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Grand Traverse Resort & Spa

Jim Neff's Ultimate Michigan Ski Guide 2003-04



Petoskey / Harbor Springs / Boyne Country

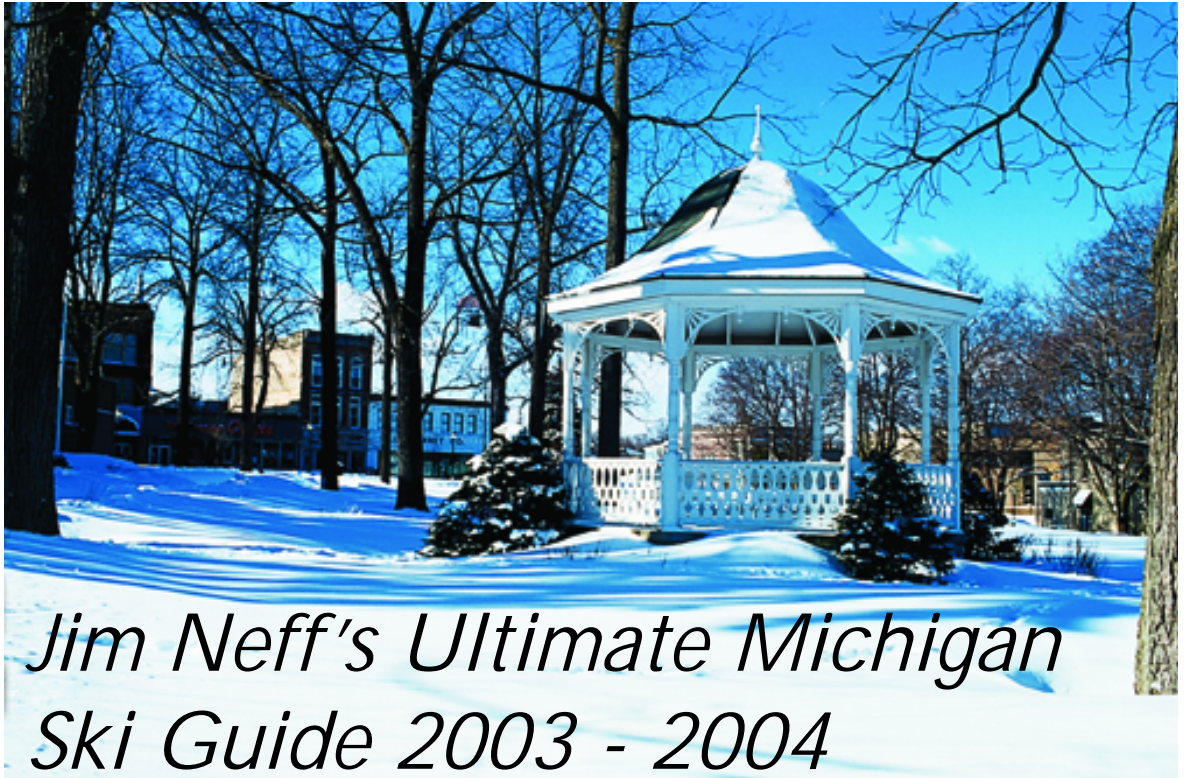


Photo courtesy of Paradise-Harbor Sports-Boys County Visitors Bureau

Jim Neff's Ultimate Michigan Ski Guide 2003 - 2004

By Jim Neff

Michigan ranks among the nation's leaders for the number of ski areas. Here's a look at what the state's ski resorts have to offer in 2003-2004.

Upper Peninsula

Big Powderhorn – Bessemer

Big Powderhorn is a favorite in the Upper Midwest, and there's infinite variety in the runs. The vertical is a solid 622 feet, one of the highest in the Midwest. Lodging at the area features an array of chalets and condos, and a family friendly ski village means there's plenty to see and do. This season a new black diamond run has been added along the upper towers of chairlift 4. The Main Lodge cafeteria has been renovated and will offer home made baked goods and health-conscious salads.

Vertical Drop: 622'
Lifts: 10 (9 chairs, 1 surface)
Terrain: 35% novice, 35% intermediate, 30% expert.
Trails: 26
Cross Country: 17km
Snowboards: 2 terrain parks, Oxbow and Powderkeg
Information: (906) 932-4838, 1-800-501-

7669.
Website: www.bigpowderhorn.net

Blackjack – Bessemer

Blackjack Ski Resort is located in the beautiful Black River Valley in the Lake Superior snowbelt of Michigan's western Upper Peninsula. The area is one of the most snowboard-friendly ski areas in the Midwest, with multiple halfpipes and terrain parks. Blackjack also caters to families with a wide variety of terrain and programs, plus special lift ticket pricing for family groups.

Vertical Drop: 465'
Lifts: 4 chairs, 2 surface
Terrain: 20% novice, 40% intermediate, 40% expert.
Trails: 22
Snowboards: 2 Parks and 3Pipes
Information: 888-906-9835, 800-848-1125.
Website: www.skiblackjack.com

Indianhead Mountain – Wakefield

Indianhead Mountain Resort in Michigan's western Upper Peninsula offers 195 acres of skiable terrain and wide open runs reminiscent of the Rockies. The base lodge and facilities are actually at the top of the mountain, which treats guests to stunning vistas. Snowmaking and grooming are a specialty of the resort, which typically opens earlier and stays open later than most other ski areas in the region. At the end of march last

year Indianhead still had 52" of snow on its runs. A great health and recreation club facility is also open to guests.

Vertical Drop: 638'
Lifts: 5 chairs, 4 surface
Terrain: 21% novice, 37% intermediate, 42% expert.
Trails: 22
Snowboards: Terrain Park and Olympic-size Halfpipe
Information: 800-346-3426
Website: www.indianheadmtn.com

Marquette Mountain – Marquette

Known as a skier's mountain, Marquette Mountain features a great race program and plenty of challenging terrain. The area contains a 4,000' alpine terrain park and two legal tree runs. The city of Marquette, the home of Northern Michigan University, is only five minutes away, so there are many lodging and dining options near the resort. For this year the Supreme lift and run have been re-engineered, the big air park has been moved to Chute, and the restaurant has been remodeled.

