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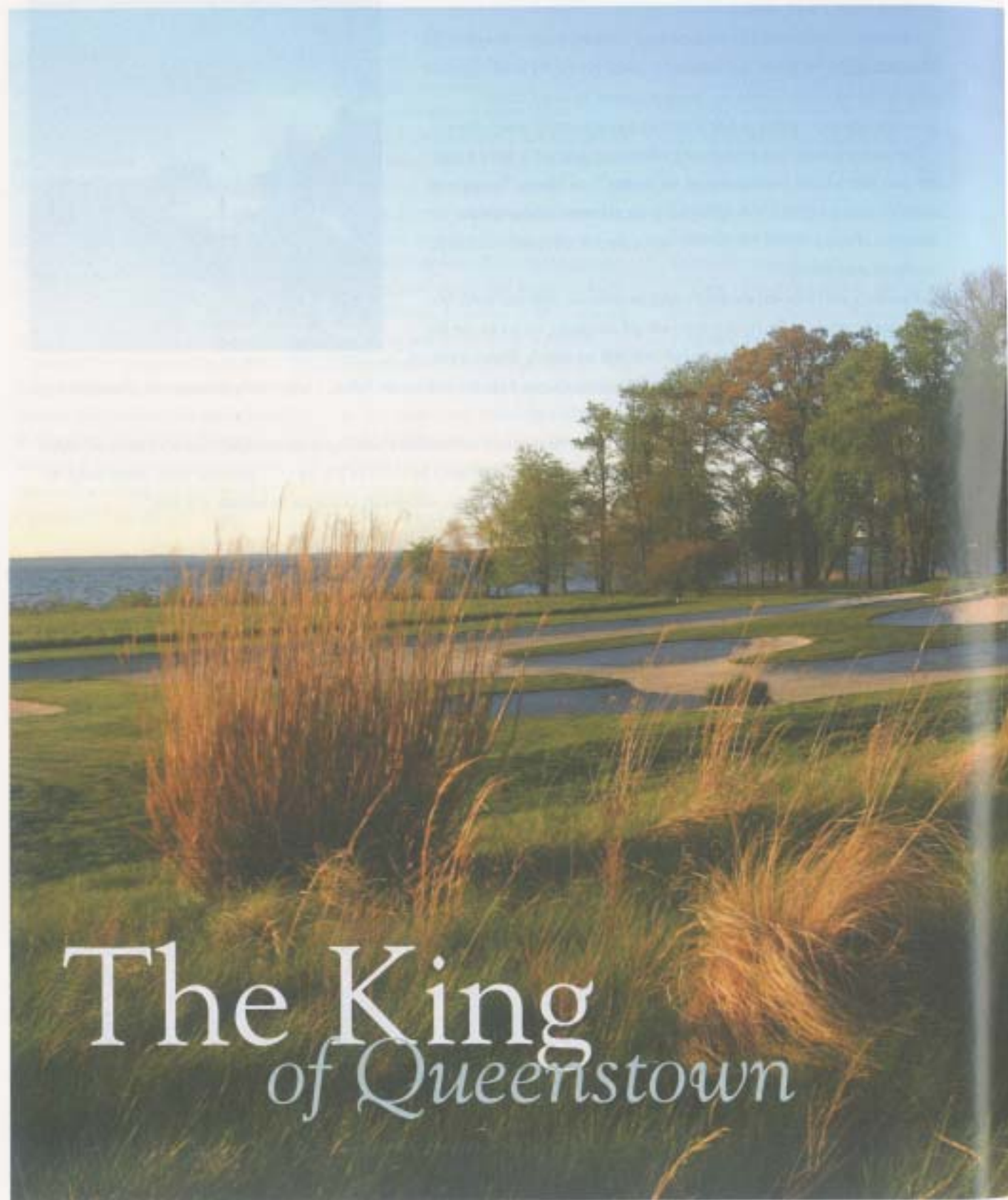
SEPTEMBER 2007

