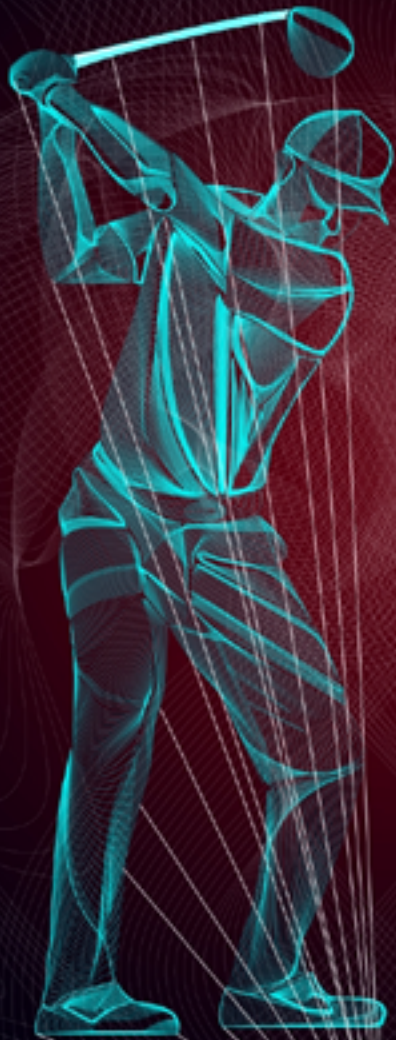


# GOLFChicago

Chicago's Premier Multimedia Golf Source & Authority

Spring 1 2024, Vol. 28 No. 2



## **AI: A NEW ERA IN GOLF**

**BOOK REVIEW:  
RAINMAKER**

**COURSE MANAGEMENT  
PRIMER**

**GAYLORD'S  
GOLF MECCA**

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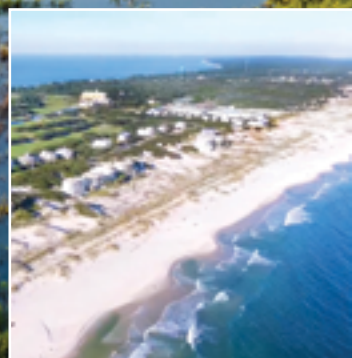
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## OPENING SHOT

Dave Silbar

Mother Nature, you did it again. Tossed us golfers a bone with some gorgeous, unseasonably warm weather in early March then only to sprinkle us with your wicked, white flaky sense of humor by month's end. Courses across Chicagoland, including Schaumburg Golf Club (where I had the chance to play 18 under sunny skies with temps hovering in the mid-60s in early March) have greened up quicker than we typically see this early in the spring. Call it Climate Change or whatever the excuse, I predict a lengthier than usual golf season around these parts this year.

And because turnaround times are faster than we've seen in several years by most, if not all, of the top manufacturers, golfers who took advantage of being fitted for the latest and greatest in equipment have had the chance to test out their new clubs on the course.

In this month's issue, we take a look at the rapid pace that artificial intelligence (A.I.) has played in allowing us to hit the ball both farther and straighter than ever, all without giving up spin, launch, and other factors that are needed to bring out the best in our games. Writer Todd Mrowice helps explain how A.I. is helping club manufacturers simulate tens of thousands of golf shots to design more forgiving faces and club heads that have increased aerodynamics.

We then take a deep dive into offerings from all of the game's major manufacturers, and explain how they've used A.I. to fine-tune their 2024 drivers to be among the best to ever grace the shelves of your local retailer, golf shop, and professional fitter.

But equipment isn't the only way to shave strokes off of your game, so we focus on one of the most underrated topics in all of golf: course management. Gone are the days of the "I didn't come here to layup" mentality. Better thinking and making smarter, more focused decisions on each shot throughout the course of a round can save a ton of strokes.

It starts on the tee box and can be especially crucial when you find yourself in extremely tricky situations (aka deep in the trees with no chance of reaching the green). We provide pro tips each step of the way that are guaranteed to pave the way to lower scores this season.

In the spirit of March Madness, Beverly Country Club Director of Instruction Billy Fitzgerald provides an explanation on how golfers have long been trained in correct motions by implementing basketball skills, and helps us connect the dots. Fitzgerald details how to get into the proper position on the downswing by having us think about the jump shot as well as the transition between catching and shooting the ball.

Looking for your next great book? We are confident that you'll love the brand-new autobiography by former sports super-agent Norton Hughes entitled *Rainmaker, the Money Grab Explosion of Golf, from Tiger to LIV*. It's an engaging read from start to finish and provides incredible insight into the world of the golf super-agent's career with the International Management Group and its founder and chairman Mark McCormack. You can read our full review on page 28.

Finally, if you haven't done so yet, make sure to watch season two of the Netflix hit series *Full Swing*. Not only does it continue to provide great insight into some of our favorite players, but it promises to give you some new players to root for every Sunday when watching the PGA Tour.

Enjoy the Master's along with this month's issue of GOLFChicago Magazine.

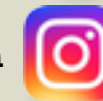
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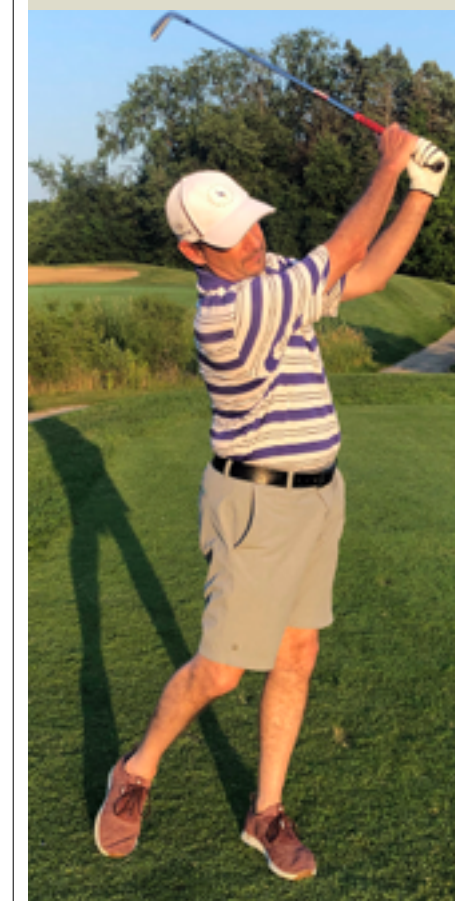
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# THE GOOD STUFF



## Cheers to Chicago Spring

The Finnish Long Drink has been around since 1952 but is now being introduced to the U.S. This isn't a filling seltzer, it's a premium citrus soda that's refreshing and smooth. Available in Traditional (5.5% ABV), Strong (8.5% ABV), and a Zero calorie options. \$11.99 (6 cans) [www.thelongdrink.com](http://www.thelongdrink.com)



## Truly Great Fit

When TRUE Linkswear debuted its 2024 line-up this LUX G model was the headliner. It offers Tour-level performance in a modern design that easily goes from the course to the clubhouse and beyond. Featuring a Neoprene easy-on collar, Wanderlux midsole, and a 2-year waterproof warranty. \$175 [www.truelinkswear.com](http://www.truelinkswear.com)



## Broad Strokes

TaylorMade promotes SpeedSoft as its softest golf ball ever. Now, it's the most visible as well. The new SpeedSoft Inl models have a high-contrast splattering of paint, available in green, blue, red, or pink. No need to compare golf balls on the first tee, they'll know yours from 300 yards away. \$24.99 [www.taylormadegolf.com](http://www.taylormadegolf.com)

## Carrying with Color

OGIO is known for pushing limits with its golf bag designs, and the new 2024 Fuse stand bags have some whoppers like this Neon Sport colorway which steals your attention. This lightweight carry bag has a four-way top, Rapid Access pockets, and a Fit Disc self-balancing strap system. \$229.99 [www.ogio.com](http://www.ogio.com)



## In the Shadows

As Srixon continues to take its share of the iron market it also takes to the dark side. Now available in a limited edition Black Chrome finish, Srixon's ZX5 Mk II and ZX7 Mk II irons are looking super sleek. The same award-winning tech now comes in this durable finish that reduces glare on the course. \$1,499.99 [www.us.dunlopsports.com](http://www.us.dunlopsports.com)



## Milled to Perfection

The new PING PLD Milled putters are works of art, and the Oslo 4 should grab any mallet player's attention. A favorite shape on tour, the Oslo 4 suits arching strokes and has a long, contrasting white sightline. Smooth like butter on impact, this model is also very forgiving. \$485 [www.ping.com](http://www.ping.com)



## Up All Night to Get Lucky

When it comes to sinking those crucial birdies and par putts, we could all use a little extra luck. Perhaps this new blade cover from Odyssey is the trick? Stitched with shamrocks and gold accents, this cover will add some appeal to your bag and hopefully some skins. \$59.99 [www.odyssey.callawaygolf.com](http://www.odyssey.callawaygolf.com)

## Can Definitely Touch This

In a crowded golf apparel landscape, let's not forget classy brands like Peter Millar. Their performance polos feel great, but can also look great like the Hammer Time design which sports hammerhead sharks, Classic fit, UPF 50+, and four-way stretch for easy swinging. \$115 [www.petermillar.com](http://www.petermillar.com)



# The Most Underrated Part of Golf

I had already decided to write this article before watching a post-round interview with Player's Championship winner Scottie Scheffler when a question was posed to him by a panel of Golf Channel commentators: "How important was your course management this week?"

And there it was. The most underappreciated part of the game, yet where potentially the most strokes can be saved in any given round you play.

The days of "I didn't come here to lay up" are a thing of the past. My response: You didn't come here to make triple-bogey either.

In virtually every lesson I teach on a daily basis, there's not a time when I don't bring up some type of course management situation. Thanks to my friend Barry, who coined the Pickleball phrase "middle solves the riddle" (because hitting between two teammates often leads to confusion over who will hit the shot), I have adopted this phrase for both my GOLFTEC students as well as the for the golfers at Carmel Catholic High School, where I serve as varsity golf coach.

*Pin tucked right: middle solves the riddle. Pin tucked left: middle solves the riddle. Middle pin: time to attack.*

If you get your distances correct, hitting towards the middle of the green is always going to leave you with either a makeable putt or at least a tap in. But what do most players do? They take dead aim and often overcook a shot left or right and leave themselves with an awkward chip out of heavy rough to a pin tucked close to the edge of the green. Deadville.

Course management is crucial in golf because it involves strategic decision-making and execution throughout the course of a round. Effective course management can significantly impact your performance and overall score. Here are several reasons why course management is essential in golf:

### Maximizing Scoring Opportunities

Golf courses present a variety of challenges, including hazards, bunkers, and uneven terrain. By employing sound course management strategies, you'll position yourself to take advantage of scoring opportunities while minimizing risks.

Pro Tip: Play smart on par 5s as that's when you'll most likely have a short iron or even wedge in to the green on your approach shot. Always the best chance for a birdie and there are usually four of them on any given course.

### Minimizing Errors and Costly Penalties

Poor course management can lead to unnecessary errors, such as hitting into hazards or finding difficult lies. By carefully assessing the layout of the course and planning shots accordingly, you'll reduce the likelihood of incurring penalties and avoidable mistakes.

Pro Tip: If your drive lands in deep rough, don't hit for distance, hit for the fairway. Doing so keeps par or at worst bogey in play.

### Playing to Strengths

Course management involves playing to one's strengths and minimizing weaknesses. You should strategically select clubs and shot types that suit your abilities and preferences, maximizing your chances of success on each hole.

Pro Tip: Spend 85 to 90% of practice time working on your short game (putting, chipping, pitching, bunker shots). Drop 20 balls just off a practice green and use three to four different clubs to hit the same shot, helping you understand how the ball reacts with each and which is most comfortable for you.

### Navigating Course Conditions

Course management also entails adapting to various course conditions, such as wind direction, pin placements, and turf firmness. You must assess these factors and adjust your strategy accordingly to optimize performance. Understanding the slope of the green on approach shots is another way you can have your short shots finish closer to the hole.

Pro Tip: Use tee markers to your advantage. Instead of teeing the ball in the middle of the tee markers, move to one side that gives you a better view of the fairway you are hitting to. If a par three is 143 yards and you are dead from 150 with your 7-iron, then move two clubs backwards to make the hole closer to 150 yards and fire away.

### Staying Mentally Sharp

This is possibly the hardest of all course management traits. Effective course management requires focus, concentration, and decision-making skills. It challenges you to think strategically and remain mentally engaged throughout the round, contributing to overall mental toughness and resilience.

Pro tip: When it's your turn, take 10 seconds to block out the rest of the world, close your eyes, and focus on the shot at hand. You don't need four to five hours of focus during an 18-hole round, just those 10 seconds before every shot.

