

## Warming up with a little golf this winter

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Published: 1/23/2008 12:36 AM

I first got the itch two weeks ago, but it got worse last week.

In years past, watching the PGA Tour pros open their season with back-to-back events on the idyllic Hawaiian Islands hardly moved me.

Sure it was a pleasure to watch, but the urge to actually go out and swing a club didn't usually kick in for me until the Masters rolled around in early April.

This year, however, the moons aligned. The combination of tropical vistas coinciding with the timely arrival of Golf Digest -- featuring its Hot List of the best new equipment on the market - - did the trick.

I had some scratching to do.

I had to find some places where a golfer with clubs in his hands in the middle of January wouldn't be hustled away by big guys in white jackets.

But this isn't Hawaii. It's Chicago. And it's cold. Real cold. So what's a golfer to do?

Get in the car and find some golf sanctuaries, that's what. And when I did, I discovered I wasn't alone. There were others.

### Golf Nation

The final stop on my midwinter tour was Golf Nation in Palatine.

One minute I was walking into an otherwise nondescript building on Quentin Road, and a few minutes later I was on the seventh tee at Pebble Beach (hitting over the green and into the water three straight times with a choked up 7-iron). Or at least it felt that way, thanks to one of four state-of-the-art simulators that briefly transport you to another place.

A warm place.

Pebble Beach is but one of 57 top courses available at Golf Nation, but this place is more than fancy gizmos.

You want an indoor putting green that can be rolled to reach any number on the Stimp Meter? You got it. An undulating chipping area? Check. A greenside bunker to blast out of? It's here.

A restaurant, a locker room, an executive suite, an outdoor heated range, a fitness room, a Skills and Drills area, pro shop? Check and check.

"It's kind of like a private club without the huge membership fee," said general manager Tim Wuhrman.

And a heck of a way to end a warm journey on a cold day.

*This is a truncated version of the article. Please visit [www.dailyherald.com](http://www.dailyherald.com) for more information.*