Vertical Drop: 600'
Lifts: 3 chairs, 1 surface
Terrain: 15% novice, 65% intermediate, 20% expert.
Trails: 25
Snowboards: 3 terrain parks all designed by

ability: lite weight, big air, all natural. 1 halfpipe, 13 rails.
 Information: 906-225-1155, 800-944-7669.
 Website: www.marquettemountain.com

Mont Ripley – Houghton

Mont Ripley is operated by Michigan Tech University provides a comfortable chalet featuring a cafeteria and lockers as well as a ski shop and ski school. The terrain is varied, with something for beginners and experts alike. The area is also known for its professional National Ski Patrol unit. Mont Ripley sits adjacent to the Keweenaw National Historic Park. Ripley recorded 112 ski days last season. This year look for new Salomon shape skis in the rental department and a new state-of-the art snow-making system.

Vertical Drop: 423'
 Lifts: 1 chair, 1 surface
 Terrain: 28% novice, 30% intermediate, 31% advanced, 11% expert.
 Trails: 16
 Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe
 Information: 906-487-2340
 Web Site: www.aux.mtu.edu/ski/

Mt. Bohemia – Keweenaw

Located in the Keweenaw Peninsula, Mt. Bohemia boasts the state's highest vertical and steepest terrain. Mt. Bohemia offers the biggest vertical drop in the Midwest, featuring expert slopes and some cliff-like drops on some of the steeper runs, a true western experience. The area also has the largest skiable glade between the Rockies and Eastern resorts, extreme back country terrain, and upwards of 300 inches of powder per winter. Bohemia is undoubtedly the most unique ski experience in the entire Midwest.

Vertical Drop: 900'
 Lifts: 2 chairs, 1 surface
 Terrain: 7% novice, 39% intermediate, 54% expert.
 Trails: 41
 Snowboards: Park and Pipe
 Information: 888-937-2411, 906-289-4105
 Website: www.mtbohemia.com

Norway Mountain – Norway

Skiers recognize Norway Mountain for its varied terrain and friendly staff. The lodge and trail-side condos are located on the summit of the mountain, making for easy access to the ski runs. The resort has excellent programs for kids and families at the Alpine Learning Center, and you can even purchase lift tickets and resort merchandise via their on-line store.

Vertical Drop: 500'
 Lifts: 3 chair, 2 surface
 Terrain: 30% novice, 35% intermedi-

ate, 35% expert
 Trails: 15
 Cross Country: 5km; 3km snowshoeing.
 Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe
 Information: 906 563-9700, 800-272-5445
 Website: www.norwaymountain.com

Pine Mountain – Iron Mountain

Pine Mountain is one of the Upper Peninsula's most famous ski resorts. It's main lodge is a classic and the resort also offers a selection of condos. Resort spa facilities are open to all guests. While there,

don't miss a visit to Famers, the location of the Upper Peninsula sports Hall of Fame. Pine Mountain Resort is located next to Timberstone Golf Course rated by "Golf Digest" Magazine as one of the top courses in the US.

Vertical Drop: 500'
 Lifts: 3 chairs, 2 surface
 Terrain: 30% novice, 40% intermediate, 30% expert
 Trails: 23
 Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe

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Information: 906-774-2747
 Website: www.pinemountainresort.com

Porcupine Mountains – Ontonagon

Porcupine Mountains ski area is located in Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, Michigan's largest state park. The park is in Ontonagon County, at the western edge of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The park harbors the last extensive tract of old-growth hemlock forests, and is one of the Midwest's most extensive wilderness areas. The Porkies are home to one of the first alpine ski areas in the Midwest as well as some of the most scenic Nordic ski trails in the entire Great Lakes region. The chalet offers ski and snowboard rentals, pro shop, rest rooms, 3 fireplaces, and cafeteria.

Vertical Drop: 641'
 Lifts: 2 chair, 2 surface
 Terrain: 21% novice, 50% intermediate, 29% expert.
 Trails: 15
 Cross Country: 42km
 Information: 906-885-5275
 Website: www.ontonagon.net/porkies/ski/

Ski Brule – Iron River

Photo above: The Otsego Club

Ski Brule is always the first ski resort in Michigan to open and the last to close, last year logging a record 182 days of skiing. The resort really caters to families and children with an array of ski programs and deals. Off the slopes families and kids can also enjoy ice skating, sleigh rides, marshmallow roasts, torchlight parades, and a visit to the Homestead Lodge for a barbeque. This winter a new tubing park is opening on the Whitewater Trail and the rental inventory of skis, snowboards, and snowblades has been expanded. All children enrolled in a kid's program gets a free helmet rental.

Vertical Drop: 500'
 Lifts: 5 chairs, 2 T-Bars, 4 surface
 Terrain: 30% novice, 35% intermediate, 35% expert
 Trails: 17
 Cross Country: 23km
 Snowboards: Snowboarders welcome on all runs, but Snowshoe and Rapids are dedicated snowboard terrain: halfpipe, whales, spines, table tops, and kickers.
 Information: 800-362-7853
 Website: www.skibrule.com

Mt. Zion – Ironwood

Mt. Zion is run by the ski management school of Gogebic Community College and is the oldest winter recreation complex in Big Snow Country. With ski and snowboard

rentals, a snow tubing park, free cross country skiing, and a snack bar, the area is a popular spot for families.

Vertical Drop: 300'
 Lifts: 1 chair, 1 surface
 Terrain: 25% novice, 50% intermediate, 25% expert
 Cross Country: 3km
 Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe
 Information: 906-932-3718
 Website: www.gogebic.cc.mi.us/studentinfo/mtzion

More Ski Areas

Al Quaal – Ishpeming – 906-486-6181
 Gladstone Sports Park – Gladstone – 906-428-9130

Northern Lower Peninsula

Boyer Highlands – Harbor Springs

Boyer Highlands is one of Michigan's best family resorts. The area is well-known for its excellent ski school and children's programs. The terrain is expansive, and the lift structure is one of the most efficient in the region. With three base lodges, plenty of ski in/ski out condos, and three hotels, the resort has plenty of capacity, and the outdoor swimming pools and hot tubs are a big favorite. This year beginners can ski/board on North and South

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Vertical Drop: 545'
Lifts: 8 chairs (including a high speed quad), 2 surface
Terrain: 37% novice, 29% intermediate, 31% expert
Trails: 46
Cross Country: 25km
Snowboards: Terrain park and pipe
Information: 800-GO-BOYNE
Website: www.boyne.com

Boyne Mountain – Boyne Falls

Boyne Mountain, the dean of Midwest ski resorts, was the first North American resort to install a six-seat chair lift, and it's where the triple and quad lifts were invented. Always known as a place with challenging and varied terrain, the Mountain also boasts a wide variety of lodging options, the Austrian/American ski school, and the best apres ski in the Midwest, featuring the legendary Snowflake Lounge. The ten new trails off the top of Disciple's Ridge are a fantastic addition to this storied resort.