### Managing Emotions

Golf can be a mentally demanding sport, and effective course management can help you manage your emotions and maintain composure, even in challenging situations. By staying focused on your strategy and execution, you can avoid becoming frustrated or discouraged.

Pro Tip: Play in segments of three holes at a time. Set a goal for your score (over or under par) for those three holes and then start over. Don't dwell on past shots or past holes.

### Improving Consistency

Consistency is key in golf, and sound course management can contribute to more consistent performance. By making smart decisions and executing shots with precision, golfers can achieve greater consistency from round to round.

Pro Tip: Instead of social media, seek out an actual golf professional whose provides instruction for a living and can address your individual problems.

### Reducing Risk

Course management involves assessing risk and reward on each shot and hole.

By taking calculated risks and avoiding unnecessary gambles, you'll minimize the potential for catastrophic mistakes and maintain control over your game.

Pro Tip: Middle solves the riddle (see above).

Effective course management can lead to a more enjoyable round and, most importantly, to lower scores. You'll experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment on the course when you feel more in control of your game and are making better decisions,

Overall, course management is essential because it empowers you to make strategic decisions, navigate the challenges of the course, and optimize your performance. By employing sound course management strategies, I know you'll improve your scoring, consistency, and overall enjoyment on the course this season.





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## Cues from the Hardcourt for Proper Downswing Positioning

One of the biggest problems in the history of golf is slotting or positioning the club correctly in the downswing. Most golfers are over the top or too steep, widely caused by not using the body and the

ground properly. How your body changes direction in the transition or change in direction at the top of the swing allows the club to get in a good position on the downswing or "slot" properly. The golf

swing is made up of dynamic movements that create positions. This is why it's important to focus on the correct motion for the desired position.

In many cases, we as golfers already have been trained in the correct motion by another sport and we just need to connect the dots. In the spirit of the men's and women's basketball tournament, the jump shot or catch and shoot is the motion we need in transition. Picture this: You're at the top of the key facing the basket and you receive a pass from the right wing. As you catch the ball your pelvis pushes back as your arms swing the basketball in front of you before you shoot.

**Step 1:** When I turn to catch the ball my hips and shoulders rotate to catch the pass.

**Step 2:** When I turn to face the basket I push my hips back so my arms and basketball can get in front of me in a shooting position. What I don't do is catch the ball and immediately jump towards the basket like so many golfers, and over the top.

**Step 3:** In transition you want to feel your lead leg push your lead hip back to meet your trail hip which causes a sitting position.

**Step 4:** This motion and change in direction in your body by using the ground properly slots the club in front of you promoting an excellent delivery of the club into the ball.

**How to practice:** First, use your imagination as if you were at the top of the key and you're receiving a pass from the right wing and shooting the ball towards the basket. Next, grab a club using no ball and make swings mimicking that motion. As you swing back your body rotates to catch the ball and sit in transition as the club works in front of you much like getting ready to shoot. Finally tee up a ball (8 iron recommended) hitting shots at full motion but 50% speed to allow your body to feel the similarity in shooting a basketball and hitting a golf ball.

Billy Fitzgerald, PGA  
Director of Instruction,  
Beverly Country Club  
[www.BillyFitzgeraldGolf.com](http://www.BillyFitzgeraldGolf.com)



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4

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# My Kind of Golf: The Gaylord Golf Mecca

Each year, a large number of Chicago-area golfers can be found roaming the Gaylord Golf Mecca's collection of destination golf in the heart of Northern Michigan.

It's roughly a 360-mile trip by automobile, and golfers from Chicago and Illinois land near or at the top of the Mecca's list for visitors and website clicks, too. The proof is in the numbers.

"I think the Chicago-area golfer realizes they can make it here in part of a day, and then they find a quantity of quality golf courses and great lodging options at prices more affordable than other destinations," says Paul Beachnau, executive director of the unique cooperative Mecca marketing group of 16 courses and 20 lodging partners.

The Mecca, in the Eastern Time Zone, offers long getaway summer days with play

until 9 p.m. or later, and comfortable average temperatures in the mid-70s across a great green expanse. They have been doing it for 37 years with cooperation, vision, investment, and hard work. The partners' goal: To be the premier U.S. summer golf destination with all price points and levels of luxury requested or required.

"The reason the Mecca works and continues to grow is a really great group of owners, managers, and golf professionals who have vision and believe in working together in destination marketing," says Beachnau, has worked at the Mecca since its inception in 1987.

"We keep getting better. You continue to see Mecca members improve their golf courses and properties with renovations, investment in additions and facilities, all the

hard-work items. When you put it together, it makes a better experience for our visitors."

The Mecca's current president is J.T. Aude, the head golf professional at Gaylord Golf Club, one of the original Mecca members. He says his course promises a country club experience for the day, including greens that compare with top private courses in the Midwest.

"Just come check us out," he says. "It's the thing we are known for. Golfers from everywhere tell us we have the best greens in Northern Michigan."

Aude said the Mecca, which includes eight properties total, is unique because it's a wide variety of partners who share the same goal of getting golfers to the Gaylord area.

"We all strive to offer quality and quantity. Together, we have unmatched price points, getaway golf, classic golf, resort golf, great country club style golf, and some of the best-conditioned courses in the country. While we are competitors, we know what's best for all of us is to work together to be the best summer golf destination we can be," he says.

Mecca's quality properties include: **Black Lake Golf Club** and its award-winning Rees Jones-designed golf course.

**Gaylord Golf Club** with its classic pristine greens that have charmed golfers for decades.

**Garland Lodge & Golf Resort**, which is home to four golf courses and is in year 73 as a destination.

**Indian River Golf Club**, a classic celebrating 100+ years which bills itself accurately as the friendliest golf course in the north.

**Lakes of the North Golf Club** provides a get-away-from-it-all spot with an affordable hidden-gem golf course.

**The Pines Golf Course at Michaywe'**, which has been a home of classic and competitive golf for 52 years.

**Otsego Resort**, which is continuing multi-million-dollar improvements and features two courses, including the highly acclaimed Tribute Golf Course.

**Treetops Resort**, with its unmatched five golf courses including the only Tom Fazio design in Michigan and the famous Rick Smith-designed Threetops Par 3 course.

Golfers continue flocking to Gaylord from all points on the map, and it doesn't have to be a car trip. The Mecca partners with the Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City, Mich., which has opened up new national markets and has multiple direct flights to Chicago.

"It's a quick flight to Traverse City, then a scenic drive of about an hour," Beachnau says. "We're a small Northern Michigan community rich with great golf. We are easy to find, and you won't have any Chicago traffic."

Gaylord, known fondly as the Alpine Village, started its journey to being a U.S. golf destination in 1987. Harry Melling, a flamboyant auto industry supplier and NASCAR team owner who had earlier purchased a ski resort on the edge of town, unveiled the Masterpiece, the last major golf course design by the legendary architect Robert Trent Jones Sr.

The award-winning work by Jones attracted golfers to Treetops Resort, but also quickly put Gaylord in the national golf conversation as a must-stop in the Midwest.

When golfers stop, they find uncommon variety in golf fashioned by not only Jones, but multiple highly regarded architects.

Tom Fazio's only Michigan design – the Premier – is at Treetops.

Rick Smith, maybe best known for working on the swings of Phil Mickelson and several other top pros, picked the brains of Jones and Fazio when he was the director of golf at Treetops and then designed Signature, Tradition, and Threetops, all award winners.

Wilfred Reid, a Michigan Golf Hall of Fame member who designed over 20 courses in the state as well as the Olympic Club in San Francisco, did original design work that remains a part of the classic Indian River Golf Club, since redesigned by Warner Bowen.

Rees Jones, one of Robert Trent Jones' sons, created one of his personal favorites and an award-winning course at Black Lake Golf Club.

Rick Robbins and PGA Tour player and NBC golf analyst Gary Koch built The Tribute at Otsego Resort, a tribute to Northern Michigan golf and vistas. William

continued on page 22



Treetops Resort



The Pines GC at Michaywe'



Gaylord GC



Indian River



Otsego Resort



### Pars Under the Stars

Foxford Hills Golf Club in Cary will host its first "Pars Under the Stars" scramble featuring dinner at 5:30 p.m. and golf with glow in the dark golf balls at twilight on Saturday, May 18. This unique event will feature raffles, on-course games, and other fun activities. If you've never played it, the course is an awesome 18-hole championship layout.

Other fun activities include a cart decorating contest, and all proceeds from this starlit adventure will benefit the Cary Park Foundation, supporting special projects within the Cary Park District and its scholarship fund. Gather your team of four and register by calling the golf shop at 847-639-0400. Cost is \$420 per team.

### USAGA Junior Board Topgolf Fundraiser

The U.S. Adaptive Golf Alliance Junior Board will host its spring fundraiser on Sunday, April 14, noon to 3 p.m., at Topgolf Naperville. Attendees will participate in a fun-filled afternoon featuring two rounds of the TopContender competition, a captivating live leaderboard, buffet, and silent auction. The USAGA Junior Board is composed of dedicated high school students who are passionate about serving as volunteers for USAGA and are committed to broadening the reach of golf to individuals who are currently underserved. Cost is \$125 per person or \$650 for a team of six. For more information, visit [www.usaga.org/](http://www.usaga.org/) or call 704-796-4176.



### Golf at Wrigley Field

Earlier this spring, Wrigley Field and Upper Deck Golf announced that tee times will be available for bookings to the public for an exclusive opportunity to play a round of golf inside the stadium May 12–14. As part of the Upper Deck Golf event, participants will have a chance to play a round of golf throughout Wrigley Field down to custom greens on the field below while enjoying great music, cold drinks, food and multiple golfing challenges at a clubhouse bar and festival area inside the stadium.

Upper Deck Golf will offer tee times available to be booked as early as 7 a.m. on the three dates and as late as 9 p.m. Tee times will be offered in two player increments, and VIP tee times will be available that offer a more premium experience for fans looking to enjoy additional perks at the event including free entry into driving, chipping, and putting challenges and complimentary food and beverage items.



Standard clubs will be available for players to use at each tee box. While guests are welcome to bring their own clubs, no drivers or fairway metals will be allowed within the stadium for safety purposes. Tee times are limited and are expected to sell out quickly! For more information and to book a tee time, visit: [www.upperdeckgolfing.com/wrigleyfield/](http://www.upperdeckgolfing.com/wrigleyfield/).

### Morton Arboretum to Open Eco/Educational Mini Golf

On May 24, the Morton Arboretum will unveil a miniature golf course named Wonder Woods Mini featuring interactive, tree-themed features designed for all ages.

"Each hole brings the Arboretum's tree research to life in a playful way," said Amy Scott, head of exhibitions. "People enjoy connecting to trees and nature through the Arboretum's outdoor exhibitions, such as Of the Earth, and this imaginative mini-golf course will be another fun way to develop an appreciation for trees, their benefits, and their vital importance to a healthy environment."

The course is being designed by the Arboretum and will incorporate whimsical features at each hole to illustrate different scientific concepts, including how sound is used by researchers to detect tree decay or what tree rings can tell scientists about the life of a tree and its environment.

"Our aim is to create a unique course that will be unlike anywhere else," Scott said. "It will have unexpected elements, such as a foosball-inspired hole with acorns from various species of oak trees to a replica of the Chicago skyline with a stylized urban tree canopy."

Vibrant visual elements will also illustrate the roles trees play in reducing the impacts of climate change, supporting ecosystems, and benefiting communities. For example, one area will include a fabricated tree canopy overhead that will provide shade to minigolfers, highlighting how trees cool streets and homes on hot days.

The course will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. Tickets will be in addition to Arboretum general admission. Member tickets will be \$8 for adults and \$6 for children, and non-member tickets will be \$10 for adults and \$8 for children. Visit [www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org).

### Bettinardi to Unveil its First Generation Forged Irons

We all know how great Tinley Park-based Bettinardi putters are, so it makes sense to be excited to hear that the company will unveil its first generation of forged irons this spring. The irons apply Bettinardi's signature Honeycomb milling and classic design characteristics that the manufacturer believes will deliver superior performance and versatility to meet the diverse needs of all golfers.



These first-generation irons showcase two distinct models: the MB24 and the CB24. Co-forged with premium materials to create a solid-body iron, each model is designed to provide golfers with unparalleled feel, control, and forgiveness, elevating their game to new heights. The fact that they look great, too, certainly doesn't hurt.

The MB24 irons are crafted for better players who demand precision and allow shot shaping with confidence. Characterized by a thinner topline and a differential muscleback designed for precise weighting, the MB24 irons maximize control with added forgiveness and optimal bounce in a player's profile.

