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THE GOLF STATE

Sunny days, championship layouts, spectacular views, superior service:

Arizona, of Course!

a full-length feature story

► PAGE 2



SOUTHWEST
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The Grand Canyon & Other Great 19th Holes

See what else our state
has to offer ► PAGE 16

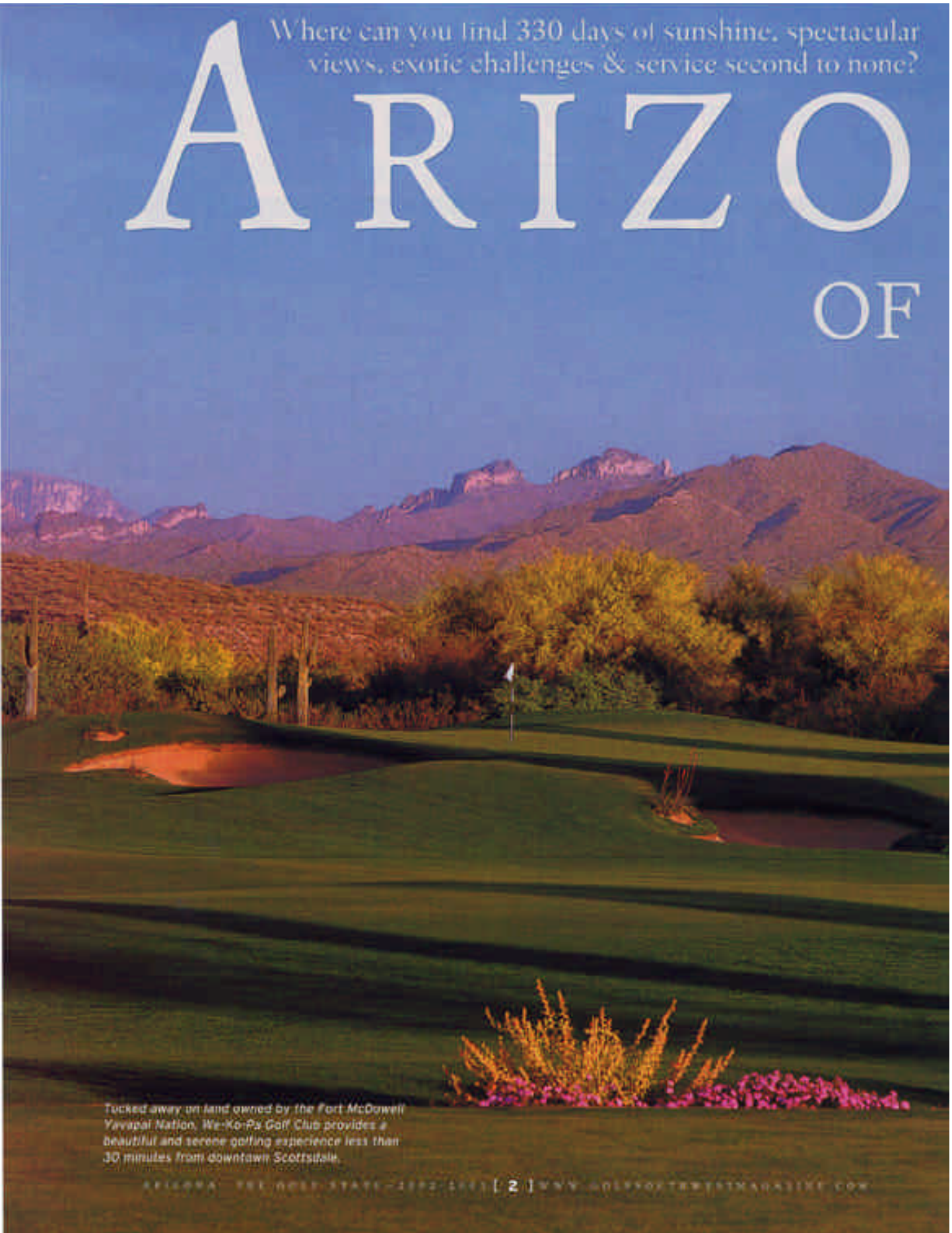
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NA, COURSE!

BY BILL HUFFMAN

When it comes to world-class golf, Scottsdale seems to own the lion's share in Arizona—an amazing feat, considering the Southwest's "most Midwestern city" boasts only 50 of the Grand Canyon State's 350-some layouts. Of course, Scottsdale has been ranked as the Number 5 golf destination in the world by *Golf Digest*. And, if that's not enough, the highly regarded *Robb Report* recently selected Scottsdale as "America's Ultimate Golfing Destination."

But take this travel tip if you journey to Arizona to play the game: Look around at this whole awesome landscape loaded with some of the finest fairways and greens on the planet. You'll be surprised at the variety and values you might encounter.

