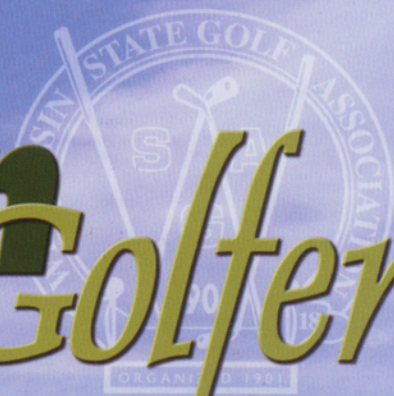


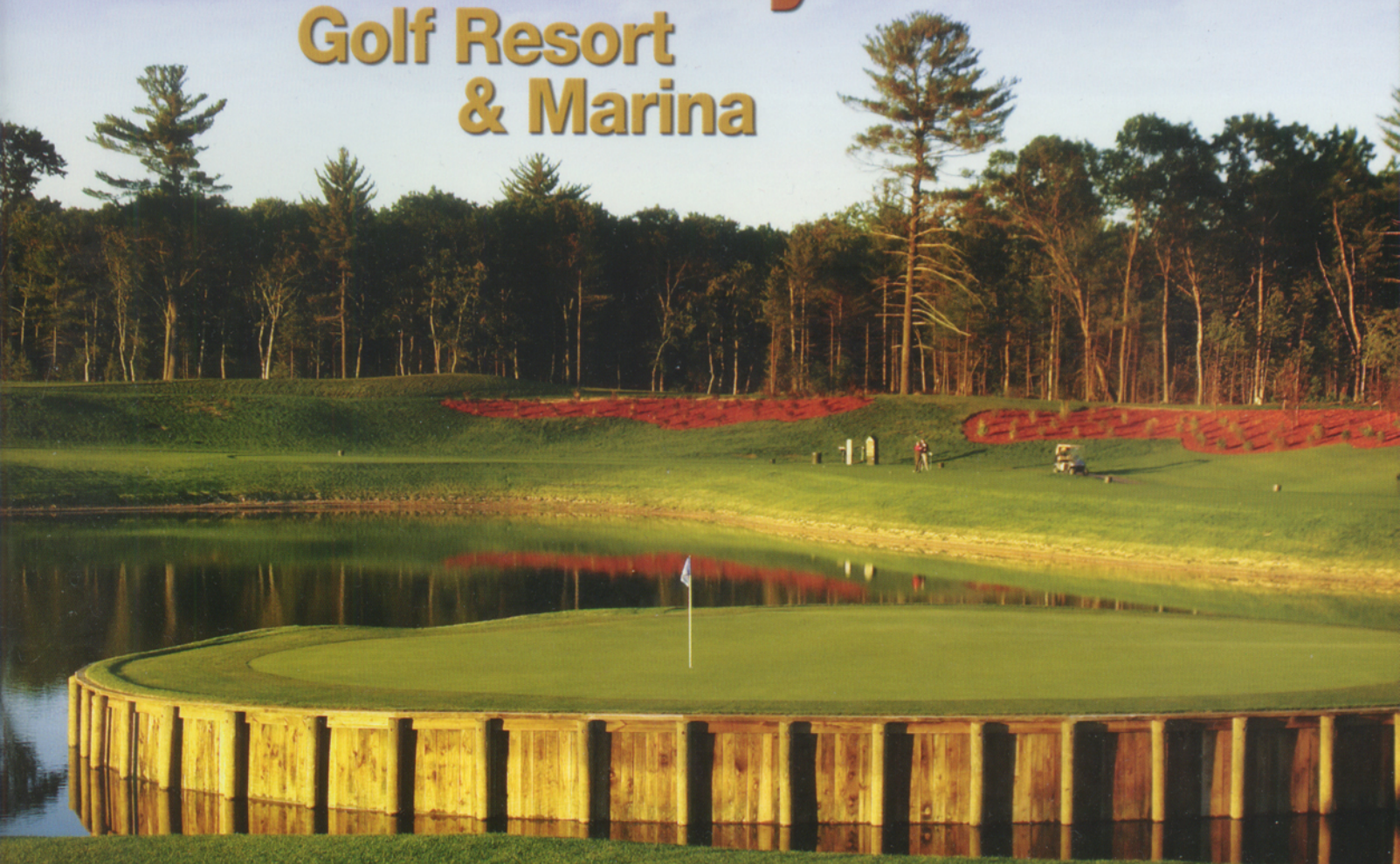
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Northern Bay Golf Resort & Marina