The CB24 irons are a bit more forgiving, but don't let that fool you. Created for ultimate playability, the CB24 irons combine modern engineering with classic design. Crafted for players who want both accuracy and distance, these irons blend a traditional forged feel with innovative technology. Characterized by an optimal progressive cavity and perimeter weighting for maximum MOI, the optimized design promotes maximum forgiveness and a higher launch trajectory, resulting in enhanced distance on every shot.

The Bettinardi MB24 and CB24 Irons are available online at [www.bettinardi.com](http://www.bettinardi.com) starting at \$1600 for both MB

and CB designs. The CB24 is available in right-handed and left-handed orientations. Both models will offer 24 shaft and 18 grip options.

Authorized Bettinardi dealers and Studio B Oak Brook by Bettinardi began fitting customers for MB24 and CB24 orders April 5. Left-handed CB24s will begin shipping in late June.

For additional product updates, please follow @bettinardigolf on Instagram and X [formerly Twitter].

### Mistwood To Host College Golf Experience Camp June 18-19

Aspiring college golfers are encouraged to register for the Division III Midwest Girls and Boys Exposure Camp (aka the College Golf Experience or CGX), being held June 18-19 at Mistwood Golf Club in Romeoville. CGX is a camp for competitive juniors and their parents looking to connect with college coaches. The program is the brainchild of entrepreneur John Jacobs who saw an opportunity to educate prospective college players by scheduling events across the country that introduce young players to learn and experience what it's like to play golf at the college level.

"Golf is a lot different than a quarterback camp or a running back camp," Jacobs explains. "Our camps usually result in intimate conversations where coaches really learn a lot about not only the player and their family, but who they may be spending four years with. It also provides insight for the coaches into the player's ability to show off their course management skills."

CGX hosted over 1,500 competitive juniors with more than 180 coaches from Division I, II, III and NAIA colleges and universities in 2023.

The Mistwood camp will feature coaches from Illinois Wesleyan, Depauw University, and Grinnell College with scheduled sessions including a college golf recruiting seminar, simulated college golf practice session, and simulated tournament rounds with real-time evaluation and feedback. Recommended ages for the camp are 12 to 18. Parents are encouraged to attend to receive guidance on the recruiting process, academic expectations and the ins and outs of playing college golf.

Early registration fee for the two-day camp is \$1,133. The deadline for early sign-up is June 13. At press time, the remaining spots available for participation was 48. For more information and registration, go to [www.collegegolffx.com](http://www.collegegolffx.com) or call College Golf Experience at 310-321-9605.





# Fontana's Newly Renovated Abbey Springs

Ask any player who has taken on the terrific 18 holes at Abbey Springs golf course to cite the most memorable experience of the round, and he or she will proudly display a selfie photo taken behind the 13th green. Indeed, this breathtaking view of Geneva Lake's south side is made more stunning by the forested land and the impeccably groomed fairway in the foreground. The panorama, alone, may very well be worth the price of the green fee.

Celebrating its 53rd year, Abbey Springs in Fontana, Wisconsin, has experienced an amazing renaissance complete with redesigned greens, lifted fairways, and overhauled bunkers to evolve from a hidden gem into a stunning, rolling, challenging must-play layout that now ranks among Southern Wisconsin's premier courses.

Originally designed by the esteemed team of Ken Killian and Dick Nugent, the course underwent a massive \$2.5 million renovation in 2021 by Bob Lohmann and Todd Quitno (whose projects over the years have included The Merit Club, in Libertyville and Blackstone Golf Club in Marengo). Some of their work addressed lowland fairways that retained moisture following storms. But the project also involved expanded greens, adjusted bunker placements and enlarged ponds to update the look, feel, and playability of the championship layout.

"Our golf course was always beautiful," said long-time Abbey Springs pro Jack Shoger in a March interview. "But after 50 years of the status quo, our membership wanted the course to compare in beauty, challenge, and conditioning to the best courses across Wisconsin."

One huge advantage Abbey Springs has over most Wisconsin and Illinois courses is rugged topography that takes players up massive hills and down vast dales. While most of the front nine rolls gently from one hole to the next, the back nine dishes out extreme transitions from each tee to each fairway to each green. "The course is located on a really interesting property," said architect Lohmann from his winter headquarters in Arizona. "The dramatic landscape also meant that there were areas where water historically collected. That issue needed to be addressed. On the 9th fairway, alone, we added four feet of soil to lift it above the wetlands."

The end result of the renovation work is a course that maintained the character of the original design but has expanded tee shot landing areas as well

as larger green sites and improved quality of the putting surfaces.

Long-time guests of this semi-private club will notice the new look and feel of Abbey Springs on just the first few holes. Resting upon some of the lower parts of the property, the fairways on these holes are in impeccable shape, reflecting the layout's updated drainage system. Following the treacherous 3rd hole that features a lake on the hole's left side all the way to the green, the course travels upwards through tree-lined fairways. The 4th hole is a dramatic par 5 and leads to the property's deceptively long 378-yard 5th hole due to uphill climb.

The departure from the forested land provides an introduction to the property's signature par 3, the 174-yard No. 6. Two pearly white bunkers protect a rolling green. A pond that was formerly lined by thick rough and cattails today sparkles in the sun and is lined by rocks collected from across the property during construction. While this hole has always been a marquee attraction, the expansion of this elevated green combined with the eye-catching bunkers make this a picture-postcard perfect hole.

"Most everyone agrees that the 6th hole has become a really spectacular hole," said Lohmann. "Besides the improved eye appeal, the playability of the hole was enhanced by eliminating some of the trees that stood just behind the green."

The subtle hills of the front nine give way to the massive topographical changes of the back nine. The difference is obvious immediately. The par-5 No. 10 climbs upwards from the tee shot landing area all the way to a green which is protected on the front left by a bunker and on the back by a steep berm. While it is essential to use enough club on the approach shot to reach the green, don't dare go even slightly over as you'll be faced with a delicate chip that can easily slide past the hole and never stop rolling.

The charming uphill par 3 leads players to an epic sequence of holes featuring significant elevation changes. The 12th hole is one of two reachable par 4s on the back nine. Launch a drive from this highly elevated tee and enjoy the view of your ball bounding toward the long, lightning-fast putting surface far below. Remember to take two extra

clubs on your approach shot to the 13th green. The hole climbs up the ridge just descended. Once you've putted out, yank your cellphone out of your bag to take a photo of the sailboats bobbing up and down on the pristine waters of Lake Geneva far in the distance.

No review of Abbey Springs is complete without mention of the course's famous, towering par-4 No. 17. From a tee perched 98 feet above the Fontana skyline, this hole dives toward a green protected by a massive bunker on the right side and a bunker and a pond on the left. "We wanted players to have a route to roll their tee shots onto the green," said Lohmann. "The water on the left side combined with the bunkers make that task more difficult. But the severe downslope of the fairway gives a good tee shot a decent chance for a birdie or maybe an eagle." Even if that tee shot is executed flawlessly, birdie on this hole is no cinch as the green was enlarged and allows for a number of treacherous flagstick locations.

"The 17th is a special hole to our members and regular guests," said Shoger. "It's a short, uncomplicated par

4. But that length tempts players to take chances in hopes of making a birdie. We're just pleased that the renovations allowed that hole to play the way it was originally designed."

The dogleg left No. 18 features a tight landing area setting up a dramatic approach shot to the largest green on the golf course. Most tee shots won't carry far enough to view the entirety of the putting surface. "There's plenty of room on the left to allow for a safe approach shot," said Lohmann. "But there's significant trouble on the right which slopes toward water."

Abbey Springs is a gated beach, boat, and golf community located on the southwestern shores of Geneva Lake. Amenities at the club include pickleball and tennis courts, a rec center, indoor and outdoor pools, a full service marina, and a lake-front beach. While tee times are available to the public, the club also offers public golf memberships with no initiation fees. Membership packages include weekday, twilight, and 9-hole options.

To book a tee time or for more information on Abbey Springs, visit [www.abbeysprings.org](http://www.abbeysprings.org).



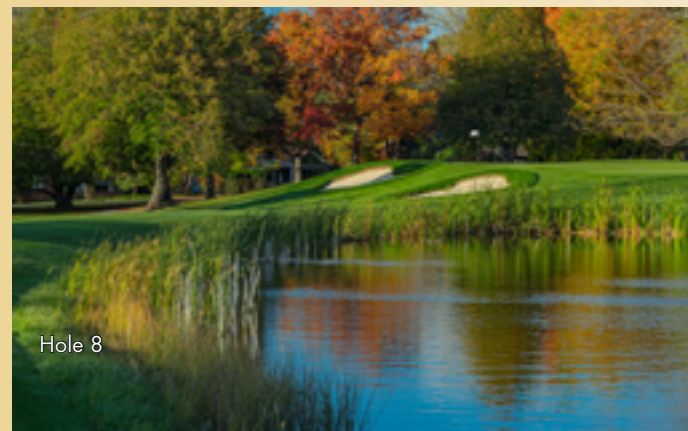
Hole 13



Hole 7



Hole 5



Hole 8



Hole 17

# A.I. and its Impact on Golf

By Todd Mrowice



It's that wonderful time of year here in Chicago when we're on the cusp of golf season being a real thing. The days are longer, the lawnmower has replaced the snowblower, and you can all but smell pimento cheese sandwiches in the air. It's also the time when you start dusting off the golf bag and taking stock of your equipment.

Your irons still play, your putter is trusty, and wedge grooves are sharp, but what about the big dog? Surely there's always room for a few extra yards under that headcover. With just about every OEM claiming that they can get you to the promised land, it's important to know what makes the top driver models stand apart from the competition. GOLFCChicago Magazine has you covered with our collection of the top drivers you can buy in 2024.

## A.I., A.I., Captain

The popular buzzword you'll hear around golf equipment these days is "A.I." Artificial intelligence has entered into many areas of our daily lives, but it's actually been used by equipment companies for a few years. Instead of writing books or designing robots smarter than humans, AI is helping club manufacturers simulate tens of thousands of golf shots to design more forgiving faces and club heads that have increased aerodynamics. As drivers hit the size limit of 460cc, it was logical to wonder what the next big thing could be now that mass had been maxed out. Well, A.I. appears to be the answer and it could be limitless.

## Dropping Coin

Whether it be the game's popularity or increased material cost, equipment prices have jumped in the last few years. As you walk through our list, know that your eyes aren't deceiving you. A typical driver runs \$600 now, with some manufacturers catering to cost-conscious consumers and going slightly lower. Drivers with premium materials and higher manufacturing costs, however, will be north of \$600.

## Sub-Models

It's worth noting that many drivers on our list also have some equally outstanding sub-models that are designed for both higher and lower handicaps. We always encourage a proper fitting from a certified club fitter to determine which lane you should be driving in, so to speak.

## GOLFCChicago Magazine's Top Drivers of 2024

### Callaway Paradym Ai Smoke MAX

Price: \$599.99

Available Lofts: 9, 10.5, 12

Stock Shafts: Mitsubishi Tensei AV, Project X Cypher 2.0

What Callaway says: "We're really proud of what we've accomplished here. We've seen a new level of performance that's possible in terms of how we use AI, our machine learning, and design process to create a longer, straighter driver." - Brian Williams, VP of R&D.

What we say: Going into 2024, Callaway had a lot to live up to on the driver front. The first Paradym model was a complete success and was widely considered the best driver Callaway had produced in recent years. Paradym Ai Smoke had to be better than just a new paint job, and it is. Although the paint job is pretty cool, too.

The Paradym Ai Smoke MAX caters to the larger amateur golf population because it combines distance and forgiveness. A perimeter weight slides to adjust up to 19 yards of shot shaping, so no matter where your miss may occur, you're covered. Ai Smart Face, however, is the big tech piece with this driver. Instead of having one sweet spot, the face has been designed to accommodate several hot spots for misses and essentially has sweet spots everywhere. We'll take that extra dose of confidence whenever and wherever.



Callaway Paradym Ai Smoke MAX

### Cobra Darkspeed X

Price: \$549

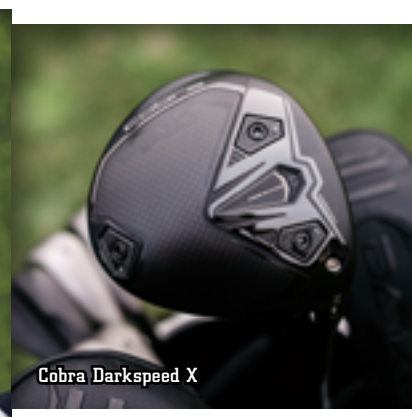
Available Lofts: 9, 10.5, 12

Stock Shafts: MCA Kai'li Blue, Project X HZRDUS X Black Gen 4, Project X HZRDUS X Red CB, UST Lin-Q M40X

What Cobra says: "The aerodynamic package in the new DARKSPEED family of drivers is our most advanced to date. We continue to push aerodynamic shaping, mass properties, and resilience to drive technology and innovation, providing golfers the most advanced and high-performance clubs possible." - Mike Yagley, VP of Innovation.