Robert "Doc" Graves is well aware of Arizona's smorgasbord of golf courses. And with good reason, as he has rated and played every course in the state as the chief volunteer of the Arizona Golf Association. "I think there is a misconception that Arizona offers only desert or target golf, but nothing could be further from the truth. It's amazing, really, because you could take all kinds of trips around this state and run into just about every kind of golf course you could imagine."

The reality is there just might be a course for everyone, including those eclectic desert/mountain tracts, target courses (where transition areas separate the grass and desert), purely desert golf (where the majority of tees, fairways, and greens are connected yet surrounded by sagebrush and saguaros), and—believe it or not—traditional, tree-lined fairways containing basically wall-to-wall grass. And don't forget Arizona's "hidden gems"—those off-the-beaten-path havens that combine several design elements.

Yes, Virginia, there *are* golf courses in the desert, laden with trees and covered with grass.

Yes, there is a lot to like about Arizona golf besides the super-courses that draw so much acclaim. The perfect formula begins with 330 days of sunshine a year and includes spectacular views, player-friendly designs, exotic challenges, the very best conditioning, and genuine service second to none.

Arizona golf also has a price point for everyone. Sure, you can spend upwards of \$150 to play the best of the best. But there's also some pretty good golf to be had for \$50 or less.

Scott Scherger, the director of golf at **Gold Canyon Golf Resort**, points to his resort as the perfect example of quality vs. value. "In peak season, you'll pay \$170 to play our Dinosaur Course, and about half that to play our Sidewinder Course," Scherger explains. "Sure, you're going to get the views and a great variety of holes if you opt for the Dinosaur. But if you choose the Sidewinder, you'll also have a great time, because both courses have the same conditioning, use the same facilities, and have the same great service. We've got something for everyone."



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The same could be said of Arizona golf in general, which offers five distinct categories from which to select:

DESERT/MOUNTAIN COURSES

Hard as it might be to fathom for some, not all of the Arizona desert is flat. Many of the state's high-elevation tracts range from 2,500 feet above sea level to as high as 6,000 to 7,000 feet in the state's northern and even southernmost regions.

For instance, **Sedona Golf Resort's** desert elements roll through the crimson landscape at 4,300 feet above sea level. Surrounded by surreal red rocks, this Gary Panks-designed layout is a must-play, well worth the 90-minute drive from Phoenix. And don't be surprised if some of the best shots you'll take along these piñon-lined fairways come from your camera. It could happen.

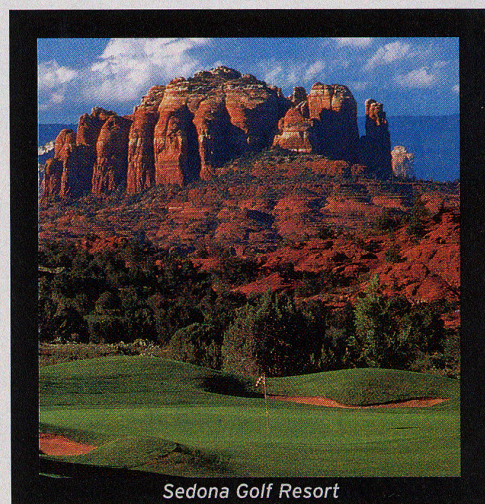
Arizona boasts a number of other higher-altitude links well worth checking out. In Prescott, Hale Irwin's pristine **Prescott Lakes Golf Club** nestles against the magnificent Granite Dells, and **Hassayampa Golf Club**, a private Tom Weiskopf creation, lies tucked into the pines. On the outskirts of Prescott Valley find **Stone Ridge Golf Course**, a new roller coaster-like course by architect Randy Heckenkemper. And Robert Von Hagge's terrific **Torreón Golf Club** is private but open to the public on a limited basis in Show Low. Fees for all of the above fall somewhere in the mid-to-upper price range and would undoubtedly cost much more if they were nearer Arizona's larger metro areas.

A little farther down the mountain in the 2,000- to 3,500-feet-above-sea-level range reside the likes of such well-known Scottsdale/Phoenix courses as **Troon North Golf Club**, **Desert Mountain Golf Club**, **SunRidge Canyon Golf Club**, **The Golf Club at Eagle Mountain**, **Legend Trail Golf Club**, **Gold Canyon Golf Resort**, **Estrella Mountain Ranch Golf Club**, **Quintero Golf & Country Club**, and **We-Ko-Pa Golf Club**. Just as prestigious are the high-end Tucson layouts of **The Stone Canyon Club**, **The Lodge at Ventana Canyon**, **The Westin La Paloma Resort & Country Club**, **The Gallery Golf Club**, and **Arizona National Golf Club at Sabino Springs** (formerly the Raven at Sabino Springs).

