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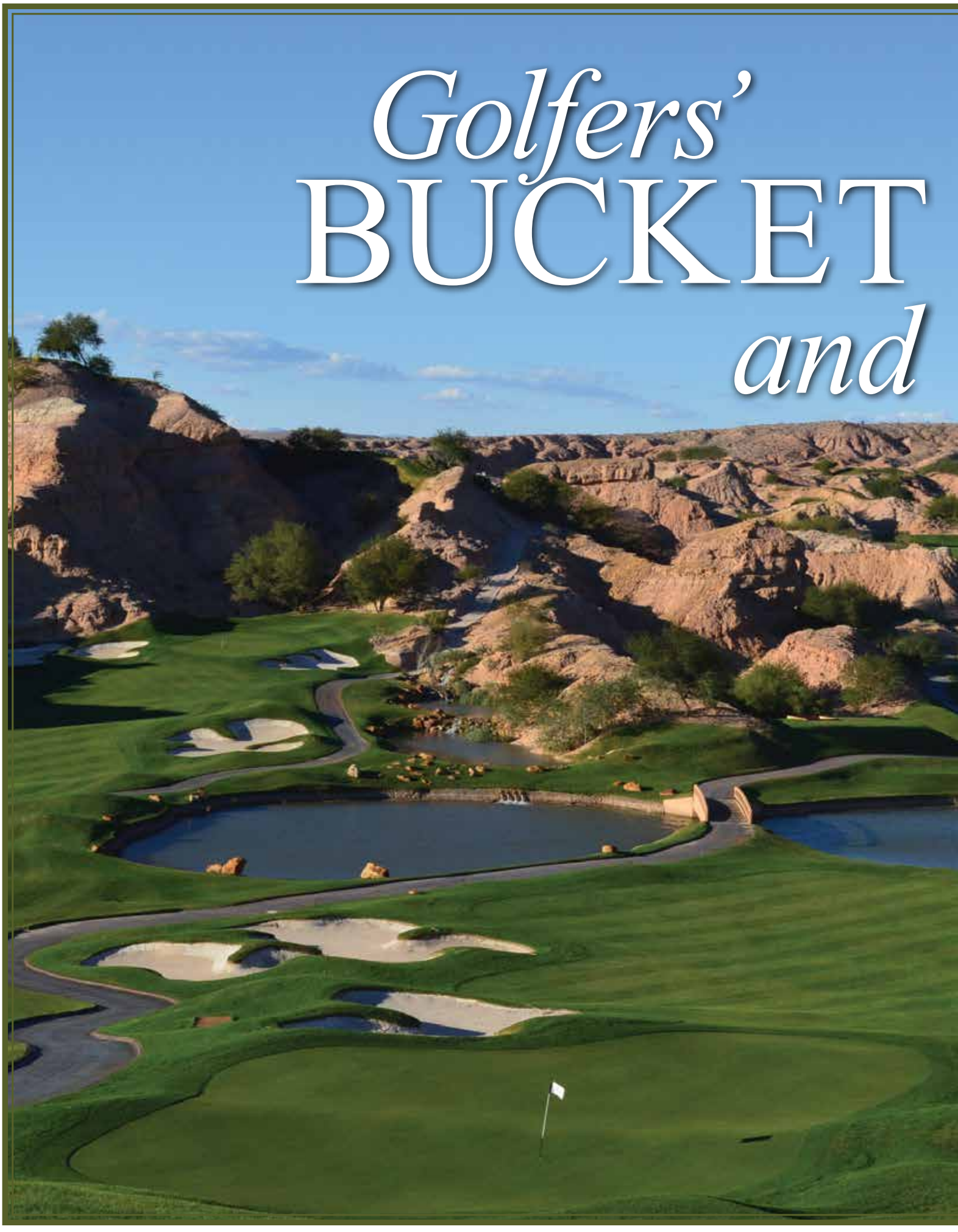
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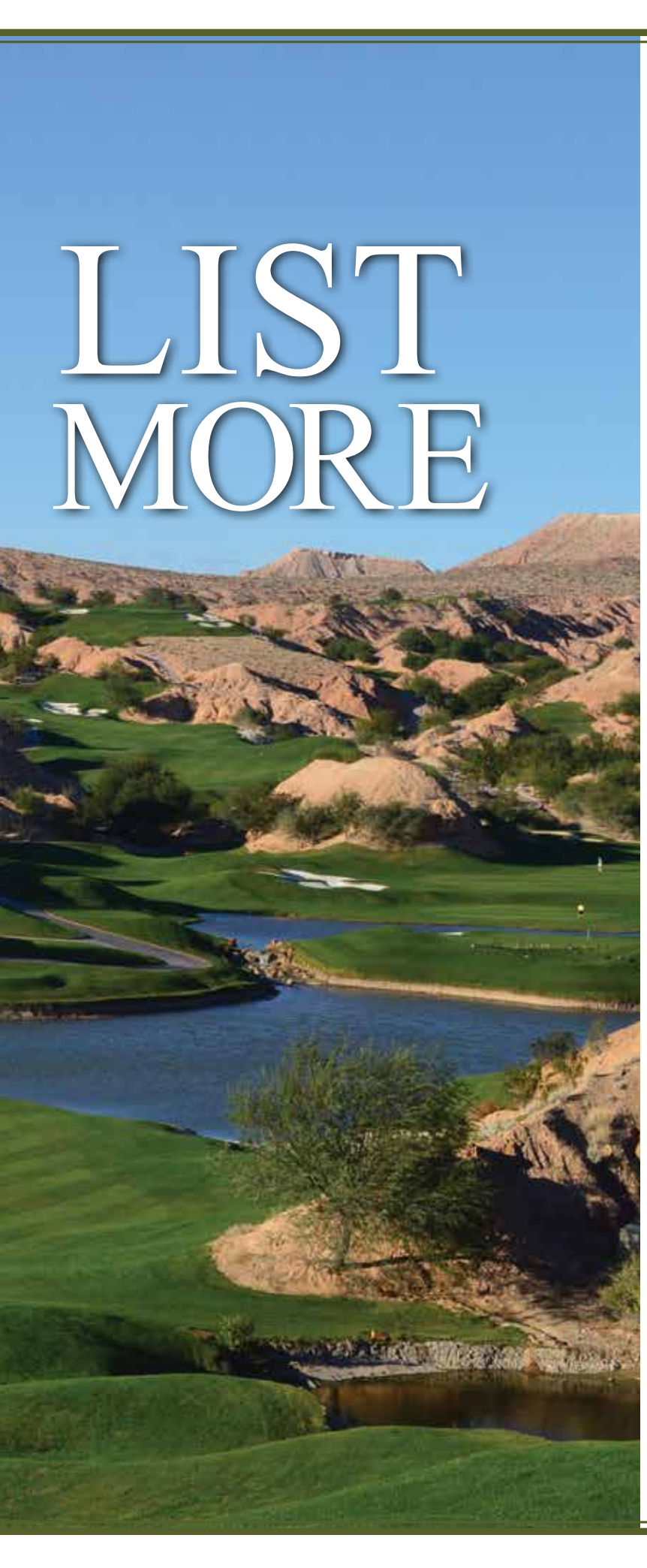
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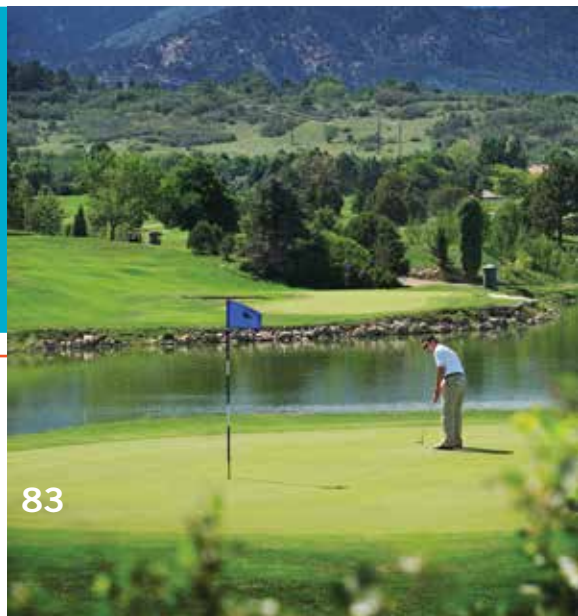
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Photograph by Justin Tafoya/Clarkson Creative