What we say: Cobra wasn't kidding around this year. Darkspeed instantly became one of the hottest drivers of 2024 based on feeling alone. At impact, this driver lets you know you're nailing it. When the numbers display, you'll likely see increased distance, dispersion, ball speed, and much more. Its predecessor, the Cobra LTD, walked so Darkspeed could run.

The Darkspeed X is the most popular of the three available models under the umbrella. Aerospace engineers helped design the head, so you can say it's pretty darn fast. There are two adjustable weights to help with spin control while Cobra's patented PWRSHELL got an upgrade this year to produce more energy at impact.



Cobra Darkspeed X

### Cleveland Launcher XL2

Price: \$449.99

Available Lofts: 9, 10.5, 12

Stock Shafts: Mitsubishi Tensei AV, Aldila Ascent PL

What Cleveland says: "Using a multi-step AI process and emphasizing impact locations in areas where avid golfers tend to strike the ball, we were able to evaluate performance characteristics and manipulate face geometries based on those results. With the MainFrame XL Face design golfers will see more powerful ball speeds, distance, and consistency no matter where contact is made." - Dustin Brekke, Director of Engineering.

What we say: We're happy to see Cleveland Golf back on the map for clubs other than wedges. Let's not forget some of the absolute thumpers they produced back in the day. The new generation of Launcher comes in the form of the Launcher XL2 and it's on many top equipment lists this year, not just ours.

Most mid to high-handicap amateurs should consider the Launcher XL2. It's one of the most forgiving drivers available and it offers attainable loft. The A.I.-designed MainFrame XL and Rebound Frame are both adopted technologies from Cleveland's sister company, Srixon. It's also a great choice if you're not in love with spending \$600.



Cleveland Launcher XL2

### PING G430 MAX 10K

Price: \$599.99

Available Lofts: 9, 10.5, 12

Stock Shafts: PING Alta CB Black, PING Tour 2.0, Mitsubishi Kai-li White, Project X HZRDUS Smoke Red RDX, PING Alta Quick

What PING says: "The combined distance gain throughout the entire G430 family are like nothing we've seen from one generation of clubs to the next. Our approach with G430 has been to find more speed and deliver it in a way that contributes to lower scores and more enjoyment on the course." - John K. Solheim, CEO & President.

What we say: Take into account every driver model made over the past decade and you won't find a manufacturer that has been more consistent than PING. Distance, forgiveness, spin, feel, club speed, ball speed, smash factor, you name it. The PING G430 MAX 10K capitalizes on an already spotless track record. It's one of those clubs you have to experience to fully understand.

It gets the name from its record-breaking 10,000 g-cm<sup>2</sup> combined MOI threshold, which basically says it's tops for forgiveness. The G430 MAX 10k launches the ball high but is surprisingly low spinning. The wide selection of stock shafts gives players of all handicaps a reason to match with this incredible clubhead technology. We highly recommend putting this model to the test.

### Honma BERES 09

Price: \$900

Available Lofts: 9.5, 10.5

Stock Shafts: ARMRQ FX, ARMRQ FX Light

What Honma says: "Evokes an unmatched sophistication, elegance, and luxury experience, with every detail carefully considered to provide players with a sense of control, precision, and confidence on the course. For discerning players who demand the very best from their equipment, BERES 09 raises the bar with exhilarating performance." - Honma website.

What we say: Yes, \$900 is a lot for a driver, but hear us out. If you've ever swung a Honma club, you'll know they have a special feel to them. The Japan-based club manufacturer has a boutique look, but at the end of the day, the clubs produce the goods. The BERES series is highlighted by the BERES 09, and if you're willing to spend the extra bucks, it's well worth it.

The BERES 09 has a fairly simplistic design but with modern tones. The high-strength, lightweight carbon is an R&D triumph as it's perfectly balanced from head to toe. The face was designed with uneven thicknesses to reward you on your misfires. The ARMRQ shafts that come standard were exclusively designed for Honma to effectively pair with the BERES 09 head.

### Mizuno ST-MAX 230

Price: \$499.99

Available Lofts: 9.5, 10.5, 12

Stock Shafts: Project X HZRDUS Smoke Green, UST Helium NanoCore 4F1, Mitsubishi Kai'li Blue, UST LIN-Q Red.

What Mizuno says: "The goal of the ST-MAX project was to engineer the greatest

MOI and performance from off centre strikes conceivable - but not sacrifice ball speed or make the profile too cumbersome to look at." - Chris Voshall, Mizuno Golf R&D.

What we say: When you think about the best drivers on the market, Mizuno likely isn't popping into your brain. Without question, Mizuno irons get all of the gold medals, but the ST-MAX 230 competes with every driver on this list and, in some cases, wins outright. It definitely seems like Mizuno dipping into its secret iron sauce for this big stick.

The ST-MAX 230 has a wider profile and 54g of back weighting which are both great from aesthetic and performance standpoints. Simply put, you feel very confident on the tee box with this driver. The Quick Switch Hosel offers four degrees of adjustability and, like other 2024 driver models, it has a variable thickness on the clubface to allow for off-center hits and decreased spin when you're having a less-than-stellar day on the course.

### Srixon ZX5 Mk II

Price: \$499.99

Available Lofts: 9.5, 10.5

Stock Shafts: Project X HZRDUS Smoke Red RDX

What Srixon says: "Get more power where it counts: at impact. A stronger Rebound Frame design with dual flex zones delivers purer energy transfer from club face through the ball, enhancing distance on every shot. And it's only available on new ZX Mk II Woods." - Srixon website.

What we say: If you still think of Srixon as only a golf ball company, it's time to explore. Alongside Cleveland and XXIO, Srixon has been producing some of the highest quality, and highest-performing,

clubs on the market. There's a reason why Brooks Koepka, Hideki Matsuyama, and Shane Lowry are gaming them, and it's not just contractual.

The ZX5 Mk II is the more player-friendly Srixon driver model and can be effective for a wide array of handicaps and skill levels. The dual flex zones on the face are Srixon's patented Rebound Frame, which feels like a trampoline at impact. Aside from the adjustable hosel, an 8g sole weight is placed deep on the driver's head to allow for increased loft. You can purchase other weights if you so choose. The ZX5 Mk II does have a bit of a draw bias, which is welcomed on our course.

### Takomo Ignis D1

Price: \$359

Lofts Available: 9, 10.5

Stock Shafts: Project X HZRDUS Smoke Black RDX, Project X HZRDUS Smoke Red RDX

What Takomo says: "The IGNIS D1 is long. Don't trust its beautiful looks, it's deadly. The IGNIS provides impeccable control and a powerful transfer of energy off the club face. The carbon crown lowers the driver's center of gravity promoting spin consistency and forgiveness without sacrificing ball speed or feel." - Takomo website.

What we say: Haven't heard of Takomo Golf? No worries, allow us to tell you about them. This direct-to-consumer golf brand is all about the game being available to everyone. They take pride in their designs and have A+ customer service. But don't mistake that feel-good stuff with club performance. They make some outstanding sticks.

The IGNIS D1 driver has a subtle look to it but with some modern accents. The driver comes with three weights so you can configure your shot shape and spin to your liking. The carbon crown offers a lower CG for ideal launch and added forgiveness. Don't underestimate the D2C model. Takomo is producing a driver that's not only worthy of this list but worthy of you taking a chance on ordering one.

### TaylorMade Qi10 MAX

Price: \$599

Lofts Available: 9, 10.5, 12

Stock Shafts: Fujikura Speeder NX TCS, MCA Diamana T+

What TaylorMade says: "We're all about breaking barriers and never looking back. From the first metalwood to 60X Carbon Twist Face, once we commit and cross a threshold we continue to push the boundaries of innovation." - Brian Bazzel, VP of Product Creation.

What we say: It should come as no surprise that TaylorMade is included on this list, but it was no guarantee. Admittedly, the Stealth 2 from 2023 fell a bit short for us as well as many golf media. The new Qi10 MAX, however, reclaims TaylorMade's spot among the great ones. Like the PING G430 we mentioned earlier, the Qi10 crossed the 10,000 inertia number. Hence the name.

This driver is perhaps the most stable of any we've hit this year. The MOI numbers TaylorMade boasts about really come to fruition when you feel that the clubhead remains square at impact. It has a shallow design which allows mass to be placed further from the face, resulting in big gains in ball speed and distance for us. From our standpoint, it's the best driver TaylorMade has produced since the early SIM days.

### XXIO 13

Price: \$699.99

Available Lofts: 9.5, 10.5, 11.5

Stock Shafts: XXIO MP1300

What XXIO says: "Golfers with moderate swing speeds looking to gain back distance and consistency will find it with XXIO 13. Our engineers have refined each new technology feature to better aid golfers' performance from tee to green, so players can have the utmost confidence that their best golf is ahead of them." - Jeff Brunski, VP of R&D.

What we say: If you have a slower swing speed, we highly recommend going beyond this write-up and exploring the XXIO 13 driver. We'll even lend a hand: it's pronounced "Sek-si-oh." No matter how you say it, slow to moderate swingers should have this driver in hand. It will remedy some of the distance you've lost and have you knocking it past your buddies at league.

Activwing is a two-foil aerodynamic design on the crown that guides the club back to square at impact. Along with effortless loft, this leads to higher ball speeds and more distance on the fly. Another R&D tip of the hat is what XXIO calls Biflex. This edging goes around the clubface to create an even stronger frame to optimize distance, even on off-center hits. Every aspect of the XXIO 13 caters to those looking for a lightweight driver that will produce big distance gains.



PING G430 MAX 10K



Honma BERES 09



Mizuno ST-MAX 230



Srixon ZX5 Mk II



Takomo Ignis D1

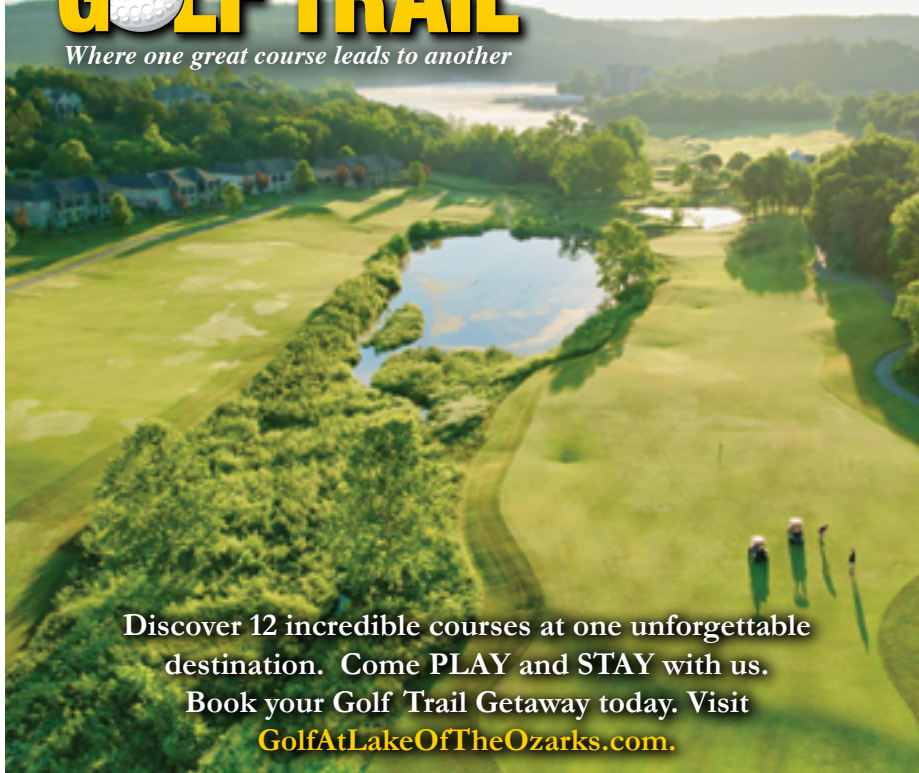


TaylorMade Qi10 MAX



XXIO 13

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Located right off of Interstate 55 in Channahon, IL, The Bluffs, also known as Heritage Bluffs Golf Club, offers both a challenge and composure across its rolling acres. With scenic beauty unlike most Chicago-area courses, The Bluffs is a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary and has received a 4-Star rating from Golf Digest Magazine.

