

SHOWCASING THE HERITAGE OF THE OZARKS THROUGH THE BEAUTY OF GOLF



## SHOWCASING NATURE THROUGH GOLF IN THE BEAUTIFUL OZARK MOUNTAINS

### **Big Cedar Golf Fact Sheet**

Big Cedar Lodge has quickly become one of the premier golf destinations in the United States and was recognized in 2026 by USA Today 10Best as one of the Best Golf Resort in the United States. In summer 2025, Big Cedar Lodge opened Cliffhangers, the first course designed by Johnny and JP Morris, joining the five existing and top-rated courses at the resort including the first public access course by Tiger Woods' TGR Design, Payne's Valley, Ozarks National (Bill Coore & Ben Crenshaw), Buffalo Ridge (Tom Fazio), Mountain Top (Gary Player) and Top of the Rock (Jack Nicklaus). These world-class courses bring Johnny Morris' vision to life by creating an unparalleled golf experience in the Missouri Ozarks, attracting visitors from across the world.

#### **Cliffhangers**

**Designed by: Johnny and JP Morris**

**Course Opening: July 4, 2025**

The most extraordinary par-3 course on Earth! Created by Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris and his son John Paul, Cliffhangers dangles on a steep hillside adjacent to Payne's Valley with 18 holes ranging from 60 to 170 yards. The adventure course features dramatic elevation changes, breathtaking views, and holes meticulously carved into the region's iconic limestone cliffs and flowing creeks.

#### **Payne's Valley**

**Designed by: Tiger Woods' TGR Design**

**Course Opening: September 22, 2020**

Named in honor of golf legend and Ozarks native, the late Payne Stewart, the new "Payne's Valley" course was the first completed fully public-access course in the world designed by Tiger Woods' design firm, TGR Design. The 18-hole layout showcases the region's natural beauty and features an extraordinarily dramatic 19th hole, "The Big Rock at Payne's Valley," designed by Bass Pro Founder Johnny Morris. The spectacular finishing hole is a par 3 that can be used to settle unfinished bets, and is set against a 200 foot limestone cliff and roaring waterfall. With multiple tee boxes, the course is challenging for the world's best players yet player-friendly with wide fairways and an unforgettable finish. The course officially opened in fall 2020 with a grand opening event, The Payne's Valley Cup, where American greats Tiger Woods and Justin Thomas challenged European standouts Rory McIlroy and Justin Rose. It was named the Best Public Golf Course by USA Today 10Best in 2026 along with the #3 Top Public-Access Golf Course in Missouri by Golfweek.

#### **Ozarks National**

**Designed by: Bill Coore & Ben Crenshaw**

**Course Opening: April 29, 2019**

The world-renowned golf course architect team of Coore & Crenshaw shares Johnny Morris' passion and appreciation for nature and conservation. Honored as the Best New Public Course of 2019 by Golf Digest and the Top Public-Access Course in Missouri in 2025 by Golfweek, the design of Ozarks National is a striking display for the senses and a fitting tribute to the Ozarks region. It tests avid players and golf travelers from around the country. With breathtaking views, the course also includes interesting features, such as a 400-foot wooden beam and plank bridge, which connects the tee box and fairway of the 13th hole that stands 60-feet above a flowing creek.

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### Mountain Top

**Designed by: Gary Player**  
**Course Opening: August 31, 2017**

The 13-hole Mountain Top Course designed by Gary Player was created to bring a more accessible experience to golfers of all skill levels. Acknowledged by GOLF.com as one of the Best Par-3 Courses in America, Mountain Top routes through unforgettable rock formations. Player teamed up with Johnny Morris to create an unparalleled experience for golfers that features some of the most breathtaking and unobstructed views in the region. Mountain Top also offers a Himalayan-style putting course designed by 5-time Open Champion Tom Watson.

