

Raising the Bar



Silo Ridge's comfort stations are to the halfway house as Le Bernardin is to the average fish fry **BY JEFF NEUMAN**

Playing a beautiful golf course on a summer day can make you feel like a kid in a candy store. At Silo Ridge Field Club in Amenia, N.Y., that simile turns literal between the third green and fourth tee.

It would be easy to cruise by the first of two “comfort stations” located just below the twin silos at the north edge of the golf course, were it not for the classic rock coming out of the outdoor speakers. The building itself seems lifted from Mayberry R.F.D., with weathered wood walls and rocking chairs on the front porch. Open the door and you’re instantly transported to a child’s post-Halloween dream of endless sweets, yours for the taking.

Straight ahead are shelves of penny candy jars filled with jellybeans, gum balls, M&Ms, red hots, Good & Plenty, Hershey’s Kisses, mini-chocolate bars, lollipops, and more (and for the more health-



inclined, dried fruit and a variety of energy bars). To the left, a soft-serve machine with several syrups and a dozen choices for toppings. To the right, coffee, oatmeal, and more candy jars; also warming drawers filled with fresh pastries and muffins, and an assortment of locally-made nut butters (peanut and almond, sure, but also cocoa-coconut almond butter, sprouted pumpkin seed butter and more). Refrigerated drawers are labeled DRINKS! BEER! SNACKS! On the center table, chips and KitKats and popcorn and a vessel of homemade caramelized spiced nuts. And more.

How to choose? Greedily.

“We have a sweet theme at Comfort Station 3, which we call The Front Porch,” writes Jonathan Wright, regional vice president of culinary operations for Discovery Land Company, in an email. “This one evolves during the day; at lunchtime it evolves into lunch and all-day snacking items with a focus on our garden: Crudités, salads, wraps, chilled soups, homemade potato chips and flatbreads. We have a root beer float station, a wide array of cookies, and warm savory empanadas.”

And even this cornucopia is but a prelude to The Back Porch, situated just above the twelfth tee. This one features the club’s smokehouse and savory specialties like bone broth, charcuterie, shorty hot dogs on a roller next to cobs of foil-wrapped corn, a grilled cheese station with tomato soup, steamed buns with smoked pork belly and homemade kimchee... At how many halfway houses have you heard someone say, “Don’t miss the smoked duck breast”? Choices from the outdoor grill may include Angus sliders, duck and foie gras bratwurst with truffle aioli, and braised short rib tamales. The beverage options include many on the adult side: a full bar, a frozen margarita machine, and beers and wines, locally sourced as much as possible.

It’s easy to imagine a foursome ambling into The Back Porch and never coming out. For those who do continue their rounds, they’ll get another crack at it near the sixteenth green.

The comfort stations are a hallmark of Discovery clubs. “We have some guidelines that we try to

incorporate into each of our clubs,” notes Wright, whose prior posts include executive chef positions for the reopening of The Rainbow Room, at the Michelin two-star Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons in Oxfordshire, and stints at luxury hotels in New Orleans, Miami Beach, Barbados, and Singapore. “However there is a great deal of freedom to push the boundaries, redefine and recreate something special at each property.... We have an abundance of incredible local ingredients and our farm-to-table style emulates its way through all of our offerings.”

“One of the vital considerations for our potential members is the food – not just good food, but an exceptional culinary experience,” says PGA General Manager Brian Crowell. “That’s why Jonathan Wright was one of our most important hires.”

It’s rarely a good thing when you visit a club and come away talking about the halfway house. Considering Silo Ridge’s comfort stations, it may be the ultimate compliment to its outstanding Tom Fazio layout if you mention the course at all. ■



(Opposite page) Interior and exterior view of The Back Porch, with some of the savory options available. (Left) The comfort station near the third green, The Front Porch, has an broad array of sweet selections.



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