



BASKING RIDGE CC

Glows With a New Luster

It's

a new day, indeed a new era, for legendary Basking Ridge Country Club.

The club, located in the town that it takes its name from, originally opened as Pennbrook Golf Club in the summer of 1926. It has undergone several facelifts that have brought it back into prominence as one of northern New Jersey's truly great private golf clubs.

The club first opened its fairways and greens in the roaring twenties and became the hot spot for the area's social and sporting elite. Unfortunately, during World War II the course went back to being what it had been, a cow pasture and cornfield. Edward V. Murray brought Pennbrook back to life in 1953 and it remained open to the public until 1977 when a group of businessmen purchased the property and took it semi-private.

The club was purchased by the Mahan family in 1986 and became a fully private golf and swim club. They set about bringing what was now known as Basking Ridge Country Club into a first class private facility, with a commitment to continued golf course and facility

improvements. Recent renovations have added the new luster to this New Jersey gem.

"We are a family oriented club," said Kara Bosi, membership director of the non-equity private club that offers a variety of memberships and, most importantly, no initiation fee. "We have a private swim club and lots of wonderful events geared toward the family."

Annual membership dues are extremely affordable, especially considering the superb course and the amenities that come along with it. Fees range from \$2,750 to \$7,175. Located only 45 minutes from New York City and 30 minutes from Newark Airport, Basking Ridge is easily accessible to businesspeople looking for an ideal getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city and their busy careers, Bosi said.

While Basking Ridge is a country club in the truest sense of the word, with a vibrant swim program, superb practice facilities, an expanding golf academy, and a wonderful dining experience, it is the golf course that has perhaps attracted the most attention during the last few years.

Enhancements to the course within the past few years included adding about 300 yards to its total yardage, bringing it to around 6,906 yards from the back markers and 6,423 from the members' tees. Work continues, with modifications being made to the 18th green and additional drainage to keep the fairways and rough in peak playing condition in all types of weather. Landscaping has contributed to the attractiveness of the course and clubhouse area. Indeed, the overall conditions at Basking Ridge CC have become quite impeccable.

The layout of the course was first designed by Alexander H. Findlay, a Scotsman who came to the U.S. in the 1880's. He had a hand in designing more than 500 golf courses throughout the country.

Perhaps the best short hole on the front side is the 184-yard, par-three third. Water borders the left and back of the green with a nasty bunker short of the putting surface. Better be true with that long iron.

The fourth is a beastly, 464-yard par-four

that has out of bounds on the left hand side. The green welcomes run up shots.

There are several risk-reward par-fours on the track, one of the best being the 353-yard eighth. It may be wise to leave the driver in the bag and place a fairway wood or long iron into the narrow fairway to avoid a hazard that runs down the left side of the hole. But that would be no fun, would it?

The talk in the pro shop and 19th hole is that the pros love to cut the corner on the 350-yard, dogleg left par-four 11th and go for the green. But lesser players must beware of a stream that dissects the fairway out about 220 yards from the tee. This is a great short par-four.

The testy par-four 13th hole was stretched to 452 yards, its green enlarged and new bunkers added around the putting surface. The par-five 14th was given another 125 yards, making it a 546-yard dogleg left. Members will tell you that the easiest hole on the course became the hardest after the renovations.

The par-four 15th was lengthened to 461 yards, and the 16th, a par-three, was given 26 yards, which made it 179 yards to reach an elevated, small and narrow green.

The green at number 17, a 404-yard par-four, was enlarged and given a new bunker that makes it difficult to execute run up shots.

Basking Ridge, which features views of the scenic Somerset Hills, finishes rather unconventionally, with a par-three. It's almost 200 yards from the back tees to a massive green protected by five bunkers.

"Our golf academy is very strong and growing; we have junior camps and clinics throughout the season for ages 4 and up. We are also very woman friendly here. We don't have any A or B class members and have two ladies leagues."

The Golf Academy at Basking Ridge is open to the public as well as club members and offers adult and junior clinics, junior summer day camps, ladies only clinics, and private lessons from PGA professionals.

The driving range and practice facility with bunkers make a warm-up or practice session easy, and the club's pro shop and players area contains a renovated locker room. There's also a halfway house at the ninth hole.

The club has a public dining venue, The Bamboo Grille, which offers a unique menu, outdoor dining overlooking the golf course and live entertainment. Fair Winds Fine Catering at Basking Ridge Country Club is also open to the public and available for weddings, corporate meetings and private parties.

Individuals interested in joining are welcome to take a tour of the property and play the course. Greens fees will be refunded once the person joins the club, said Bosi.

For further information about the club visit www.baskingridgecc.com. For membership information, contact Kara Bosi at 908-766-8200, extension 114 or write to her kbosi@baskingridgecc.com.