In addition to an award-winning course, The Bluffs also features a large all-grass practice range, putting green, separate chipping green and bunker, and a newly renovated clubhouse.

The clubhouse is open 7 days a week and features a full dining room and bar as well as indoor golf simulators for year round fun!



**Gaylord Golf Mecca**

continued from page 13

Diddle of Indianapolis, a co-founder of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, designed The Classic, the friendly course along the road at the resort.

Michigan Golf Hall of Fame designer Jerry Matthews designed nine of the holes at Lakes of the North to go with an original nine by Bill Newcomb, another notable Michigan designer.

Don Childs, a prolific course designer, created The Pines at Michaywe' and Gaylord Golf Club, shining-star parkland style courses that first brought quality golf to the area.

The late Ron Otto, a Detroit businessman who invented the insulated garage door and later developed and owned Garland Lodge & Golf Resort, also became a golf course designer. His four popular designs at the resort are a clear reflection of his inventive mind and talents. Michael Benkusky, an Illinois designer, redesigned the Fountains course in 2010 and it has become the favorite course of many who visit.

The Mecca is a collective reflection of many talents, and the current leaders believe it's an unmatched collection of golf variety.

"We might not be as well-known as maybe the Myrtle Beach area or the Alabama Golf Trail, but our courses rival in variety and design those bigger boys in the destination game. Every year we are reaching out further and further to the golfers around the country," says Judy Mason, head professional at The Pines at Michaywe'.

"Those who want to have a variety of wonderful courses to play in natural settings with perfect weather for the best prices will want to come here, and once they come they will want to come back."

This summer an estimated 300,000 rounds will be played in the Mecca and there is always room for more with 16 golf courses to choose from.

"I never envisioned what we have today," Beachnau says. "I imagined us to be reasonably successful in developing a cool niche of the golf market, but what it has led to in terms of the number of golf courses here in Gaylord and in Northern Michigan, the quality and the number of world class designers that have found us and created here—all of that is absolutely amazing. We have a bright future as long as we keep the quality of our courses at a high level and keep working together. It's our not-so-secret sauce."



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# The Exclusive Bunker Hill Farms Resort

Of all the over 300 exhibitor booths that decorated the Chicago Golf Show in late February, one individual local property stood out over all others. While there are some outstanding and elegant golf complexes that bless the city and its surrounding suburbs, only one offers a unique and intriguing opportunity that allows guests and their companions to basically enjoy fabulous dining, skeet-shooting, ATV-trail riding, and golf experience all to themselves for a day or a longer stay: the gorgeous, fascinating, and stunning Bunker Hill Farms.

How this lodge came into existence is, in and of itself, a story unique to size, scale, scope and history. In the early 2000s, TicketsNow entrepreneur Mike Domek received a remarkable offer from competitor TicketMaster to buy out his business for \$265 million. And what would one possibly do given such a dream offer? In Domek's case, he and his wife Amy elected to build a dream resort complex for themselves, family, and friends on an amazingly diverse chunk of pristine land

a few miles away from the quaint city of Woodstock, Ill. The project began over a relatively modest 150 acres in 2005 with the construction of a sports pavilion and some trails built for hiking, riding and snow activities during the winter. Over ensuing years, their vision expanded to incorporate ski and sled hills; a landscaped field to hold large events and music concerts; a main lodge to host intimate dinners and receptions; additional acreage to expand the property to 450 acres; elegant lodging to accommodate retreats and larger groups; a spa built upon the frame of an old cement farm silo; trails for ATV rides across the prairies and through forests; plantings of thousands of trees, wild grasses and flowers to bring shade and color to the estate; and a state-of-the-art skeet shooting range.

Following the construction of a 70-foot-deep lake in 2009, construction was initiated on the centerpiece of Bunker Hill Farms: a championship 18-hole golf course designed by local golf architect Harry Vignocchi whose previous work includes Bittersweet Golf Club in Gurnee, Makray Memorial in Barrington, and Bull Valley G.C. in Woodstock.

Provided with pristine land that includes hills, woods, and lakes, Vignocchi created an intriguing course that includes shared greens and switchback fairways. Since the course was so exclusive as to only host a limited number of rounds per day, the architect was able to maximize the available land by building fairways shared by holes that head out away from the clubhouse with holes heading back

to the clubhouse. While this system would necessarily create traffic issues on a heavily used course, it works without issue on a course that on a busy day might have just a few foursomes on the property.

"It was a really interesting project," said Vignocchi in an interview. "Mike (Domek) wanted a course that was truly natural. He didn't want to use a lot of excess land to build the course, so placing holes on shared greens and shared fairways was the most workable solution."

The course begins with a 580-yard dogleg left that introduces players to the many characteristics that make the course special, including a wide variety of colorful trees that line the perfectly manicured fairways and greens. From the bottom of a valley, the second hole traverses up a ridge to a small, well-contoured green. The third and fourth holes work together in harmony as players are encouraged to hit their tee shots over a lake to the par-3 No. 3 green and then walk a few steps away to the tee of the par-5 No. 4 and hit away. As the third green is parallel to the landing area of the fourth fairway, the transition after putting out is seamless. Just a short jog through an opening takes one to the second shot on No. 4. If this sounds complicated, it's not. Rather, this is a great and creative way to play two holes at once.

For me, the centerpiece hole on the course is No. 6 which doglegs toward a green tucked into the furthest corner of the layout. The green rests among a wide variety of beautiful mature trees. If you hear any sound around this green, it is probably from feeding deer or other wildlife which make this sanctuary their home.

Even though played on the exact same footprint of the front nine, the back nine is surprisingly different as the holes play from different tees with wildly different angles to the greens. Golfers with sand phobia have little to worry about as the only bunker on Bunker Hill Farms, oddly enough, is next to the 18th green. (Note to self: avoid that deep hazard at all costs!)

While golf at the Midwest's most exclusive course is special, the use of the other amenities at Bunker Hill Farms

is what makes a visit a 'bucket list' experience. Meals are prepared by executive chef Mario Scordato who uses local produce from that day's run to the farmer's market as inspiration for your lunch and dinner. Explore the vast property with a guided ATV tour. Or shoot skeet at a remote controlled range. Any visit to the property should include services at the specially built spa that allows guests the comfort of gazing at a lush botanical garden beneath you as seen through a glass bottom floor.

"Bunker Hill Farms is an amazing, special experience," said Sig Kolano, director of property and grounds. "Our guests get to enjoy fantastic accommodations; get served evening cocktails by a personal bartender; have amazing, hand-crafted meals; and get to play a fantastic championship golf course. And best yet they have that experience to themselves as the property is exclusively theirs to enjoy during their stay."

Perhaps the truly best aspect of a stay at Bunker Hill Farms is that all proceeds from your visit are donated to local charities supported by Bunker Hill Charities. Over the years, the foundation has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from events large and small held on the property.

In 2015, the Domek's made the decision to transition Bunker Hill Farms from a private entertainment complex into an exclusive lodge specific to corporate retreats, special events, intimate golf groups and even couples. For information on how to book the resort, contact: [www.bunkerhillfarms.com](http://www.bunkerhillfarms.com).



Bunker Hill Farms Hole #18



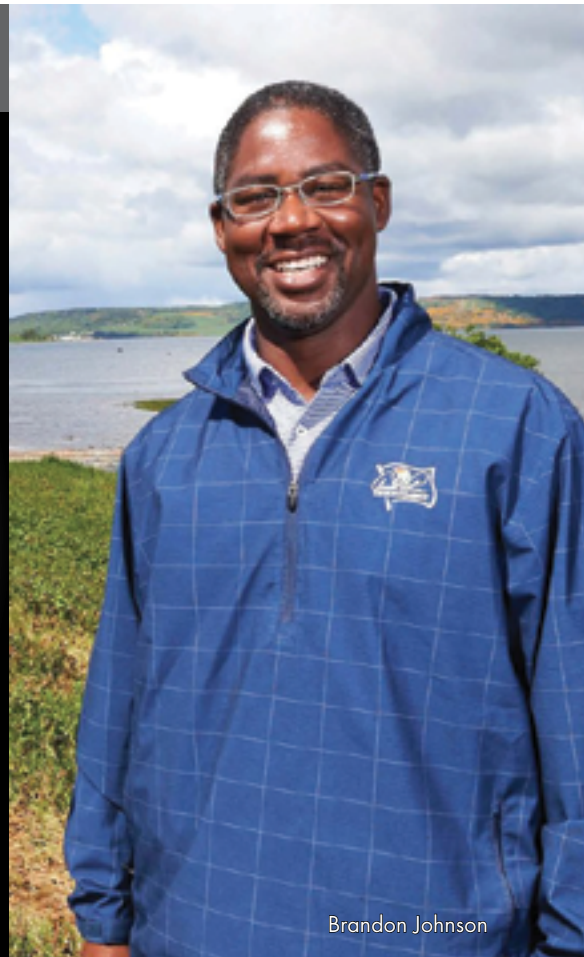
Bunker Hill Farms GC



Bunker Hill Farms Spa Silo

# Geneva National Update

Advertorial  
by Brandon Johnson



Brandon Johnson



Brandon Johnson and the late Arnold Palmer



New In 2022, The Dance Floor Is A Lighted Himalayas-style Putting Course

Today, multi-course destination resorts offer a tantalizing array of choices for the avid golfer but 35 years ago, when Arnold Palmer and his team were commissioned to design Geneva National's course that traverses the rugged terrain surrounding Lake Como, it proved to be a harbinger of things to come, not just in Wisconsin but for the global game of golf. Consumers are now accustomed to experiencing various architectural styles and approaches to the game on one property. The experience provides infinite variety and special morsels for all discerning tastes and skill levels to enjoy.

At Geneva National, the Palmer Course stands out as a favored choice among members and resort guests, cherished by long-time friends and competitors Player and Trevino for its fun, challenging, and heroic design.

The game of golf and the Palmer Course have evolved since those early days. With current maintenance practices and green speeds lightyears ahead of standards from 30 years ago, several of the original greens simply had too much

contour and slope to remain playable and enjoyable in today's game.

Now, after more than 30 years since opening day, the course has received some exciting new enhancements, primarily those standout greens, which will make the playing experience more enjoyable.

So, what did we change in the fall of 2023?

## HOLE #1

The original starting hole was not a gentle handshake, nor did it represent what one would experience for the remainder of the round. A rocky swale snaked across the fairway twice between the first landing area and the green. The green was severely pitched from back to front leaving only a miniscule section on the front right of the green as a true and equitable pin location.

A continuous fairway approach leading into the green was established by eliminating the forced carry over the winding swale. A new foreshortening cross bunker descending from the left rough was added. It helps signify and defend the generous feeding slope

toward the green on the other side. A lowered, expanded and redesigned green and green surround now showcases a variety of contours shaped as bowls, back boards and a shedding false front that offers a wider variety of dynamic pin locations.

## HOLE #2

With original hole #1 crashing towards the players like an avalanche, the green on hole #2 flipped the script. While grades were not overly severe, the green tilted away from the line of play making it difficult to impossible to stop approach shots on the green. The front portion of the green had contracted, and the approach was not conducive to ground game options.

Originally, we were only going to address the front approach to the green but expanded the scope to include a complete green and approach redesign. Now players will have the option to fly to balls towards a variety of new and enticing pin locations or utilize feeding slopes in the approach to access the green. Benign bailout areas are contrasted with

steeper shedding contours that protect edge pins and call for a creative recovery. The subtle variety in the green surface will keep players thinking about their approach shots and recovery options.

The revamped opening sequence should provide that warm, gentle handshake the course was missing while providing a fun challenge that compliments the holes to come.

## HOLE #6

This green was a close cousin to the back-to-front sloping green on hole #1, just not as severe but still troublesome to pin correctly.

In the redesign, we felt it was important to retain some feelings and strategic elements of the original green by having to calculate the risk and reward of playing to pin high versus staying below the hole yet incorporate a few new elements to the green.

There is a balance of feeding, shedding, and holding slopes to provide a variety of attack and recovery scenarios. The addition of a back left greenside bunker accents the left edge and sets up a dra-

matic pin perched on an upper rise. This is contrasted by a bowl-like back left pin that incorporated the existing back slope as a backboard. Front pin locations are now protected by a false front that also helps reveal green surface from the fairway below. The combination of contour and pin location will present fun and different challenges from day to day.

## HOLE #14

The work done to hole #14 illustrates the breadth of scope and design changes made during the project. The existing 14th green resembled old #2 in that it fell away from the line of play. Holding approach shots on this green was difficult but not as problematic as hole #2. This green also had some very subtle-yet-interesting contours that gave the green depth and character.

