

Golfing Indian River Country



Chestnut Valley

By Jack Berry

Indian River

Indian River Golf Club borrows an old newspaper review to bill itself as the “Best Kept Secret in the North.”

But it isn't a secret. Established in 1923 as a nine hole course and with the second nine added in 1984

by Warner Bowen who did the popular Schuss Mountain course, Indian River rightly has become known as one of the most enjoyable, playable courses in the golf hotbed at the top of the Lower Peninsula. It's just a few minutes off the 310 exit of I-75, 25 miles from Petoskey, Harbor Springs and Mackinaw City.

Indian River is a comfortable, well-maintained layout with four sets of tees that measure 6,692, 6,143, 5,380 and 5,167 yards. The slope rating is

125, 122, 114 and 119 and there usually seems to be a tree when you stray too far off the fairway. Water is in play on four holes but there aren't any forced carries.

And with perhaps a little nod to Ireland's famous Ballybunion which has a cemetery on the right side of the first hole, Indian River's par 3 ninth is bordered on the right by a cemetery.

Indian River's prices are really right after Sept. 5 – it's the twilight rate of \$25 walking and \$35 riding. Canadian money is accepted at par after Labor Day.

Chestnut Valley

American chestnut trees were nearly wiped out by an Asian fungus that infected them beginning at the turn of the last century. Once a staple of American forests and valued for its exceptional wood and the nuts that were feasted upon by wildlife, the tree virtually disappeared.

Some survived, though, and one is the anchor of Chestnut Valley Golf Club in Harbor Springs. It's just south of Brutus Rd. and east of Pleasantview. The magnificent specimen chestnut by the green of the 10th hole is believed to be 135 years old and is the second largest chestnut in Michigan.

Chestnut Valley's other trees aren't as old but Larry Mancour weaved the course through some outstanding oaks and maples (a huge maple is by the green of the par 3 14th

hole) and produced a very playable course that measures 6,506 yards with a 120 slope from the back tees, 6,007 yards from the middle and 5,166 from the front markers.

Flint native Mancour has been one of Michigan's top professionals over the years on both the state and national scene and he's had a flair for design – Grand Blanc Golf Club, Sugarbush in Davison and Dunmaglas, a strong test, in Charlevoix. Chestnut Valley has a nice variety with nothing overbearing and two sets of twilight rates, after 1 p.m. — \$45 during the week, \$55 weekends, and after 3 p.m. — \$35 during the week and \$40 weekends.

Besides that great, spreading chestnut tree on the 10th, there's another distinctive signature – caps in the pro shop that say: The Nut. **MG**

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/indian-river/>



Photo by Art McCafferty

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