The above list starts with Troon North, perhaps the most coveted tee time in the state if you don't mind paying \$200-plus. Built by the former design team of Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish, the Monument and Pinnacle Courses have reaped dozens of awards since they arrived on the scene in 1990. The same could be said of Desert Mountain, an 8,000-acre golf park in north Scottsdale that, unfortunately for the general public, is private unless you happen to know a member.

All of these desert/mountain dandies are basically to die for, and we're not talking about the hefty green fees. These spectacular tracts feature one-of-a-kind designs created by some of the most revered architects in the game: Tom Fazio (Ventana Canyon), Jack Nicklaus (Desert Mountain and La Paloma), Rees Jones (Legend Trail and Quintero), Robert Trent Jones Jr. (Arizona National), John Fought/Tom Lehman (The Gallery), Scott Miller (Eagle Mountain and We-Ko-Pa), Keith Foster (SunRidge Canyon), and Jay Morrish (Stone Canyon).

But let's not forget such other desert/mountain values as **Phantom Horse Golf Club** on the steep slopes of South Mountain in Phoenix, the fun-packed **Rancho Mañana Golf Club** in the rambling hills of Cave Creek, and Tucson's spectacularly treacherous **Starr Pass Golf Club**—once the home of the Tucson Open.



Sedona Golf Resort

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Cover photo: The island green of Number 15 at the Tournament Players Club of Scottsdale's Stadium Course