We recaptured between three and six feet around the perimeter of the green revealing key edge pin locations that had been lost for years. Our aim was to retain some of the subtle nuances while softening the front-to-back tilt to increase pin locations and playability.

The end result is a green that may be very tricky to read as the softened contours become more difficult to discern against the larger movement of the surrounding land. Developing local knowledge through multiple plays will provide players with a mental advantage at a critical time in the round or friendly match.

I'm excited for everyone, including myself, to experience the latest changes to the Palmer Course this May 15, 2024. The reopening of my mentor's acclaimed course in Lake Geneva reaffirms Geneva National and its collection of courses as one of the finest settings for golf, hospitality, and recreation one can experience across the US Destination Golf roster.

www.DestinationGN.com | 262.245.7000  
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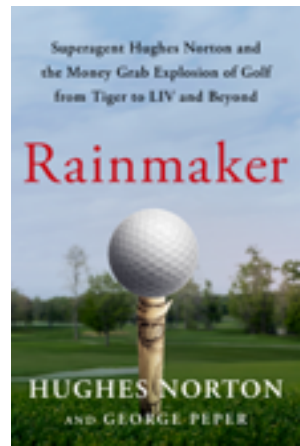
Brandon Johnson is a longtime Arnold Palmer Design Company Senior Golf Course Architect and a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, serving on the Board of Governors.

Dave Silbar

# Super-agent Hughes Norton and the Money Grab Explosion

International Management Group (IMG) super-agent Hughes Norton's relationship with Tiger Woods and the money grab explosion of LIV golf is used to sell the brand-new book *Rainmaker* (Atria Books, \$28.99).

But what I found most interesting were the stories of Norton's relationships long before there ever was a Tiger Woods, with golfing greats including Laura Baugh, Curtis Strange, Greg Norman, and others whose names you will quickly recognize.



Early in the book, the author recalls a story when, in 1976, IMG founder Mark McCormack gathered his captains and unveiled an idea he was working on: A separate tour that featured the world's best players, more prize, money,

fewer tournaments per year, events in every major international market, and a season ending championship. McCormack's idea even had health benefits and a pension plan for the players, things the PGA Tour did not offer.

In essence, it was a precursor to what LIV golf became.

It was refreshing that several times Norton was not afraid to admit to his mistakes. While many are written about, the one that sticks out is his national spokesperson deal made with Curtis Strange and Nevada Bob's golf stores. At the time, Strange was affiliated with Taylormade, which sold its equipment exclusively through on course pro shops. Obviously, the golf manufacturer was not keen on the idea of competition from a new distribution channel, especially Nevada Bob's, which undercuts the pro shop pricing structure.

Norton wrote: "What a turn my career had taken. In my first few years I could do no wrong; now, suddenly I was a serial f\*\*k up – and the worst was yet to come."

Norton's most intriguing chapters feature his recollections of representing maybe the most famous golf pro in the world prior to Tiger Woods: Greg Norman.

The relationship started very early in the Great White Shark's career, and included major deals with Spalding and, of course, Reebok. It was with the latter when the one of the most recognizable brand logos in the world—the multi-colored shark—was created.

Norman's prize money between 1983-1993 would earn him nearly \$11 million. With Norton's help as his agent, Greg Norman would earn nearly \$50 million in endorsement income.

"No client in my experience loves making money more than Greg," Norton wrote. "As time went on, I sensed the dollar becoming Greg's way to keep score, particularly as his major championship performances kept falling short of expectations. Money validated him, as did the things he bought, among them seven Ferraris, three successively larger airplanes, a 218-foot yacht, and 12,000-acre ranch."

Through it all, it was easy to see why Norman became such a controversial figure and why LIV Golf made him it's focal point when that tour was established. They've always seemed to want to stick it to the PGA Tour, and having someone like Norman at the helm was one of the biggest things they could do to achieve this goal.

Norton wrote, "Greg was a polarizing figure from the start of our relationship. Ultra-aggressive with no concern for others. A classic narcissist: always convinced he was right, confrontational, loves to fight, never backing down."

Let's leave the Norman portion right here, "Another time, a player in the locker room observed that he has never seen anyone hit so few practice balls before a tournament round. Norman's response, "It doesn't take much to warm up a Rolls-Royce, mate!" Such swagger made Norman less than popular among his peers, and he did little to undo the perception. As Fred Couples said recently, "Greg has been hated for 25 years."

About three quarters of the way into the book Norton finally dives into his rela-

tionship with Tiger and Earl Woods. It's an amazing insight into the beginnings of building the brand for arguably the most popular athlete in the 21st century.

Most fascinating was the creation of Tiger's relationship with Nike and the "Hello World" ad campaign that was established prior to his press conference when he would announce that he was turning pro. He would sheepishly say "hello world" as if it were a spur of the moment comment, only to be followed by an enormous ad campaign the following day based on those two words.

Norton being fired by Woods was a very melodramatic part of the book, but did provide great insight into to how professional athletes who have made hundreds of millions of dollars through the work of their agent could simply turn their back on people like Norton without much hesitation. Of course, Norton also became a wealthy man because of all of these representations, but not without personal costs including time away from his wife and children, and subsequent divorce.

Overall, the book is a modern-day *Jerry Maguire*, and one not only for golfers, but for sports enthusiasts of all kinds. Norton saved some of his strongest thoughts towards the final pages of the book, "When I started my career, pro golf was relatively poor and pure, and as proud as I was at the time when I earned Tiger an unprecedented \$100 million in endorsement income, I see now that I was really an agent of the wretched access that pervades the game today. Money is all that counts, whether it's an agent's commission, the smorgasbord of corporate logos plastered across Tour player's apparel, or the legalized gambling that is spreading like a virus. Six betting websites, including FanDuel and DraftKings, are now official partners of the PGA tour, with a potential for substantial harm if it's all allowed to go too far."

Norton then provides his final thoughts on LIV golf and the circus that continues to envelop the world of pro golf. You won't want to miss what he says, and when you finish, you'll want to pass this book on to any friend who loves the game like you do.

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## The Bellwether: Chicagoland's Premier Putting Course at Shepherd's Crook

Shepherd's Crook Golf Course is both challenging and exciting to play. It is a links-style course that returns golfers to the game's past by creating a feeling of playing Ireland's Ballybunion or Waterville courses. Shepherd's Crook's design reflects the golden era of golf course architecture of the 1920s and 30s, with bentgrass fairways, tees, and greens.



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# A Wine Fit for a King

Louis Roederer [Road-ur-ur], a distinguished champagne producer situated in Reims, France, traces its origins back to 1776, when it began as Dubois Père & Fils. While its early days were marked by still wine production, the focus soon evolved to embrace the art of crafting fine champagnes. The business underwent a transformation under the stewardship of Louis Roederer in 1833 when he not only inherited but also renamed the company for himself. He boldly ventured into international markets, focusing particularly on Russia. This endeavor gained him immense recognition, including from Tsar Nicolas II, who appointed Louis Roederer as the official wine provider to the Imperial Court of Russia.

Created in 1876, the wine made for Nicolas' grandfather, Alexander II, was the first Cuvée de Prestige (Prestige Cuvée) of Champagne and is called Cristal, referring to the unusual clear glass of the bottle. The Tsar had pointed out to his sommelier that the design of a standard champagne bottle made the beautiful color and effervescence of champagne invisible to the eye. He therefore instructed Roederer that his personal cuvée be served in bottles made of transparent crystal glass with a flat bottom (allegedly to foil the insertion of explosives in the more-usual indentation by would-be assassins) to remedy this defect. Thus was Cristal born, and the first notion of a premium cuvée. For more than a century, the appearance of the patented Cristal bottle has remained unchanged. After the fall of the Russian monarchy in 1917, Roederer decided to continue producing Cristal and to market it internationally, and it remains one of the world's most sought-after champagnes in the world.

Despite encountering financial challenges due to events like the Russian Revolution and U.S. Prohibition, Roederer emerged as a premier Grandes Marques producer. In the 1930s, Camille Olry-Roederer took charge after marrying Léon Olry-Roederer. The 1970s saw Jean-Claude Rouzaud, a descendant of the Olry-Roederer family, take the helm. Focusing on modernization and expansion, he shaped Roederer Champagne's contemporary identity.

Today, it stands as one of the few champagne houses that remain independently operated and family-owned. The estate vineyards encompass 590 acres that produce approximately two-thirds of the grapes required for their champagne production. (The remainder is sourced from long-standing farmer partners.) Vineyards are strategically dispersed across Champagne's prominent zones of Montagne de Reims, Vallée de la Marne, and Côte des Blancs.

Like most producers around the world, Roederer Champagne has embraced sustainability. 185 estate acres adhere to biodynamic principles, making Roederer a pioneer in sustainable viticulture. 285 acres are farmed organically. Since the 2021 harvest, these plots have borne the official "AB" [agriculture biologique] organic certification, symbolizing their embrace of organic viticulture. They earned the prestigious Robert Parker Green Emblem in 2021 as well, a recognition that reflects their commitment to sustainable viticulture, acknowledging a profound dedication to environmental preservation and biodiversity.

Each year, approximately 600 individuals engage in hand-picking grapes from Roederer's vineyards, with the harvest usually spanning ten to fifteen days. The grapes are transported in 110 lb. baskets from the vineyards to Roederer's dedicated press houses. The resulting musts embark on their transformation within the Reims' cellars, ensuring that the unique qualities of each plot endure through to the blending process. A winter ritual involves Cellar Master Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon and staff oenologists assessing each wine before the final blending and spring bottling.

With a global presence, Louis Roederer annually exports over 3.5 million bottles of their exceptional champagne to more than 100 countries.

## Louis Roederer Champagne 2015

The fruit for this Champagne was sourced from the La Montagne Estate, concentrated on the original vines purchased by the Champagne house. It is a mix of 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay. 34% of the blend was aged in oak barrels, with



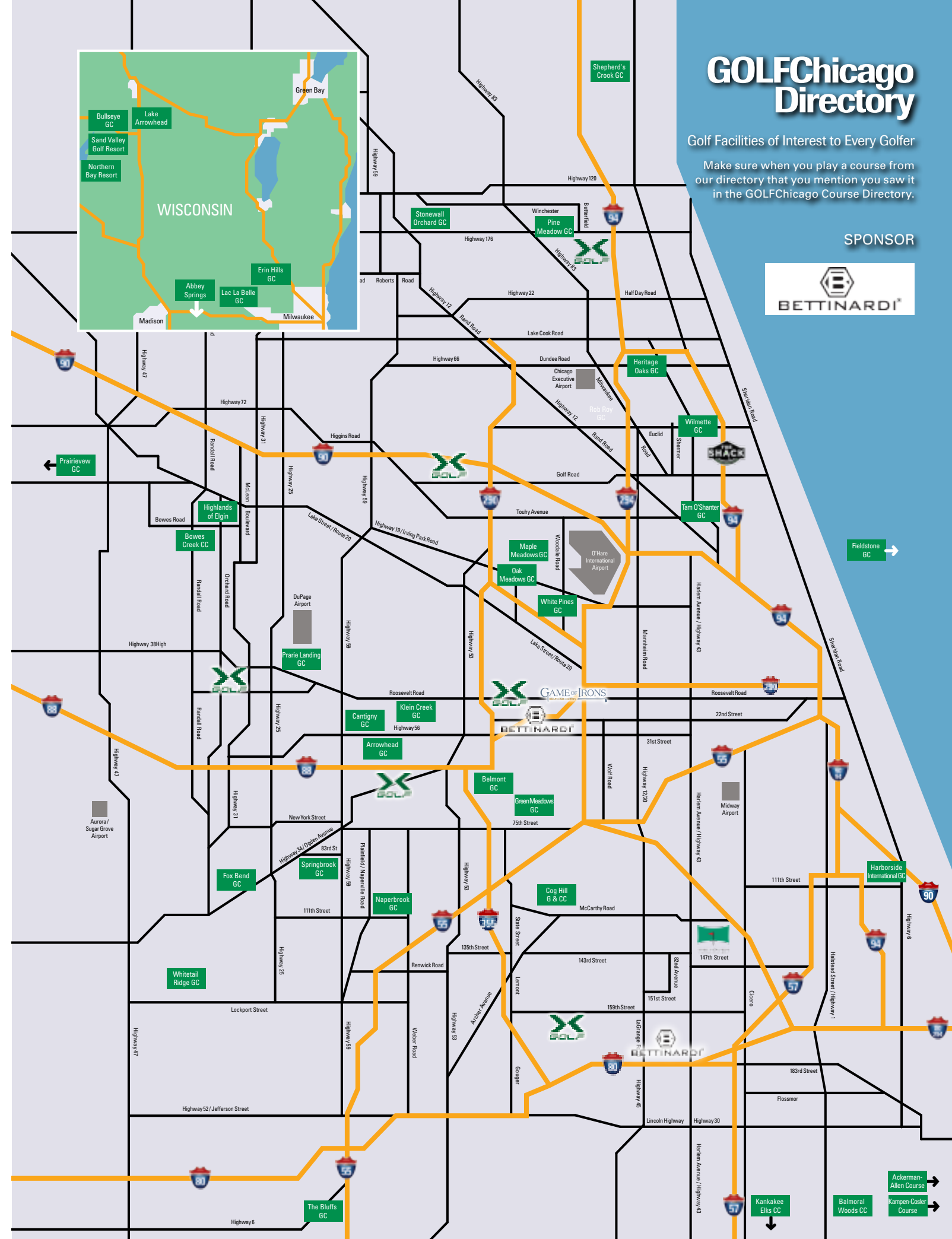
smhawk@winervana.com

24% undergoing malolactic fermentation. 2015 saw a mild, wet winter and hot, dry summer, with rain in late August providing much-needed relief.

