



Caverns Country Club ~ The Holy Grail

Nick Ciattei



Hole 1 Par 5

How many times have you walked up to the first tee on a golf course and told your playing partner to watch out for the hole in the middle of the fairway? My guess would be only once, and that time and that place would be when you played Caverns Country Club. I have more to tell you about this rare oddity and other reasons to play this wonderful golf course located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Many call this area

of the Commonwealth "God's Country," and He no doubt had a hand in providing some of the most remarkable vistas in the mid-Atlantic that are abundant in this part of the country. A big part of the Luray Caverns family, Caverns Country Club lies just beyond the attraction's entrance. The course was opened in 1975 by the Luray Caverns Corporation and was designed by Mal Purdy. The Blue Ridge Mountains form an amphitheater of sorts as the golf course plays over rolling hills on the banks of the Shenandoah River.

Well proportioned tee boxes and very large greens complement this terrific mountain course, a par 72 that plays from 6499 yards at the tips to a pleasing 5266 yards from the forward tees. Caverns Country Club opens with a truly one-of-a-kind hole. "We are the only course in America with such a feature," says John Shaffer, director of public relations for both the caverns and the country club. Fittingly, a cave opens up in the center of the fairway on the first hole directly in the crosshairs of your target area from an elevated tee. If your ball unfortunately flies straight off the tee into this pothole, you receive a "Get Out of Jail Free" card in the form of a free drop according to a local USGA ruling. Superintendent Putt Lancaster adds that several other grottos are located throughout the layout but none attracts as much attention as this one. In addition, this hole perched high on a bluff borders the Shenandoah River creating one celebrated test of golf. An array of tree-lined and prairie holes follows and provides a very interesting mix that will test most aspects of your game. Tight fairways demand accuracy off the tee on numbers two and three, but things open up on the 527-yard par 5 fifth (pictured on



Hole 3 Par 4



Hole 6 Par 4



Hole 12 Par 3



Hole 10 Par 4

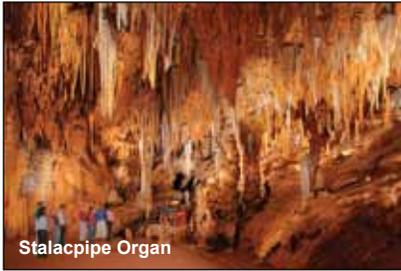
the cover). The approach on this roller-coaster hole climbs slightly uphill so take an additional club. You will remember the virtually unobstructed tee box on the par 4 sixth that presents a panoramic marvel of the surroundings. The front nine wraps up with two par 4s that are some of the toughest driving holes on the course.

The back nine at Caverns Country Club kicks off with a pair of challenging dogleg rights, and the tenth rates as the hardest hole on the course with only a slither of a fairway on which to land your tee shot. No picnic either, the eleventh makes an even sharper dogleg with plenty of misfortune surrounding the green. Take pars here and move on to better scoring opportunities on holes 12 through 16 including a couple of mid-length par 3s and a reachable par 5 at number thirteen. The sixteenth, also a par 5, features a tenacious tee shot through a grove of trees with out-of-bounds all the way down the right side. The closing holes at Caverns are both solid par 4s with the eighteenth playing to a green protected by a bunker graced with wood planks. Shots that fall short may slingshot off of the wood making just an awful bonking sound and into trouble left of the green.

The town of Luray's other main attraction has always been the caverns with nearly one-half million visitors annually. The underground marvels of Luray Caverns make it one of the great wonders of the world. I still to this day remember my first visit there on a school field trip in the 1960s. The caverns are perhaps best known for the Great Stalacpipe Organ, a lithophone made from solenoid-fired strikers that tap stalactites of various sizes to produce tones similar to those of xylophones, tuning forks, or bells. Shenandoah National Park is headquartered in Luray, the nearest town to the Thornton Gap entrance to Skyline Drive (to the east).



Hole 18 Par 4



Stalacpipe Organ



Titanias Veil

Over the past 40 years golfers from points north include “snowbirds” from as far away as Canada continually find Caverns Country Club an ideal place for a golf excursion away from the cold. Most of the packages that the country club puts together use the Luray Caverns Motel and several other nearby properties and include meal vouchers for several area restaurants. You could also choose to include Caverns Country Club in a package in either Harrisonburg or New Market, VA, through Golf Guide Golf Getaways.

Whether you are going for several days or just planning a day trip, Caverns Country Club delivers the goods for a somewhat religious golf experience, one that will be best remembered for its plentiful natural beauty and one unique golf hole. 🏌️

For more information visit cavernscountryclub.com

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