Vertical Drop: 500'
Lifts: 10 chairs (including a high-speed 6), 2 surface
Terrain: 29% novice, 41% intermediate, 30% expert
Trails: 62
Cross Country: 35 km
Snowboards: Terrain park and pipe
Information: 800-GO-BOYNE
Website: www.boyne.com

Challenge Mountain – Boyne Falls

Challenge Mountain is the only ski resort in the United States devoted entirely to physically and mentally challenged skiers. The area offers every type of adaptive ski gear and a dedicated staff of volunteer instructors, and all of its services and equipment are provided free of charge to special needs skiers. Challenge Mt. is open most weekends and by appointment.

Vertical Drop: 370'
Lifts: Paddle tow and snowmobiles (for certain adaptive equipment)
Terrain: 100% novice
Trails: 3
Snowboards: Available this year for the first time.
Information: 231-535-2141
Website: www.challengemt.org

Crystal Mountain – Thompsonville

Crystal Mountain offers lodging for over 1,200 people, indoor and outdoor pools, a fitness center, and a myriad of skier services in the Crystal Center. But where the resort excels is in family skiing, with solid terrain choices and excellent programs. Crystal's Totem Park is designed exclusively for first-

timers and beginners to improve their skiing and snowboarding skills. The resort also has one of the best cross-country ski touring centers in Michigan. Last winter the new Kinloch Lodge opened in the base village.

This year the resort opens 11 new slopes serviced by a new quad lift, which adds 22% more skiing.

Vertical Drop: 375'
Lifts: 7 chairs (including a high speed quad), 2 surface
Terrain: 24% novice, 53% intermediate, 23% expert
Trails: 45
Cross Country: 40+ km
Snowboards: Quarterpipe and 4 Parks
Information: 800-968-4676, 800-YOUR-MTN
Website: www.crystallmountain.com

Caberfae Peaks – Cadillac

Now in its 65th ski season, Caberfae Peaks just keeps getting better. The South Peak and North Peak developments have totally changed the skiing at Caberfae Peaks in recent years. The resort now boasts some of the biggest vertical drops and longest and best ski runs in the Midwest. Other new additions include a rental building, a beautiful day lodge, and paved parking. This year renovations on the Mackenzie Lodge begun last year have continued, with 10 rooms refurbished. 300 pairs of shaped skis and 50 snowboards

Name	City	Phone	Website Address
UPPER PENINSULA			
Big Powderhorn Mountain	Bessemer	505-502-4538 800-501-8100W	bigpowderhornmi.com
Blackack Ski Resort	Bessemer	505-225-5115 800-848-1125	skiblackack.com
Indianhead Mountain Resort	Windsor	505-225-2205 800-3-INDIAN	indianheadmi.com
Marquette Mountain	Marquette	505-225-1155 800-944-7889	marquettmountain.com
M.L. Bohemia	Lac La Poudre	888-937-2411	mlbohemia.com
Norway Mountain	Norway	505-953-5700 800-272-5445	norwaymountain.com
Pine Mountain Resort	Iron Mountain	505-774-2747	pinemountainresort.com
Ski Rutle	Iron River	505-265-6754 800-00-BRULE	skirutle.com
NORTHWESTERN			
Boyne Highlands	Harbor Springs	231-526-3000 800-GO-BOYNE	boynehighlands.com
Boyne Mountain	Boyne Falls	231-548-6000 800-GO-BOYNE	boynemountain.com
Caberfae Peaks Ski Resort	Cadillac	231-862-3000 800-YO U-SKI	caberfaepeaks.com
Crystal Mountain	Thompsonville	231-378-2000 800-968-7889	crystalmountain.com
Cross Country Ski Headquarters	Roscommon	800-832-2853	cross-country-ski.com
The Homeslead Resort	Glen Arbor	231-334-5000	thehomesleadresort.com
M.L. Holiday Ski Resort	Traverse City	231-938-2800	
Mob's Mob Ski Area	Harbor Springs	231-526-2131 800-SKI-MOB	rutle.com
Shanley Creek	Bellevue	231-503-7056 800-678-1111	shanleycreek.com
SnowSnake Mountain	Hambon	888-508-6883	snowsnake.net
NORTH CENTRAL			
Okego Hidden Valley	Okego	888-732-5151	okegodub.com
Skyline Ski & Country Club	Grayling	888-275-5445	skylinemountain.com
TheLaps Resort	Okego	888-732-6111 888-TRLETO PS	thelaps.com
WEST CENTRAL			
Cannonburg Ski Area	Cannonburg	616-874-6711	cannonburg.com
Pando Winter Sports Park	Rockford	616-874-8343	pandopark.com
EAST CENTRAL			
Apple Mountain	Freeport	888-781-6789	applemountain.com
SOUTHWESTERN			
Bilzswell Ski Area	Okego	888-884-2002	skibilzswell.com
Swiss Valley Ski Area	Jones	888-244-5535	skiswissvalley.com
Timber Ridge Ski Area	Oakley	888-884-9449 800-253-2528	timberidgeski.com
SOUTHEASTERN			
Alpine Valley Ski Area	White Lake	248-887-2180	skialpinevalley.com
M.L. Brighton	Brighton	810-229-9981	mlbrighton.com
M.L. Holly	Holly	248-634-8389 800-582-7296	skimlholly.com
Pine Knob Ski Area	Clarkston	248-625-0800 800-642-7889	skipineknob.com

have been added to the rental department. Additional skiable terrain has also been developed for the upcoming season.

Vertical Drop: 485'
Lifts: 4 chairs, 2 surface
Terrain: 39% novice, 29% intermediate, 32% expert.

