



# Yarrow Ranks Among The Best in the Midwest

By Dianna Stampfler

**In 2001, the management at The Lodge at Yarrow in Augusta was facing a 20 percent decline in corporate business, attributed to a weak economy, the after-effects of 9/11 and a major October storm that tore up the 300-acre property.** Little did they know that the final blow in the “trials and tribulations of threes” would actually turn out to be “the third time’s the charm” that has now brought them recognition as one of the best new golf courses in Michigan.

The storm, which caused \$200,000 in damages and destroyed 50 acres of red pines, white pines and hardwood trees, actually carved out a natural setting for what would become a \$5 million championship golf course which opened in June 2003, under the new name Yarrow Golf & Conference Center.

“Great golf courses should fit into their natural surroundings in a harmonious manner, utilizing the ‘lay of the land’ to a maximum degree, while also being environmentally sensitive to the surrounding ecosystems,” said golf course architect and designer Ray Hearn.

“In my opinion, a great golf course is one with 18 truly memorable holes. Each hole should be fairly challenging for all levels of golfing ability, while rewarding well-executed shots. At Raymond Hearn Golf Designs, we feel we have achieved all of this at the Yarrow.”

Throughout Yarrow’s expansive property, you’ll find a cathedral of greens — groves of pine and hardwood trees as well as native bushes and grasses. Numerous marshy areas, the private Hamilton Lake and the meandering Augusta Creek add scenic and natural waterways to the course.

“In my 17 years in the business, Yarrow is the most spectacular inland setting for a golf course that I have seen to

date, period,” said Hearn. “The wetlands, rolling terrain, vegetation and rock outcroppings are just absolutely spectacular.”

The design stretches to over 7,000 yards for championship play, but this par-72 course also offers four other tee options to suit the ability of all golfers. Yarrow has a links-style feel, with wide tree-lined fairways, distinctively manicured bent-grass greens, extremely generous landing areas and strategically placed sand bunkers which contribute to the dramatic layout. You’ll find dramatic views from the tee boxes, including a breathtaking look at the water glistening on Hamilton Lake from #14 and a spectacular shot of the lodge around the bend — especially impressive at sunset — on hole #18.



Yarrow is challenging for even the best golfer, yet offers plenty of room for errant shots. The course offers golfers of all levels a test with varying degrees of difficulty.

"With the large number of courses to choose from, we set out to create a unique golfing experience," Hearn said. "We strongly believe it will be in a 'must play' category for any serious golfer. Once discovered, we believe Yarrow will be ranked along with the other premier golfing establishments in the Midwest."

And ranked it has been. In 2003, Yarrow was presented a Player's Choice Award by Great Lakes Golf magazine for the best new course in the Midwest. Golf Magazine ranked Yarrow as one of the "Top 25 New Courses in the Nation." And, Celebrated Living distinguished Yarrow as one of its "Top 10 Courses in the U.S."

A slice of world-class golf within a short drive of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, Yarrow is one of 12 courses in the area collectively known as Southern Swing, a cooperative of courses and facilities offering golf packages. Regarded as one of the finest golf resorts in Southern Michigan, Yarrow also offers lodging, dining and corporate programs including team building activities. Overall, what you'll get here is an ultimate golf experience with uncompromising Yarrow hospitality.

Yarrow features 42 standard overnight rooms in the Larkspur and Chicory buildings and three rooms located in the Forget-Me-Not building. Each room has two beds, coffee maker, robes and cable TV. The three isolated rooms are slightly larger, featuring two king beds and a screened-in porch. From business trips and corporate events to weddings and reunions, you'll find the accommodations at Yarrow most pleasing.

Whether it's a romantic dinner for two, a corporate dinner or an elegant wedding reception, the culinary options at Yarrow are endless. The Yarrow Pub is open seven days a week, offering a lighter menu and a large selection of domestic and imported beers, fine wines, liquors and cordials. The menu offerings range from fried calamari and honey glazed chicken salad to maple planked whitefish and filet mignon. A complete dessert menu provides a decadent end to a flavorful meal.

The Pub Deck and Cinnamonwood Deck are large entertainment venues which allow guests to take full advantage of the outdoor scenery and West Michigan weather. For something different, try the Redbud site for a barbecue and toasted marshmallows around the campfire, sure to create an experience like no other. Mulligan's Snack Shop is located in one of the original buildings near the bag drop, perfect for a snack before your round or at the turn.

Dogwood Hall is the formal banquet room for large groups including weddings, reunions and large business gatherings. Located on the upper level, this hall features fieldstone walls, wall-to-wall windows providing an impressive view of the wooded course, exposed wood beams and a copper cathedral ceiling. This room can be divided into two smaller conference rooms if necessary.

The conference and banquet facilities at Yarrow offer 12 comfortable and private rooms in its 14,000 square foot lodge. Described as an American Gothic style, the lodge is tastefully decorated with antique decor on all levels. Each private room is unique and can be set up in classroom, theater or banquet style, depending on your needs. Advanced audiovisual support is available.



In the various common areas of the lodge, expansive picture windows overlook the golf course with a panoramic view. Massive Michigan fieldstone fireplaces, flanked by overstuffed couches and chairs under natural wood cathedral ceilings, offer a warm and relaxed atmosphere for business or pleasure in a den-like setting. One flight up, you'll find two more intimate rooms — Cat Tails and Primrose — which beckon you to sit and relax. These rooms are favorites for brides and bridal parties. Ascend the spiral staircase to the Hawks' Nest, where the high perch lookout affords you the view of a lifetime, where one can see for miles in all directions beyond the course below. Four corner seats provide a place to sit and unwind after a day of wielding the pens or swinging the clubs.

Outdoor decks abound throughout the lodge, where the atmosphere is cozy and intimate. These decks are ideal for relaxing and socializing after the work is done. Complete food and beverage support and a host of amenities and recreational offerings can also be arranged.

Yarrow is one of the few resorts in Michigan to offer team-building and corporate training programs. The Experiential Learning activities, including The Climbing Wall, Quantum Leap, High-Y, Blind House, Market Share and The Grid, provide exercises in strategic planning, group risk-taking, mutual support, strategic partnering, planning and development. The staff at Yarrow can provide complete training or complement your existing program.

Yarrow Golf & Conference Center  
800.563.4397  
[www.yarrowgolf.com](http://www.yarrowgolf.com)

*Dianna Stampfer is the president of Promote Michigan, a travel destination marketing and consulting company based in Plainwell. [www.PromoteMichigan.com](http://www.PromoteMichigan.com).*