

## Deer Creek Lodge and Conference Center



Travel writer  
Aaron Leventhal

the lodge and discovered that it's ideal for a weekday or weekend getaway.

Deer Creek Lodge is situated in the heart of the 3,600-acre Deer Creek State Park, once home to nomadic Indian tribes that hunted and gathered plants along the banks of the creek and in the surrounding lush meadows and dense woodlands. Today the region is filled with rich farmland and, thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the creek was dammed in the early 1970s to create Deer Creek Lake.

Built in 1981 and recently refurbished, the lodge, operated by Xanterra Parks and Recreation, has 110 guest rooms, all with balconies overlooking the lake or woodlands. There also are 25 spacious, two-bedroom cottages, each with fully equipped kitchen, bedding and linens, full bath, living room, charcoal grill and screened-in porch.

According to general manager Jeff Harper, "Our summer program is now in full swing with a naturalist on staff, bike rentals, outdoor pool and a new geo-caching GPS unit that creates a magical treasure hunt around the grounds enabling our guests to experience an old-fashioned, fun-packed scavenger hunt and win great prizes.

**Rafters Restaurant** is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner under the able direction of executive chef Ben Theis. I had the pleasure of meeting him in 2006 when I was writing a travel feature on Mohican State Park Lodge. Ben is celebrating 10 years as chef at the state park lodges, overseeing the culinary needs of the

lodge and conference center and regularly creating new menu selections. Recent additions to the menu include a 14-ounce rib eye steak topped with blue cheese butter, vegetable lo mein with teriyaki sauce and battered cod fillet with homemade hush puppies. He also supervises **Harding's Lounge**, with a selection of sandwiches, oven-baked pizzas, full-service bar and large-screen TV, open daily at 5 p.m.

**Outdoor activities** range from hiking and swimming to tennis and horseback riding. The park has eight miles of nature trails with a 1.2 mile mountain bike trail and 15 miles of bridle trails. (Horses are available at Paint Creek Stables, 740-437-7325.) The lake has a marina with two boat ramps and boat rentals. Fishing is permitted with an Ohio fishing license, which can be purchased at the marina. There is a 1,700-foot sandy swimming beach across from the lodge. The lodge has a large outdoor swimming pool, snack bar, putting green, shuffleboard, lighted tennis courts, horseshoes, volleyball and basketball courts and softball field.

**Getting There.** Take I 70-S to exit 84, left on Route 56 into Mt. Sterling, left on Route 207 to Yankeetown Road, turn left and follow the signs to the lodge at 22300 State Park Rd., Mt. Sterling, Ohio.

**High Street Summer Special.** Mention this offer with the code word "BOUNCE" for a special lodge rate of \$79 per night, plus tax, Sunday-Thursday. Offer expires Aug. 31, 2011. For information and reservations, call 740-869-2020. [www.deercreekstateparklodge.com](http://www.deercreekstateparklodge.com)

**High Street Summer Special.** Mention this offer with the code word "BOUNCE" for a special lodge rate of \$79 per night, plus tax, Sunday-Thursday. Offer expires Aug. 31, 2011.

For information and reservations, call 740-869-2020. [www.deercreekstateparklodge.com](http://www.deercreekstateparklodge.com)



Rafter's Restaurant overlooking Deer Creek Lake in the lodge.



Travelwriter Aaron Leventhal with his buddies, Ernie Hartong, Wayne Owens and Will Logan.

**Deer Creek Golf Course** was designed by legendary course architect Jack Kidwell. Paul Newman, PGA pro and director, says that the 350-acre, 18-hole championship course has the best greens in Central Ohio. "You can play our course in less than four hours on a weekend for \$40 greens fees including cart." The course is long and challenging, with the back tees set at 7,119 yards and the white tees at 6,605 yards. It has been voted Best State Park Golf Course for eight consecutive years.

**Indoor activities** are fine when the weather turns inclement. Amenities include a large indoor pool with hot tub and sauna, fitness center with weight room and a game room with pool tables, ping pong and video arcade games.

### Deer Creek Lodge Golf & Poker Getaway

If it was good enough for President Warren G. Harding to play poker with his cronies at Deer Creek, it's good enough for you.

**Friday, Saturday, Aug. 11 & 12**

Organized by travel writer Aaron Leventhal

Enjoy a great time at great value with excellent networking opportunities.

Getaway includes:

- Golf, 18-hole round Friday afternoon, Saturday morning Scramble with great prizes
- Texas Hold'em Tournament Friday night
- Buffet-style dinner, lunch and breakfast
- Lodge or cottage accommodations Friday night
- Use of all facilities until Saturday, 5 p.m.

For more information and to register, log on to [www.LeventhalTravel.com](http://www.LeventhalTravel.com).

Yosick's  
artisan chocolates



### A Great Gift Idea

Select your handcrafted chocolates, pralines, Belgian and French chocolates, Yosick's house coffee (whole or ground), and more...

614-223-9575 • [www.yosicks.com](http://www.yosicks.com)

HIGH STREET Neighborhoods • Expires April 30, 2011 • Must present coupon.

### Cooks Creek Golf Club

Top 10 Ohio Public Course - *Golf Digest*

## Free Round

Foursome only.

Valid Monday to Friday

3 golfers at regular fee

and 4th golfer plays free!



740-983-3636 • 1-800-430-GOLF

COOKSCREEK.COM • 16405 U.S. Rte. 23, Ashville, Oh

Banquet Facility • Snack Bar • Pro Shop

HIGH STREET Neighborhoods • Expires August 31, 2011