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FORE FROM HOME

Home Green Advantage brings golf to the backyard

Written by Ken Borsuk, Staff Reporter

Michael Lehrer knows why people love golf.

“There’s such skill involved,” Mr. Lehrer said. “There’s a challenge in hitting that perfect shot. It’s so elusive. You can keep searching forever for that perfect swing. That’s what draws you in and keeps you coming back to it.” Mr. Lehrer isn’t just talking about his own passion for the game. As president of Home Green Advantage, he’s worked with homeowners all over Connecticut and New York to bring the challenge and fun of the golf course right to their homes. Since he started his business in 1996, Mr. Lehrer has installed 375 personal putting greens, tee boxes, sand traps and even three-hole mini courses for golfers both casual and religious.



Mr. Lehrer compares having this feature on your property to having a tennis court or a swimming pool. He said it is an attractive feature to add to your home and for those who are really serious about working on their golf game, it can be a real benefit as well. He estimates that steady use of it can take as many as 10 strokes off someone’s score.

“Not only does it look really nice, but it will help you improve your game,” Mr. Lehrer pledged. And having the green on the property doesn’t just have to be nice feature to look at. It can also help resale value by being an extra incentive to a buyer who also loves to play. Mr. Lehrer pointed to a property he had done on King Street that has been sold several times, each time to a serious golfer who loved the idea of being able to practice at home.

“People look at this when they’re thinking about buying a house and go, ‘Wow! I have this in my backyard,’” Mr. Lehrer said. “It doesn’t detract from anything. It can only add to a property.”

There are many different options of what may be built depending on what each client wants. “Some of the greens are meant just for putting and hitting tiny little chip shots into, and others are for hitting shots to,” Mr. Lehrer said, estimating that 85-90% of his clients are serious golfers who use the greens diligently to work on their games.

Mr. Lehrer got into this business 13 years ago when he was working as a certified public accountant. He began with his own property and the putting green he put in for his neighbor and from there word of mouth began to spread. That job turned into another and another and soon Mr. Lehrer left accounting to work full time on his growing green business.

Mr. Lehrer said the greens are not generic. Each one is done based on the individual needs of the client and the particulars of the property. And he promises that he puts as much thought and care into the greens he develops for his clients as he did for his own backyard.

“I look at each property like it’s my own,” Mr. Lehrer said.

Now Mr. Lehrer is turning down jobs and working on between 25 and 35 greens a year. Some are big and some are small. Some can be installed in as few as three days if it’s 300 or 400 square feet of green for putting, or a month or more to develop the space depending on what excavation and landscaping has to be done. Many Greenwich residents have benefited from the greens he has built for them, which he creates out of a synthetic turf similar to nylon.



Michael Lehrer, above, tees off from his backyard period. Mr. Lehrer is such a fan of golf that he designed a green for his own home. That hobby turned into a new business for him and today Home Green Advantage has designed greens for dozens of Greenwich homes.

One of those people is Greenwich resident Trevor Ganshaw, who had a hole installed three years ago. He said he loves being able to use his green during his free time whenever the weather is good, and his entire family loves the game.

“When you get something like this, it’s like getting a new toy,” Mr. Ganshaw told the Post. “But a lot of times when you get a new toy, there’s a lot of excitement around it at first but then it gets played out. That hasn’t been the case here at all. It’s a great thing to have on the property, and when you’re showing someone the home it’s a nice surprise for them because they would never expect to find something like that.”

All told Mr. Lehrer estimates he’s done 24 projects in Greenwich and has also done work at the nearby Round Hill Country Club. The bigger courses have been on backcountry properties in town, including one on Byram Shore Road and at Conyers Farm. Mr. Lehrer has a portable green he can bring to local events such as ones done on Greenwich Avenue at Richard’s, which has been a big hit in the past for product launches and initial public offerings and other major corporate events. Mr. Lehrer’s work has even sent him to Wall Street and Central Park.

While a hole at a golf course can only be played from one direction, Mr. Lehrer’s designs make it possible for people to approach the hole from different directions, giving varying angles and challenge levels. This essentially turns one hole into several because clients can play it a different way based on the approach.



Home Green Advantage, Inc. • Armonk, NY

www.HomeGreenAdvantage.com

Toll Free (800) 788-8889