

Lake

BRIAN WALTERS/ESORT + GOLF

COURSE-RATINGS GUIDE

- ★★★★★ Pack a tent—you'll want to stay
- ★★★★☆ You're kissing a supermodel but thinking of here
- ★★★☆☆ Definitely beats a day at work
- ★★☆☆☆ You'll revisit some holes—with a bulldozer
- ★☆☆☆☆ Where's the police tape? This is a crime scene!

Grand
coastal
scenery
comes with
a humble
tab in
northern
Michigan

By Josh Sens

effect

The 418-yard, par-4 sixth
at Bay Harbor Golf
Club's Links Course.

AS STATE mottos go, Michigan's is a mouthful: "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you." Less hyped and less crowded than Monterey or Myrtle Beach, this "pleasant peninsula" offers the best of those golf meccas: waterside links, secluded pine-lined layouts and country-club conditions. In summer, daylight lingers until 10 p.m. In fall, the landscape is kaleidoscopic with color. It may not make a pithy motto, but if you seek a pleasant (and pleasantly cheap!) golf experience, look to Michigan.

Bay Harbor Golf Club

Quarry: 3,320 yards, par 35 **Preserve:** 3,352 yards, par 35 **Links:** 3,404 yards, par 35 **Greens fee:** \$59-\$89; 800-462-6963, bayharbortgolf.com

Bay Harbor is the biggest name in northern Michigan resort golf, and it lives up to its billing. The Quarry meanders around deep shale gorges with a waterfall spilling down a cliff. The Preserve stands in the shade of giant pines. And the Links hugs 150-foot bluffs along Lake Michigan. Bay Harbor's sister property, Boyne Highlands, features four courses, including the top-ranked Heather, a 7,093-

Ambience ★★★★★
Challenge ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

yard, par-72 Robert Trent Jones Sr. design.

TRIP TIPS

● Where to stay

The Inn at Bay Harbor (800-462-6963, innatbayharbor.com). Victorian architecture and modern amenities at an elegant 152-room lakeside resort and spa. Rates from \$149.

Crystal Mountain (800-968-7686, crystalmountain.com) has 250 hotel rooms, suites, townhomes and condominiums set in rolling, forested terrain. Rates from \$120 to \$630, from hotel rooms to five-bedroom condos. For more information on where to stay and play, visit michigan.org

● Where to eat

Cherry Republic (800-206-6949, cherryrepublic.com). Michigan is the cherry-growing capital of the country, and this shop, 20 minutes outside Traverse City, is the capital of all things cherry. Cherry salsa. Chocolate-covered cherries. Cherry soda. Cherry barbecue sauce. You get the idea.



GETTY IMAGES



The 485-yard, par-5 15th hole at the Rick Smith Signature.

Tree Tops Resort Rick Smith Signature

6,653 yards, par 70 **Greens fee:** \$45-\$120; 888-873-3867, www.treetops.com

The shaggy grass around the bunkers on Rick Smith's Signature Course creates a timeworn look. But the Signature isn't the oldest of the resort's five courses (that honor belongs to Robert Trent Jones Sr.'s Masterpiece). Nor is it the most telegenic. The nod there goes to Three Tops, the resort's par-3 course that hosts the ING par-3 shootout. The swooping elevation shifts make even

Ambience ★★★★★
Challenge ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

wedge shots testy, and the greens are as closely guarded as the Pentagon.

Belvedere Golf Club

6,715 yards, par 72 **Greens fee:** \$50-\$99; 231-547-2611, www.belvederegolfclub.com

The antidote to overwrought resort golf, this is a place for purists. The pro shop is little more than a shack. The green-to-tee layout welcomes walking. What it lacks in length, it makes up for in the subtlety of its greens. Scotsman Willie Watson built Belvedere in the 1920s, and you can feel the hand of history here. It's golf

Ambience ★★★★★
Challenge ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

without fuss—golf for those focused only on getting a little white ball around.

Arcadia Bluffs

7,300 yards, par 73 **Greens fee:** \$50-\$180; 800-494-8666, www.arcadiabluffs.com

Rick Smith's high-drama design extends along the bluffs of Lake Michigan, with water views from every hole. The front-nine fairways are forgiving, but the back nine funnels through mounding as impressive as anything

Ambience ★★★★★
Challenge ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

this side of Ballybunion. The vistas are more sweeping than those at Pebble Beach.