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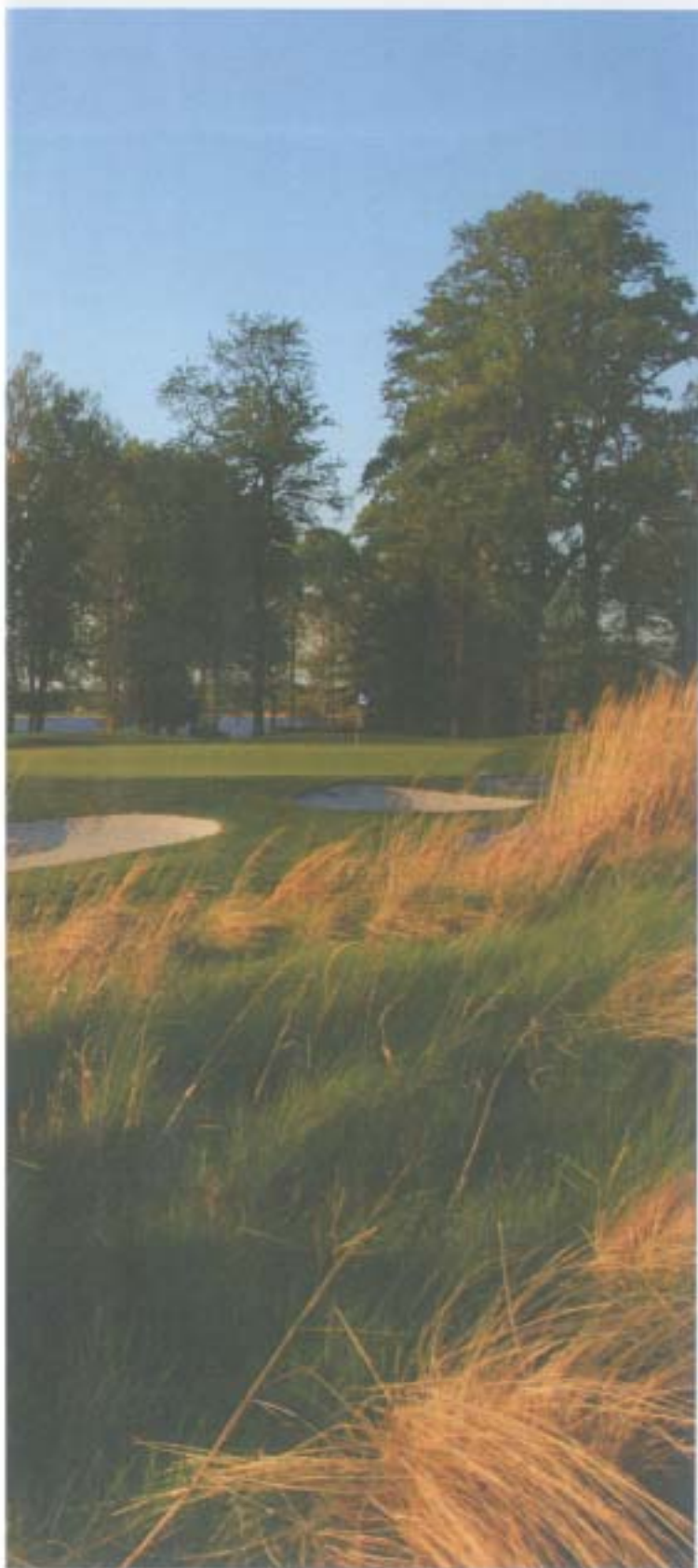
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WITHIN DRIVING RANGE



The King *of Queenstown*



THE PAR-3 SECOND AT QUEENSTOWN HARBOR'S RIVER COURSE • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL KAMENJAR

The blueprints for the current Queenstown Harbor golf layouts on Maryland's Eastern Shore actually began with a thumbprint.

As history relates, the Queenstown Harbor golf complex contains the site of the colonial American home of Henry Coursey, an English colonist who played an important role in the history of Maryland. His loyalty was rewarded in 1658 when Lord Baltimore pulled out a map of the region and told him he would give him all the land his thumb would cover.

It wasn't quite like spinning a globe, but Coursey's thumb landed on nearly 1,200 acres in the vicinity of what is now the town of Queenstown, a small Eastern Shore village near the intersection of the Chester River and the Chesapeake Bay. The Englishman named his land grant and a subsequent farm "My Lord's Gift" in commemoration of Lord Baltimore's generosity and that name has since been associated with the property. As it turns out, his gift is now more of a gift to golfers throughout the Middle Atlantic.

Coursey and his children built several homes on the property and lived in them through the late 1700s. The most spectacular was his own dwelling, an enormous two-story framed manor house with a stone foundation built in the 1670s. At that time it was one of the largest private residences in Maryland. Coursey lived in the house until his death in 1695, after which time

BY BILL KAMENJAR



THE PAR-4 13TH ON THE RIVER COURSE

it was occupied by his son. The house was finally abandoned and dismantled in the 1730s.