Trails: 31
Cross Country: 15km
Information: 231-862-3000, 800-968-7544
Website: www.caberfaepeaks.com

Hanson Hills – Grayling

Publicly owned and operated, Hanson Hills is really a winter sports park. The area offers alpine skiing and some of the best cross-country skiing in the state. Hanson Hills hosts many Michigan Cup XC races.

Areas Amenities

Vertical Drop (feet)	Longest Run (feet)	Number of lifts	Instruction	Rental Equipment	Snowmaking	Night Skiing	X-Country Trails	Length of Trails to Ski Stop	Dining Facilities	Lodging	Snowshoeing	Tel. Viewing	Telling Run	Hill Pipe	Terrain Park	Winter Swimming	Ice Skating	Kill's Ski Program
400	5200	9						26										
425	5300	4																
636	5300	9																
600	8300	4																
600	5240	2																
600	5300	5																
600	5400	3																
600	5300	5					8	23										
650	5200	10					10	25										
600	5230	12					12	35										
625	4950	6					22	15										
375	2640	8					14	40										
							9	19										
375	1320	3					6	18										
200	1800	2																
427	5000	8					4	28										
450	5230	12					12	30										
220	5230	6					2	3										
368	4800	7					9											
210	1800	1					1	3										
225	2200	4					18	21										
250	1800	3																
125	500																	
200	1000	1																
350	2340	6																
225	1800	3																
250	2000	4																
300	2000	10																
300	1350	7																
350	2100	7																
300	1620	5																

peaks, and spectacular vistas of Lake Michigan's Little Traverse Bay are a treat. The area has one of the best snowboard parks in the state, too. New this year is a 4,000 sq. foot warming house and restaurant on top of Pintail Peak with stunning vistas over Little Traverse Bay. 20 snow guns have been added, bringing the resort's total to 199, and all new children's skis and boots will be available in the rental department.

Vertical Drop: 427'
Lifts: 8 chairs
Terrain: 30% novice, 50% intermediate, 20% expert
Trails: 43
Cross Country: 28km
Snowboards: Top to bottom terrain park and 300' half-pipe
Information: 231 526-2131, 800 SKI-NUBS
Website: www.nubsnob.com

Otsego Ski Club - Gaylord
Opened in 1939, Otsego Club is America's oldest ski club with its own facility. The club is private, but the public is invited to ski the area at selected times of the winter. The ski facilities include 27 slopes, 5 chair lifts including high speed quad, 2 snowboard half-pipe parks, and miles of marked cross country ski trails. The Club's elevation is the highest point in the famed Michigan Snow/Sun Belt, and assures exceptional skiing throughout the season.

Vertical Drop: 358'
Lifts: 5 chairlifts, including a high-speed quad
Trails: 27
Cross Country: Miles of marked trails.
Snowboards: Terrain Parks, 2 halfpipes, numerous terrain features
Information: 989-732-5181
Website: www.otsegoclub.com

Shanty Creek - Bellaire
Shanty Creek is a four-season resort located on 4,500 acres. The complex includes two ski mountains and three villages, all tied together with a transit system. Skiers can ski both the Summit Slopes and the Schuss Slopes on one Superticket. The area also offers tubing, horse-drawn sleigh rides, and 30 km of the finest cross country skiing in Michigan. Shanty is famed for its restaur-

rants and debuted the La Vigna Italian Bistro in Cedar River Village last season. This year a new glade skiing run will greet skiers at Schuss Mountain, a new Extreme Tubing Run will thrill visitors at Summit Village, and the largest TV screen in northern Michigan will provide après ski fun at Ivan's in Schuss Village.

Vertical Drop: 450'
Lifts: 7 chair, 4 surface
Terrain: 37% novice, 30% intermediate, 33% expert
Trails: 46
Cross Country: 30km
Snowboards: 2 Parks and Pipe
Information: 800 678-4111
Website: www.shantycreek.com

Skyline - Grayling
Skyline has undergone a transformation thanks to new ownership. The venerable ski area has long been a favorite of families. The cozy lodge is always a fun place. Easy access off I-75 near Grayling makes this a popular resort.

Vertical Drop: 210'
Lifts: 1 chair, 4 surface
Terrain: 10% novice, 70% intermediate, 20% expert.
Trails: 14
Cross Country: 10km
Snowboards: Terrain Park
Information: 989-275-5445
Website: www.skylineski.com

The Homestead - Glen Arbor
The Homestead is unique because it rests on the western shores of Lake Michigan, overlooking the Sleeping Bear Dunes. The trails loom high over Lake Michigan and lead down to a charming Village and resort neighborhoods, all close to resort activities and amenities. Children will love the Tamarack Children's Center. Guests can also enjoy a snowshoe in the woods, savor fine dining, or travel to nearby villages and explore shops, galleries, museums and historical sites.
Vertical Drop: 375'
Lifts: 3 chairs, 2 surface
Trails: 16
Cross Country: 18km
Snowboards: Terrain Park
Information: 231-334-5000
Website: www.thehomesteadresort.com

Treetops - Gaylord
Treetops Sylvan Resort, in the heart of Northern Michigan's snowbelt, is a perfect family getaway. Located outside "The Alpine Village" of Gaylord, Treetops has a hotel at the top of its ski hill and a good selection of condos. The ski trails wind their way through the majestic hardwood forests that cover the slopes while state-of-the-art snowmaking and grooming make skiing

Vertical Drop: 225'
Lifts: 1 t-bar, 3 surface
Terrain: 50% novice, 50% intermediate
Trails: 11
Cross Country: 35km
Snowboards: Terrain Park
Information: 989-348-9266
Website: www.hansonhills.org

Nub's Nob - Harbor Springs
Nub's Nob is an excellent family ski area famous for its excellent snow, award-winning day lodge, and superb cafeteria. This is a ski-only operation, with no lodging on site, but the varied terrain keeps skiers coming back. Readers of SKI Magazine have voted Nub's as the Number One resort in the Midwest the last 3 years. Trails face all directions of the compass and spill off two

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Join Don Thomas SportsHaus for the premiere of a spectacular Warren Miller extreme ski film. This will be a can't miss event for fans of Mr. Miller. Time and date to be announced.