### Buffalo Ridge

**Designed by: Tom Fazio**  
**Course Reopening Following Renovation: June 2014, June 2025**

Buffalo Ridge is an 18-hole championship public golf course ranked by *GOLF Magazine* as the No. 2 Public Golf Course in Missouri, 2025. Following Big Cedar Lodge's acquisition of the course in 2013, renowned course architect Tom Fazio and visionary conservationist Johnny Morris worked side-by-side to complete a major course renovation project. The new layout brings players in close contact with nature and features pristine playing conditions.

Herds of roaming bison graze on the native prairie grasses that surround the golf course boundaries. The renovation unveiled natural rock formations that have been incorporated into the routing of the course. Other improvements include the beautification and enhancement of all water features, the creation of new water features, and completely rebuilt bunkers with new white sand. Buffalo Ridge covers approximately 450 acres and the course measures 7,036 yards from the back tees.

### Top of the Rock

**Designed by: Jack Nicklaus**  
**Course Opening: 1996**  
**Course Reopening Following Renovation: June 2014**

Top of the Rock is a true celebration of nature and Ozarks heritage, sitting at the highest elevation in Taney County, Missouri, overlooking the Ozark Mountains and Table Rock Lake. GOLF.com acknowledged Top of the Rock as one of the Best Par-3 Courses in America. Honored as the first par-3 course to be featured on a PGA TOUR-sanctioned event, the 9-hole course offers an unrivaled golf experience with unparalleled panoramic views that highlight the work of the course architect, Jack Nicklaus. After their round, golfers are treated to a nature experience like no other on the Lost Canyon Cave and Nature Trail at Top of the Rock, a two-mile self-guided journey by golf cart through the Ozarks landscape.

In addition to world-class golf, Top of the Rock is a multi-faceted destination featuring: Lost Canyon Cave and Nature Trail; Top of the Rock Golf Course, and Pro Shop; Ancient Ozarks Natural History Museum; Arnie's Barn Restaurant & General Store; Osage Restaurant; Buffalo Bar; End of the Trail All-American Wine Cellar; the Chapel of the Ozarks; and the Cathedral of Nature, which originally revealed itself in 2015 when the site opened up due to a sinkhole. Since then, 82,500 dump truck loads of dirt have been removed unveiling one of the greatest wonders of the Ozarks.

### Accommodations

#### **Angler's Lodge Hollister and Payne's Valley Cottages**

The Angler's Lodge Hollister and Payne's Valley Cottages offer travelers the perfect accommodations for a golf focused trip to the Ozarks. At Angler's Lodge Hollister, guests enjoy being a short drive away from some of the top golf courses in the country with access to Big Cedar attractions like Fun

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Mountain, Dogwood Canyon, Cedar Creek Spa and more.

Angler's Lodge offers 94 custom rooms that combine rustic touches with modern finishes. These accommodations offer simple, functional spaces that put couples, families, and groups in a central location to take advantage of all the activities and amenities in the Ozarks. Amenities include complimentary breakfast, a shuttle to Big Cedar golf courses, daily housekeeping, a fitness room, and more.

The Payne's Valley Cottages are located on the ridge below the Mountain Top clubhouse and provide sweeping views of the Ozark mountains overlooking Payne's Valley and Mountain Top. These new cottages feature stone fireplaces, private patios, a full kitchen, and more. They are perfectly suited for a golf buddy's trip or for the family looking for a pristine setting close to world-class golf yet a short 15-minute drive away from the award-winning amenities included on Big Cedar's main campus.

### Big Cedar Golf Rankings

#### 2026 Accolades

- Top 200 Resort courses in the U.S.: #T41 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2026
- Top 200 Resort courses in the U.S. #T52 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2026
- Top 200 Resort courses in the U.S. #T67 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2026
- Top 100 Best Golf Resorts in the World: #91, *Golf World*, 2026
- Top Public Access Courses in Mississippi: #1 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2026
- Top Public Access Courses in Mississippi: #2 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2026
- Top Public Access Courses in Mississippi: #3 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2026
- Best 25 Public Golf Courses in Missouri: #11 Payne's Valley, *Golf Pass*, 2026
- 15 Best Shorts Courses in the U.S.: #10 Cliffhangers, *Links Magazine*, 2026
- 15 Best Shorts Courses in the U.S.: #11 Top of the Rock, *Links Magazine*, 2026
- 15 Best Shorts Courses in the U.S.: #12 Mountain Top, *Links Magazine*, 2026
- Best of the Midwest Awards, Big Cedar Lodge, *Midwest Living*, 2026
- Best Golf Resort, #2, *USA Today 10Best*, 2026
- Best Public Golf Course, #1 Payne's Valley, *USA Today 10Best*, 2026

