

Shennecossett Golf Course

Seaside location offers golfers a unique experience

When you think of Shennecossett Golf Course in Groton, two things come quickly to mind.

First is the renowned golf course architect Donald Ross, creator of over 400 layouts across the nation, whose signature remains indelibly etched at Shennecossett. Second is the unique location, where the Thames River converges with Long Island Sound, offering players a feeling of golf in the British Isles.

Yet, there is more to the Shennecossett story, and last year it was told with the awarding of the Walter Lowell Public Golf Course Distinguished Service Award, given annually by the CT Section PGA to honor courses that serve as a model for providing opportunities to those who want to learn and play the game.

For more than 10 years, Shennecossett has hosted the CT Section's Senior Open, which brings together top senior professional and

amateur golfers from Connecticut and the Northeast. The course has always supported junior golf in a big way, hosting clinics and tournaments for young players. And last year, Shennecossett formed a partnership with Gaylord Hospital and the Eastern Amputee Association to host a training seminar for golf professionals to instruct physically challenged golfers.

As Groton's Director of Parks and Recreation John Silsby says, the town has stayed true to its mission of providing a quality golf course in a customer-friendly manner to the golfing public.

"Though our Donald Ross links has much tradition, we are proud that it serves the golfing public of southeastern Connecticut in such a satisfactory way," Silsby said. "We've worked to make Shenny more accessible to all golfers, and we're also proud to continue to host the annual Connecticut Senior Open."

Shennecossett has served as a golfer's summer playground for well over 100 years. It used to be known as Shennecossett Country Club, when, at the turn of the century, the rich and famous came to the area to relax in their summer cottages or at the old Ocean House hotel.

Donald Ross was hired to create an 18-hole championship layout from the existing course, and his creation here typified the Ross standard. Holes follow the contour of land and each present a different challenge. His courses demand that every stroke requires full concentration and attention necessary to good golf, and that's certainly true at Shennecossett.

You will not find a better Donald Ross hole than the 10th, although the tee shot requires you to look left and right before starting your swing. That's because the tee box of this 425-yard par-4 is just across Plant Street. The sloping fairway follows the contour of the land, and any shot too far left could roll into the heavy grasses that form a wide hazard. To the right is a grassy hillside that could leave left-to-right players with a hanging lie and a very difficult approach.

And your approach shot is where the fun really begins. The elevated green is surrounded by bunkers all around, and even with an accurate shot, birdie or par can be difficult to achieve on the tiered, sloping putting surface.

Another classic Ross hole is the par-3 4th. From the back tees the hole plays 208 yards, which is difficult enough for a par-3. But the hole rises uphill to an elevated green that slopes severely in all directions, leaving little, if any, room for error.

Indeed, Shennecossett offers golfers a unique opportunity to play a Ross design: Of the five courses Donald Ross designed in Connecticut, only Shennecossett is open to the public. However, three holes that weren't designed by the master Scotsman may be among Shennecossett's best.

In the late 1990s, a major course renovation



Shennecossett Golf Course

www.shennygolf.com

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 2008 Club Champions: | Men: Ben Bauer Women: Jen Hildebrand |
| Course Record: | 65 – Casey Roan (2006) |

changed much of the original layout on the front nine and created three new holes on the back nine. These became the 15th, 16th and 17th holes, all unique and incredibly scenic.

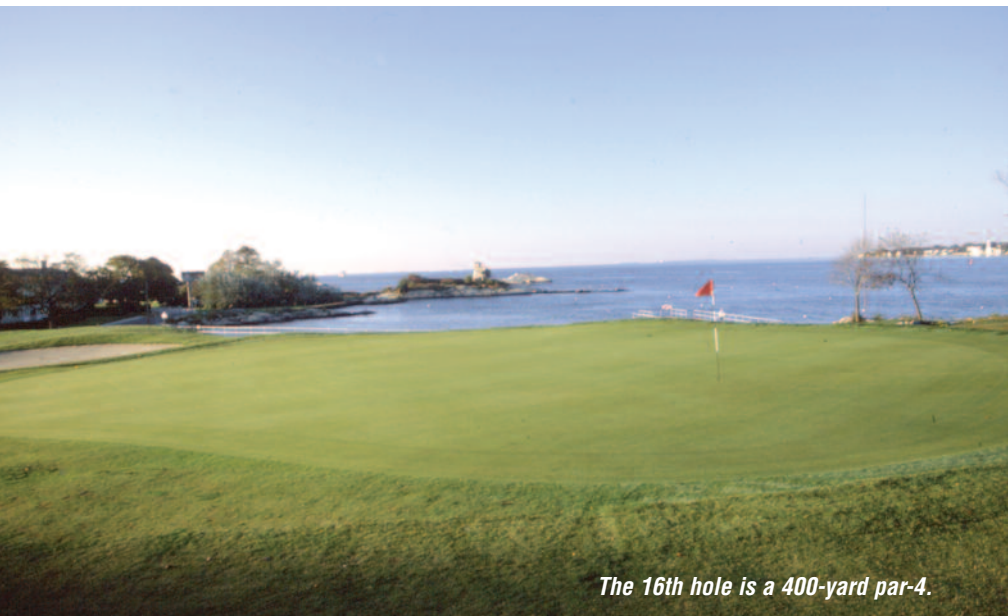
The 15th hole is a 195-yard par-3 that begins with a somewhat elevated tee box. The green is large, but slopes back-to-front with two large bunkers left and right.

Next is a 400-yard dogleg left that is quickly becoming one of the renowned holes of New England. The 16th hole starts with a platform tee box that aims toward a sweeping fairway, then turns to the left and uphill to the green.

Here, you'll find a view that is unsurpassed. Beyond the green is the Thames River as it empties into Long Island Sound, a vast seascape of marine activity that will surely test your ability to concentrate on golf.

The final hole of this spectacular trio is a short par-4 that requires an accurately placed tee shot for your approach to a highly elevated green. It's all carry to the putting surface, and nothing but trouble short. Once again, you'll enjoy remarkable views of the nearby river, where you might even see a submarine from the nearby Naval base or the three-masted U.S. Coast Guard bark Eagle on a training cruise.

Shennecossett offers online tee times as well as telephone reservations. Season passes for residents and non-residents are available. The course usually remains open all winter because of its seaside location.



The 16th hole is a 400-yard par-4.