

GOLF IN TATARSTAN



GOLF KAZAN

I was working in Switzerland for the golf & country club Blumisberg, near the capital city of Bern when in the spring of 2011, I was asked by Peter Harradine if I would be interested to work in Tatarstan.

My answer was "where is Tatarstan?". I thought it might be an undeveloped area! I have always liked challenges, so I immediately answered: "yes, of course, when can I start?"

I arrived in Kazan on the 25th of July 2011 and I was very impressed with that modern capital city which has a population of 1.4 million people. By the way, the autonomous Republic of Tatarstan has a population of 3.2 million people and is almost as big as Switzerland.

I flew from Zürich to Moscow and from Moscow to Kazan. The distance from Moscow to Kazan is about 850 kilometers east of Moscow.

The first 9 holes were designed by Peter Harradine and were opened in 2009.

A further 18 holes have also been designed by Peter Harradine and it is my responsibility to oversee the construction. This includes earthmovements, irrigation, cart paths, planting of trees, drainage, seeding and growing in, all in accordance to the detailed designs and specifications of the golf course architect.

I also give advice on the greenkeeping for the existing 9 holes.

The complete resort covers 600 hectares, which include the golf course, multiple ski slopes, luxury villas and hotels. (The locality is called Savina village, Verkhneuslonsky district in Tatarstan)

Photo no.1 below shows the 6th hole par 4 of the existing course which is a dog leg to the right.



PHOTO No. 1

The 6th hole on the existing golf course.

The site is very unique and will have 3 completely different loops of nine holes

Photo no. 2 shows the par 5, 5th hole which plays down hill, with a view of the river Volga



PHOTO No. 2

Our first task on the second loop was to cut and collect the grass (photo no.3), on the areas dedicated to future earth movements, so that we could start with the actual construction.



PHOTO No. 3

The construction of the golf course is “in-house” which means that all the machinery and labour is provided by the client.

All the staff is local and inexperienced in the affinities of golf course construction so improvisation and patience is imperative or one would not survive in such an environment.

Specified machineries are not always available, so we continue the work with what has been supplied by the client.

Photo no. 4 shows the stripping of the topsoil which was the easy part.



PHOTO No. 4 STRIPPING TOPSOIL

The weather conditions are very extreme in this part of the world, with temperatures in summer reaching 35 °c and minus 30 °c, in winter. Those extreme conditions make it difficult to work for the men and the machines

Photo no. 5 shows the machinery removing the snow, so that we could still continue working during some of the less severe winter conditions.



PHOTO No. 5



PHOTO No. 6 shows the use of a "Morooka" for transporting soil in difficult circumstances and steep slopes

The local workforce on site never worked on a golf course before, which can be a big advantage as they listen to you, resulting in very few unnecessary discussions.

Photo No. 7 Shows the constructing of the irrigation lake which holds more than 100'00 m3 of water.



PHOTO No. 7 also shows Arne supervising



PHOTO No. 8 shows the completed irrigation lake

We have a gasline crossing the 10th fairway and this caused severe issues as it was not marked on the client's plans and nobody knew the exact location.

We needed many investigation trenches to find the elusive gas line. We were not allowed to shift or lower it so we had to raise the tees by 4-8 metres (depending on the tee) in order to see the theoretical landing area.

Many other problems such as the removal of electricity poles and cables have now been resolved and we are looking forward to finish the 2nd 9 holes by the autumn of 2014.



PHOTO No. 9

The team on site from left to right: Ilnur Mourtazin General Director Golf Kazan, Construction Supervisor Arne Van Amerongen, Foreman Rainur Khannano, Gerrard Manto Fine Finisher, Alina Kolchina Interpreter, Peter Harradine Golf Course Architect, Alexandra Bogdanova, Martin Cleary Shaper

Before I finish this article I would like to show you more of the great nature on this newly constructed golf course.



PHOTO No. 10 shows the 11th hole par 3. Photo is taken from the back tee



PHOTO No. 11 shows the 12th hole par 5, the photo is taken from the back tee

The work here in Russia is fantastic for me, but some other people might object to the tight security and cameras on the resort which means that “big brother” is always watching you. I do not have any objections to such measures as one feels extremely safe

The local people are great to work with! although it is important to give exact instructions to them in order to get the job done correctly.

I am living in a very luxurious villa on the resort although unfortunately the project is about 40 kms away from Kazan, so it can get quite lonely! The food and the people in Tatarstan are great. Unfortunately, some Europeans have the wrong impression about Russia.

Kazan definitely will be a new golf destination because the golf course will be extended to 27 holes.

Furthermore, Peter Harradine has also been instructed to design a 9 hole golf course in the actual city of Kazan.

It is time to say goodbye for me and I hope my next article will give you some details about the irrigation, cart paths, fine finishing and seeding including what is required to prepare the golf course ready for play.



PHOTO No.12 Arne under the snow

I would like to thank the whole team for the support they have given me specially Peter Harradine the Golf Course Architect and the Director of Golf Kazan Ilnur Mourtazin.

It is only with team effort that you produce the best results.

Construction & Maintenance Supervisor for
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