



**GREG NORMAN AND HIS G550** recently touched down on the Eastern Caribbean isle of Anguilla, where The Shark helped celebrate the grand opening of Temenos Golf Club, an 18-hole course Norman designed for the new St. Regis Resort & Residences, Temenos Anguilla.

# THE NORMAN EMPIRE

A superbly planned and executed play through from golf to business is keeping Greg Norman at the top of his game. By Scott Kauffman

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ot long ago in the wee hours of the morning, golfer Greg Norman and some mates took his 61-foot sport fishing boat on an expedition from the Turks and Caicos Islands. On the way to a coveted

fishing spot some 100 miles north of Cuba, a U.S. Coast Guard cutter interrupted Norman's swift-moving predawn run. After asking some questions over the radio, the Coast Guard had Norman stop his *Aussie Rules* so they could continue the inquiry. With the sun starting to peek over the horizon, Norman identified himself and explained that they were just a few nautical miles from some fishing and they would really like to get there if they could. Suddenly recognizing Norman's name, the female Coast Guard commander replied on the radio, "Greg Norman, huh? You're the wine guy."

"Yes!" responded Norman, with a great sense of satisfaction. "Yes! I'm Greg Norman, the wine guy."

As Norman's longtime business partner Bart Collins tells it, Norman and the others heard laughter from the Coast Guard guys on the bridge behind the commander because all of them were saying, "What are you talking about—he's the *golfer!*"

"Greg loved it," Collins recalls, "because he said that's where he's going."

Photography by Karim Shamsi-Basha



**I**ndeed, while many star athletes would rue the day when their sports identity is lost, that fleeting Coast Guard exchange was precisely the place Norman wanted to be. If anything it was further evidence that golf's famous "Shark" was truly transcending the very sport he once dominated. Of course to those who know Norman the businessman, this comes as no surprise because Norman has long been making the successful transition from sports star to business icon, creating an identity and building a brand that is certainly independent from his golf-playing roots.

Considered one of the all-time great golfers of the modern era, the native Australian now oversees a vast and diverse multinational business empire—Great White Shark Enterprises Inc.—that encompasses everything from his popular Greg Norman Estates wine to his signature Greg Norman Collection of apparel and his growing golf course design interests. Other key business ventures are Medallist Development, a global real estate development partnership with Macquarie Bank of Australia, an event management and sports marketing company, turfgrass and beef production businesses, and investments in GPS-related golf technology. Additionally, the two-time British Open champion and 2001 World Golf Hall of Fame inductee has several lucrative endorsement deals with Land Rover and Qantas Airlines to name a couple. But make no mistake—Norman will tell you that he makes a conscious effort to limit his exposure to brands and partners "that I'm passionate about."

One of Norman's more energizing endeavors is Greg Norman Golf Course Design, which is ranked as one of the premier designers of high-end private and resort golf courses. At last count Norman had 55 courses open in 13 countries on 4 continents with another 40 courses in development.

Norman's transition to the design side of the golf industry was

spurred 13 years ago by his collaboration with acclaimed architect Pete Dye on the design of Medalist Golf Club in Hobe Sound, Florida. Norman, who lives on nearby Jupiter Island, actually codeveloped the private club community on property surrounded by 870 acres of state-controlled nature preserve. Picking such an environmentally sensitive site for his first project in the United States was fitting for Norman, who is a noted outdoorsman.

"We proved to the Audubon Society and Martin County, which is a very tough county environmental-wise, that we could build the 10th hole, that plays into the wetlands, and actually re-create the wetlands to a better state than Mother Nature had given it," notes Norman, who spent 331 weeks as the No. 1-ranked golfer in the world from 1986 to 1997. "There was a lot of weed buildup in there and contaminants you didn't want, and we proved the case," he explains. "The secret to it is making sure everybody understands the same rule book. Now whether you're a developer, a golf course designer or superintendent, or an environmentalist, if everybody has the same rule book we could all work together."

"I've always been a huge proponent of working very close with environmentalists," Norman adds. "One thing I've always been very particular and meticulous about is the fact that the environment is here and we need to work in conjunction with the environment. You can't fight environmental institutions, and you can't fight their views on how to protect the environment—but you can join them. And on top of that, when you join them and work hand in glove with them, it's amazing the collaborative effort that comes out of it. I've enjoyed that aspect."

NORMAN DRAWS HIS PASSION FOR NATURE from his Australian roots. "We're much more environmentally sensitive I would say than Americans," he points out. "And sometimes I would say to a point that we're a little bit overboard. You've got to understand that

**CARIBBEAN SANCTUARY:** Temenos, the Greek word for Sanctuary, is a befitting name for the Sand, Sky and Sea—a trio of exquisite Greek island-inspired villas that sit atop a pristine stretch of beach on the island of Anguilla, just a few minutes from Temenos's sister property, the new St. Regis Resort & Residences.



the vast majority of Australia is desert. So where the population is on the coastline, the Australians really appreciate it.”

