

Arcadia Bluffs

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"With no water hazards on the course, the fescues, bunkers and chipping areas around the greens will make Arcadia Bluffs look as much like a seaside links as possible," said Smith. "And, best of all, it won't require a passport or an overseas flight to get there."

The Arcadia Bluffs site is com-

prised largely of sand, lending itself to a windswept dunes appearance. Native grasses and fescue will enhance the links look Smith and Henderson aspire to, as will dozens of sod-wall bunkers.

"The sod-wall bunkers create a fantastic visual effect," said Smith. "As the sun goes down late in the day, they create shadows which give every hole a unique look, one that seems to change by the hour."

The par-72 layout stretches over a 245-acre parcel situated 150 feet above the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Arcadia Bluffs will be a daily-fee course offering private club amenities. The club will feature a clubhouse overlooking Lake Michigan as well as a practice facility and practice putting greens. The project was commissioned by RVP Development Corp. of Grand Rapids.

DYE, WEED OPEN OCEAN LINKS AT AMELIA ISLAND PLT.

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. — Featuring five holes along the Atlantic Ocean, the Pete Dye and Bobby Weed-designed Ocean Links at Amelia Island Plantation opened for play on Sept. 1. "Building this golf course represented two unique opportunities for me: working with my mentor, Pete Dye, and designing the ocean-front holes," Weed said. "It was certainly an experience I will remember for some time. The course provides golfers with a memorable experience as well. The medium-length par-3 15th plays directly towards the Atlantic, and club selection is at the mercy of the ocean breeze. It can be anything from a 5-iron to a bazooka," Weed said.

The first nine holes opened in April.

Olde Stonewall

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Connoquenessing Country Club nicknamed Hvizdak "The Stone Baron," a moniker that will be given to the bar in the 30,000-square-foot, castle-like clubhouse, which will boast 47-foot-high turrets on the corners.

Superintendent Richie D'Ambrosio, who came here after serving three years as an assistant at both Allegheny Country Club and Diamond Run Golf Club in Sewickley, sits in a 8,000-square-foot maintenance building also shaped like a castle.

Yet, D'Ambrosio points to other facets of the course that set it apart. Among them:

- a 30-foot-high bridge that spans a 250-foot natural ravine and has a natural rock waterfall ledge beneath it; and
- a par-3 14th hole on which two waterfalls front the green.

But in the end, Fry said, the upscale public-access course "will gain its notoriety from the amount of rock walls. It physically is unbelievable, especially when you see the size of these rocks."

To wit:

- More than 2,000 linear feet of sloped rock served as rip rap along the Connoquenessing River.
- The 420-yard length of the par-4 6th hole was "rock-walled."
- All the tee boxes, curbing, lakes, rivers and streams were rock-walled.
- Rock walls serve to hold up many areas along the back nine that were built with severe elevation changes and deep cuts.

For Niebur, the project encompassed challenges far beyond the norm. "We're using a 690 with an oversized grapple," he said. "We busted the thing twice, but it's as big as we could find."

"The other problem was getting the rocks to the back of the property where the terrain is severe."

But it was worth it, Niebur said, adding: "The owner has a good taste for quality. He and Dana have come up with some great stuff."

Fry summed it up:

"Rick loves golf," he said, "and is one of those guys that if one rock's good, two is better, and three must be the best."

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