

The Legend Grows at Dubai's newest course

By Kent Gray, May 29, 2018



Harradine Golf principal architect Peter Harradine and son Michael on the par-3 2nd hole at Living Legends.

The cliché promises good things for those who wait and it couldn't ring truer than for the team behind Living Legends.

Fifteen years after the nine-hole layout was first commissioned and five years after ground was originally broken on the project, Dubai's newest old course is now, finally, full-steam ahead.

The full-length driving range (with views to the Burj Khalifa) has been grassed and the already shaped holes of the Harradine Golf-design will quickly follow suit.



Given the stuttering progress to date, pinning an opening date on principal architect Peter Harradine or builders Orient Irrigation Services is a trifle unfair, although play is likely within a year and possibly well before next spring. The wait will indeed be worth it as Golf Digest Middle East's exclusive tour of the course, the centrepiece of real estate developer Tanmiyat's extensive Al Barari residential development off Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Road (the 311), illustrated. Harradine is noted for creating layouts that are the antithesis to the monster "championship" courses that predominate the region's modern golf landscape and Living Legends is no different.

The routing was largely dictated by the available corridors within this portion of the 500 villa-12 apartment block development, essentially two horseshoes that snake around four man-made, saltwater lakes. It hasn't stopped Harradine sculpting a collection of holes offering strategic challenges from tee to green with ample, eye-catching elevation changes.

The landing areas for tee shots looked tight in their nude state during our inspection but this is apparently some sort of optical, pre-grass illusion – they are in fact a generous 40-55 yards wide in most instances. All will be revealed once the wall-to-wall Paspalum Platinum T3 grass grows apparently and with just one fairway bunker, to the right of the 4th fairway, the course appears imminently playable in trademark Harradine style. There are also five tee options on each hole – spanning 3248 yards from the tips to 2543 yards from the forward-most red markers – to cater for all ability levels.



Principal designer Peter Harradine surveys progress, here on the approach to the 1st green.

The lakes, all on the left of the holes they hug, will give right-handers with a hook and lefties with a slice pause for thought on four of the nine holes. Harradine also promises plenty of trees to separate adjacent fairways, offer protection to homeowners where necessary and no doubt frustrate those trying to stay out of the wet stuff. Otherwise, the stiffest challenge will come on and around the sizeable greens that are to be well protected with a combined 11 large, deep bunkers.

SCORECARD (IN METRES)						
HOLE	PAR	BLACK	BLUE	WHITE	YELLOW	RED
1	4	372	347	332	314	290
2	3	165	148	133	115	100
3	4	382	357	342	327	290
4	5	505	491	477	463	427
5	4	336	311	296	278	262
6	4	360	336	322	306	286
7	4	367	348	332	318	297
8	3	140	133	120	104	82
9	4	343	343	328	312	291
OUT	35	2970	2814	2682	2537	2325

SCORECARD (IN YARDS)						
HOLE	PAR	BLACK	BLUE	WHITE	YELLOW	RED
1	4	407	379	363	343	317
2	3	180	162	145	126	109
3	4	418	390	374	358	317
4	5	552	537	522	506	467
5	4	367	340	324	304	287
6	4	394	367	352	335	313
7	4	401	381	363	348	325
8	3	153	145	131	114	90
9	4	375	375	359	341	318
OUT	35	3248	3077	2933	2774	2543

Without grass and the benefit of a loop or three with clubs in hand, it's hard to single out the best holes although the par-3 4th and par-5 next look like a beauty and beast back-to-back and the 7th will be another stern test with all that water. The two pars 3s also shape as thoroughly memorable, both played to downhill greens that are blessedly only 180 and 153 yards from the tips (Memo to contemporary architects: 200-yard plus par-3s are no fun for club golfers).

Living Legends takes some finding off the 311 but once discovered, it shapes as a fun-friendly beacon for residents and guests alike, especially as the layout is to be fully floodlit. It joins Abu Dhabi G.C., Doha, Al Hamra, Mirage City (Egypt), plus four other nine holers at Jebel Ali, The Track, Sharjah and Jebel Sifah (Oman) in Harradine Golf's Middle East portfolio. It might be the latest addition, but on first evidence we trust it won't be the last. The game here is fortunate to have an architect with an everyday golfer (read common sense) touch to modern day design.



The new driving range with views to the Burj Khalifa.