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The course at Currahee Club offers sweeping views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Lake Hartwell

NORTHEAST GEORGIA

A Quick Trip to Two Extraordinary Golf Opportunities

BY CARL DANBURY JR.

IT MAY NOT BE AUGUSTA, but a quick jaunt up Interstate 85 to the Lake Hartwell area recently left me dumbfounded simply because I had the opportunity to visit two very unique golf courses: the Currahee Club in Toccoa and the Catechee Golf Club in Hartwell. One (Currahee) is a private, gated club community with plans for 810 homesites, while the other (Catechee) is a semi-private club that welcomes all. Both should reside on your must-play list for different reasons.

CURRAHEE CLUB

Currahee is a Cherokee word meaning to “stand alone” and it clearly describes this Jim Fazio-designed golf course, as well as plans for the entire community.

One understands the majesty of the Currahee Club from atop the tee box on the 10th hole, which may actually pale in comparison to the sweeping vistas of the Blue Ridge Mountains and astounding view of Lake Hartwell afforded from the clubhouse, upon its completion. A deep breath and a blink of an eye may lead you to believe you have been cast into another location altogether, perhaps thrust in a more mountainous topography than Georgia. Yet, that is the beauty of Currahee Club — extraordinary elevation changes and stunning topography right here in our own back yard.

While the community is in its construction phase, which will include the fabulous clubhouse, community grill, recreation facility and a general store, one can only hope that the rest of the development will mirror the golf course both in maintenance and grandeur.

The development team of Bob and Chris Whitley of Currahee Partners,



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who have created such revered golf communities as Colleton River Plantation near Hilton Head Island, S.C.; The Bear’s Club in Palm Beach County, Fla.; and The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club and Spa in Jupiter, Fla., plan to create an incredible lakeside community with elegant homes and world-class amenities, which includes this incomparable golf course.

Far enough removed from quaint Toccoa, Currahee Club may soon be recognized as the crown jewel of private clubs in Northeast Georgia. With ample access to the pristine waters of Lake Hartwell for fishing and boating, residents have more recreational opportunities than just golf from which to choose, yet the golf course speaks volumes for creativity, imagination and implementation.

According to Alpharetta resident Floyd Brown, the golf course at Currahee Club includes one of the greatest holes he has ever played. “I think No. 17 is one of the most beautiful par-3s that I have ever seen from the back tees,” Brown exclaimed. “It has everything.”

The hole, which measures a staggering 251 yards from the tips, plays across a quarry adorned with an intimidating waterfall to a wide, sloping green. But, with five to seven sets of tees, players of all abilities will enjoy attempting to slay the par-3 dragon. “I regretted not trying to hit from the back tees with a driver,” said Brown, who is an accomplished senior golfer.

While the rugged No. 17 is a visual masterpiece, the variety of the entire layout is what Brown enjoyed most about the Currahee Club. “I liked the fact that no two holes on the course were alike. It has remarkable elevation changes and the views there are without peer in Georgia,” Brown said. “It is a very fair course, but choosing the correct set of tees to play based upon your ability is essential.”

In terms of maintenance, Currahee Club rivals any of the best that you have played or seen on the PGA Tour. “The greens were impeccable and the general maintenance of the fairways, rough and bunkers was first-rate,” Brown offered. “Playing Currahee Club is a very enjoyable experience.”

BUILDING PLANS

Homesites in Currahee Club start in the mid-\$100,000 range. And the homes currently under construction illustrate elegant and sophisticated mountain architecture. Builders at Currahee Club must qualify for the builder program, which means they must satisfy the developers in terms of financial capability, building quality and, most importantly, customer relations. Currahee Club has a complete set of architectural guidelines that must be followed. Bainbridge Homes and Dalco Custom Homes were recently selected for the builder program.

“We’re creating something special here,” Bob Whitley said. “We want to develop a culture at Currahee Club that leads to a safe and secure and nurturing environment, a fun environment, for everyone in the entire family. It’s not only a home for the golfer. It’s for the wife and the mother, and the grandparents and the children, and the pets. The goal is to create an atmosphere that’s welcoming and comfortable.”

From what we saw on our first visit, Whitley’s vision is right on target. 

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