#### 2025 Accolades

- Top 10 Lakeside Courses You Can Play, #10 Top of the Rock, *Links Magazine*, 2025
- Top 10 Golf Resorts in the U.S., *Forbes*, 2025
- Top 100 Public-Access Courses in the U.S., T#92 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 100 Public-Access Courses in the U.S., #69 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 100 Public-Access Courses in the U.S., T#58 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Best Golf Resort, #1, *USA Today 10Best*, 2025
- Best Public Golf Course, #3 Payne's Valley, *USA Today 10Best*, 2025
- Top Public-Access Golf Courses in Missouri: #1 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top Public-Access Golf Courses in Missouri: #2 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top Public-Access Golf Courses in Missouri: #3 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 200 Resort courses in the U.S.: #43 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 200 Resort courses in the U.S. #54 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 200 Resort courses in the U.S. #71 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 200 Modern Courses in the U.S. T#170 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 200 Modern Courses in the U.S. #196 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 200 Modern Courses in the U.S. #41 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2025
- Top 200 Modern Courses in the U.S. #52 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2025

#### 2024 Accolades

- Top 200 Resort Courses in the U.S.: #40 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2024
- Top 200 Resort Courses in the U.S.: #53 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2024

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- Top 200 Resort Courses in the U.S.: #69 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2024
- Top 25 Public Golf Courses in Missouri -- Golfers' Choice 2024: #1, Ozarks National, 2024, *GolfPass*
- Top 25 Public Golf Courses in Missouri -- Golfers' Choice 2024: #8, Buffalo Ridge, 2024, *GolfPass*
- Top 25 Public Golf Courses in Missouri -- Golfers' Choice 2024: #16, Payne's Valley, 2024, *GolfPass*
- Best Golf Courses in All 50 States: Where to Tee Up in America: Best in Missouri, Ozarks National, *Men's Journal*, 2024
- Top Public-Access Golf Courses in Missouri: #1 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2024
- Top Public-Access Golf Courses in Missouri: #2 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2024
- Top Public-Access Golf Courses in Missouri: #3 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2024
- 9 Family-Friendly Golf Resorts Worth Visiting This Summer: *GOLF*, 2024
- Top 100 Best Courses You Can Play in the U.S.: T#55 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2024
- Top 100 Best Courses You Can Play in the U.S.: T#70 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2024
- Top 100 Best Courses You Can Play in the U.S.: T#94 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2024
- Top 200 Modern Courses: #T167, Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2024

### 2023 Accolades

- Top 100 Golf Resorts in the World, *GOLF*, 2024-25 (Published Sept. 2023)
- Top 100 U.S. public-access courses: #51 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Top 100 U.S. public-access courses: #77 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Top 100 U.S. public-access courses: #93 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #1 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #2 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #3 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Top 200 resort courses in the U.S.: #38 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Top 200 resort courses in the U.S. #58 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Top 200 resort courses in the U.S. #68 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2023
- Top 40 par-3, short and non-traditional courses in the U.S.: #19 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2023
- The 50 best golf courses in the Midwest: #42 Ozarks National, *GOLF*, 2022-23
- 28 best golf resorts in the U.S. and Canada, *GOLF*, 2023
- Top 100 Golf Resorts in the World, *GOLF*, 2024-25
- The Best Golf Courses in All 50 States: #25 Payne's Valley, *Men's Health*, 2023
- America's 100 Greatest Public Courses: #30 Ozarks National, *Golf Digest*, 2023
- America's 100 Greatest Public Courses: #78 Payne's Valley, *Golf Digest*, 2023
- America's 100 Greatest Public Courses: #92 Buffalo Ridge, *Golf Digest*, 2023
- The best golf courses in Missouri: #3 Ozarks National, *Golf Digest*, 2023
- The best golf courses in Missouri: #7 Payne's Valley, *Golf Digest*, 2023
- The best golf courses in Missouri: #8 Buffalo Ridge, *Golf Digest*, 2023
- "Greens of Distinction" Award, *Corporate & Incentive Travel*, 2023
- Platinum Golf Shop Award Winner: Big Cedar Golf, *Association of Golf Merchandisers*, 2023

