

BUSINESS

G-A mini-golf course 'unique'

By Kate Ward
Special to the Enterprise

Famous for providing endless fun on the banks of the Crystal River, The River Club in Glen Arbor (RCGA) was named one of the most unique mini-golf courses in Michigan by the Detroit Free Press last week.

The article highlighted how the course incorporates the topography of the area, using blue and tan turf to look like sand and water, and does not include the typical obstacles such as windmills, walls and obstacles for boundaries. Instead, the River Club opts for things like rough turf and faux sand bunkers to create challenges at each hole. But that's not all that makes River Club such a fun and unique place to be.

"2024 was an incredible year for River Club Glen Arbor. We entertained thousands of families looking for a little escape from their daily lives. In 2025 we're taking the place to a whole new level with over a dozen improvements, initiatives, and offerings. We can't wait to see our old customers enjoying the new amenities as well as welcoming all the new folks looking for something for the whole family in Glen Arbor," said

Mike Sheldon, the founder and CEO of RCGA.

Nearly 40 events have already been booked at RCGA with more requests coming in daily. With this kind of volume, one of the new additions this year is the River Lounge tent. This 700 square foot tent can be set up right off the course and serve as a covered and private space for parties and events.

Inside the tent is another new addition, Put-Pong, based off of the popular party game, beer-pong. Instead of taking turns bouncing ping-pong balls into cups on a table, putt-pong has players putting golf balls into holes laid out in the familiar beer-pong triangle formation.

Visitors can get a bite to eat next door to the putt-pong and the River Lounge at the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse serves build-your-own or off the menu burritos, bowls, and tacos along with desserts, drinks, and appetizers.

"It's easy, it's fast, it's healthy, and it's tasty," said Sheldon about the choice to serve Mexican food. "There's a lot of bar food up here but not many Mexican food places and I've always been a big admirer of places like Chipolte."

The big new addition to the

Clubhouse menu this year is the Mucho Macho Nacho appetizer. Appetizer might not be the right word however, because this "bonkers-sized serving" feeds 4-6 people and has a price point of \$48. On par with the Mucho Macho Nachos is the River Monster dessert which is a "colossal serving of Waffle Churros served with vanilla ice cream."

The Margarita Mike's Magnificent Marg Bar has added five new frozen margaritas, along with expanding the beer, seltzer, and wine options at the Clubhouse and Caddy Shack.

Speaking of the Caddy Shack, if you get a hole-in-one you can now stop by Caddy Shack and get your picture taken with a trophy to be added to the wall of fame.

Other additions starting this year include The Clubhouse will start offering breakfast beginning June 15 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., and live music has been extended to seven days a week beginning June 19.

The River Club is truly unapologetic fun.

"There's really no other place like this anywhere. Where you have putt-putt, food, booze, merch, skydeck, river front,



Visiting from Ohio, Jon Reist stares down the Mucho Macho Nachos served on a plate bigger than his head. *Photo by Kate Ward*

etc," said Sheldon about how he strives to always make RCGA as unique as possible. "It's maddening because I wish I could just stop, but this is my retirement project and I'm constantly looking to do new things. My wife says my motto should be: anything that can be done can be overdone."

Sheldon says his goal is to constantly be improving and adding something new each

year. Each step you take around The River Club has been thought out in every small detail, from the "faux boat" chairs that are perfect for a picture, to the local lake outlines on the golf course, to the bass speakers under the entry bridge to help transport you out of the real world into a perfect playground.