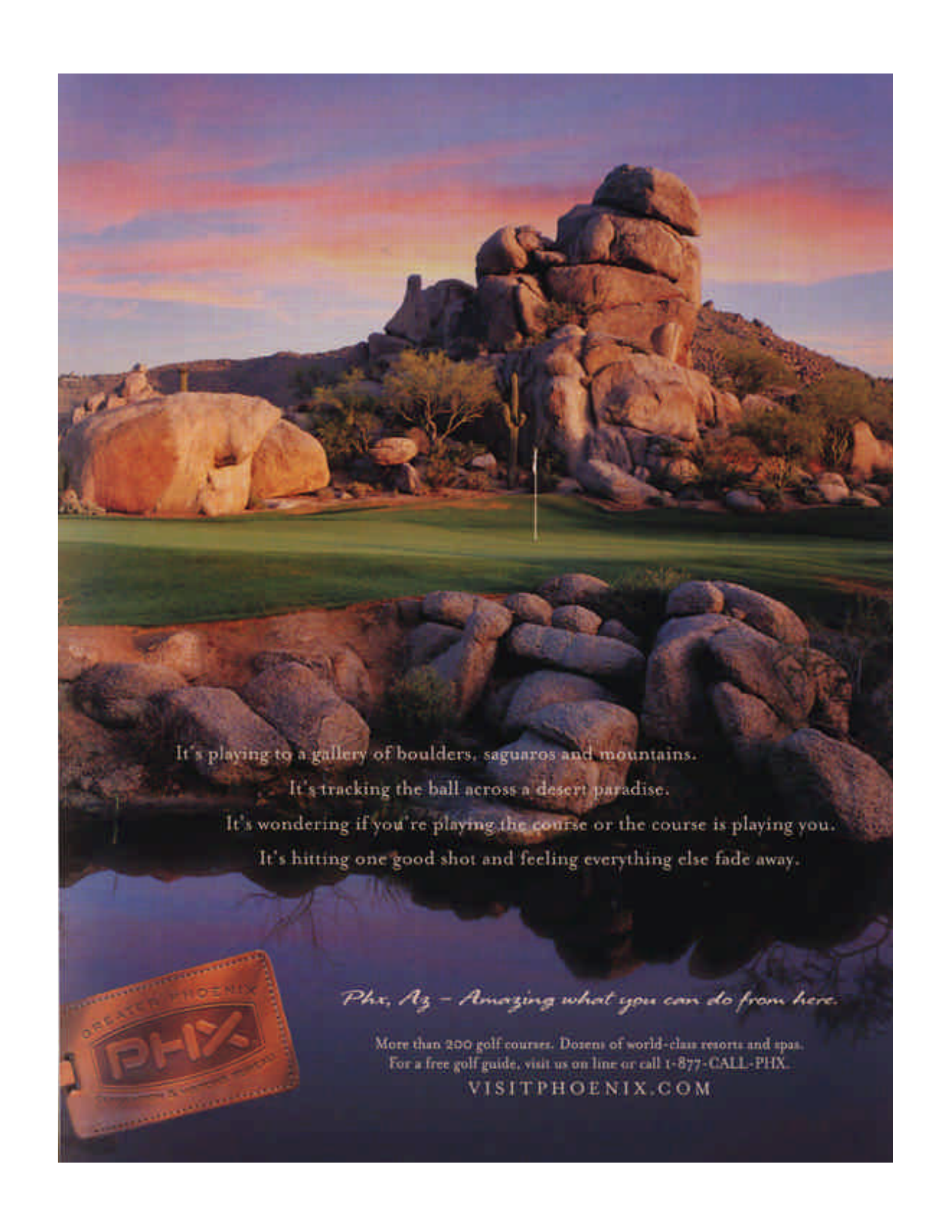


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TARGET COURSES

When most golfers think of “target golf,” they think of layouts that require exacting shots and long carries off the tee. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Truth be known, most golf requires aiming at a vantage point—it’s just that in the target game the hits and misses seem more dramatic, with the ball landing either on an emerald-green fairway or in the confines of the equally colorful desert.

But what you give up in fairness you often gain back in aesthetics, because Arizona’s target tracts rank among the most dazzling courses in the game. Take **The Phoenician Golf Resort**, for example. Erected on the south slope of awesome Camelback Mountain by architect extraordinaire Ted Robinson, its palm-lined fairways and abundant water make for an almost regal round of golf. The same could be said of **The Boulders Resort**, where Jay Morrish painted true masterpieces in the North and South Courses. Or how about heralded **Grayhawk Golf Club**, where Gary Panks and David Graham (Talon Course) and Tom Fazio (Raptor Course) left their brands of distinction.

And then consider **Talking Stick Golf Club**, where Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore carved 36 holes out of the desert on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Reservation. Target golf doesn’t get much fairer, from either a playing or price point of view. Also in that green fee range: such noted target layouts as **Dove Valley Ranch Golf Club**, another Robert Trent Jones Jr. course found near Carefree; the 27 distinctive holes at **Kierland Golf Club**, developed by Scott Miller with three intricate themes (desert, grasslands, and native trees); **Sheraton El Conquistador Resort and Country Club** in Tucson, where shots echo through the canyons and arroyos of the Cañada and



Conquistador Courses; and Arthur Hills’ **Heritage Highlands Golf & Country Club**, a secluded layout located in the foothills of the Tortolita Mountains.

Other top layouts playing to a target theme at a price that won’t break the bank include such serene offerings as Del Webb’s 18 holes at **Anthem Golf & Country Club** just north of Phoenix, which allows public play despite being private; **The Golf Club at Vistoso**, a very playable Tom Weiskopf 18 framed against Tucson’s Santa Catalina Mountains; the always-rugged Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed **Las Sendas Golf Club**, with views of the Superstition Mountains in Mesa; and Gary Panks’ soon-to-be 36 holes of golf at **Whirlwind Golf Club** (with 18 currently in place) on the Gila River Reservation outside of Phoenix (scheduled to open in October 2002).

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Bargain hunters also can hit their “target” if they shop around. Such affordable venues as **Club West Golf Club** and **The Foothills Golf Club**, which lie just beyond South Mountain, exemplify getting more bang for your buck. Also falling into that category are such lush layouts as **Desert Springs Golf Club**, the toast of the Sun City Grand/Surprise area, and the **Trilogy Golf Club** in Gilbert, where noted designer Dick Bailey left his mark. **Silverado Golf Club** and **Sanctuary Golf Course** at WestWorld—both tucked into exclusive neighborhoods in Scottsdale—also offer players a great deal.

Of course, **Tournament Players Club of Scottsdale**—the home course for the ever-popular Phoenix Open—stands as the ultimate target experience. What’s especially cool about the Tournament Players Club is that, unlike the rest of these bull’s-eye bastions, it has lots and lots of grass. So don’t visualize it as a target—just remember “mind over matter,” and you’ll play like a member of the PGA Tour!

DESERT COURSES

Desert courses are often confused with target golf courses. The difference? While native vegetation such as cactus and palo verde trees define and surround desert courses, they usually have continuous grass from tee to fairway to green. Without the forced carries, they play as easily as traditional parkland courses.

Topping this unique list, **Raven Golf Club at South Mountain** combines tree-lined fairways (with more than 7,000 pine trees throughout the course) with some charming yet challenging golf. Just a 10-minute drive from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Raven has received rave reviews since David Graham and Gary Panks put their stamp on it back in the mid-1990s. Even though several holes require some carry off

the tee, they are minimal as Raven is guaranteed to not beat you up.

Others at the top of the desert directory include Arnold Palmer’s **The Legend at Arrowhead** in Glendale, where Arnie left more than 100 bunkers in his wake. **Legacy Golf Resort**, another Gary Panks product in south Phoenix, also shows plenty of sand but lots of grass, too. One more nifty alternative with a good deal of bunkering is the new Faldo Course at **Marriott’s Wildfire Golf Club at Desert Ridge**, where Nick Faldo selected an Australian sands theme, a trick that left lips around the bunkers as large as Mick Jagger’s.

