

# Santee's Secret is Out...

## *Great Value Golf Destination*

By Martin Armes

When golfers find a “hidden gem,” they try not to tell anybody. Secrets like that are to be held closely. Fortunately or unfortunately however, golfers are only human, so word usually leaks out and when that happens, the hot spot becomes popular and everyone comes a-callin’.



### *Santee National Golf Club*

Witness South Carolina’s Santee region, located near the heart of the state, now a veritable hot spot for Americans and Canadians for decades traveling up and down the I-95 corridor. Where bragging-sized bass and monster catfish were once the talk of this quaint resort town, birdies and eagles have transformed a perpetually fertile fishing ground into more of a dual air-and-sea assault. Play the land game around Santee and you will soon discover that each of the 16 layouts has been designed for maximum enjoyment and thrilling challenge.

Golfers enjoy classic tree-lined layouts, traverse dramatic elevation changes and soak up views of beautiful Lake Marion. Folks there will tell you Santee is hands down the best-valued golf vacation on the East Coast. Combine this with good old-fashioned Southern hospitality and you’ll come away with an experience that may have you actually laying up short of other destinations in the future.

***A People Place*** – Behind golf counters, alongside first tees, inside restaurants, hotels and on the streets of Santee you will find friendly faces and welcoming hosts. It’s that kind of town. “What makes us unique is the familiarity,” says Todd Miller, general manager of Santee Cooper Resort. “I have been on site for 16 years; my wife who runs the pro shops has worked here for 20 years; we have an employee at the resort that has behind the desk for 30 plus years. The groups get to know us fairly well. Even many of our residents started out by coming here on a package for golf and fell in love with the area and the people and decided to stay.”



### *Lake Marion Golf Club*

That same love for the Santee community goes for the golf trade’s supporting cast. “Same thing with the hotels and restaurants,” Miller adds. “Our better restaurants and bars are owned and operated by residents. When you go to the Oasis bar and Grill, you may meet the owner Dennis and he will buy a drink. That’s all part of the charm.”

The welcoming feeling will even follow guests out onto the golf course. “At Lake Marion we have a starter that has been with us for couple of years and he is known as the one with the loud outfits,” says

Miller. “No problem picking Dick out on the first tee.”

A great place to start your search for a memorable retreat is in one of Santee’s full-equipped villas. You can find units overlooking the beautiful Lake Marion Golf Course, situated alongside Santee National’s fairways or rising high above the big waters on Lake Marion’s north shore.

There is also a wide range of local and chain hotels to be had. No matter how inviting the accommodations are, resist the temptation to become a cabin dweller because right outside your door is maximum golf pleasure. In the case of the Lake Marion villas, a traditional Eddie Riccoboni-designed layout featuring outstanding Miniverde greens and pine tree-lined fairways is at your beckoning. Several small lakes border the course at Lake Marion and 47 sand bunkers will test your golf course navigational skills.



### ***Santee Cooper Country Club***

Santee Cooper Country Club plays right next door to Lake Marion and is the venue you should never leave off any Santee itinerary due to its prime positioning on the big lake and dotted by smaller ones. Set among majestic pines, the classic George Cobb-designed challenge winds its way through a series of scenic dogleg holes and features some of the best par-3s in the region. Of course the par-4s and 5s are enjoyable too, though the best closing hole in Santee is unquestionably the par-4 No. 18 that provides a panoramic view of Lake Marion from its elevated green.

Another popular golf course on the menu at Santee is the Porter Gibson-routed Santee National Golf Club. This 6,858-yard offering is positioned in a truly natural setting filled with mossy live oaks and more highland terrain that what is found closer to Lake Marion.

Additional top-notch courses within proximity of the big water include Wyboo Golf Club, a Tom Jackson signature course, Foxboro Golf Club, another Porter Gibson creation nestled along the shores of Lake Marion, and the Players Course at Wyboo Plantation, perhaps Santee country's most player-friendly layout.

Wherever you choose to "San-tee it up," you'll marvel at the beauty and downhome feeling found at one of the true gems of East Coast golf destinations. And don't forget the value you'll get out of a Santee package. "Our prices are still reasonable, but we've also been able to improve our product playability-wise the past few years as well," said Miller.



### ***Fishing for Catfish on Lake Marion can produce a happy day off the links***

***On the Way To or Fro'*** – The folks at Santee Cooper Resort are working on partnering up with some courses in the Yadkin Valley and the Pinehurst Region for options for groups that may want to split their travel on the way north or south through the Carolinas. Stay tuned.

For sportsmen that like to mix golf with fishing, both Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie on the Santee Cooper lakes system have reported big catfish that many anglers only dream about. Charter fishing trip can be arranged to provide your choice of daytime or nighttime fishing for Santee Cooper's world-renowned Arkansas Blue catfish, Flathead catfish, and Channel catfish. Both lakes have also been long-time favorites for bream, bass and crappie fishing as well.

Find more info at [www.SanteeTourism.com](http://www.SanteeTourism.com). Specific golf packages are available at: [www.GolfSantee.com](http://www.GolfSantee.com), [www.SanteeCooperGolf.com](http://www.SanteeCooperGolf.com) and [www.ClarksInnandRestaurant.com](http://www.ClarksInnandRestaurant.com).