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PHOTOGRAPH BY TED MCINTYRE

FOR THE FIRST time in this magazine's 15-year history, a person appears on the cover of our Spring issue. Our annual celebration of the Best in Colorado Golf, known now and forever as the CAGGY Awards, usually features a golf course or type treatment.

The usurper, Paige Spiranac, has yet to qualify for the Symetra Tour, let alone the LPGA Tour. So why does she warrant a place on the cover of an issue celebrating accomplishment?

Do you have eyes?

Frankly, Spiranac is a phenomenon—an attractive, athletic young woman who has parlayed her beauty, charm and mad golf skills into hundreds of thousands of followers on YouTube, Instagram and Twitter. And, lucky us, she happens to have grown up in Monument, qualifying her for coverage—and a cover story—in *Colorado AvidGolfer*. She also holds the distinction of being the only woman not named Jennifer Kupcho to win a CWGA major tournament—the 100th Match Play—during the last two years.

But for all the attention she's courted for her sexy posts and videos, Spiranac would trade all of it for recognition as a professional golfer, preferably for winning on the LPGA Tour. As she tells Sam Adams in "Paige Before Beauty" (page 58), she's fiercely competitive and wants to be known for how she plays, not how she looks.

How she looks, though, has brought her attention she would not otherwise have received: a sponsorship from Callaway, for example, and a sponsor's exemption into two Dubai Ladies Masters. However, the backlash from golfers and the cyber-bullying she received surrounding the latter, especially after she failed to make the cut, brought her to tears in the pressroom.

During her interview with Sam, she misted up a bit when he brought up the critics and trolls, but she shook off the question like it was a shanked drive and played it as it lay.

Her response and Sam's entire profile affords a look at behind Spiranac's online persona and golf career. We learn who she really is—shy, religious and immensely likeable—and how she became that way.

If Paige Spiranac is more than an online phenomenon, so are the CAGGY Awards. Our annual online voting for the best in everything golf generated nearly 6,000 votes—not exactly a total of Paige views, but we'll take it—and the results appear in the foldout on page 73.

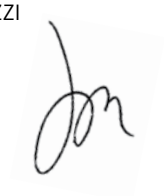
In case you haven't already looked, here's a preview. On the public side, The Golf Club at Bear Dance again earned top honors for Denver Metro Course, while courses in other regions maintained their hegemony as well. Surprises came in the categories of Best Course to Walk, Most Family-Friendly, Best for Women and Best for Seniors.

The private club world, the Cherries—Hills and Creek—both took big pieces of the pie, as did Ballyneal, an invitation to which you consider the most coveted to receive.

New categories, such as Best Golf Store, Best Par 3, Par 4 and Par 5 yielded some mild shockers. The instruction category, as always, brought some attention to previously unheralded teachers.

Some of their best tips appear in the first part of our "17 for '17" story on page 66.

Even though we could all benefit from some instruction, I somehow don't think that's the first Paige to which most readers will be turning. — JON RIZZI







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Thank you, Readers

AS HOLLYWOOD CELEBRATES its award season, our voting body of Colorado golfers has spoken with its own version of the People's Choice Awards. Thank you to the nearly 6,000 readers who voted online in our annual CAGGY awards celebrated in this issue. So get out there and play but come back to vote next year. You might even win something. During our most recent voting cycle, three voters, selected at random, received a prize: one got a $100 PGA TOUR Superstore gift card and the other two received Golf Passports.



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Teaching Our Children Well

The CGA's partnership in the Golf in Schools Program exposes a diverse cross-section of youth to the game's many facets. By Ryan Smith

FOLLOWING THROUGH:
One of the many beneficiaries of the Golf in Schools Program.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF COLORADO GOLF ASSOCIATION

WITH MANY SCHOOL districts deemphasizing physical education for budgetary and other reasons, schools constantly seek activities that cost as little money as possible. Given the need for access to equipment and facilities, introducing students to golf is an afterthought. In Colorado, however, many golf organizations are working to create access to the sport.

The Colorado Golf Association proudly partners with the Colorado Section of the PGA's Golf in Schools Program, which provides participating schools free access to instruction and, for schools whose schedule allows, a field trip to a neighboring golf course. Last year more than 8,000 kids participated in the program.

The CGA focuses its partnership on the schools neighboring the association-owned CommonGround Golf Course in Aurora. In 2016 more than 800 students participated in CGA-run Golf in Schools Programs.

Given the diversity of this population, the CGA finds itself serving some of the most underserved children in our community. Last year, two of the participating elementary schools in our Golf in Schools Program had 80 percent of their children receiving free or reduced lunch. The overwhelming majority of these children have had no prior exposure to golf and the field trip to CommonGround is their first time stepping foot on a golf course.

"It is not unusual for students to ask, 'is this real grass?'" notes CGA Director of Programs, Erin Gangloff. "When they walk onto a putting green they can't believe it is real grass—they have never seen anything like it."

While the field trip is a highlight of the program, the real emphasis is on the life skills that golf provides.

"By introducing this diverse group of kids to golf, we are pointing children to the many facets of the game and business of golf," Gangloff adds. "With so many people employed by the business, in addition to our growing caddie program, we are confident these students are seeing a pathway of opportunity to participation or employment."

Leann Zimmerman, a teacher at Side Creek Elementary in the Aurora Public School system, shared how her students "always have an amazing experience as they participate in the Golf in Schools program! It is fun to watch their skills and confidence grow with each experience as they become familiar with the game. I love how the program builds in life skills and a hands-on experience at the golf course."

The primary goal of the Colorado PGA Golf in Schools Program is to expand participation of the next generation of golfers in the state. At the end of the Golf in Schools Program, kids are introduced to the Player Pathway of the Junior Golf Alliance of Colorado.

The Pathway helps parents and juniors identify the right fit with our statewide partners. Research indicates that if children do the right activities at the right times they will get active, stay active, and even reach the greatest heights of sport achievement.

