

MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP, N.J. — An autumn grand opening has been scheduled here for the North Course at Charleston Springs, an 18-hole Mark Mungeam design and the newest addition to Monmouth County's exceptional daily-fee roster.

The county currently operates five courses, two of which are ranked in *Golf Digest's* top 75 public tracks: Hominy Hill Golf

Course in Colts Neck and Howell Park GC in Farmingdale. With the North Course at Charleston Spring — soon to be joined by a sister 18 and 6-hole learning center — Monmouth County can boast another jewel in the crown. "Our golf course people are already oohing and ahing," said Joseph Sardonia, Monmouth

County's supervising landscape architect. "Mark has done great work; the North Course is going to be an excellent layout."

"The North Course is a links-style design, along the lines of Royal Lytham and St. Anne's [Golf Club in Lancashire, England]," said Mungeam, a partner in the Uxbridge, Mass.-based firm Cor-

nish, Silva and Mungeam. "Before we got started, the site — a former nursery — was gently sloping with few dramatic features. We chose not to create an 'in-amongst-the-dunes' look.

There aren't any huge mounds on this course; the undulations are relatively minor. But the ground is constantly moving and

we've employed a random-bunkering scheme common to many linksland courses. We avoided creating a non-substantive but flashy golf course here; we've created a fun and challenging player's course."

With five sets of tees, which can stretch the layout from 5,200 yards to more than 7,000, the North Course was designed to suit players of all caliber. Many of the expansive putting surfaces, for example, are flanked by closely mowed, inventively shaped chipping areas. "If an approach should miss the green, making par will be tough — but bogey can be easily achieved," Mungeam explained.

The Monmouth County Park System was introduced to Cornish, Silva and Mungeam (CSM) when partners Geoffrey Cornish and Brian Silva conducted a series of renovations at their other facilities. When it was time to choose an architect for Charleston Springs, CSM was the clear choice. Ground was broken on the North Course in April of 1997; Wadsworth Golf Construction, one the nation's most respected contractors, built the course.

"We decided early on the two courses would be very different in style, to give each its own identity," Mungeam said. "The North Course is a links-style design, while the South Course — which won't begin construction until next year — will be a parkland layout.

"Both courses were designed to be extremely sensitive environmentally. The North, for example, has been graded so as to collect about 80 percent of the water used on the course. This scheme funnels the water towards three manmade ponds where it's recycled into the irrigation system. Another development goal of ours was to create a more diverse site for wildlife.

We've spent a great deal of time planning and creating new habitats using different types of native grasses, sporadic tree cover and wildflowers. We've also interconnected these areas to provide special wildlife corridors. This makes the course more visually interesting — but it also creates a more friendly site for local fauna."

The North Course at Charleston Springs is one of five CSM designs scheduled to open during 1998, among them Mungeam's Owl's Nest Golf Club in Campton, N.H., and Silva's Waverly Oaks GC in Plymouth, Mass. Last year, Mungeam's Cyprian Keyes Golf Club opened to national acclaim in Boylston, Mass, while his restoration portfolio includes a major renovation at Chicago's Olympia Fields Country Club, which subsequently hosted the 1997 USGA Senior Open and was recently named site of the 2003 U.S. Open.

CSM to open first 18 of 36 in N.J.

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