### 2022 Accolades

- Top 200 Resort Golf Courses in the U.S.: #35 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Top 200 Resort Golf Courses in the U.S.: #63 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Top 200 Resort Golf Courses in the U.S.: #118 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Top 100 Courses You Can Play: #49 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Top 100 Courses You Can Play: T#82 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Top 200 Modern Golf Courses: T#128 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #1 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #2 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #4 Payne's Valley, *Golfweek*, 2022
- Platinum Golf Shop Award Winner: Big Cedar Golf, *Association of Golf Merchandisers*, 2022
- Golf World Top 100: Best Golf Courses of America, #40 Ozarks National, *Today's Golfer*, 2022
- "Greens of Distinction" Award, *Corporate & Incentive Travel*, 2022
- 15 Best Golf Resorts in the United States, *Robb Report*, 2022
- Best Golf Course: Payne's Valley Golf Course, *Springfield News-Leader*, 2022

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### 2021 Accolades

- Best New Public Course and Second Place in Best New Overall: Payne's Valley, *Golf Digest*, 2021
- America's 100 Greatest Public Courses: Ozarks National, *Golf Digest*, 2021
- The Best Golf Courses in Missouri: #2 Ozarks National, #9 Buffalo Ridge, *Golf Digest*, 2021
- America's Second 100 Greatest Golf Courses: #155 Ozarks National, *Golf Digest*, 2021
- Best Par 3 Courses in the World: Top of the Rock, *Golf Magazine*, 2021
- Top 100 Courses You Can Play: #54 Ozarks National, *Golf Magazine*, 2021
- Best public golf courses in the Midwest: #1 in Missouri, Ozarks National, *Golf Magazine*, 2021
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #1 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2021
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #2 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2021
- Top 100 Courses You Can Play: #44 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2021
- Top 100 Courses You Can Play: #81 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2021
- Top 200 Resort Golf Courses in the U.S.: #33 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2021
- Top 200 Resort Golf Courses in the U.S.: #63 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2021
- Top 200 Modern Golf Courses: T#110 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2021
- Best New Course: #3 Payne's Valley, *Golf Inc.*, 2021
- 10 golf destinations to visit in 2021: *GolfPass*, 2021
- Distinguished Golf Destination: ICONIC designation, *BoardRoom Magazine*, 2021
- Best New Golf Course: Payne's Valley, *Golf Aficionado*, 2021
- Best Golf Resort: Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf Aficionado*, 2021
- 9 Best and Most Affordable Par-3 Courses in the United States, Top of the Rock and Mountain Top, *Golf.com*, 2020
- Clubhouse of the Year: #2, Ozarks National, *Golf Inc*, 2020
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #1 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2020
- Best Course You Can Play in Missouri: #2 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2020
- Top 100 Courses You Can Play: #64 Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2020
- Top 100 Courses You Can Play: #83 Buffalo Ridge, *Golfweek*, 2020
- Top 10 Golf Trips in 2020: #1 Big Cedar Lodge/Payne's Valley, *Golf Advisor*, 2020

