

Harlan Coben, What's New in Travel, The Road to Shinnecock and more



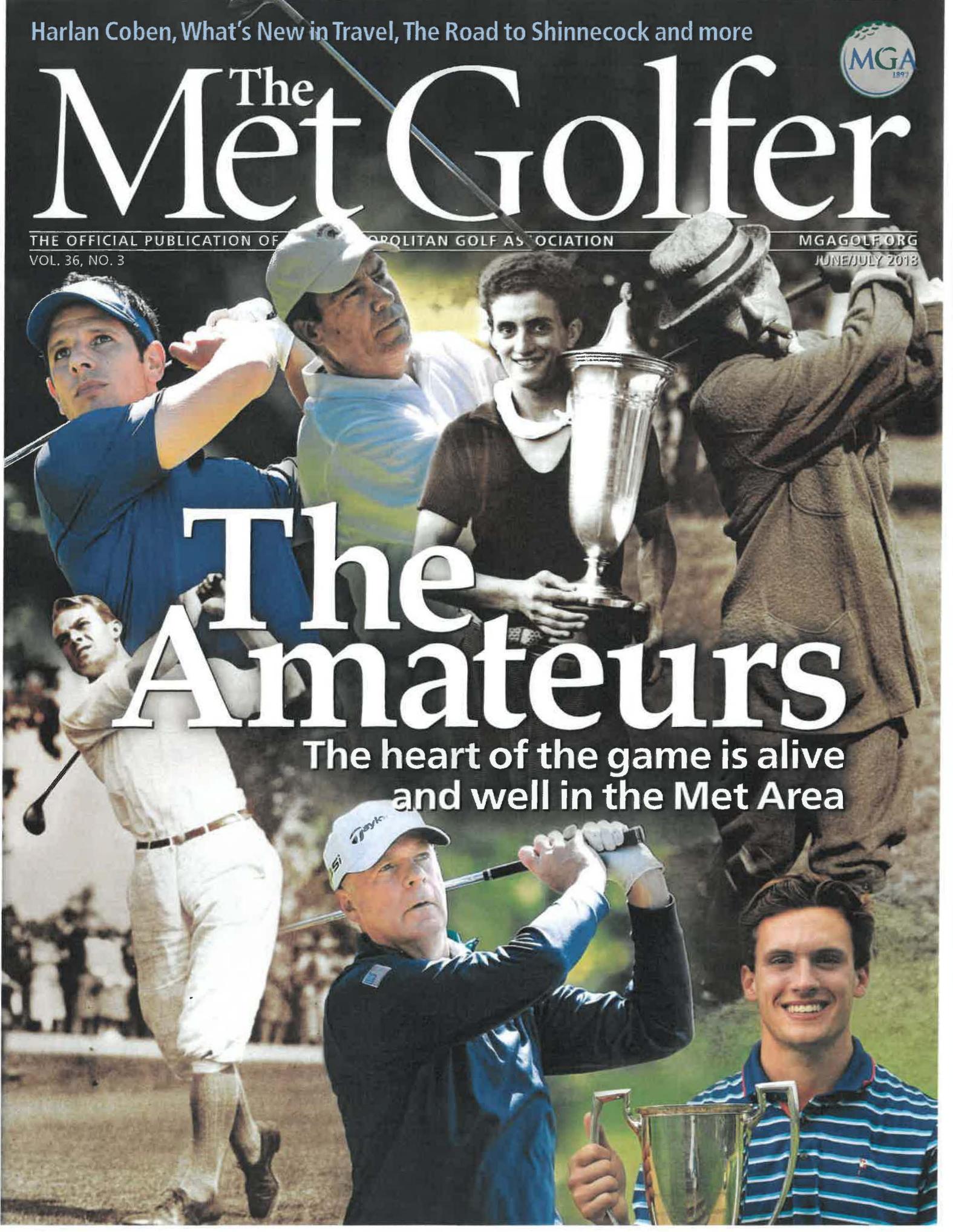
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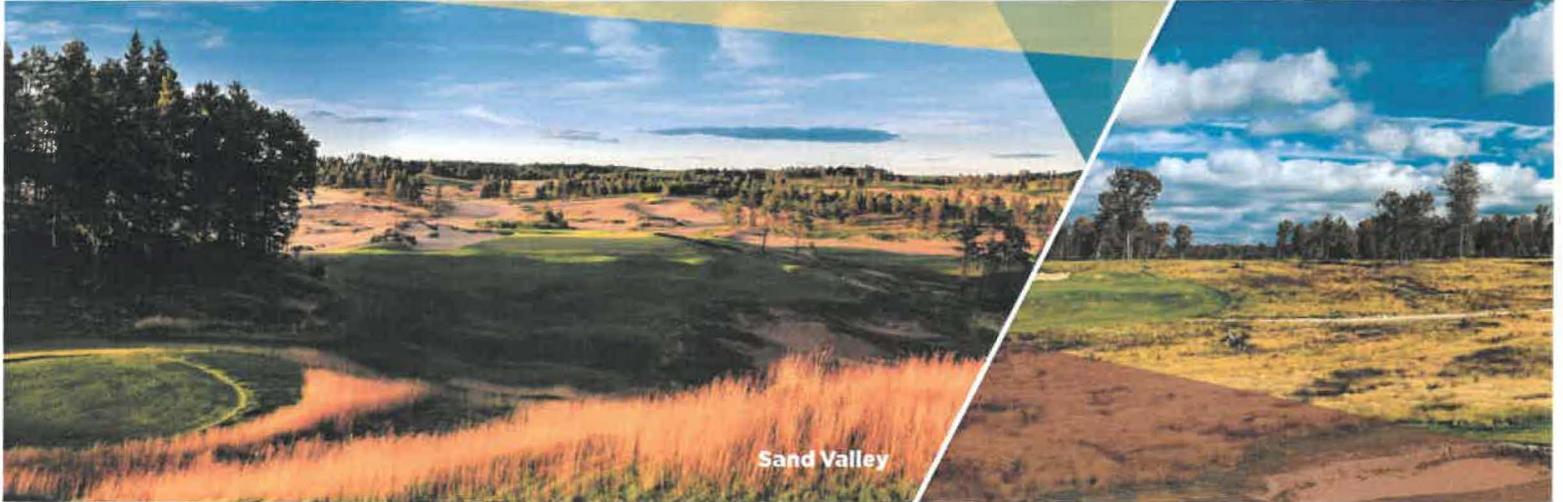