The wine pours a rich gold, with an excellent and energetic mousse. Crisp apple and key lime are featured on both the nose and palate, with a hint of grapefruit. Disappointingly, for me at least, there is but a little of the bready and yeasty notes I treasure in a bubbly. The ABV is 12%.

Roederer also has a Napa Valley operation, where they make my favorite California sparkler, Roederer Estate Brut. An excellent value, it is fresh and crisp with elegant bubbles, and features pear and subtle spice flavors. Equal to or better than its non-vintage French cousin, which is twice the price.

For many more wine and spirits reviews, be sure to visit [www.winervana.com](http://www.winervana.com).



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### Belmont Golf Club

630-963-1306  
2420 Haddow Ave.  
Downers Grove, IL 60515  
[belmontgolfclub.org](http://belmontgolfclub.org)

The historic Belmont Golf Club is a scenic 9-hole par-36 course featuring mature trees, natural areas, elevation, and water hazards. A driving range with 24 hitting stations, a practice putting green, sand trap, and chipping area includes a 10-station covered shelter.



### Abbey Springs

262-275-6113  
One Country Club Dr.  
Fontana, WI 53125  
[abbeysprings.org](http://abbeysprings.org)

Abbey Springs has been rated 4.5 Stars by *Golf Digest*. With spectacular views of Geneva Lake, Abbey Springs underwent a major green renovation in 2021, featuring state-of-the-art 007 bent grass on all greens. Make your reservation at the web site above.



### Bettinardi Studio B Oak Brook

630-819-8592  
1225 22nd St. Ste. 130  
Oak Brook 60523  
[bettinardi.com/pages/studio-b](http://bettinardi.com/pages/studio-b)

Studio B Oak Brook by Bettinardi is now open!

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### Arrowhead Golf Club

630-653-5800  
26W151 Butterfield Rd.  
Wheaton, IL 60189  
[arrowheadgolfclub.org](http://arrowheadgolfclub.org)

Arrowhead Golf Club is recognized for its beautifully maintained course and inviting atmosphere.

Arrowhead is a public course which offers impeccable golfing conditions at affordable rates on three separate par-72 18-hole layouts surrounded by forest preserve. The West, East, and South Courses feature new bunker renovations and enhancements. The practice area includes a lighted driving range, putting green, and chipping green. Group and individual golf lessons are available.



### The Bluffs Public Golf Club

815-467-7888  
24355 W. Bluff Rd.  
Channahon, IL 60410  
[heritagebluffs.com](http://heritagebluffs.com)

18 Holes: Par 72  
Yardage: 5,035 - 7,171  
Located near the intersection of Interstates 80 and 55 just south of Joliet, Heritage Bluffs is the pride of the Channahon Park District. The tranquil surroundings make a day playing golf fun and relaxing.

Along with our award-winning course we also feature a large all-grass practice range, along with a large putting green and a separate chipping green and bunker. After your round you can relax in our Grille Room or out on the patio, enjoying a full menu of delicious food and beverage choices.



### Balmoral Woods Golf Club

708-672-7448  
26732 S. Balmoral  
Woods Dr.  
Crete, IL 60417  
[balmoralwoods.com](http://balmoralwoods.com)

Balmoral Woods offers a demanding, superbly conditioned, magnificent round of golf.

Laid out over 280 acres of wooded, rolling hills, the course will test the skill of golfers with its 6700-yard, 72.6 rated, 133-slope layout. It is a public 18-hole golf course, has hosted many local and state events and tournaments, and is the annual home of the Will County Amateur Championship. Check out our website for new rates, reservations, and more information. Follow us on Instagram for the latest updates and events.



### Bullseye Golf Club

715-423-2225  
2800 Ridgewood Trail  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494  
[bullseyegolfclub.com](http://bullseyegolfclub.com)

Designed by Larry Packard featuring towering pines giving a feel of the Carolinas right in Central Wisconsin. The Wisconsin River provides a picturesque view for the finishing holes across our rolling terrain. Warm up before your round on our new 30,000 sq. ft. bent grass practice tee!



### Cantigny Golf

630-668-8463  
27W270 Mack Rd.  
Wheaton, IL 60189  
[cantignygolf.com](http://cantignygolf.com)

Part of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Cantigny Golf opened in 1989 and is managed by KemperSports. A renovation of Cantigny's highly rated 27 holes begins in June 2024 with the Hillside nine, followed by the Woodside and Lakeside nines. Eighteen holes will remain open for play throughout the three-year project. Cantigny Golf Academy offers TrackMan Range technology, installed in 2023, plus club fitting and repair services, junior clinics, private lessons and climate-controlled hitting bays. Cantigny Youth Links is a 9-hole, par-3 course for families.



### The Preserve at Oak Meadows

630-595-0071  
900 N. Wood Dale Rd.  
Addison, IL 60101  
[dupagegolf.com](http://dupagegolf.com)

After extensive renovations, The Preserve is a new 288-acre world-class 18-hole course, practice facility, and environmental haven—designed by Greg Martin.

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### Cog Hill Golf & Country Club

866-264-4455  
12294 Archer Ave.  
Palos Park, IL 60439  
[coghillgolf.com](http://coghillgolf.com)

Cog Hill Golf & Country Club, a Jemsek Golf Facility, is a historic 72-hole public golf facility located 30 miles southwest of Chicago. The year-round facility includes a driving range equipped with lights and heated Toptracer stalls, two golf shops, patio dining, and a pavilion for events, along with a 280-seat banquet hall.

- Rated in "America's 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses" by *Golf Digest*
- 2020 GRAA Top 50 Public Range in the Nation



### Erin Hills

866-772-4769  
7169 County Road O  
Erin, WI 53027  
[erinhills.com/](http://erinhills.com/)

Erin Hills is a course like none other — routed over the kettle moraine areas left by glaciers, surrounded by wetlands and a river, with ground that consists of glacial till of varied composition of sand and small rock. In an unconventional decision for a course in Wisconsin, the architects routed the fairways around contours of the property and provided a firm playing surface that plays shorter than its length on the scorecard.



### Green Meadows Golf Club

630-810-5330  
18 W. 201 W. 63rd St.  
Westmont, IL 60559  
[dupagegolf.com](http://dupagegolf.com)

Green Meadows is a fun nine-hole gem that offers quality conditions in a traditional parkland setting.

Featuring three par 4s and six par 3s, the Green Meadows layout is the perfect blend of challenge, enjoyment, and value for all skill levels!

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Look for Green Meadows behind the Westmont water tower on 63rd St.

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### Fox Bend Golf Course

630-554-3939  
3516 Route 34  
Oswego, IL 60543  
[foxbendgolfcourse.com](http://foxbendgolfcourse.com)

Fox Bend Golf Course, Oswego Park District's fun and challenging public course, boasts lush fairways, mature trees, and challenging greens. This 6,925-yard par-72 course tests skills of all levels with well-positioned bunkers and water in play on 11 holes. Fox Bend has hosted three Illinois Opens, USGA Qualifiers, Illinois State Amateur Qualifiers, and is home to the annual Fox Bend Amateur. Visit [foxbendgolfcourse.com](http://foxbendgolfcourse.com) for more information or to book your next tee time. Visit Christina's Pub & Grill before or after your round to enjoy spacious outdoor seating with great course views and American fare done right!



### Maple Meadows Golf Club

630-616-8424  
272 Addison Rd.  
Wood Dale, IL 60191  
[dupagegolf.com](http://dupagegolf.com)

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### Game of Irons

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Suite 104  
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[gameofirons.com](http://gameofirons.com)

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Northbrook, IL 60623  
[heritageoaksgc.com](http://heritageoaksgc.com)

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C: 708-698-1197  
9559 151st St., Suite 5C  
Orland Park, IL 60462  
[www.golftec.com](http://www.golftec.com)

For golfers Southwest of Chicago near Orland Park, IL looking for golf lessons, golf instruction, or a custom club fitting, GOLFTEC Orland Park is the answer. At our state-of-the-art Training Center, you'll find all the tools you need to help you improve your golf game.



**The Highlands of Elgin**  
847-931-5950  
875 Sports Way  
Elgin, IL 60123  
[highlandsofelgin.com](http://highlandsofelgin.com)

The Highlands of Elgin has become a premier destination for thousands of golfers throughout the region. Nine new holes reclaim an old stone quarry, and take maximum advantage of the unique and dramatic landforms that were left behind, including a twelve-acre quarry lake. Four holes hug the top of the bluff thirty to forty feet above the water, providing golfers with incredible views and numerous shot options on each hole. The prairie-style clubhouse features an expanded golf shop, locker rooms, event rooms, and a full-scale food and beverage operation.



**Harborside International Golf Club**  
312-782-7837  
11001 S. Doty Ave. East  
Chicago, IL 60628  
[harborsidegolf.com](http://harborsidegolf.com)

Harborside International Golf Center, home to the Port & Starboard Courses, is Chicago's home for golf. Located minutes from Chicago's Loop, Harborside offers a premier golf experience in the Chicagoland area. Harborside is the only facility with two of *Golfweek's* "Best Courses You Can Play in Illinois" and is home to an expansive practice facility. Harborside is owned by the Illinois International Port District and managed by KemperSports.



**Kankakee Elks Country Club**  
815-937-9547  
2283 Bittersweet Dr.  
Saint Anne, IL 60964  
[elksgolf627.com](http://elksgolf627.com)

The Kankakee Elks Country Club is an 18-hole par-72 course. It is one of Illinois' premier Langford @ Moreau design courses, featuring some of the best green complexes in Illinois, 40 miles south of Chicago along the beautiful Kankakee River with very affordable rates. Chose from one of our four tees to accommodate all levels of play. Driving range, chipping area, and putting green with newly remodeled bar and snack shop.



**The Haven Indoor Golf**  
708-671-8052  
12317 S. Harlem Ave.  
Palos Heights, IL 60463  
[thehavenindoorgolf.com](http://thehavenindoorgolf.com)

The Haven Indoor Golf & Bar is the only indoor facility in the Southwest Suburbs using Foresight GC Hawks! Our simulators are true game improvement simulators making us the premier facility in the Southwest suburbs.

Foresight Sports launch monitors use exact photometric measurements and image processing taken with a clear, direct view of the critical ball launch condition and club head into impact. The result? Our launch monitors measure – not estimate – club head data based on the club's triangulated face plane, delivering vastly more accurate results.



**Klein Creek Golf Club**  
630-690-0101  
1N333 Pleasant Hill Rd.  
Winfield, IL 60190  
[kleincreek.com](http://kleincreek.com)

Klein Creek Golf Club is an 18-hole public golf course located one mile south of North Avenue and easily accessible from I-355. Designed by Dick Nugent, the layout features an open design in which water is present on 15 holes. Trees frame the layout's gentle doglegs, and tall prairie grasses border the fairways. Contoured mounding frames the fairways and greens, allowing a variety of approach options and great risk-reward opportunities.



**The Club at Lac La Belle**  
262-567-7833  
6996 Pennsylvania St.  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066  
[clubatlaclabelle.com](http://clubatlaclabelle.com)

The newly renovated Club at Lac La Belle is now open for public play! If the club's original founders and its legendary Scottish golf professionals were alive today, our hope is that they would recognize our new course as fun "sporting" golf, which was a fundamental part of the game in 1896. We invite you to come see why Lac La Belle is the birthplace of the Wisconsin Golf Trail



**Pine Meadow Golf Club**  
847-566-4653  
1 Pine Meadow Ln.  
Mundelein, IL 60060  
[pinemeadowgc.com](http://pinemeadowgc.com)

Pine Meadow Golf Club is known for our beautiful 220 acres of fairways, greens, pine trees, and meadow areas.

