



TRAVEL

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The Exclusive Bunker Hill Farms Resort

Of all of the over 300 exhibitor booths that decorated the Chicago Golf Show in late February, one individual local property stood out over all others. While there are some outstanding and elegant golf complexes that bless the city and its surrounding suburbs, only one offers a unique and intriguing opportunity that allows guests and their companions to basically enjoy fabulous dining, skeet-shooting, ATV-trail riding, and golf experience all to themselves for a day or a longer stay: the gorgeous, fascinating, and stunning Bunker Hill Farms.

How this lodge came into existence is, in and of itself, a story unique to size, scale, scope and history. In the early 2000s, TicketsNow entrepreneur Mike Domek received a remarkable offer from competitor TicketMaster to buy out his business for \$265 million. And what would one possibly do given such a dream offer? In Domek's case, he and his wife Amy elected to build a dream resort complex for themselves, family, and friends on an amazingly diverse chunk of pristine land

a few miles away from the quaint city of Woodstock, Ill. The project began over a relatively modest 150 acres in 2005 with the construction of a sports pavilion and some trails built for hiking, riding and snow activities during the winter. Over ensuing years, their vision expanded to incorporate ski and sled hills; a landscaped field to hold large events and music concerts; a main lodge to host intimate dinners and receptions; additional acreage to expand the property to 450 acres; elegant lodging to accommodate retreats and larger groups; a spa built upon the frame of an old cement farm silo; trails for ATV rides across the prairies and through forests; plantings of thousands of trees, wild grasses and flowers to bring shade and color to the estate; and a state-of-the-art skeet shooting range.

Following the construction of a 70-foot-deep lake in 2009, construction was initiated on the centerpiece of Bunker Hill Farms: a championship 18-hole golf course designed by local golf architect Harry Vignocchi, whose previous work includes Bittersweet Golf Club in Gurnee, Makray Memorial in Barrington, and Bull Valley G.C. in Woodstock.

Provided with pristine land that includes hills, woods, and lakes, Vignocchi created an intriguing course that includes shared greens and switchback fairways. Since the course was so exclusive as to only host a limited number of rounds per day, the architect was able to maximize the available land by building fairways shared by holes that head out away from the clubhouse with holes heading back

to the clubhouse. While this system would necessarily create traffic issues on a heavily used course, it works without issue on a course that on a busy day might have just a few foursomes on the property. "It was a really interesting project," said Vignocchi in an interview. "Mike (Domek) wanted a course that was truly natural. He didn't want to use a lot of excess land to build the course, so placing holes on shared greens and shared fairways was the most workable solution."

The course begins with a 580-yard dogleg left that introduces players to the many characteristics that make the course special, including a wide variety of colorful trees that line the perfectly manicured fairways and greens. From the bottom of a valley, the second hole traverses up a ridge to a small, well-contoured green. The third and fourth holes work together in harmony as players are encouraged to hit their tee shots over a lake to the par-3 No. 3 green and then walk a few steps away to the tee of the par-5 No. 4 and hit away. As the third green is parallel to the landing area of the fourth fairway, the transition after putting out is seamless. Just a short jog through an opening takes one to the second shot on No. 4. If this sounds complicated, it's not. Rather, this is a great and creative way to play two holes at once.

For me, the centerpiece hole on the course is No. 6 which doglegs toward a green tucked into the furthestmost corner of the layout. The green rests among a wide variety of beautiful mature trees. If you hear any sound around this green, it is probably from feeding deer or other wildlife which make this sanctuary their home.

Even though played on the exact same footprint of the front nine, the back nine is surprisingly different as the holes play from different tees with wildly different angles to the greens. Golfers with sand phobia have little to worry about as the only bunker on Bunker Hill Farms, oddly enough, is next to the 18th green. (Note to self: avoid that deep hazard at all costs!)

While golf at the Midwest's most exclusive course is special, the use of the other amenities at Bunker Hill Farms

is what makes a visit a "bucket list" experience. Meals are prepared by executive chef Mario Scordato who uses local produce from that day's run to the farmer's market as inspiration for your lunch and dinner. Explore the vast property with a guided ATV tour. Or shoot skeet at a remote controlled range. Any visit to the property should include services at the specially built spa that allows guests the comfort of gazing at a lush botanical garden beneath you as seen through a glass bottom floor.

"Bunker Hill Farms is an amazing, special experience," said Sig Kolano, director of property and grounds. "Our guests get to enjoy fantastic accommodations; get served evening cocktails by a personal bartender; have amazing, hand-crafted meals; and get to play a fantastic championship golf course. And best yet they have that experience to themselves as the property is exclusively theirs to enjoy during their stay."

Perhaps the truly best aspect of a stay at Bunker Hill Farms is that all proceeds from your visit are donated to local charities supported by Bunker Hill Charities. Over the years, the foundation has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from events large and small held on the property.

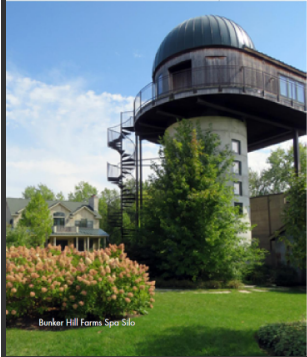
In 2015, the Domek's made the decision to transition Bunker Hill Farms from a private entertainment complex into an exclusive lodge specific to corporate retreats, special events, intimate golf groups and even couples. For information on how to book the resort, contact: www.bunkerhillfarms.com.



Bunker Hill Farms Hole #18



Bunker Hill Farms GC



Bunker Hill Farms Spa Silo