The Amateurs

The heart of the game is alive
and well in the Met Area

TRAVEL

WHAT'S



The global slowdown in course creation has eased. What are some of the new locations that were worth waiting for?

The world keeps getting smaller, and golf expands to fill it. The success of resort destinations in such out-of-the-way places as Bandon, Ore., Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, demonstrates that we will gladly beat a path to the starter's hut wherever great golf may be. They're building it, and we're coming.

Golfers are also getting more sophisticated about what they want from a course. Fun is not a dirty word; a round need not be relentlessly challenging to be worth a trip. We want courses that look and feel natural rather than those that have been bulldozed into submission. We don't want tight corridors choked with rough; we want to swing freely and have our minor sins forgiven, and even our major ones should not face a life sentence without parole. We're content to watch the U.S. Open on TV; we don't have to re-create it for our recreation.

Most importantly, we'll travel to great courses on great sites and embrace the spirit of adventure without demanding five-star amenities. (We won't refuse them, but clean and comfort-

able is all we need; we care far more about the quality of the golf than the thread-count of the sheets.) You've got an old phosphate mine in central Florida with sand piles scattered around it? A stretch of mountain land with priceless views near the entertainment mecca of Branson, Missouri? Some rocky crags near the coast of Baja California, or a sandy stretch in the pines of Wisconsin? Make a great golf experience and we'll gather our friends and family and come stay a while.