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Men's Ski Camp & Ladies Ski Retreat on the Slopes of Otsego

Fine-tune your slalom on the pristine slopes of Otsego Ski Club during three days of personal ski analysis, while enjoying fabulous meals and cocktail parties at night. Men's Camp dates are February 1-4, 2004. Ladies Retreat dates are February 17-20, 2004.

www.LetsSki.com Visit the newly revamped Don Thomas SportsHaus website for updates on all of the events listed above. While there, take a look at our all new online store and sign up for our E-Club to receive exclusive advance notification of all sales and events.

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here a joy. The excellent ski school also is a favorite with kids and families.

Vertical Drop: 225'
Lifts: 4 chairs, 3 surface
Terrain: 30% novice, 50% intermediate, 20% expert
Trails: 19
Cross Country: 20 km
Snowboards: Terrain Park and Halfpipe
Information: 888-TREETOPS, 517-732-6711
Website: www.treetops.com

More Ski Areas

Hickory Hills – Traverse City – 231-947-8566
Mt. Holiday – Traverse City – 231-938-2500
Mt. McSaubia – Charlevoix – 231-547-3267

Central Lower Michigan

Apple Mountain – Freeland

Apple Mountain offers every skier and

snowboarder - beginner to advanced - the opportunity to enjoy their favorite winter sport just a few miles from the heart of the tri-cities (Saginaw, Bay city, Midland). Race programs challenge skiers of all ages and levels. Apple Mountain has a quad chairlift, a snowboarding park with a half pipe, and 100% snowmaking capabilities, lighting for night skiing and a warm cozy lounge.

Vertical Drop: 220'
Lifts: 1 chair, 5 Surface)
Terrain: 40% novice, 40% intermediate, 20% expert
Trails: 12
Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe
Information: 888-781-6789
Website: www.applemountain.com

Snow Snake – Harrison

Snow Snake has carved out a reputation as a great place for families and students. The ski area packs a lot of fun into its 40 acres, everything from skiing and snowboarding to snow tubing. Excellent lift ticket and rental prices are a big plus for the area.
Vertical Drop: 210'
Lifts: 1 chair, 5 surface
Terrain: 30% novice, 50% intermediate, 20% expert
Trails: 12
Cross Country: 5 km
Snowboards: Terrain Park
Information: 989-539-6583
Website: www.snowsnake.net

Southwest Michigan

Bittersweet – Otsego

Southwest Michigan's Bittersweet is in the scenic Kalamazoo River Valley. Come and features the "SWEET EXPRESS" High Speed Detachable Quad chair lift, a first for SW Michigan. The Snowberry Ski Shop has a complete line of skis, boots, and poles as well as the latest in skiing apparel and accessories. The Winner's Circle Lounge is the place to go for food and drink.

Vertical Drop: 350'
Lifts: 6 chairs, 6 surface
Terrain: 30% novice, 60% intermediate, 10% expert
Trails: 17
Snowboards: Terrain Park and Halfpipe.
Information: 616-694-2820, 616-694-2032
Website: www.skibittersweet.com

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Cannonsburg Ski Area – Cannonsburg

Cannonsburg Ski Area, just north of Grand Rapids, offers slopes of great variety close to home. Continuous grooming and snow-making assures every skier from the unsteadiest beginner to the advanced racer that the best snow conditions are always at Cannonsburg. With a quad, triple, and double chair, T-bar and rope tows, Cannonsburg has plenty of capacity to move skiers up the hill. The area also have a top-notch ski school and popular adult and junior racing programs.

Vertical Drop: 250'
Lifts: 3 chairs, 9 surface
Terrain: 40% novice, 40% intermediate, 20% expert
Trails: 18
Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe
Information: 616-874-6711, 616-874-6728
Website: www.cannonsburg.com

Swiss Valley – Jones

Celebrating its 35th Anniversary this winter, Swiss Valley is a popular destination for Michigan skiers as well as skier's from Indianapolis to Chicago. The area specializes in group outings, with an outstanding ski school and children's program. Swiss Valley is also home for one of the best freestyle training programs in the country, the Swiss Valley Extreme Team. With alpine themed buildings and a nifty mountain top restaurant, Swiss Valley has a lot to offer. Swiss was open for 100 days of skiing last year, and this year a restructured racing program in the Junior and Adult leagues should provide lots of action.

Vertical Drop: 225'
Lifts: 3 chairs, 4 surface
Terrain: 20% novice, 60% intermediate, 20% expert
Trails: 11
Snowboards: Terrain park with table tops, spines, picnic tables, kickers, floaters, and a 36' dragon rail called "Nessie"
Information: 616-244-5635, 616 244-8016
Website: www.skiswissvalley.com

Timber Ridge – Kalamazoo

Timber Ridge has proudly offered skiing and snowboarding in southwest Michigan for the past 41 years. The trails cascade over beautifully wooded hills. The area also features the Snowshoe Bar with huge windows overlooking the slopes, which come in handy for watching the many race programs sponsored by the resort. The Ski Patrol is one of the best in the country, and patrollers put on slope side barbecues every Saturday, a "don't miss" attraction. Check out the great photo gallery on the resort's website.

Vertical Drop: 240'
Lifts: 5 chairs, 5 surface
Terrain: 20% novice, 70% intermediate,

10% expert
Trails: 15
Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe
Information: 616-694-9449, 800 285-6525
Website: www.timberridgeski.com

More Ski Areas

Pando Winter Sports Park – Rockford – 616-874-8343

Southeast Michigan

Alpine Valley – White Lake

A short drive from Detroit or Ann Arbor brings you to the largest ski area in southern Michigan. This family-oriented ski area features 25 scenic slopes serviced by 10 chairlifts and 10 rope tows. And when you're ready to unwind after a fun-filled day or night of challenging snowy runs, you can relax in front of one of the many massive stone fireplaces in the spacious lodge, complete with two cafeterias and snack bars.

Vertical Drop: 300'
Lifts: 10 chairs, 10 surface
Terrain: 39% novice, 26% intermediate, 35% expert
Trails: 25
Snowboards: Terrain park and 350' half-pipe
Information: 248-887-2180, 248-887-4183
Website: www.skialpinevalley.com

Mt. Brighton – Brighton

Mt. Brighton, now in its 43rd season, is one of the busiest ski areas in Michigan, a favorite with young and old alike. The area is popular with groups and does a great job with children, but that does not mean the adults are left out. Night skiing (as late as 2 A.M. on Saturday nights) and race programs are two staples on the Mt. Brighton menu. The area also boasts a massive lodge with good food and a fun atmosphere. Last year the restaurant lounge was renovated and is now a full scale sit down restaurant called the Bauery. Snowboarders will love the halfpipe and terrain park featuring a VW Beetle.