Robert Sillerman also appreciates pristine coastline. When the founder of SFX Entertainment began developing the newly minted St. Regis Resort, Temenos Anguilla several years ago with partner Paul Kanavos of Flag Luxury Properties LLC, Flag Luxury interviewed a number of big-name architects for the resort's upscale Temenos Golf Club. Once Sillerman and his team got a taste of Norman's approach to real estate development and keen sense of environmental stewardship, the Shark was the hands-down choice for Anguilla's first golf course.

“On his first visit, when I found him in the bush pulling dirt up with his hands, I right away said, ‘That’s my guy,’” Kavanos recalls. “Greg’s sensitivity to the environment, working with the natural landscape and vegetation, and working with developers and understanding their real estate needs is very important. And he’s very hands on.”

Indeed, whenever the driven Aussie discovers a passion, he is ready because there’s only one way he knows how to live—hands on with lots of vigor and zeal. As one of the Shark’s popular slogans goes: “Attack Life.”

“From the time I met Greg as an IMG rep in 1987, the thing that convinced me to leave IMG and join Greg was just his sheer determination and drive,” Collins recalls. “If someone were to describe Greg in one word, ‘driven’ is the word. Let’s talk golfers since we



“When you study everything that’s out there, it will blow everything out the door! I love flying the helicopter because you’re using everything from your head to your eyes. It’s much more of a feel and finesse experience than flying jets, and that’s what flying is all about.” *Greg Norman describing the Bell 609 helicopter*

know golfers. There’s a lot of golfers who kind of turn their attention to business. Don’t get me wrong, but you can’t take a guy like, say, Corey Pavin and build businesses around him—even if he was really driven—like you can Greg. But there are other guys who have got some cachet and got something you can build a brand off of, but they don’t have the drive. And Greg is driven to succeed. Like I often say, we just kind of get pulled in behind the vortex, this trail that he’s blazing.”

THE DESCRIPTION IS APROPOS for an adventurous soul like Norman who was an air force cadet in his youth and once desired to be a fighter pilot. Of course golf got in the way of plans once his parents joined Virginia Golf Club in

Brisbane and signed him up as a junior member. To this day though, Norman’s affinity for private aviation is as strong as ever, whether he’s jetting around the world in his Gulfstream 550 with longtime pilot Guy Maira or flying his Bell 407 helicopter on shorter business trips.

Norman began using planes in the mid-1980s to shuttle to and from golf tournaments. After one of his leased jets blew an engine and had to make an emergency landing in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, in 1990, Norman decided right then and there to buy his first jet—a Lockheed JetStar, according to Maira.

Norman had the unique JetStar, based on the U.S. military’s SR71 and U2 spy planes, for only about 14 months, but Norman and Maira still speak fondly of the plane. “We flew about 450 hours and

did some pretty interesting trips," recalls Maira, who started flying part-time with Norman in 1988. "We traveled all the way around the world with no maintenance issues, but we would do five trips to Australia each year and just needed more range."

So in 1993 Norman bought the first of his many Gulfstream jets, a G3. Norman now owns his fifth Gulfstream, a \$42-million G550 that he spends some 600 hours on each year clocking some 325,000 miles. He is now anxiously awaiting his newest helicopter, the Bell 609, and he has the No. 15 slot for the machine he describes as "an incredible piece of equipment."

"It's flying 25,000 feet at 300 knots," notes Norman, who has more than 200 hours behind the stick of a helicopter. "When you study everything that's out there, it will blow everything out the door! I love flying the helicopter because you're using everything from your head to your eyes. It's much more of a feel and finesse experience than flying jets, and that's what flying is all about."

Then again bursting the speed of sound with the Blue Angels off the coast of Florida, dogfighting inside the fierce F-4 Phantom with the Royal Air Force in Scotland, or taking off and landing F-14s off the U.S. aircraft carrier *Carl Vincent* in San Diego is quite memorable. "There are people in the military who dream about some of the things Norman's done," Maira says. "When people ask me how good a pilot he is, it's the same thing I told Bell—he's been doing this for 14 to 15 years and flies as well as anybody. He's just elected to not get a license. Overall Greg's had more aviation experience than most people."

Collins perhaps sums up Norman's connection to aviation best when he likens him to the Arnold Palmer of his generation. "There's an interesting parallel between Arnold Palmer and Greg Norman—they're both a man's man," Collins explains. "Something like John Wayne, the macho guy. Palmer's got his fixed wing license, but he was never really accomplished in a helicopter. For Greg flying fixed wings was always kind of boring, but flying helicopters you're literally flying by the seat of your pants. So here's Arnold, the quintessential fixed wing guy, and here's Greg, whose psyche and everything is oriented more toward helicopters—so Greg's the quintessential right-seat guy, and Arnold's the quintessential left-seat guy."