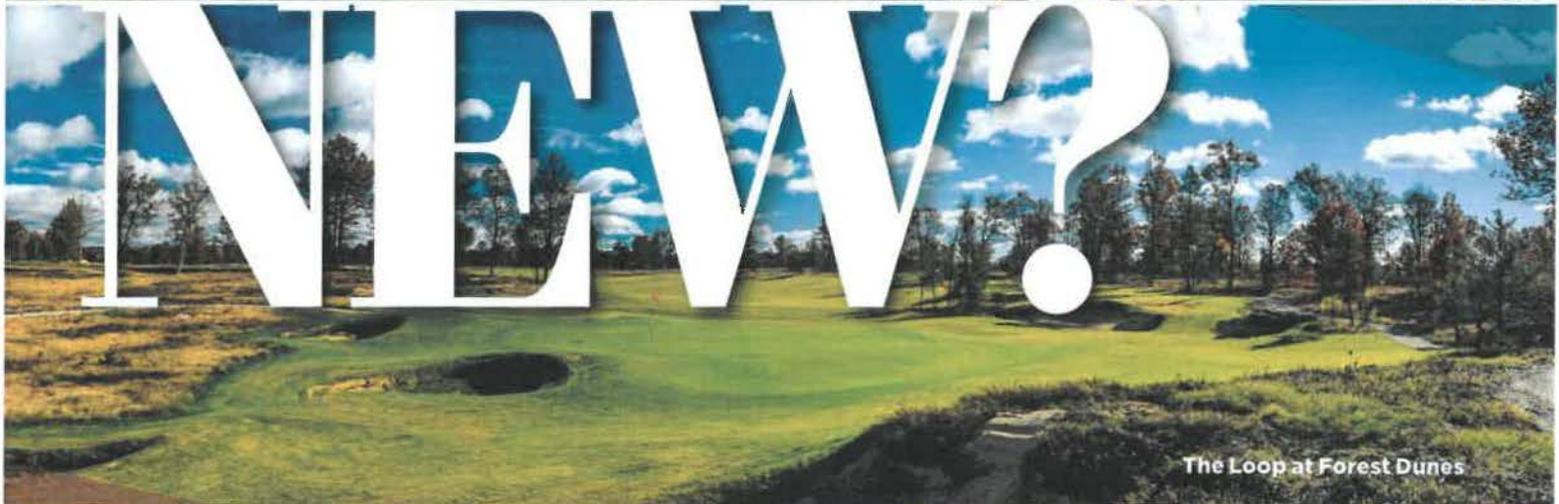
The following are just a few of the latest locations to take up the challenge—one within driving distance (*see Expanded Content on the MGA website*), many requiring only domestic flights, one across the International Date Line. All are worth the effort to get there and likely to inspire a return visit.