Vertical Drop: 250'
Lifts: 7 chairs, 11 surface
Terrain: 30% novice, 40% intermediate, 30% expert
Trails: 26
Snowboards: Terrain Park and Pipe
Information: 810-229-9581
Website: www.mtbrighton.com

Mt. Holly – Holly

Nestled in beautiful Groveland Valley, Mt. Holly is just one hour north of Detroit and 15 minutes south of Flint. The area offer slopes for the whole family, and uphill capacity that includes a high speed quad. Skier friendly Mt. Holly

offers night skiing, complete snow making and grooming, and a helpful staff. The sprawling lodge has some great dining spots, like a pizza room and the Lift Lounge with 21 food/drink items, as well as the best apres ski decks in Michigan.

Vertical Drop: 350'
Lifts: 7 chairs, 6 surface
Terrain: 22% novice, 39% intermediate, 39% expert
Trails: 18
Snowboards: Terrain Park
Information: 248-634-8260, 800-582-7256
Website: www.skimtholly.com

Pine Knob -- Clarkston

Pine Knob is close to Detroit, but has an "up north" feel. The slopes offer a lot of variety, including the double black "Wall." The day lodge is one of the classiest in Michigan, with huge windows overlooking the slopes. Beginners flock to the ski school each winter, and the Adult Racing League is one of the most active in the state.

Vertical Drop: 300'
Lifts: 5 chair, 5 surface
Terrain: 30% novice, 35% intermediate, 35% expert
Trails: 15
Snowboards: Terrain Park
Information: 248-625-0800, 800-642-SNOW
Web Site: www.skipineknob.com

Ontario

Blue Mountain – Collingwood, Ontario

Although not "technically" a Michigan ski area, so many Michigan skiers trek to Blue Mt. each winter it ranks as a close cousin. With a whopping 728' vertical and a mountain that's 2.5 miles wide, Blue is immense. The resort is so huge it encompasses 4 distinct base areas, but the Village at Blue is the most impressive. Anchored by the stately Grand Georgian Hotel, the Village contains shops, restaurants, and a town square. By 2010 Blue will have pumped \$500 million into development and will rival places like Tremblant. This winter skiers will see a new six-place lift on the mountain plus a Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory and Firehouse Pizza restaurant in the village.

Vertical Drop: 728'
Lifts: 12, including 4 high speed lifts
Terrain: 15% novice, 32% intermediate, 52% expert
Trails: 40
Snowboards: 4 terrain parks, 1 halfpipe, 2 Superpipes
Information: 705-445-0231
Website: www.bluemountain.ca **MS**

10 Nordic Northern Michigan Delights

By Mike Terrell

When it comes to cross-country skiing, the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan is hard to beat around the Great Lakes. Located on the leeward side of Lake Michigan and the lake-effect snow conditions are as consistent as you'll find in the Midwest. The last few winters have been lean snow years for Wisconsin, Minnesota and the southern part of the UP.

As an avid Nordic skier, I've skied delightful trails in every corner of the Lower Peninsula. In fact I wrote a book on it called *Northern Michigan, Ås Best Cross Country Ski Trails*. Here's a rundown on 10 my favorite areas for both state land trails, touring centers and resorts. Each of the trail systems mentioned have a variety of trails to suit all levels of cross-country skiers from those seeking easy meandering glides to more difficult terrain with hills and thrills. Enjoy.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

This is some of the most spectacular cross-country scenery in northern Michigan—dunes, panoramic views and beautiful overlooks amid woodland settings. Seven trails are designated for skiing within the 70,000-acre national park along 70 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline in Leelanau and Benzie counties. The more popular trails are Scenic Drive, Alligator Hill, Bay View and Platte Plains. Although all offer a mix of beginner, intermediate and advance terrain, Platte Plains is the easiest and stays mostly on the flats. All other pathways climb up into the dunes.

Observing the National Park Service tradition of keeping things simple and natural, none of the trails are groomed, but they are well marked, and often are skier-tracked. Distances range from two to 14 miles. Maps are posted at the trailheads and can be picked up at the Visitor Center located on M-72 near Empire. You need an annual or day pass to display in your vehicle, which can also be picked up at the Visitor Center.

VASA Pathway

One of northern Michigan's perennial favorite cross-country trails—more than 25,000 skiers annually ski this trail each winter—was originally developed for the grueling North America VASA Race, which

Photo above: Garland Resort



is a one-day race that takes place the second weekend of February each winter. The trail proved so popular with the locals that it was developed into a year-round DNR pathway that's groomed by a local volunteer group that oversees the grooming, and they do a bang-up job. You can count on fresh tracks every time it snows. The pathway is groomed for both skate and classic styles. Winding through the picturesque Pere Marquette State Forest, the pathway offers four routes from an easy skiing 2K to the 25K racecourse, which is a hill-laden workout. For the latest trail conditions, call (231) 938-4400, or click on www.vasa.org.

Big M

In a corner of the Udell Hills in the Manistee National Forest near Wellston, Big M is a resurrected ski area. Formerly a community run alpine ski area that folded years ago, it was brought back in the late 1980s as a Nordic ski area by the Manistee Cross-Country Ski Council. The organization regularly grooms about 20 miles of single-track trails that range into the surrounding hills and cuts through a mostly hardwood forest with a few fragrant stands of pine. It's a nice mix of trails and offers something for all skill levels. A warming hut is open on weekends. Maps are posted at the trailhead and available to take with you.

Ogemaw Hills Pathway

The Ogemaw Hills Pathway, developed

by the DNR and tracked by the West Branch Chamber of Commerce, is a beautiful classic single-track trail. Perched, just north of the city of West Branch on a terminal moraine left by the last glacier to march through this area around 11,000 years ago.

The system's 15 miles of trails cater to all ability levels. Most of the trail meanders through a mixed hardwood forest and stands of white pine and hemlock. You can see evidence of old homesteads—rock fence lines, old orchards and foundations—along the trail. A beautiful overlook of the Saginaw basin is found along the southern edge of the moraine. A variety of terrain exists for all level of skiers.