Also new to the Phoenix area and plenty playable: the **Thunderbirds Golf Club**, built by PGA Tour designers with the help of local pros Howard Twitty, Billy Mayfair, and Tom



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Lehman. Thunderbirds (formerly Thunderbird Golf Club at South Mountain) differs completely from its predecessor in that it is a high-end daily-fee course. Yet it still boasts those same panoramic views of the city skyline.

Other rejuvenated courses include **Longbow Golf Club** in Mesa and **Starfire at Scottsdale Country Club**, where recent redesigns have not only changed the face of the golf course for the better, but also erected new clubhouse facilities. Both are popular with the locals and reasonably priced for visitors.

Don't be surprised if some of the best shots you'll take along these piñon-lined fairways come from your camera.

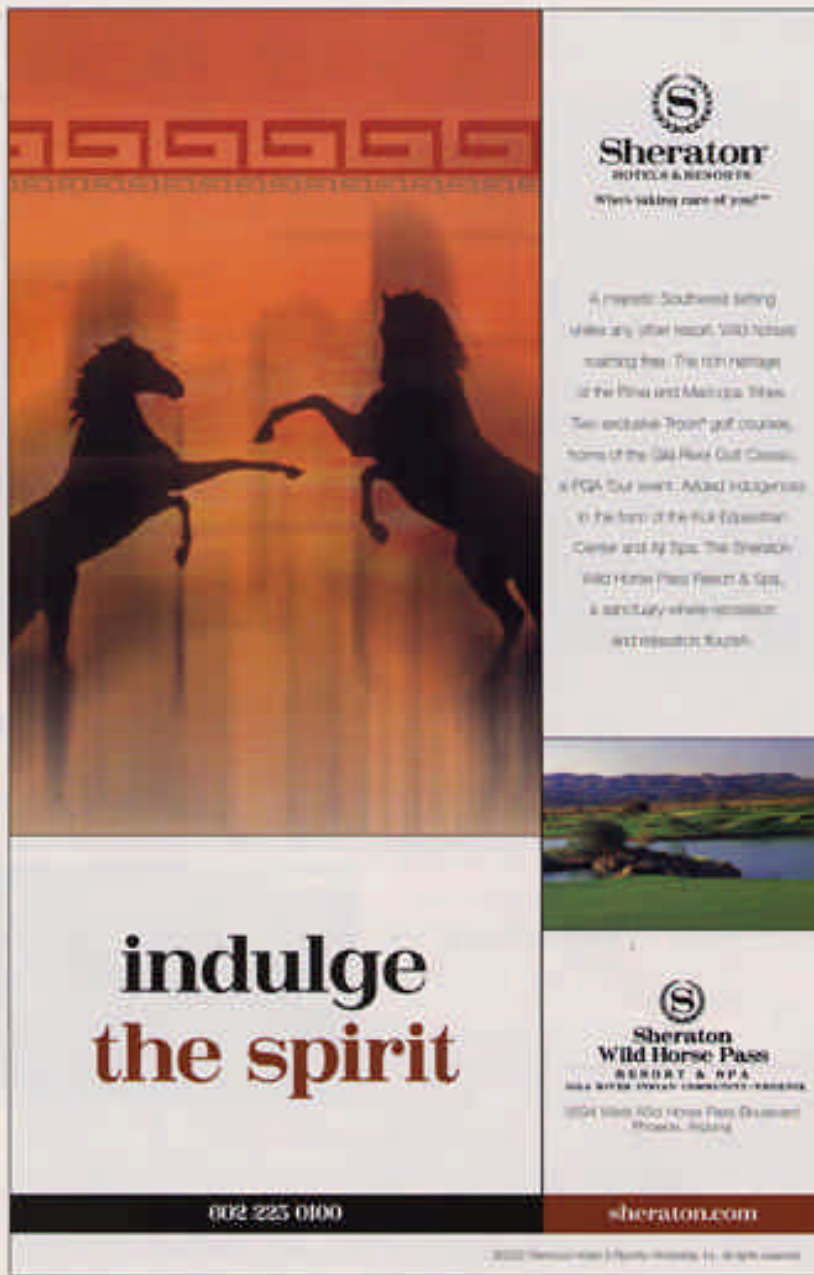
Among the desert mainstays are **Marriott's Camelback Golf Club** in Scottsdale and **ASU Karsten Golf Club** at Arizona State University in Tempe. Camelback's 36 holes have been around forever but have been recent modernized. Karsten, home of the ASU Sun Devils, has Pete Dye's name on the layout, so you know it's going to be "Dye-abolical" in the truest sense.