—Jeff Neuman

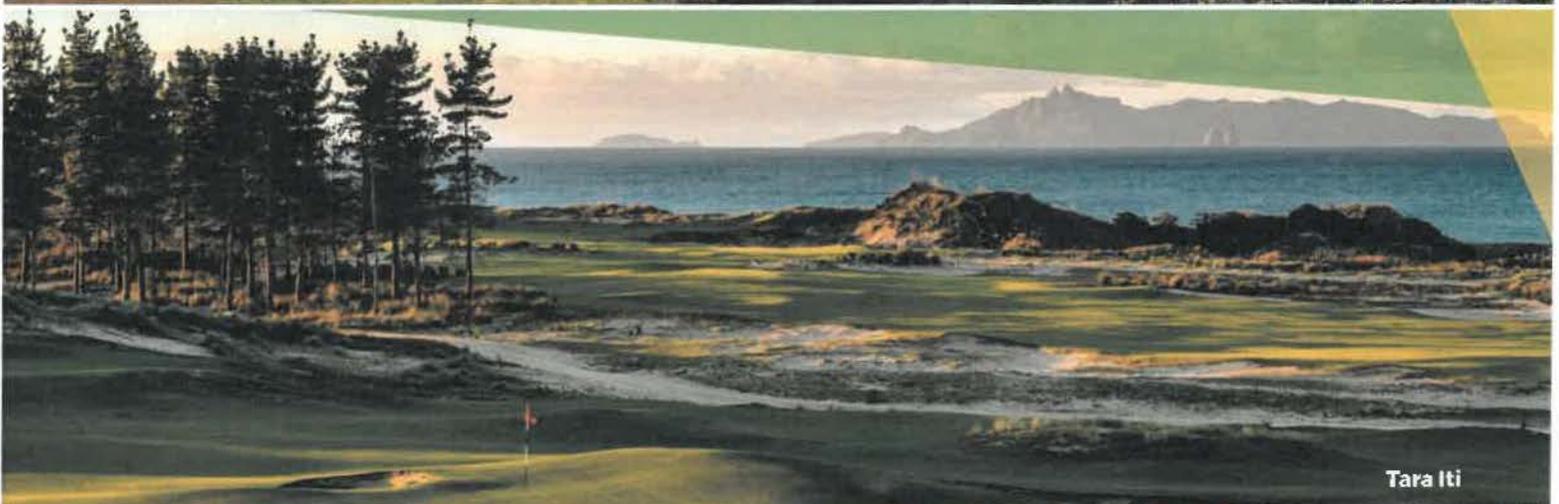




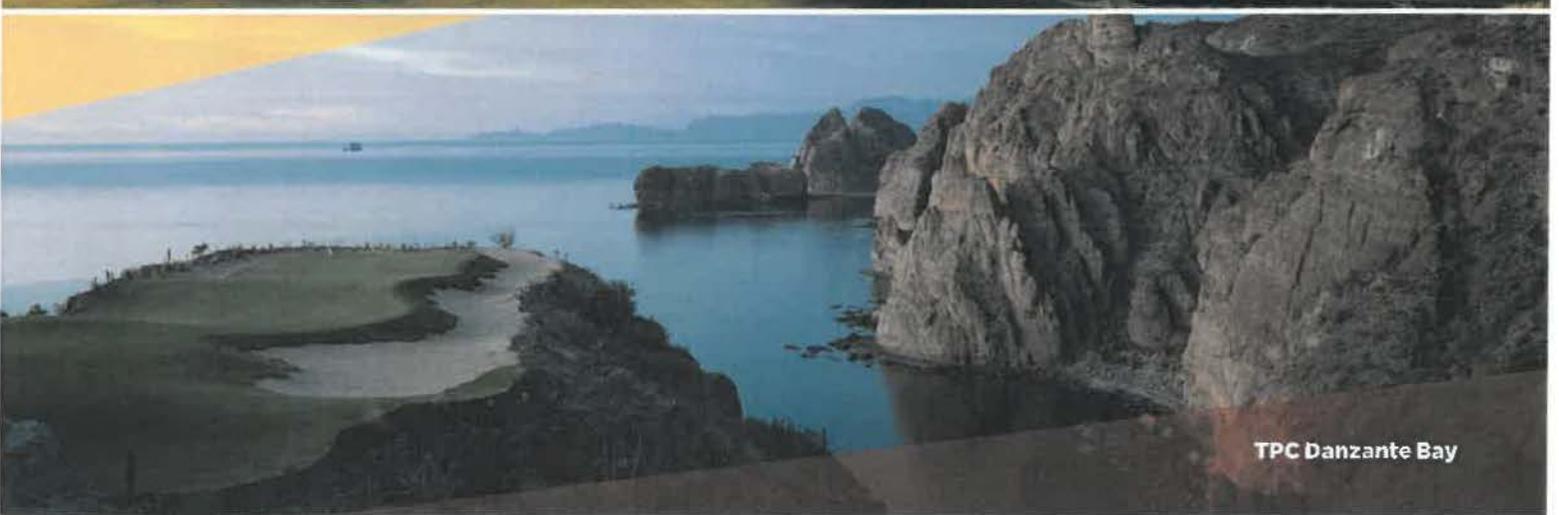
Big Cedar Lodge



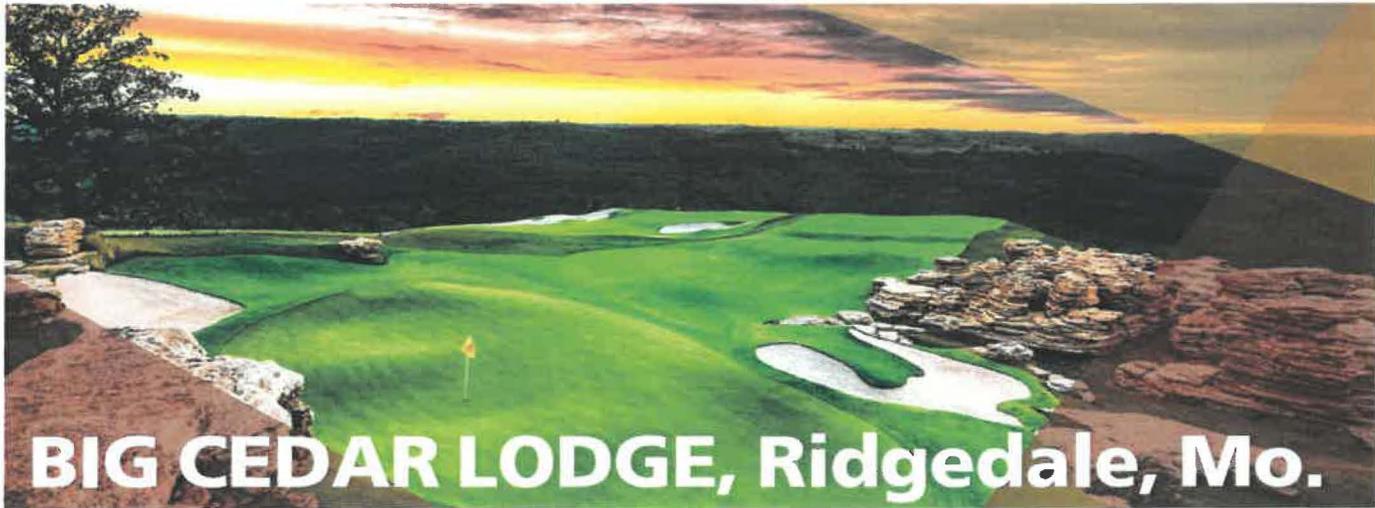
The Loop at Forest Dunes



Tara Iti



TPC Danzante Bay



BIG CEDAR LODGE, Ridgedale, Mo.

With all due respect to America's best golf destinations, Big Cedar Lodge in Missouri's Ozark Mountains hopes to be the country's next great golf experience. Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris has taken to heart the state motto, "Show Me," and has created something to see just an hour's drive from Springfield Branson National Airport in the hamlet of Ridgedale.

Big Cedar Lodge caters to golf buddy trips and family vacations alike. Two par-3 courses—the 13-hole Gary Player-designed Mountain Top and Jack Nicklaus's nine-hole Top of the Rock—provide plenty of challenge for golfers of all levels, and can be played in under 90 minutes each. Avid golfers will want to take on Buffalo Ridge Springs, a well-named

Johnny Morris/Tom Fazio 18-hole layout whose hilly contours and meandering water bodies require precision shots and smart course management. Ozarks National, an 18-hole Bill Coore-Ben Crenshaw design, is scheduled to open in September; Payne's Valley, honoring Springfield native Payne Stewart, is Tiger Woods's first 18-hole public access design and will open in 2019 to round out this well-stocked golfing mecca.

You can play golf from sunup to sundown, but activities abound at this 4600-acre wilderness resort. Try bass fishing at Table Rock Lake or fly fishing on the many streams surrounding the property, or take aim at the Shooting Academy for clay and sports target shooting. For a change of

scenery, visit nearby Ancient Ozarks Natural History Museum that showcases Native American art and artifacts. Then jump on an electric cart to traverse Lost Canyon Cave Trail that passes waterfalls, natural rock formations, and runs through a cave. It's a short drive to the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium in Springfield, and the nearby city of Branson has 50 showplaces to keep music and theatre enthusiasts entertained.

This part of America features stunning beauty and a rich heritage. The combination of the golf experience, the spectacular sights, the dining, accommodations, and service make Big Cedar Lodge worth a trip to a region you may have never considered before.

— Les Schupak

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SOMERSET COUNTY

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