The exact location of the manor house was forgotten and remained a mystery until it was "rediscovered" in the summer of 1990, prior to the construction of the River and Lakes golf courses at Queenstown Harbor. The actual building had long since disappeared, but its enormous foundation was nicely preserved beneath the cornfield soil of My Lord's Gift Farm. Even though the Brick Companies, which now owns the land, was not obligated to provide an archeological study of the site, the company provided funding for excavations of the site by the University of Delaware Center for Archeological Research. The entire manor house foundation and the remains of many support buildings and facilities were identified and nearly one million early historic artifacts recovered. Many are housed

QUEENSTOWN HARBOR

800.827.5257 or midgolf.com

The course The River Course is set in lowlands near the intersection of the Chester River and the Chesapeake Bay. Several holes have views of one or the other and from two holes you can see the Bay Bridge. The Lakes Course is more inland and has a smattering of holes that are tightly wooded.

The designer Lindsay Ervin has done numerous high-quality courses in Maryland and Virginia. The River Course at Queenstown is one of his best.

The numbers The River Course stretches from less than 5,898 to 7,110 yards and is rated from 68.6/124 to 74.2/138. The Lakes Course plays from 5,246 to 6,569 yards and is rated from 65.0/105 to 71.0/124.

at the university where they are being studied.

Little did Coursey realize back then that more than 700 acres of his "thumb grant" would one day be turned into a spectacular golf resort.

Thanks to the continual efforts of the Brick Companies, which purchased the working farm in 1974, Queenstown Harbor is on its way to being just that. The facility already boasts two of the finer layouts in the region, and the property is on its way to providing lodging and conference structures featuring an Eastern Shore theme.

"Queenstown was built with the long-term goal of becoming a golf resort and spa," says Bob Moore, the general manager for Atlantic Golf, the facility's managing partner.

Located along the shore of the Chester River, Queenstown Harbor is a 36-hole facility with bentgrass tees, greens and fairways. While the resort aspect will take a few years to complete, the golf at Queenstown Harbor is now fully ingrained. Recent upgrades to the River Course included rebuilding all of the greens and making modifications to some of the designs. The par-3 13th green is



THE RIVERS PAR 4 GREEN

entirely new. Ridges have been removed or softened in other greens, most noticeably the fifth and 14th holes.

While casual players might not notice the design changes, they will notice the spectacular conditions. The fairways, after a lengthy rest while the greens work was being done, are in the best shape ever. The new greens are as pure and true as any public course greens in the region.

The layout remains one of the region's best. It offers several holes where players can take the John Daly approach but reins them in on holes like the sixth and 18th, both par 5s, where accuracy usually prevails over brute strength.

From the par-3 second and again at the par-4 14th, a distant view of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge avails itself, and the view across the expanse of water and wetlands between you and it is a picture-perfect Eastern Shore scene.

Along with Queenstown's new look, the club offers every group a forecaddie, which comes in quite handy on some of the River Course's tight, tree-lined holes. A little local expertise in knowing where an off-line shot might end up could save you a few Bridgestone's along the way.

The new River Course is the first major golf step for Queenstown on its way to becoming a resort. Atlantic Golf has remodeled a large turn-of-the-century home that sits along the Chester River and now rents it for weddings, banquets and golf retreats. Its 1,000-square-foot indoor banquet facility and four bedrooms make it perfect for small gatherings.

Not to be forgotten in the run toward becoming a resort is the fact that Queenstown Harbor remains a 36-hole facility. The Lakes Course is set more inland, and while it is tamer than the River Course, it would be the "A" course at a lot of Middle

Atlantic facilities. The Lakes Course opens and closes with short par 4s, but plenty of the holes in between are stout. The par-5 fourth is a great risk-reward hole with a long second shot that needs to carry a pond or be played as a safe layup shot. Both par 3s on the back encounter wetlands, and the stretch from 11 to 17 is as big league as the River Course.

The whole ambiance of Queenstown has changed. From the moment you pull into the brick-paved club-drop area, you notice a more upscale aura. The landscaping around the clubhouse and on the course is improved. The pavilion behind the clubhouse now has a national-park look rather than the old unkempt timbers and roof. A huge new putting green and a short-game practice area have been built near the new pavilion.

It all combines to make the facility the king of Queenstown and beyond. ■