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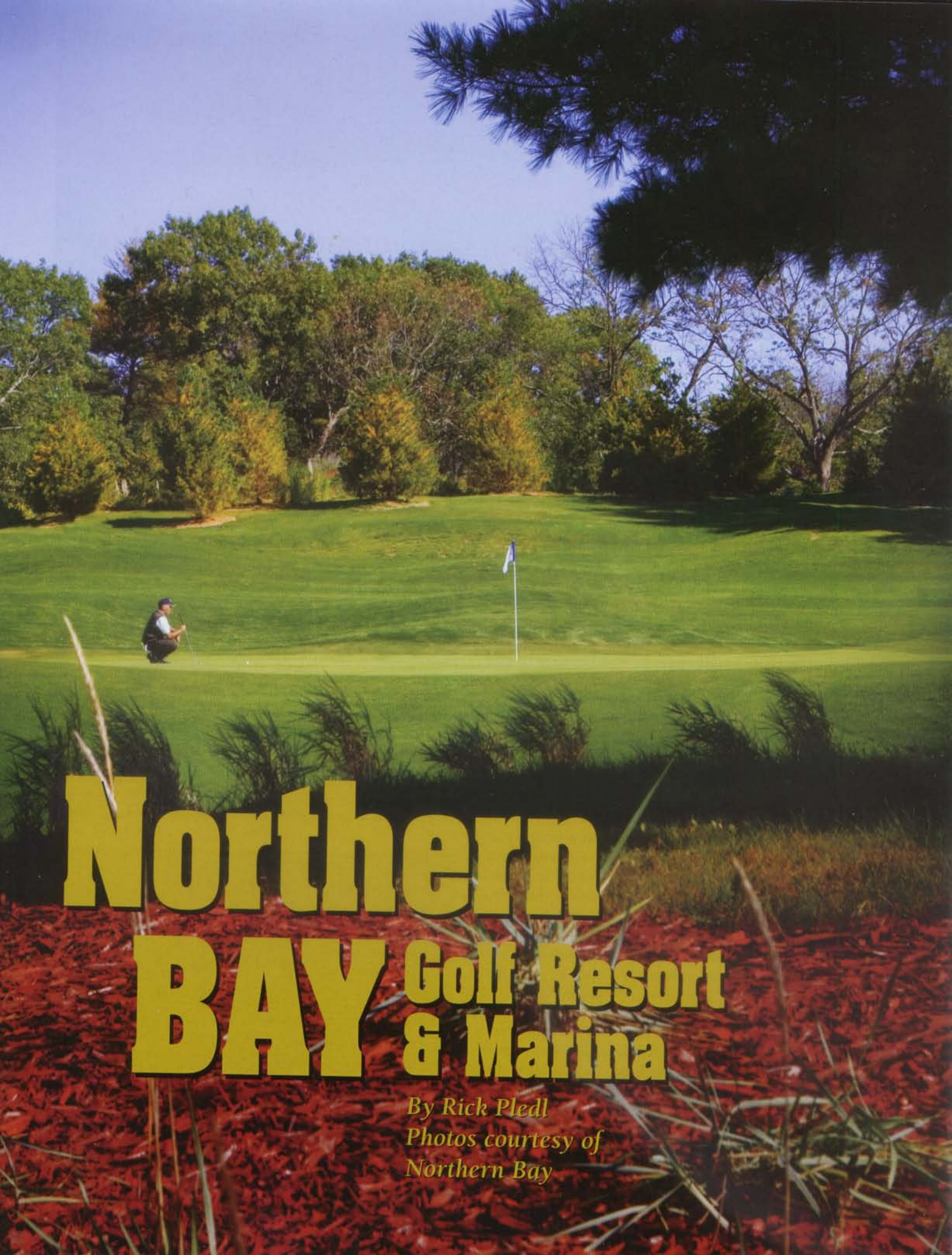


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Amateur Players of the Year

A Look Back at 10-Time
State Amateur Champion
Ned Allis



Northern BAY Golf Resort & Marina

*By Rick Pledl
Photos courtesy of
Northern Bay*

The replica golf concept arrives in Wisconsin with a new development along the shores of Castle Rock Lake.