Additional desert courses worth a trip include **Arizona Golf Resort and Conference Center** (a great value in Mesa), Lee Trevino's **Torres Blancas Golf Club** south of Tucson in Green Valley, **The 500 Club** in Phoenix (where race-car driver Tom Sneva often tees it up in his super-charged golf cart that can reach 60 mph), and the private, Arnold Palmer-designed **Arrowhead Country Club** in Glendale.

TRADITIONAL COURSES

This category surprises many who visit Arizona. Yes, Virginia, there are golf courses in the desert, laden with trees and covered with grass. Many of these traditional tracts take us back to the early years, when the game was just getting under way—mostly through tales from back East. Still, these Arizona traditionalists remain popular with the residents, as well as with guests who yearn for the courses back in the Midwest.

The list starts with such venerable favorites as **Randolph North Municipal Golf Course** in Tucson, where noted architect William "Billy" Bell designed a



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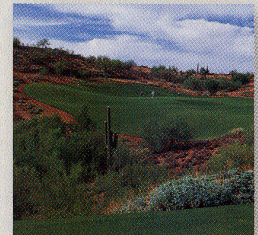
overlooks the 18th green with a beauty and style all its own offering a dining room, lounge and men's and women's locker rooms with room to relax and enjoy family and friends.

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or to schedule a tour of FireRock Country Club please call 480.836.7770. From \$265,000.



Par 3, 145 yard 6th hole



Par 3, 190 yard 2nd hole



Par 5, 558 yard 18th hole

Balera AT FIREROCK COUNTRY CLUB **ODYSSEY HOMES**

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magnificent municipal layout that still remains a hot spot and annually hosts the Welch's/Circle K LPGA Tournament. The course also shares its address in the middle of the city with **Dell Ulrich Municipal Golf Course**, a renovated version of what once was the old South Course. Both are incredible values—if you can get a tee time! If you can't, try Tucson's other well-known "muni," **Fred Enke Municipal Golf Course**, as it's loaded with character, too.



Omni Tucson National Golf Resort & Spa, Gold Course, Tucson

Bell, who pioneered his way through Arizona in the 1950s and 60s, also takes his place as the architect of record for several other tree-lined favorites. Certainly at the top of the list comes **Papago Golf Course**, without question the most beloved muni in Phoenix. Built below the Papago Buttes, the namesake course is so regaled that the locals line up in their cars the night before in hopes of nabbing a tee time.

At the opposite end of the green-fee scale from Papago is the prestigious **Arizona Biltmore Country Club**. Also built by Bell in the early years of Arizona golf, the Adobe Course still beckons golfers with its wide fairways and easy-to-read greens. But the same cannot be said of its sister course, the Links, where designer Billy Johnston added the bells and whistles often associated with the modern era to this layout that hopscotches its way below Squaw Peak.

Another easy walk in the park, **The Wigwam Resort**—in the quiet oasis of Litchfield Park—offers 54 holes of golf, including the famed Gold Course built by the late Robert Trent Jones Sr. Also at The Wigwam you'll find one of Red Lawrence's best efforts in the Red Course. For those who like to kick back and stay and play in the same spot, The Wigwam is the perfect retreat.

Also along that line is **Orange Tree Golf & Conference Resort**, located along the border of Phoenix and

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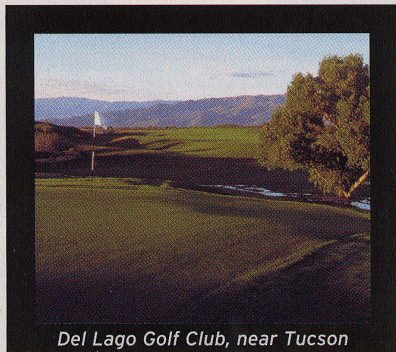


Scottsdale. Orange Tree's shady fairways and greens were the master plan of Johnny Bulla, an early pioneer of the PGA Tour who still lives in Phoenix. In the same neighborhood, **McCormick Ranch Golf Club** offers the Palm Course—loaded with lakes and, well, palms—and the Pine Course (which also lives up to its name).

Two other traditional favorites that might confuse some visitors are the **Omni Tucson National Golf Resort & Spa** and **Ocotillo Golf Resort**. Both sound as if they would fall into the desert category, but the National—the longtime home of the Tucson Open—plays like it belongs in the Midwest, thanks to the influence of the late architect Dick Wilson (with help from Robert Von Hagge). Ocotillo, named after a type of desert plant, actually feels more like Arizona's version of *Waterworld*, as 24 of its 27 holes bring the wet stuff into play.

HIDDEN GEMS

Whereas most of the above courses are well known to the golfing public, the Arizona golfscape also boasts many "hidden gems" that few who play the game ever hear about. Chiefly, this problem relates to geography, as most of these diamonds in the rough lie away from the large metro areas of Phoenix and Tucson.