Golfers of all abilities and ages enjoy the serene setting and fun playable design of the "Pine." The Pine, due to its challenging design, has been host to all types of competitive events ranging from PGA Jr. League, to Men's and Women's State Ams, to Illinois PGA Championships.

This is truly a golf facility for everyone.



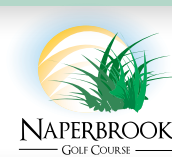
**Lake Arrowhead**  
715-325-2929  
1195 Apache Lane  
Nekoosa, WI 54457  
[lakearrowheadgolf.com](http://lakearrowheadgolf.com)

Located in the heart of Central Wisconsin, Lake Arrowhead boasts two of the Midwest's elite 18-hole golf courses. Here you have the rare opportunity to enjoy not just one, but two 4½ star championship golf courses in one incredible experience.



**Prairie Landing Golf Club**  
630-208-7600  
2325 Longest Dr.  
West Chicago, IL 60185  
[prairielanding.com](http://prairielanding.com)

Prairie Landing Golf Course is a prairie links style 18-hole course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr. The course has been rated 4.5 Stars by *Golf Digest* for "Best Places to Play." Prairie Landing Golf Club prides itself on offering the quintessential golf experience of the Chicago-land Area.



**Naperbrook Golf Course**  
630-378-4215  
22204 W. 111th St. / Hassert Blvd.  
Plainfield, IL 60585  
[golfnaperville.org](http://golfnaperville.org)

Located in Plainfield, scenic Naperbrook Golf Course is a "links style" course that features rolling hills and wide fairways. Challenges in the way of ponds, a double green, and hidden bunkers await golfers of all levels. Additional amenities include a recently updated and expanded practice area featuring a one-acre turf range tee, large practice green, and practice bunker. Enjoy post-game refreshments on the picturesque patio. Naperbrook also offers lessons, outings, a well-stocked golf shop, and much more.



**PrairieView Golf Club**  
815-234-4653  
6734 N. German Church Rd.  
Byron, IL 61010  
[prairieviewgolf.com](http://prairieviewgolf.com)

Recognized by many suburban golfers as a hidden gem, PrairieView Golf Club boasts beautiful views of restored dolomite prairie land that is well worth a short drive west out to Bryon, Ill. (south of Rockford). With challenging greens, dramatic bunkering, and supreme conditioning, the course will test the skills and nerves of every golfer. PrairieView is also home to PrairieFire Golf & Grill, a year-round Toptracer Range® with heated bays, lounge seating, and great food and drink selections.



**Northern Bay Resort and Marina**  
608-339-2090 ext. 2  
1844 20th Avenue  
Arkdale, WI 54613  
[northernbayresort.com](http://northernbayresort.com)

Play where the pros play. Experience our unique replica golf course inspired by the most celebrated holes in the game and situated on the shores of Castle Rock Lake. Northern Bay offers all the amenities of a Wisconsin Dells resort without all the hustle and bustle. Bring your golf buddies to play our one-of-a-kind replica course, or relax around the lake with your family. However you choose to stay, we look forward to greeting you at Northern Bay. Get started and book your tee time.



**Purdue's Ackerman-Allen Course**  
765-494-3139  
West Lafayette, IN  
[purduegolf.com](http://purduegolf.com)

The Ackerman-Allen Course, a Pete Dye design, is an 18-hole, parkland-style, par-72 championship golf course featuring large bent-grass greens, fairways and tees. The layout presents a challenge for golfers of all abilities with rolling hills, tree-lined fairways, white sand bunkers, and minimal water hazards. Ackerman-Allen offers five sets of tees with the championship tees playing over 7,500 yards and the forward tees playing at 5,300 yards.





LEGENDARY  
PUTTERS,  
AND  
SO MUCH  
MORE!



### Shepherd's Crook Golf Course

847-872-2080  
351 North Green Bay Rd.  
Zion, IL 60099  
[www.shepherdscrook.org](http://www.shepherdscrook.org)

Shepherd's Crook has earned rave reviews as a course that is both challenging and exciting to play. Keith Foster, who has designed some of the most interesting courses built in the last 10 years, created a links-style course that feels like playing Ireland's Ballyunion or Waterville courses. The design reflects the golden era of golf course architecture of the 1920s and 30s, with bentgrass fairways, tees, and greens.

"Shepherd's Crook is routed with classic and strategic design principles that cut features naturally to the terrain. The vision of Shepherd's Crook returns golfers to the game's past." – Keith Foster, Architect



### Purdue's Kampen-Cosler Course

765-494-3139  
West Lafayette, IN  
[purduegolf.com](http://purduegolf.com)

The Kampen-Cosler Course, a Pete Dye design, is an 18-hole, links-style, par-72 championship course features large bent-grass greens, fairways, and tees. The layout is a challenge for golfers of all abilities with vast sand bunkers, native grasslands, ponds, and a natural celery bog. There are five sets of tees with the championship tees playing over 7,400 yards and the forward tees at 5,300 yards.

Kampen-Cosler, one of the top collegiate courses in the nation, has been awarded 4.5 stars on *Golf Digest's* "Places to Play." It receives high marks as one of the most difficult golf courses in Indiana.



### Sand Valley

888-398-8671  
1697 Leopold Way  
Nekoosa, WI 54457  
[sandvalley.com](http://sandvalley.com)

Sand Valley is known for its three award-winning golf courses, Sand Valley, Mammoth Dunes, and the Sandbox, which were modeled after the great heathland courses of London. Enjoy dramatic views, a magnitude of strategic playing options, modern lodging, and a culinary experience to match.



### The Shack Indoor Golf

847-904-2905  
1717 Chestnut Ave.  
Glenview IL, 60025  
[theshackgolfclub.com](http://theshackgolfclub.com)

The Shack Indoor Golf Club features TrackMan® simulator technology for an immersive golf experience. Enjoy delicious food and drinks from our full bar while practicing your swing. Perfect for socializing or improving your game, come and tee off at our state-of-the-art facility.



### University Ridge Golf Course

608-845-7700  
9002 County Rd. PD  
Madison, WI 53593  
[universityridge.com](http://universityridge.com)

University Ridge is home to the University of Wisconsin Men's & Women's Golf Teams. Since 2016, University Ridge has been the host site of the PGA Tour Champions, American Family Insurance Championship, which is hosted by Ryder Cup Captain Steve Stricker.

Play where the Badgers and the Pros play! University Ridge!



### White Pines Golf Club

630-766-0304  
500 W. Jefferson  
Bensenville, IL 60106  
[whitepinesgolf.com](http://whitepinesgolf.com)

The White Pines Golf Club's two 18-hole championship courses, situated on more than 260 acres, have been a favorite among Chicago area golfers since 1928. The public course, owned and operated by the Bensenville Park District, is an excellent choice for players of all skill levels. Whether it's an evening at the lighted driving range, a casual round with friends, an outing or special event, White Pines Golf Club offers the perfect setting to get "away from it all." Enjoy food and drink at 37 Bar & Grill. Take advantage of Monday-Thursday tee time specials and book online.



### Whitetail Ridge Golf Club

630-882-8988  
7671 Clubhouse Dr.  
Yorkville, IL 60560  
[whitetailridgegc.com](http://whitetailridgegc.com)

Experience a "tail" of two Nines at Whitetail Ridge Golf Club. Our Front Nine flows through a beautiful valley featuring a creek that splits through its relatively flat landscape. Our Back Nine begins on #10 with a climb up the slopes and follows the rolling hills into some towering trees. Finish your day in The Persimmon Room. This newly renovated space features an indoor/outdoor dining area with shareable dishes, scratch-made entrees, an extensive list of bourbons and whiskey, and the most spectacular sunsets around!



### Wilmette Golf Club

847-256-9777  
3900 Fairway Dr.  
Wilmette, IL 60091  
[golfwilmette.com](http://golfwilmette.com)

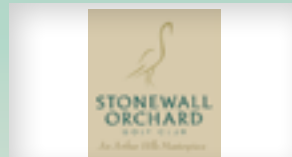
Wilmette Golf Club is the closest 18-hole facility north of Chicago. This par-70 course will test all skill levels with the purest greens on the North Shore. A 30-station driving range and large putting green are available for working on your game. Enjoy a drink or dinner on the patio overlooking the 18th green at The Lawn. Contact us directly to book your next outing or special event. Take advantage of tee time specials by booking online at [golfwilmette.com](http://golfwilmette.com)



### Springbrook Golf Course

630-848-5060  
2220 W. 83rd St.  
Naperville, IL 60564  
[golfnaperville.org](http://golfnaperville.org)

Springbrook GC commands some of the finest views of Naperville's open space and trails. This 18-hole parkland-style championship course was renovated in 2022, and is expected to reopen in mid-year of 2023 with exciting updates including new tees and bunkers. Work on your swing at the one-acre turf practice tee, or fine tune your short game at the large practice putting green or two short-game practice greens with bunkers. Enjoy post-game refreshments on the expansive patio with great views of the course. Springbrook also offers lessons, outings, a well-stocked golf shop, and more.

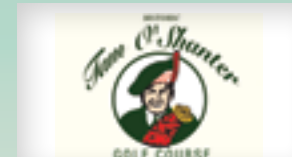


### Stonewall Orchard Golf Club

847-740-4890  
25675 W. Highway 60  
Grayslake, IL 60030  
[stonewallorchard.com](http://stonewallorchard.com)

Cutting through hundred-year-old oak and pine trees, Stonewall Orchard Golf Club has quickly become one of Chicago's most prolific public golf courses.

Since opening in 1999, the Arthur Hills-designed gem located in northwest suburban Grayslake has served as Final Stage Qualifying site for the U.S. Open, and currently sits in rotation with Olympia Fields and Medinah Country Club as host site for the Illinois PGA Section Championship held every Spring 1.



### Tam O'Shanter Golf Course & Learning Center

847-965-2344  
6700 W. Howard St.  
Niles, IL 60714  
[golftam.com](http://golftam.com)

One of the most important courses in popularizing the game of golf in America is located right here in Niles. In 1953, Tam O'Shanter Country Club hosted the first-ever nationally televised golf tournament.

Today, a public 9-hole par-33 course remains, maintained with the goal of providing playing conditions reminiscent of those Hogan, Palmer, and Nicklaus enjoyed years ago. Swing out for a scenic round and walk in the footsteps of legends at Tam O'Shanter! Year-round instruction available!



### X-Golf Kildeer

847-847-1723  
20771 N Rand Rd Suite I-4  
Kildeer, IL 60047  
[xgolfkildeer.com](http://xgolfkildeer.com)

XGolf Kildeer offers an upscale indoor golf experience. State-of-the-art golf simulators, full bar, private and semi-private rooms, and wide open floor plan!



### X-Golf Libertyville

224-504-2940  
1177 S. Milwaukee Ave.  
Libertyville, IL 60048  
[xgolf-libertyville.com](http://xgolf-libertyville.com)

We spent 15 years engineering, learning from golf experts, and creating a simulator of unparalleled accuracy. The result? A completely new experience that lets golfers play on the world's top courses, compete in a wide variety of game formats, and of course – enjoy some of the best golf they've ever played in a high-energy indoor entertainment facility.

Whether a tee time or PGA Professional lesson, X-Golf has it all: a full bar with beer and cocktails, shareable appetizers, and courses designed for all ages and levels from amateurs to professionals.



### X-Golf Orland Park

708-966-0486  
15876 S. LaGrange Rd.  
Orland Park, IL 60462  
[xgolforlandpark.com](http://xgolforlandpark.com)

We offer eight state-of-the-art simulators which are designed for golfers at all stages of their game. Whether you want to sharpen your game to gain that competitive edge or are just starting out and want to learn new skills without battling the outdoors, this is the place for you. The simulators can give you data about your swing and ball striking to improve your game and along with that, we can help you take your game to the next level by having a PGA-qualified Professional on our team.



### X-Golf Schaumburg

847-380-1848  
1100 American Ln.  
Schaumburg, IL 60173  
[xgolf-schaumburg.com](http://xgolf-schaumburg.com)

We spent 15 years engineering, learning from golf experts, and creating a simulator of unparalleled accuracy. The result? A completely new experience that lets golfers play on the world's top courses, compete in a wide variety of game formats, and of course – enjoy some of the best golf they've ever played in a high-energy indoor entertainment facility.

Whether a tee time or PGA Professional lesson, X-Golf has it all: a full bar with beer and cocktails, shareable appetizers, and courses designed for all ages and levels from amateurs to professionals.





**YOUR NEXT GREAT 18**  
*find it at* **SAND VALLEY**



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