Take some Donald Ross, mix it with a smattering of Pete Dye and sprinkle in a little Arnold Palmer. Blend it together with the combined genius of Dr. Alister Mackenzie and Bobby Jones. Then, for good measure, conjure up the ghosts of Johnny Miller's sensational final-round 63 in the 1973 U.S. Open and Greg Norman's humbling and bumbling 78 on Sunday in the 1996 Masters.

What have you got?

It's the recipe for a new golf, recreational and real estate development called Northern Bay Golf Resort & Marina in Arkdale. Poised to open this spring along the shores of Castle Rock Lake, Northern Bay seems to have the market cornered on Wisconsin's favorite summertime recreational activities.

Are water sports your thing?

Northern Bay sits on the northwestern corner of Castle Rock, a sprawling Wisconsin River impoundment and the state's fourth-largest body of water. The development offers marina services, boat slips, boat rentals and a 600-foot stretch of sandy beach.

Do the kids enjoy waterparks?

The Lodge at Northern Bay, a condo hotel to be completed in the spring of 2007, will have a 20,000-square-foot waterpark. Grown-up facilities such as tennis and basketball courts, hot tubs, an exercise room and spa are also included in the development.

Searching for a vacation property?

You can find it here. Northern Bay's 312 condominiums are under construction and selling fast. Condos also are available as short-term vacation rentals.

In the mood for golf?

Northern Bay absolutely has that covered, with a new layout unlike any



One of the familiar sights at Northern Bay is the course's third hole, above, a replica of the famous par-3 16th hole at Augusta National GC. Opposite page, a player lines up a putt on the par-5 15th hole.

other golf course in Wisconsin, or for that matter in any surrounding state. Northern Bay is the first replica golf course in the Midwest, but even among the handful of replica golf facilities in America – which precisely re-create holes found on the world's most famous golf courses – Northern Bay is unique. For lack of a better term, Northern Bay is a hybrid replica course, meaning it features seven replica holes and 11 original holes.

Bill Ranguette, one of seven principal developers involved with the project, explained that “replicas cost 30- to 50-percent higher per hole, so that was one underlying factor.”

Just as important, however, was the simple fact that the 320-acre property included a gorgeous parcel of land which begged to develop its own identity. Holes 13 through 17 now reside there, and they generated a number of positive comments when some selected property owners and VIPs played the course during the fall.

“We wanted to do something differ-

ent than anyone else has done in Wisconsin, and something different that what was happening in (Wisconsin) Dells,” Ranguette said. “So we went with a different type of golf course, and we went with a higher-end product as far as our condos and facilities. So we wanted something unique.”

Maybe unique isn't quite the right word to use for replica holes, since they are, after all, copies of things that already exist elsewhere. But call them what you will, Northern Bay has seven:

■ The third hole at Northern Bay is a replica of the famous (Mr. Norman would probably call it infamous) par-3 16th hole at Augusta National GC. The diagonally placed green features a severe back-to-front slant.

■ No. 4 is a replica of the par-4 fifth hole on the South Course at Oakland Hills CC in suburban Detroit, a course regarded as one of Ross' classic works of architecture.

■ The 525-yard sixth hole is a replica of the par-5 16th on the South Course at Firestone CC in Akron,



Ohio, featuring a small putting surface with water in front and sand behind. The South Course has hosted dozens of important tournaments over the years and is the current home of the annual NEC Invitational.

■ The back nine at Northern Bay begins with arguably the most famous hole in championship golf, the Dye-designed 17th hole at the TPC at Sawgrass, located in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. This is the notorious island green hole which causes so much trepidation among the PGA Tour's best each year at the Players Championship.

■ The 11th hole conjures up images of Amen Corner with a replica of Augusta National's par-5 13th hole. Four distinctive bunkers surrounding the green, including the heart-shaped one on the left side, have been meticulously constructed, as well as a man-made version of the tributary of Rae's Creek fronting the putting surface.