Del Lago Golf Club, near Tucson

But for those who dare to venture out into the hinterlands, such jewels as **Rio Rico Resort & Country Club** and **Tubac Golf Resort** await near the US/Mexico border. Just 50 minutes south of Tucson, Rio Rico—another pearl left behind by Robert Trent Jones Sr.—offers fairways and bentgrass greens spectacularly draped against the Tumacacori Mountains. Tubac, designed by Red Lawrence and right in the heart of the beautiful Santa Cruz River valley, served as the backdrop for many of the scenes in the movie *Tin Cup*.

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
its North (traditional) and South (desert) Courses. Framed against the Granite Dells and Mingus Mountain, this perfect getaway includes the cowboy history of nearby Prescott and its infamous Whiskey Row.

Or how about **Oakcreek Country Club**, a semiprivate golf course in Sedona that, unbeknownst to most, is open to the public. Built by the Joneses—Robert Trent and Robert Trent Jr.—Oakcreek yields traditional golf in the spectacular arena of those other-worldly red rocks. Just as good is **Los Caballeros Golf Club** in Wickenburg, where the back nine of this dude ranch-themed tract rambles its way under the nose of Vulture Peak.

Other outposts worth the road trip include **Apache Stronghold Golf Club**, an award-winning course by Tom Doak that is the pride of the San Carlos Apache Nation; **River Run Golf Course**, a brand-spanking-new tract in the White Mountains near Springerville; elegant **London Bridge Golf Club** near the waters of Lake Havasu and its namesake structure (yes, it's the original); and **Del Lago Golf Club**, a new course causing quite a stir just southeast of Tucson.

EPILOGUE

The allure of Arizona golf is a never-ending story. It stretches beyond the boundaries of Scottsdale and encompasses every corner of the Grand Canyon State. We hope this directory will point you in the right direction, whether it be north, south, east, or west—you can't lose! Just remember, no matter where your travels take you, the weather is sure to be wonderful and the variety of courses among the best in the world.

Now, isn't it time to discover Arizona golf all over again? 

Bill Huffman covers golf for the East Valley/Scottsdale Tribune. He is the author of Arizona's Greatest Golf Courses and co-host of the weekly radio golf show Backspin on XTRA Sports.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ARIZONA GOLF

Contact the Southwest Section PGA (480-443-9002 or 800-688-0742, www.southwest.pga.com, e-mail: swspga@aol.com) to receive a free copy of the **Official Arizona Golf Guide & Directory**, available in November 2002.

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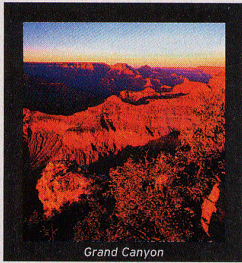
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THE GRAND CANYON & OTHER GREAT 19TH HOLES

Maybe you *can* golf the whole time you're in Arizona. But resist the temptation. Arizonans have lots more to show you, from whispers of past civilizations to trendy dining and shopping adventures. You'll find nature's beauty and human history, contemplative scenery and wild recreation. Whether you're taking a break from the links or waiting for someone else to finish, take some time to explore Arizona. It'll refresh your soul and excite your senses.



Grand Canyon

GRAND CANYON

"Spectacular" doesn't begin to describe this one-mile-deep, 10-plus-mile-wide, and 277-mile-long "hole" in northwestern Arizona (928-638-7888). See it from a plane, helicopter, or bus. Hike or ride mules around the popular South Rim or the less-crowded North Rim. Go to the bottom, where the native

Havasupai people still live. Take a raft down the Colorado River, which carved this awesome sight over millions of years.

NATURAL WONDERS

Discover "otherworldly" landscapes. The 93,533-acre Petrified Forest (928-524-6228) in northeast Arizona has one of the world's highest concentrations of petrified wood, plus animal fossils. In Navajo country, buttes, pinnacles, and spires rise from Monument Valley, and Canyon de Chelly's (928-674-5500)



PHOTO ▶ BRUCE CRIFFIN

Saguaro National Park

red sandstone walls drop 1,000 feet. Saguaro National Park (east side 520-733-5153 and west side 520-733-5158) flanks Tucson with stands of stately saguaros. Kartchner Caverns State Park (520-586-2283) near Benson reveals an enormous living limestone cave.

FLORA & FAUNA

Cactus, coyotes, and chuckwallas thrive in this desert. Learn about wildlife and native plants at Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (520-883-2702) and Tucson Botanical Gardens (520-326-9686) in Tucson, Boyce Thompson Arboretum (520-689-2811) near Superior, Desert Botanical Garden (480-941-1225) in Phoenix, and Flagstaff Arboretum (928-774-1442) in Flagstaff.

WATER!