Heading north on I-75, this is the first "Up North" trail system that you run into. Maps are posted at the trailheads, but to obtain a copy or check on trail conditions, call the West Branch CVB at (800) 755-9091. This makes a great combination with the Corsair Pathway, which is about 30 miles away, for a multi-day outing.

Corsair Trails

Located on National Forest Service land northeast of East Tawas, the Corsair Trail system is one of the largest groomed trail networks in the state. Nestled in the beautiful Silver Valley area, the 35-plus miles of trails offers as nice a variety of length and difficulty as you'll find in the Lower Peninsula. Covering scenic rolling terrain, the well designed, well-marked system is not overly difficult, but can be challenging with

the distance you choose to ski. The area is groomed at least weekly, and more often when it snows, by local volunteers who pride themselves on providing an excellent trail. The trails meander across open meadows, through stands of sweet-smelling pines and towering hardwoods, and along swift-flowing streams. For more information on the area or to get the latest snow report, call (800) 55-TAWAS.

Black Mountain Pathway

One of the newest DNR cross-country ski areas in the state, the Black Mountain Recreation Area's 31-mile trail system opened in 1993. The trail is groomed with a piston-bully groomer, and offers an excellent double-tracked pathway. A separate 6-mile skating lane snakes around the lower portion of the hill.

Located about 15 miles southeast of Cheboygan, Black Mountain looms over the east side of Black Lake. It's a series of long, wooded ridges that peak to a high point of 925 feet. The ridge was deposited here about 10000 years ago as the last ice age drew to a close. Crossing the heavily forested ridgeline, the pathway feels very remote. The forest breaks just enough to offer limited views of Black Lake and Lake Huron, which is about six miles away as the crow flies.

A couple of recently built three-sided shelters, located on both sides of Black Mountain Road which bisects the top of the ridge, are perfect for a break on a cold day or a trailside picnic lunch. Four sets of trailheads scattered around the mountain offer plenty of access to the pathway. For maps and trail conditions, call the Atlanta DNR Field Office at (517) 785-4252. This one of the best, most remote groomed DNR cross-country ski areas in the Lower Peninsula.

Cross-Country Ski Headquarters

Cross-Country Ski Headquarters is a popular stop on the way north. Located just off I-75 near Roscommon, it offers a nice mix of fairly easy trails and a well-stocked ski shop operated by friendly owners Bob and Lynne Frye. They maintain nearly 20K's of well-groomed trails for both classic and skate. The trails meander through a forest setting and across open meadows. A stop at the Trapper's Cabin log shelter is always a must where you can enjoy a hot cup of cocoa, a warm fire and good conversation before finishing your ski tour. For the latest conditions, call (989) 821-6661, or click on www.crosscountryski.com. It makes a nice warmup on the way north.

Shanty Creek

Located in the heart of the Antrim County's beautiful hill and dale country, the resort's cross-country trails traverse

the hilly, wooded hinterland between the resort's three villages—The Summit, Schuss Mountain and Cedar Creek. Secluded from the condo clusters around the villages, the trails present a scenic, somewhat challenging ski experience. At times you glide alongside beautiful, swift-flowing little creeks. An eight-mile trail connects the resort's trails with the Grass River Natural Area. The single-track trail, which is groomed on a regular basis, allows skiers a chance to experience some wonderful terrain. From the rolling, wooded uplands of the ski resort down to the wetlands along the river, it's a unique environment, especially in winter. There's lots of animal activity, and it's not uncommon to see an eagle or two. For more information on the resort or the latest trail conditions, call (800) 678-4111 or check it out on www.shantycreek.com.

Boyne Nordican

Located at the base of Boyne Mountain, the Nordican is to cross-country skiing what the Mountain means to downhill skiers; excellence. Nobody does it better than long-time cross-country guru Lou Awody, Boyne's Nordic director. He offers a nice choice of trails for all ability levels. If you want to ski to the top of Boyne Mountain, which is a good workout, you can. If you want to ride the lift to the top and pick your way leisurely down the cross-country trails, you can.

There's over 20 miles of trails groomed for both classic and skate. One of the first to open and last to close, you can always count on a good skiing experience. For the latest, and always an honest, snow report, call (800) GO-BOYNE and ask for the Nordican or click on www.boynemountain.com.

Crystal Mountain

Crystal Mountain's cross-country trail system is always changing due to continued development at the resort, but one thing you can count is a good experience. They are meticulous with their grooming. If conditions aren't first rate, they will tell you so and won't send you out. The family-owned resort grooms about 30K of trail for both skate and classic skiers, of which 6k are lit for night skiing. It's the longest night skiing trail in the Lower Peninsula. Nordic skiers can also cheat gravity here as well by taking the chairlift to the top and skiing down; mostly downhill.

The trails get well away from the hustle and bustle of the busy resort and downhill area, and even join the DNR Betsie Valley Pathway offering eight more miles of a semi-wilderness experience. For more information on the trail system or to get the latest snow report, call (800) 968-7686 or check out their website at www.crystal-mountain.com. **MS**

2003-2004 Ski Information Sources

By Jim Neff

It seems like eons have passed, but it was less than ten years ago when Great Lakes Sports Publications unveiled a "new" way of delivering information – the World Wide Web. It was at a Detroit ski show and we had to (literally) drag people over to our booth and force them to look at this "electronic media." More than one ski resort/ski shop operator assured us that this "Internet thing" was never going to work; people were not going to sit at a computer to get ski information.

Remember what it was like back then? The only way to get resort prices was to lay your hands on a brochure or phone the resort. You got ski conditions reports by reading the newspaper (where the reports were only three days old if you were lucky) or by listening to the radio — "The ski report will be coming right up, but first here are ten songs from Milli Vanilli." Now, the Web is THE key resource for ski information, and statistics show that over 70% of all skiers have web access and use it to obtain for ski news. Skiers are the most solid demographic in all of travel/recreation.

Michigan resorts were among the first to latch on to the Web, so the state's ski resort websites are bristling with everything skiers and snowboarders need to know – prices, conditions, real-time cams, photos, events, trail maps, lodging guides, coupon specials, on-line ticket sales and more. In addition to the resort sites, however, there are several other web sources skiers might enjoy.

