

# Putt it there

Kids take aim at mini-golf standouts. By **Chris Schonberger**



The course at South Street Seaport Water Taxi Beach center, located at Governor's Island, is in Rockefeller Park Mini.

It may bring to mind coastal boardwalks and touristy resort towns, but miniature golf has a strong presence in NYC. Before setting out on your next links-bound excursion, check out our field guide to the most challenging, inventive and flat-out fun holes in the city.

**Most cavernous**  
**Randalls Island Golf Center's** two leafy 18-hole courses offer ample opportunities for kids and adults to perfect their technique. If you've only got the time (or the patience) for one round, choose the links with the waterfall. Hidden away beneath a long, cavelike archway you'll find hole #9, where a dark approach provides a straight shot to the cup—the perfect chance to sink that elusive hole in one. *1 Randalls Island (212-427-*

*5689, randallsislandgolfcenter.com).* **First 18 holes:** \$7, under 12 \$5. **Replay:** \$4, under 12 \$3.

**Most inspired**  
For the past three summers, the nonprofit artist collective **Figment** has made mini golf its passionate project, asking creative collaborators to design a brand-new course each year on Governors Island. This year, the two most popular holes from 2008 and 2009—a Skee-Ball machine and the ominously titled “Venus Fly Trap”—join eight new ones influenced by the 1893, 1959 and 1964 World's Fairs. In homage to L. Frank Baum's experiences at the first one (the exposition inspired *The Wizard of Oz's* Emerald City), there is “Yellow Brick Road,” a spiraling track that leads to a hole beneath a replica hot-air

balloon. *Through Oct 3, Governors Island (figmentnyc.org).* **Free.**

## Most entertainingly infuriating

At just nine holes, the vaguely nautical course at bustling **South Street Seaport Water Taxi Beach** is just one of the amusements, rather than the main event. But

*\$5. (General museum admission ticket required: \$11, under 18 \$8)*

## Most fun to fail at

Hole #5 at **Flushing Meadows Mini Golf** is situated next to a waterfall. Kids have to control the speed of their shot to escape the drink, but often they have even more fun when their ball falls in. A stream carries errant golf balls into a pond,



that doesn't stop kids from dissolving into laughter at hole #7, which features a bright orange loop-the-loop that requires just the right amount of speed to navigate successfully. *North side of Pier 17, South St at Fulton St (877-974-6998, ext 4; watertaxibeach.com).* \$6.

**Most educational**  
The New York Hall of Science's **Rocket Park Mini Golf** is a nine-hole beauty designed to illustrate laws of motion and chart the steps of a space journey. Players need expert timing to crack the “Launch Window”—if you hit your ball at the wrong moment, it will collide with revolving celestial matter. *New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St at 47th Ave, Flushing Meadows—Corona Park, Queens (718-699-0005, nysci.org).* \$6, under 18

where players use nets to fish them out. *100 Flushing Meadows—Corona Park at Meridian Rd, Queens (718-271-8182, golfnyc.com).* \$7.75, under 12 \$6.25.

## Most like real golf

For older kids who are more interested in mastering their stroke than clanging their ball through windmills, **Staten Island GoKarts** provides 18 holes where the challenge comes from curves, walls and changes in terrain instead of gimmicky obstacles. One of the toughest holes to master is #14, where a 40-foot approach leads to a raised green. If you hit with too much force, your ball will sail right over the other side. There's no better way to learn the art of finesse. *215 Schmidts Ln between La Guardia Ave and Manor Rd, Staten Island (718-982-5576, sigokarts.com).* \$6.