Manmade dams along the Colorado River in northwestern Arizona provide fishing, boating, swimming, and skiing. Lake Powell (928-608-6404) rises above Glen Canyon Dam. Hoover Dam feeds Lake Mohave (702-293-8907). Lake Havasu (800-242-8278) boasts the added attraction of the London Bridge in nearby Lake Havasu City. For snow sports, check out Flagstaff, the White Mountains, and Tucson, which has the southernmost ski facility in the continental US.

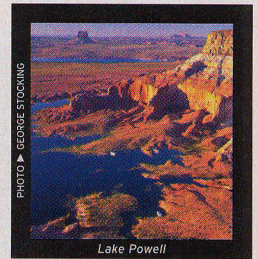


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Lake Powell

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OUR NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE

Arizona is home to more than 20 Native American nations and communities—residents whose ancestors arrived here hundreds, even thousands of years ago. Learn about their history and modern cultures at the acclaimed Heard Museum in Phoenix (602-252-8848), the Amerind Foundation near Benson (520-586-3666), Tucson's Arizona State Museum (520-621-6302), and the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff (928-774-5213).

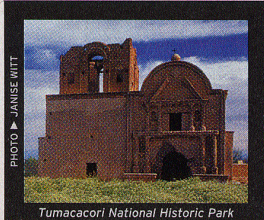


ANCIENT RUINS

Visit dozens of earth and stone buildings left by native peoples who disappeared before Europeans arrived. Some of the more easily accessible include Wupatki National Monument (928-679-2365) northeast of Flagstaff, Tuzigoot National Monument (928-634-5564) and Montezuma Castle (928-567-3322) near Cottonwood, and Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (520-723-3172) in Coolidge.

SPANISH HISTORY

As the first Europeans to arrive in what's now called Arizona, Spaniards explored this land starting in the late 1530s. In search of gold and religious converts, the Spanish left a legacy that thrives today. Discover their cultural contributions at these Southern Arizona sites: Tumacacori National Historical Park (520-398-2341) and Mission San Xavier del Bac (520-294-2624) just outside of Tucson—a fine example of 18th-



century Spanish Colonial architecture and art. View a fine collection of Spanish Colonial art at the Tucson Museum of Art's Palice Pavilion (520-624-2333).

WILD, WILD WEST

Go back to Territorial Arizona with rides, entertainment, and attractions at Rawhide (480-502-5600)—a steakhouse and amusement park set in the 1880s—or Old Tucson Studios (520-883-0100)—a working Western-town film set. See the real thing at Tombstone (520-457-3421 or 888-457-3929), famed for the OK Corral shoot-out.

SPORTS WATCH

Enjoy Major League Baseball's World Champion Arizona Diamondbacks, the NFL's Cardinals, the NBA's Suns, the WNBA's Mercury, arena football's Rattlers, and the NHL's Coyotes in Phoenix. Catch 12 baseball teams during Spring Training in the Greater Phoenix area and Tucson. Both metro areas sport Pac 10 Conference universities, and Tempe hosts college football's Fiesta Bowl in January. There's also the annual Insight.com Bowl at Bank One Ballpark (BOB).



ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS

Architecture and environment blend at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West (480-860-2700) in Scottsdale and Paolo Soleri's Arcosanti (928-632-7135) north of Phoenix near Cordes Junction. Savor art from pre-Columbian to modern at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (480-994-2787), Phoenix Art Museum (602-257-1222), and Tucson Museum of Art (520-624-2333). The Center for Creative Photography



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SHOPPING

Buy from high-style retail centers, one-of-a-kind boutiques and art galleries, Native American roadside stands, or trading posts such as the famous Hubbell Trading Post (928-755-3475)—the oldest continuously operating trading post on the Navajo reservation. For a truly Southwestern flair, look for native crafts, cowboy attire, and desert icons.

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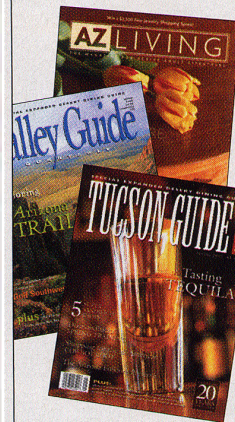
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PHOTO BY DON SCHEER/MIPI

READ ALL ABOUT IT

To discover more about the culture, lifestyle, hospitality, and excitement of Arizona, order a copy of **Valley Guide Quarterly**, **Tucson Guide Quarterly**, and **Arizona Living**—the magazine for active adult lifestyles. You'll



find ideas on what to do, and where to eat, shop, play golf, and more.

To order, send \$5 to Circulation Director, PO Box 42915, Tucson, AZ 85733, or call 800-444-8768 (ext. 299, Visa/MC/Discover accepted). For more visitor information, contact the Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau (800-638-8350, www.visitucson.org) or the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau (877-225-5749, www.visitphoenix.com) and request copies of their **Official Visitors Guides**.

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