Michigan Skier TV

GLSP again blazes new trails with the world's first Internet ski television program. Interviews with ski personalities, visits to resorts, and coverage of events are all brought directly to your computer in the form of a television program. Best, MSTV is on 24/7. <http://www.michiganskier.tv>

Michiganskier.com

The only website in Michigan skiing that has links to everything in Michigan skiing: all the resorts, all the clubs, all the travel bureaus, and all the news. The site also publishes the only comprehensive events calendar available in Michigan. Also on the site is a sign-up for the Michigan Skiing News, the state's only regular ski e-newsletter. <http://www.michiganskier.com>.

Weather Underground

If you want all the ski conditions all in one spot, the ski page of this weather service is the best. Operated out of the University of Michigan, this ski page is quick to load and updated continually. <http://www.wunderground.com/ski/MI/>

Michigan Radar

Intellicast has this great radar picture. What's good about it is that it covers the whole Midwest, so you can see storms coming in from Wisconsin and Minnesota. This is a good one to put in your favorites so you can track approaching powder (and make plans to call in sick). <http://www.intellicast.com/Local/USLocalWIda.asp?loc=ktvc&seg=LocalWeather&prodgrp=RadarImagery&product=Radar&prodnav=none>

Tognar Toolworks

If you're into ski tuning this catalog/web-site is the ultimate. Every ski tool and gadget imaginable is here, all stuff you just won't find at a "normal" ski shop. The

print catalog is a delight to read, with handy tips on everything from ski tuning to boot fitting. <http://www.tognar.com>

Great Lakes Nordic Ski Council

An association of trail systems and touring centers across the state. If you love to cross country ski, you can get lost on this site for a long time. All sorts of information, plus links to member properties. <http://www.skinordic.org>

Nordic Skiracer

This is the place if you're a died-in-the-wool racer, or just want to be. The complete Michigan Cup Race Series schedule is here, along with a top of training information. <http://www.nordicskiracer.com>

Metropolitan Detroit Ski Council

Ski clubs galore and the most active racing program in the state. The MDSC has been coordinating fun for Michigan skiers for decades, and this is the place to come for information about ski clubs and events. <http://www.mdscski.org>

Mountain Cams

If you have time on your hands, it's fun to see what the skiing is like all over the country (an in Michigan). Resort Sports Network has cams at many ski resorts and you can see first hand what the snow looks like. You can even use one of the cam shots in a free e-postcard and send it to friends. http://www.rsn.com/mtn_cams

Ski Magazine

The only national ski magazine that does Midwest coverage is SKI. You can also look at the ski resort rankings and annual gear guide. <http://www.skimag.com>

Skiing History

Created by the world's leading organization devoted to the sport's heritage, the International Skiing History Association, this is one of the coolest new sites on the web. You can find lost ski areas, read about the sport's legends, check out historical race results, and enjoy some vintage pictures. <http://www.skiinghistory.org> **MS**



The Michigan Skier Television Show

Channel: <http://michiganskier.tv>

Upcoming Shows

Michigan Ski Show 2003

A ski show returns to Michigan at the Novi Golf, Ski and Travel Show at the Novi Expo. Jim Neff, our host, will find out the latest for 2003-2004.

Don Thomas Sporthaus – the First 50 Years

Don Thomas is truly a legend in the Michigan Ski Industry. We will celebrate Don's 50th in the ski business.

The Otsego Club 2003

One of Michigan's oldest ski resorts has some new on-trail lodging to see. Scott Chesley will be our on-camera host.



Don Thomas, celebrating 50 years of ski retailing, is pictured here with Olympic champion Stein Eriksen (l) and Willie Bogner (r) of Bogner ski wear.

Cross Country Skiing in the North Country

The Michigan Skier stops by the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, the Vasa Trail, and Cadillac, to examine some of Michigan's finest trails. Mike Terrell offers some insights into what makes a great cross country destination.

Michigan Skiing 2003

Our host, Jim Neff, interviews anybody and everybody in the Michigan Ski Industry as we get ready for yet another great year of skiing in Michigan.

Getting Geared Up -Don Thomas Sporthaus

Bob Thomas shows us the latest trends on what we will wear on our feet for the coming year. See the latest on snow skis, snowboards, and snowshoes.

Skis, Shoes and Boards-Don Thomas Sporthaus

Bob Thomas shows us the latest trends on what we will wear on our feet for the coming year. See the latest on snow skis, snowboards, and snowshoes.

Caberfae Peaks at Cadillac

At one of Michigan's original ski areas, we visit with the architects who turned Caberfae into a resort with two peaks, a new lodge and a golf course.

Blue Mountain, Collingwood, Ontario

We visit our friends from Blue Mountain and catch some of the excitement of their multi-million-dollar expansion.

Mt. Brighton – Top Guns

We visit Mt. Brighton, one of the pioneers in the utilization of ski guns. The area can put a ton of snow on the slopes as soon as it hits 28 degrees.

Don Thomas – Michigan Ski Pioneer

One of Michigan's ski pioneers, Don Thomas established his business around the same time that Everett Kircher began building Boyne Mountain. Don has a fascinating story and we have captured it.

Now Showing

- Skiing The Otsego Club
- Skiing at Crystal Mountain Resort
- Jeannie Thoren and her Ski School at Crystal Mountain Resort
- Skiing at Treetops Resort
- Cross Country Skiing in Michigan with Mike Terrell
- Boyne Mountain's Carnival Days
- The Everett Kircher Story
- Michigan Senior Olympics at Treetops
- Jeep King of the Mountain Series
- Bob Thomas of Don Thomas Sporthaus: Tuning Your Skis
- Michigan Winter Special Olympic Games

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Our course has a Blue Course fitting with the Sky Park and Recreation Association and is open for all ages and all levels. If you have any comments or suggestions about our web site or the golf course, please send them to us through our www@smock.com



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The course features a solid arrangement of 100 holes totaling a par of 36. The existing ponds are brought into play on several holes in addition to serving as a natural buffer between the residential properties and the adjacent golf course. The par 3 final hole will be especially challenging by requiring the golfer to avoid water on both the second and approach shot to the green. Bunkers and new waterfalls will also add challenge and an aesthetic element throughout the series of golf holes. The golf course is now open for daily play.

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