

Michigan golfers go fore! for 4

A summer drive through Michigan in search of the perfect golf vacation just got better.

Four new courses are due to open in July. They're sprinkled in four regions on the state and if you're hankering to be the first in your foursome to get a bird's eye view (and maybe a few birdies), we'll draw you a map on how to do it.

The four layouts are The Orchards Golf Club in Romeo, about 30 miles northeast of Detroit; the Rick Smith-designed course at Sylvan Resort's Treetops North in Gaylord; Mistwood, a public course just west of Traverse City designed by Michigan's most acclaimed course architect, Jerry Matthews; and The Thoroughbred at Rothbury.

Let's start the trip in the Detroit area at The Orchards, a premium public fee course which becomes Robert Trent Jones Jr.'s first-ever Michigan project. It's about time one of the world's leading architects graced Michigan's golf landscape. That's just how Ron Dalby, owner/developer of The Orchards, felt about it.

The Orchards is located at 29 Mile and Campground roads, one mile west of Van Dyke.

Dalby is offering the Detroit market something it's never had: A major golf course/residential development anchored by a premium daily fee championship course.

Dalby developed The Orchards as a daily fee facility because of the demand for the product in the Detroit area.

The Orchards will provide the calibre of golf and all the related amenities and services of a private club to its guests. Golf pro Doug Grove has mapped out an interesting and busy schedule of events, including one-day and half-day golf schools and clinics.

There are 450 lots available at The Orchards for single family dwelling, including detached condominiums ranging in price from \$160,000 to \$300,000-plus for four bedrooms. Lots start at \$59,000 and go to \$100,000, with a few premium golf and lakeside combinations going for more.

Here's a tip: When you play The Orchards allow yourself plenty of time to enjoy the world-class practice facility. If you're a Golf Nut who enjoys to practice, this is a place you'll love.

The course offers elevation changes up to 150 feet and routing through farm lands, wooded areas and wetlands.

After your round at The Orchards, head north to Gaylord and owner Harry Melling's growing Sylvan Resort.

The addition of Smith's course this summer expands the resort to

three championship golf courses - the original by Robert Trent Jones and the Tom Fazio design which opened last year. Also debuting last year was Smith's dynamite nine-hole par 3 course.

Believe this: The hours or so it takes to play the par 3 may well be the highlight of your golf experience this summer. It's an absolute delight. You'll never forget the third hole. We won't give it away but here's a hint: It's called Devil's Drop.

Smith's championship layout is no less stunning. The signature hole is No. 3, a 443-yard par 4 from the tips of the elevated tee. Seven tees guide you down the hill and give the hole a maximum range of playability.

The course plays 6,642 yards from the back tees down to 4,600 yards from the forward markers.

After playing Smith's course, head toward Traverse City. Located 15 miles west of downtown, in Lake Ann, is the new 6,700-yard Matthews course, Mistwood.

It's a public course with a waterfall featured on the signature 18th hole. Mistwood borders a small lake and has three natural ponds as it winds its way through stands of maple and pine trees. The middle tees will measure about 6,300 yards with forward tees in the 5,200-yard range.

The clubhouse sits on a bluff overlooking most of the back nine holes. Mistwood also has an impressive practice area with a two-tiered driving range, target greens and 12,000 square foot putting green to hone the short game.

The final stop on the four-course tour is southbound, in Rothbury, about 20 miles north of Muskegon and 194 miles from Detroit.

The Thoroughbred, designed by Arthur Hills, is situated at the Double JJ Ranch, one of the Midwest's premier dude ranches.

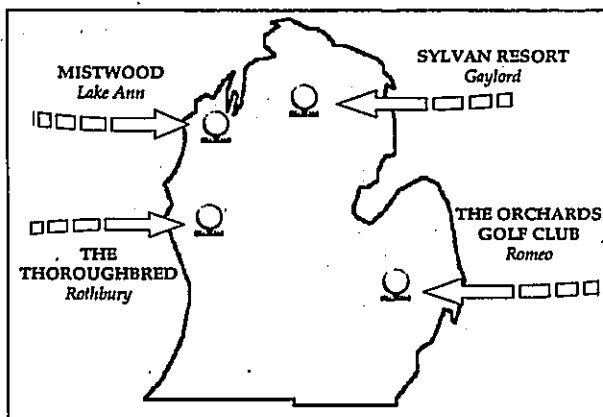
Hills, the Michigan State grad whose enormously successful golf course design company is based in Toledo, routed the course over 300 acres of sand dunes, cranberry bogs, mature hardwood and pine forests, orchards and ravines. The second hole skirts the edge of a 30-acre cranberry bog and requires solid strategy and even better ball-striking ability to negotiate the challenge presented by the par 4.

The course is the focal point of the resort's \$20 million expansion. Double JJ Resort has been a fixture on the resort scene since 1938 as an adult dude ranch. When owners Bob and Joan Lipsitz asked their guests how they might enhance the resort, adding golf topped the list.

"Arthur Hills did an incredible job," says Jeff Howland, the PGA professional at The Thoroughbred.

Hills is sold on the fruits of his labor at Double JJ.

"The Thoroughbred will be



Michigan's new found treasure," he says. "It's laid out amongst the dunes and is framed by huge oaks and beech trees."

Hills calls the 531-yard, par 5 finishing hole which wraps around Carpenter Lake "a spectacular, classic finishing hole."

The 210-yard third hole has a drop of 80 feet from tee to green. The

yardages range from 4,851 yards to 6,900 yards, with four sets of tees to choose from on each hole.

Hills moved a minimum of land, choosing instead to maintain the integrity, the look and the feel of the property.

There you have it. A quick tour of four new Michigan courses worth visiting this summer.

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