



BY NICK FALDO

# Behind a Design

The new course at Roco Ki was full of surprises from the start

■ The Dominican Republic is already a prime golf destination, but it's shaping up to get even better. New courses continue to open up, including one I designed in the Punta Cana area called the Legacy Course at Roco Ki. It sits right alongside the ocean, and it was a thrill for us to build. I expect it will be a thrill to play, as well.

The course is a real credit to the engineers. Building on the shoreline required some smart engineering, and the plans actually changed quite a bit during construction. We discovered that one part of the property was bottomless swampland—you could pour fill into it forever and you would still have pure swamp—so we changed the routing and worked our way toward the headland rather than right down to the beach. We had to raise the fairways two meters; they looked strange at first but settled nicely over the next few months. We also had to construct a seawall on eighteen, which was no small feat.

In the end, everything worked out, because now the

layout is more varied. It feels like a botanical garden, with diverse native flora and mangrove trees and magnificent colors. The course moves through several different environments on the way to the headland, finishing by the breaking waves. Along the way, we built bunkers that look as if they had been blown through by a gale.

The fifteenth is cut through a spidery web of mangrove roots and branches—I took to calling it my **Harry Potter hole**. Seventeen is our version of Pebble Beach's seventh. It's only about a hundred yards long, perched on the end of a rock formation. A tee area on eighteen sits atop a cave carved out by waves. From there you look up the fairway to the hotel—it's all very dramatic.

For more on Roco Ki, see pages 96 and 108.



Laying the way:  
Faldo and Andrew Haggar, director of architecture for Faldo Golf Design