■ No. 12 is a replica of the third hole at Oakmont CC near Pittsburgh, site of seven U.S. Opens – including Miller's historic 1973 victory – and a course generally considered one of America's most difficult. The best-known of Oakmont's many hazards, the nasty church pew bunker, resides as it should on the left side of the fairway.

■ The 18th hole is a replica of the



terrific par-4 closing hole at Bay Hill Club in Orlando, Fla., site of the annual Bay Hill Invitational and a design which been refined by Palmer since he purchased the property in the early 1970s. The Northern Bay clubhouse sits on the left side of the 18th fairway, which gently wraps around a pond on the right just in front of the green – the same pond which gives the No. 10 TPC replica hole its teeth.

Northern Bay is a joint effort of the GilRan Group, headquartered in

Waunakee and consisting of David Kennedy, Paul Gilbertson and Ranguette, and Wisconsin Golf, LLC in Arkdale, a consortium of four brothers by the name of Mootz (Matt, Frank, Nick and Jacob). The two groups hooked up after another project the GilRan Group was working on in Adams County fell through. It was then that an area banker suggested that GilRan, which has expertise in real estate development and sales, and Wisconsin Golf, LLC, which has creat-



The par-5 eighth hole at Northern Bay, top left, measures 543 yards from the back tee, while the sixth hole, top right, is a replica of an existing par 5 at Firestone CC in Akron, Ohio. All players are advised to avoid the dreaded church pew bunker, lower left.

ed, and currently manages, several golf course projects in Florida, should join forces.

“So our banker actually said, ‘Geez, you guys should get together,’” Ranguette said. “Now I’m glad the other (project) didn’t work out.”

Matt Mootz, who resides in Florida, designed the site, oversaw construction of the golf course and essentially designed the non-replica holes. Texas-based Tour 18 Design Group is technically the architectural firm of record for the whole project.

The concept of replica golf dates to around 1993, when the first replica course, called Tour 18, opened in Houston. But there are still just a handful of them in America and fewer still that employ the hybrid concept. Most of the existing replica courses were created by Tour 18 Design Group. The firm uses aerial photographs and topographical surveys to make sure they are as close to the originals as possible.

“We like to say they are exact repli-

cas, but there are always variations,” said Dave Relford, golf course architect for Tour 18 Design Group. “In terms of yardages and shot strategy – bunker placement, pond locations – they are completely accurate. Where you may see variations is in meshing the original topography of the replicated hole with the existing topography. But they are minor variations.”

So the dimensions and location of the church pew bunker, for example, are exactly as they should be. But although the creek bed on No. 11 was painstakingly crafted to match the original Rae’s Creek tributary, the pine trees which were planted there to complete the illusion are not quite as big as the actual trees growing in Amen Corner.

Many of the non-replica holes at Northern Bay are just as interesting as their more famous brethren, and that stretch of Nos. 13-17 is particularly impressive. Adams County lies in a swath of central Wisconsin which is defined by sandy soil, rolling terrain and lush forests of pine. In other words, the conditions were ripe for the creation of a memorable golf course long before Northern Bay arrived. That five-hole stretch on the back nine lies in a distant, undeveloped corner of the property which provides an authentic

North Woods ambiance.

“As a golf course designer, I can’t take full credit for those holes because I inherited the topography of the land,” Matt Mootz said. “We moved some dirt, but I had just incredible existing conditions.”

The par-4 16th hole, at 411 yards from the back tee, is exceptionally pretty. Lined with mature trees on both sides of the fairway, No. 16 narrows considerably from tee to green. Mounding on the right and the left creates a small hollow of sorts where the green is situated.

No. 17, a short par-3 measuring 167 yards from the back tee, also has a distinctive look, with two large pine trees defining the right side and decorative landscaping in back of the green. Those hazards should be avoided easily, but a pair of bunkers on the right edge of the green are very much in play.

The par-72 Northern Bay layout features five sets of tees ranging from 7,223 yards to 5,197 yards. Reservations are accepted up to a week in advance for the general public and up to a year in advance for hotel and condo guests. Golf memberships are also available.

For more information on Northern Bay’s grand opening this spring, go to www.northernbayresort.com. □