

A Long & Controversial Cleanup

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Something for Everyone

If variety is the spice of life, golf in the Hudson Valley is a banquet of flavors. Whether you're looking for a fun, quick nine holes or a serious threat to your handicap, you'll find it at one of these four fine Hudson Valley clubs.

By Daniel M. Berger

Quaker Hill Country Club

Pawling, NY
www.quakerhillcc.com
• 6,010 yards • Par 70

Many clubhouses in the Hudson Valley are blessed with fascinating artifacts from the early days of the game. Only one, however, can boast a fragment of limestone from the palace of Sargon II dating to 700 BC; a tile from Jamestown, the first English settlement in Virginia; and a stone from the Peary Monument that stands 1,500 feet above the Polar Sea in Greenland. These are just a few of the wonders built into the fireplace of the Quaker Hill Country Club, founded by adventurer, traveler, broadcaster, and bon vivant Lowell Thomas in 1940.

Thomas was also an avid golfer, so he brought his friend Robert Trent Jones, Sr., to the fertile farmland of Dutchess County to lay out a nine hole course on top of a plateau where the views never end. Sam Snead, Gene Sarazen, and Jimmy Demaret were among Thomas' friends who played the course, as were New York Governors Thomas Dewey and Nelson Rockefeller. So was Babe Ruth, who is pictured in a clubhouse montage arriving on a motorcycle.

The course continues to challenge golfers today with tiny undulating greens and two full sets of tee boxes that allow for a complete 18-hole round without repetition. Even though you cover the same ground twice, you never play a hole the same way due to vastly

different shot angles introduced by the distinct tee boxes. Even the par threes aren't just longer or shorter—the fourth/13th hole, for example, makes you approach the green from two completely different directions. The number one handicap hole, the 403-yard par-four fifth, becomes a short but treacherous 455-yard par-five the second time around as the back-nine tee box brings out of bounds into play on the hole.

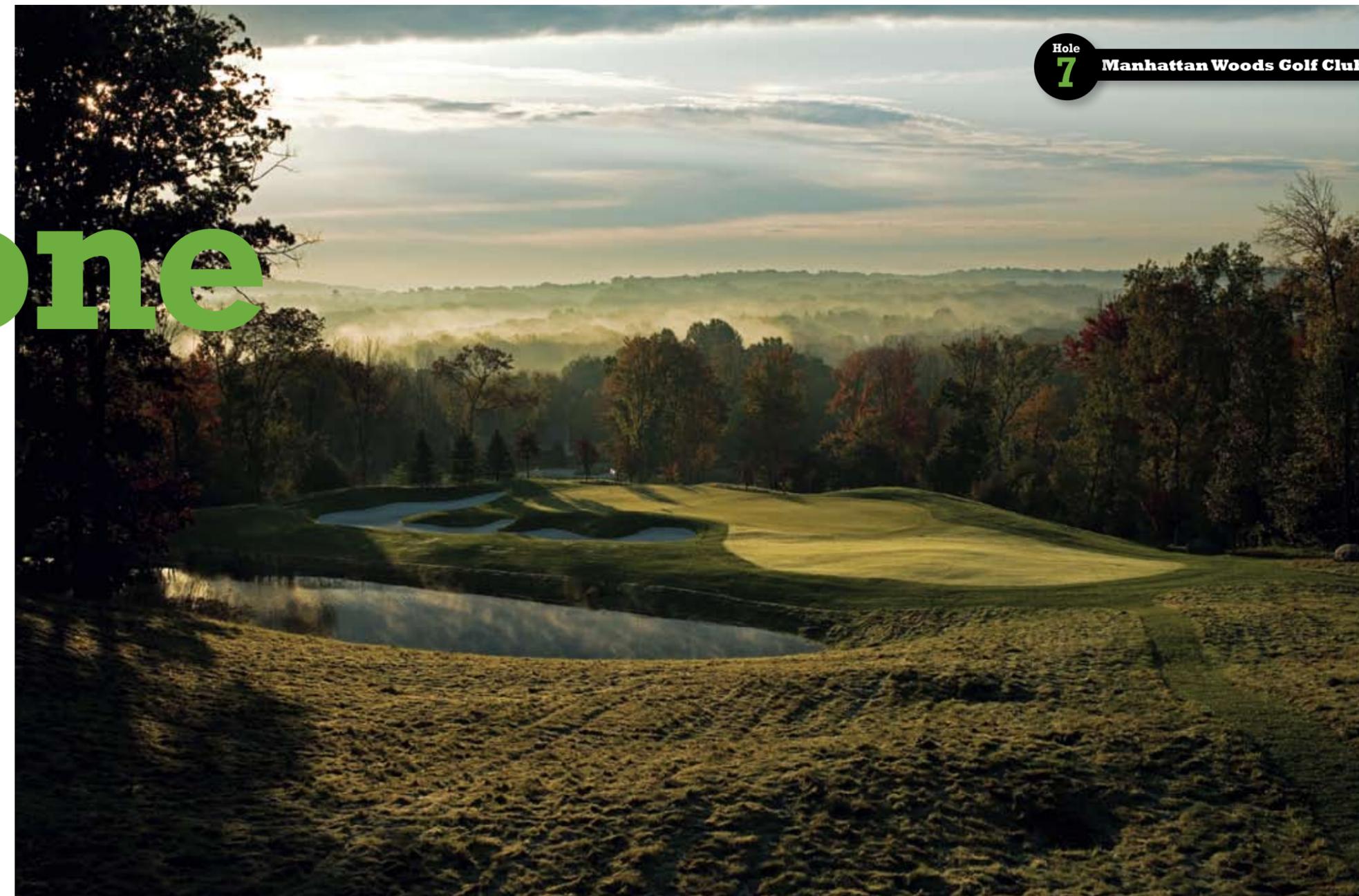
Probably the most striking thing about Quaker Hill, though, isn't the 19th-century barn converted into a clubhouse and museum full of history, or even the delightful and perfectly maintained golf course. It's the casual, friendly atmosphere of a small family club without pretensions.

Manhattan Woods Golf Club

West Nyack, NY
www.manhattanwoodsgc.com
• 7,109 yards • Par 72

Rolling hills, protected wetlands, and devilish greens are the hallmarks of Manhattan Woods, although a view of the eponymous skyline to the south helps define the club as one of the metropolitan area's finest golf experiences.

Gary Player designed the course, which opened in 1998. He carefully fit 18 holes into the wooded terrain, squeezing fairways between marshy wetlands and hillsides covered with knee-deep fescue while carving bunkers into the most challenging places. Five



Hole 7 Manhattan Woods Golf Club

sets of tees stretch it from 5,090 yards to a championship-caliber 7,109. Choose your launching pad carefully. From the blues it's less than 6,400 yards, but the course rating is a hefty 72.2 with a 141 slope.

You'll also want to look before you leap on several holes, since many of the natural features can suggest strategies that aren't wise. Several forced carries aren't as long as they look, and many of the hazards have bail-out areas that are actually good strategic choices. On the other hand, sometimes there really is trouble everywhere you look, like on the 13th hole, a short (508 yard) par five where the bunker that lies between your second shot and glory is every bit as menacing as it appears. And the oh-so-innocent-looking par three



Otterkill Golf and Country Club Hole 17



Quaker Hill Country Club