### 2019 Accolades

- #1 Family Resort in North America: Big Cedar Lodge, *GOLF Magazine*, 2019
- Best New Public Courses: #1 Ozarks National, *Golf Digest*, 2019
- Best Golf Resorts in the Rockies and Great Plains: Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf Digest*, 2019
- Top 12 Golf Resorts in the United States, *Robb Report*, 2019
- Top 100 Best Courses You Can Play: #89 Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golfweek*, 2019
- Best Courses You Can Play by State: #1 Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golfweek*, 2019
- Top 200 Resort Golf Courses: #64 Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golfweek*, 2019
- 2019 Editor's Choice Awards: Golf Destination that Keeps Rising- Big Cedar Lodge, *Midwest Golfing Magazine*, 2019
- 2019 Best Resort Amenities: Camp Long Creek, *Golf Inc. Magazine*, 2019
- Top 10 Mountain Golf Destinations in North America: Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf Advisor*, 2019
- 50 Most Beautiful Golf Courses in the World You Can Play: #45 Top of the Rock, *Golf Advisor*, 2019
- Best Short Courses in America: Mountain Top and Top of the Rock, *Golf Tips Magazine*, 2019
- Top 50 Public Golf Ranges: Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf Range Magazine*
- Top 6 Range Renovations: Tom Watson Putting Green and Ozarks National Short Game Area, *Golf Range Magazine*

### 2018 Accolades

- 10 Most Anticipated Golf Courses: #3 Ozarks National, *Golf.com*, 2018
- 12 Best Par-3 Courses in America, #9 Top of the Rock, #10 Mountain Top, *Golf.com*, 2018
- Best Golf Resorts for Each Month of the Year- July- Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf.com*, 2018
- A Look Back at my 2018 in Golf: Favorite Rounds- Ozarks National, Best Trip Accommodations- Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf Advisor*, 2018
- 13 New Course Debuts You'll Want to See: Ozarks National, *Golf Advisor*, 2018
- 10 Great Golf Destinations to Visit in 2018: #4 Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf Advisor*, 2018

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### 2017 Accolades

- Best New Courses: Spectacular New Short Course- Mountain Top, *Golf.com*, 2017
- Travelin' Joe's Favorite (and Surprising) New Courses: Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golf.com*, 2017
- The Travelin' Joe Awards: Best Courses and Travel- Mountain Top Course, *Golf.com*, 2017
- The Best Golf Courses in Missouri: Top Public Course- Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golf Digest*, 2017
- Nine Most Eagerly Awaited Golf Courses: Mountain Top Course, *Forbes*, 2017
- The Mobile Golfer's Top 50 Golf Courses You Can Play in America: #12 Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golf News Net*, 2017
- Best Places to Play Golf: GOLF Gold Premier Resorts, *Golf.com*, 2016
- Best Courses You Can Play in Missouri: #1 Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golf.com*, 2016

### 2016 Accolades

- Best Courses You Can Play in Missouri: #2 Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golfweek*, 2018
- Best of Golf: Emerging Resorts- Big Cedar Lodge/Ozarks National, *Golfweek*, 2018
- Best Golf Holes in the Ozarks: Mountain Top Course, Top of the Rock, Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Springfield Business Journal*, 2018
- 5 Diverse Short Courses: Mountain Top Course, *Robb Report*, 2018
- The Mobile Golfer's 40 Best Golf Trip Destinations: #10 Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf News Net*, 2018
- Best Coore & Crenshaw Courses: Ozarks National, *Golf Digest*, 2018
- World-Class Resorts Where Golf and Guns Mix: #4 Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf Advisor*, 2018
- Editor's Choice Awards: Best Midwest Rising Destination- Big Cedar Lodge, *Midwest Golfing Magazine*, 2018

### 2015 Accolades

- Golf's Best Kept Secret or Golf's Hottest Destination: Big Cedar Lodge, *Forbes*, 2015
- America's Most Inspiring Practice Ranges: #1 Top of the Rock, *Golf.com*, 2015
- 9 Amazing Spas at Golf Resorts: Big Cedar Lodge, *Golf.com*, 2015
- Best Courses You Can Play In Missouri: #3 Buffalo Ridge Springs, *Golfweek*, 2015

For more details about the golf experience at Big Cedar Lodge, please visit [GolfBigCedar.com](http://GolfBigCedar.com).  
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