Title: Case Study on the Political, Financial, and Environmental Challenges of American Golf Course Architecture Abroad

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Abstract: International golf course construction has grown exponentially in the last several years. Unfortunately, the transition abroad has not been simple. Local, provincial, and even national governments and cultures that are markedly different than the United States have created barriers to progress, which many architects have been unable to handle properly. As the golf architecture industry expands beyond the USA, companies need all the practical doctrine available in order to avoid cultural conflict and potential fiscal damages. Investigating the unheard and unpublished story of Vidauban, a course in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region of southeastern France, will be an excellent case study for any architectural firm questioning how not to conduct international business. The 18-hole facility built by Robert Trent Jones, Sr., sunk millions of dollars into debt in the 1970s and 1980s before the first shovel broke ground. Local land policy, corporate structure, and international politics are only a few of the areas that the firm failed to navigate properly. The issues this project encountered over more than a 10-year period moved Jones’s firm from having the potential to build the most successful project of his career to almost retiring bankrupt. The very extensive Vidauban papers in the Robert Trent Jones Papers at the Cornell University Archives contain project information including designs, transactions, and journals. My research plan is to publish an analysis of this project that can explain the missteps made by the famous architect’s firm. It is my hope that modern day companies will learn from these mistakes and operate abroad in a more efficient and diplomatic manner.