

Golf masters

Allen, Bertagna bringing Parmasters to Memphis

BY CAROLYNE PARK

They're doing it for love of the game.

Mario Bertagna and Mike Allen are bringing a new concept to Memphis in the form of Parmasters, an indoor golf training facility with a wide array of training technology and equipment designed to "demystify" the swing and help players of all levels improve their game.

When it opens this spring, the \$1.5 million, 25,000-square-foot facility at 888 South White Station will cater to the needs of beginners and pros alike. It'll be a place to improve away from the pressures of the course.

"Golf course owners love for people to come and play golf on their course," Allen says.

"What they don't want is people to learn how to play on their course. That's the void that we fill."

Parmasters

Golf training centers

Local developers:

BAMM Enterprises LLC

Partners: Mario

Bertagna, Mike Allen

Marketing agent:

Margretta Dobbs/

Outside the Box

Location: 888 South White Station

Phone: 767-0337

Web site: www.

parmastersgolf.com/memphis

Allen, CEO of BAMM Enterprises LLC, is opening Parmasters with partner and COO Bertagna. Not only will it be the first of the international franchise chain to open in the Memphis area, but also the first in the country, and possibly the first in the world. Another Parmasters is in the works in Vancouver.

A self-proclaimed "health club for golfers," the Memphis Parmasters will include a pro golf shop, cafe, fitness center, two private meeting

rooms, locker rooms, five practice bays and four golf simulators programmed with 20 world-famous courses such as Pebble Beach, Sawgrass and Spyglass Hill. It will have a 4,000-square-foot short game area with undulating greens and sand traps where players can practice chipping, putting and bunker play.

The center will offer one-on-one training under a standardized system developed by company co-founder and pro golfer Scott Hazeldine. Parmasters is guaranteeing its Straight-Line Golf system will help



Mike Allen, left, and Mario Bertagna will open the first Parmasters location in the U.S. in Memphis in March.

ALAN HOWELL | MBJ



Facility on South White Station will house Parmasters.

players reduce their handicap 25%.

Club memberships are being offered with a one-time initiation fee of \$250 and packages ranging from \$39-\$89 a month for individuals, and \$68-\$168 a month for families. Corporate memberships are being offered for up to five people at \$189 a month. The company is also offering 250 4-year founding charter memberships at \$2,500, with numerous incentives including up to \$2,500 in credit to be used within the facility.

Allen, who has more than 20 years of experience in

capital markets, discovered Parmasters after seeing an ad in the *Wall Street Journal* in March 2003. He had toyed with the idea of turning the former Mall of Memphis property into an indoor sports complex, and Parmasters provided an attractive alternative. After visiting the company founders in Vancouver, Allen called on his brother-in-law Bertagna.

"I knew if I didn't pursue it and I woke up one day and there was a Parmasters down the street from me, I would never forgive myself," Allen says.

Bertagna, whose background is in retail management, was impressed with the concept and the founders' philosophy. He co-founded the Memphis Italian Festival in 1990, which now draws more than 75,000 visitors annually, so he also enjoys the challenge of being the first. The two men own Parmasters franchising rights in nine states, and plan to open a minimum of four locations themselves in West Tennessee. They found the White Station location with the help of local real estate broker William Harrell.