Whatever seat Norman takes, rest assured that private aviation will continue to play an integral role in the continued growth of Great White Shark Enterprises. Collins, who has served as the company's president since 1995, says Norman's self-described "back nine" of his life is unfolding just like he planned it in 1993 when he was at a pivotal crossroad in his playing career. Fresh off his second British Open victory and with his longtime contract about to expire with sports management firm IMG, Norman decided to strike out on his own and create a new identity.

As Norman describes in his recently released autobiographical book, *The Way of the Shark, Lessons on Golf, Business and Life*, he recognized in 1993 that he couldn't rely on golf as his source of income forever, so he established a seven-year plan that would end with an evaluation of his career in 2000. Many thought he meant his golf career, but that was only partly correct—he also was talking about his business career.

"It was getting harder and harder for me to maintain the top physical condition required to play world-class golf," Norman explains in his book, reflecting on that soul-searching year of 1993. "I'd fallen from number one after not having won a tournament in over two years, and although I had climbed out of that hole [winning the British Open in '93], I knew it was just a matter of time before my performance would drop off again."

So Norman, who was 38 at the time, allowed his IMG contract to expire that April, gaining some precious freedom in more ways

than one. The most important was the opportunity to start empowering himself toward a goal of financial freedom—sans golf. And Norman's fundamental strategy in achieving that goal is nurturing his own brand and various businesses, and building strategic business relationships—rather than simply becoming a spokesperson for other brands or services.

As Norman began building his upstart business empire, he learned from a variety of successful people not the least of whom were golfers Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, Australian tycoon Kerry Packer, and U.S. financier Nelson Peltz. To this day Norman's guiding principles are, according to his book: take control of his business, develop equity in his own brand, identify a niche and fill it, forge strategic and long-term relationships, do not heavily invest his own capital (his currency is his name, likeness, and personal exertion, he says), and separate business interests from personal wealth management.

"There's equity in a brand, and that was one thing I wanted to build through Great White Shark Enterprises," emphasizes Norman, who has 91 career victories, including 20 wins on the PGA Tour, and 29 top-10 finishes in major championships. "I had a great logo, and to build value in a brand you have to be patient. I wanted to be my own space and time," he adds. "And the beauty of Great White Shark is it's private. As a professional golfer you're under the microscope. With my company I can build it from within."

So far that blueprint has netted an empire that is certainly more than just par. Some 20 years after Norman formed Great White Shark Enterprises, the Jupiter, Florida-based holding company is reported to be worth more than \$300 million annually. Not a bad number for someone who once earned \$38 a week as an assistant club pro at Royal Queensland Golf Club in Brisbane, Australia, prior to turning pro in 1976.

Acknowledging that Norman's playing days are starting to slip away, Collins is quick to say that we "shouldn't apologize for him." "Greg has put himself right in the position that he wanted to be in," Collins explains. "He can turn his attention to business. He enjoys business. He doesn't have to play golf to earn a living. But Greg's still a golfer and always will be—so we're keeping Greg in the golf business. But in the golf *business*, not on the golf course."

A perfect example is Norman's recent move to acquire a controlling interest in MacGregor Golf, which announced last October it was acquiring the outright rights to the Greg Norman Collection apparel business from the adidas Group. Norman, who started his signature apparel line in 1992 with longtime friend and Reebok founder Paul Fireman, called the transaction "probably the greatest business deal I've ever done."

Norman recently said his investment in Cobra golf equipment—an initial stake of \$1.8 million in 1991 that turned into a \$40-million payout in 1996 when Cobra was acquired by Fortune Brands Inc.—comes close to the MacGregor deal. On the subject of golf clubs though, get used to Norman making them rather than playing with them—at least competitively. After turning 50 two years ago and officially becoming eligible for the PGA Tour's senior circuit, many fans were probably hoping to see the Shark preying on his golf peers once again. But Norman, who is less than two years removed from back surgery, has made it clear his competitive golf days are behind him. And the charismatic, crestfallen golfer known as much for his eight runner-up finishes in majors as his two British Open victories, has no regrets about the decision. "It's a lot different now," he notes. "I don't want to go out there and take up space. My body hurts—I've been there, done that. Quite honestly I don't want to be a ceremonial golfer."

It's an existence that Norman is clearly content with—especially when he's now known as Norman the "wine guy." ❧



### A GROUP OF FUTURE GOLFERS

(top right) had ample reason to smile last November as the exclusive British island of Anguilla celebrated the grand opening of Temenos Golf Club—a Greg Norman-designed 18-hole championship course located at the new St. Regis Resort and Residences, Temenos Anguilla. As part of the grand opening weekend, hundreds of guests got a taste of the world-class food, beaches, entertainment, and accommodations that will become St. Regis's new standard for ultra-luxe living.

The 286-acre residential resort development, scheduled for completion in winter '08, comprises 62 oceanfront residences, 47 villas, and 18 magnificent estate homes ranging in price from \$1.4 to \$12.5 million. For more information on this new Eastern Caribbean jewel please visit [stregisresidences.com/anguilla](http://stregisresidences.com/anguilla).