Moreover, statistics show that those who are exposed to golf at a young age are exponentially more likely to pick it up later in life. To measure this program's effect will take many years. But the smiles on these kids' faces suggest a very bright future for the game of golf.

Ryan Smith is the Colorado Golf Association's Director of Development. If you are interested in bringing the Golf in Schools Program to your school or in volunteering to participate in this amazing program, please contact Erin Gangloff, the Colorado Golf Association's Managing Director of Programs (*egangloff@coloradogolf.org*) or Holly Champion, the Colorado PGA's Junior Golf Director (*hchampion@pgahq.com*).

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Déjà Two

WHILE THE Colorado Women's Golf Association's March 4 meeting won't have the same fanfare as last year's 100th anniversary celebration, the awards portion of the annual program at The Inverness Hotel and Conference Center will remain identical.

For the third consecutive year, **Jennifer Kupcho** (above right) will receive the 2016 CWGA Player of the Year Award, and, as she did last year, **Kim Eaton** will take home the CWGA Senior Player of the Year trophy—her seventh since turning 50 eight years ago.

Kupcho's honor means the 19-year-old becomes the first person ever to win that award three consecutive times. Currently a sophomore at Wake Forest University, the Westminster native crushed her competition 12 and 10 in the 36-hole final of the CWGA Match Play and lapped the field by 19 shots in the CWGA Stroke Play. Her second-round 65 at Denver Country Club eclipsed the great Babe Zaharias's 70-year-old women's course record of 68.

Outside of Colorado, Kupcho excelled as well, finishing runner up in the Women's ACC Championship and sixth at the NCAA Division I Championship. She won the sectional qualifier to compete in the U.S. Women's Open and earned medalist honors in her last two full-field college starts of 2016.

As of January 18, she placed 15th in the Women's World Amateur Golf Rankings. She also started the year as Golfstat's top-ranked Division I woman player and was first on the Watch List for the 2016-2017 ANNIKA Award, which honors the player of the year in women's golf, as selected by a group of college golfers, coaches and members of the golf media.

The Colorado Golf Hall of Fame will celebrate Kupcho as its Golf Person of the Year during its annual banquet May 21.

A Colorado Golf Hall of Fame inductee herself, Eaton won the CWGA Senior Match Play for the third time with a 6 and 4 victory over Christie Austin, who entered the Hall in 2015. The victory marked Eaton's 22nd overall CWGA title.

Eaton, who partnered with Austin to win the 2010 Women's Trans National Golf Association Senior Four-Ball, repeated the feat in 2016 with teammate Leigh Klasse. A Greeley native now living in Arizona, Eaton earned AWGA Player of the Year and Senior Player of the Year honors by virtue of winning both the AWGA State Amateur Seniors Championship and the open-age-division title in the AWGA State Amateur Stroke Play.

And if that wasn't enough, for the fourth time in eight years, she advanced to the quarterfinals of the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur, and scored her second career victory in the senior division of the Ione D. Jones/Doherty Women's Amateur Championship in Fort Lauderdale. *coloradowomensgolf.org*



Neighborhood Watch

IN OUR ONLINE COVERAGE of the controversy surrounding the City of Denver's plan to convert 138 acres of **City Park Golf Course** into a stormwater detention area, we received the following email:

"City Park Friends and Neighbors (CPFAN), a Registered Neighborhood Organization, has described sustainable solutions to accomplish stormwater flood control consistent with preferred and recommended measures advocated by the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District. Detention basins are considered a last resort option for flood control. They contain stagnant water, are unsightly, breed mosquitoes, often fail, and are costly maintenance nightmares. Natural stormwater protection is preferred over engineered solutions. City Park Golf Course provides a natural sustainable solution. Aside from losing its historic significance, beautiful topography, rich soils, trees, and wildlife the 'redesigned' golf course will be an unsafe and unhealthy place to be. Our neighborhoods are not in FEMA 100 year flood hazard areas and therefore do not need this level of flood control at this location. As testimony, of the 730 emergency flood control projects permitted by the US Army Corps of Engineers in Colorado in the past five years, only one was deemed necessary in Denver."

Jacqueline Manning, *Denver*



Super Loopers

THE FINAL interviews for the annual **Chick Evans Caddie Scholarship** took place January 18 at Cherry Hills Country Club, where, appropriately enough, three of the dozen finalists had worked as caddies. Another three came from Denver Country Club, with the remaining six representing clubs across the state. Sharing stories of hard work and character, all 12 individually and successfully fielded questions from the 100-person selection committee. Their reward? Full, four-year tuition and housing college scholarships at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where they will live in the recently renovated Evans Scholars House, which can now accommodate up to 60 students. Administered by the Chicago-based Western Golf Association, the Evans Scholars Foundation currently serves students at the Eisenhower Chapter in Boulder and more than 450 CU alumni. Locally, the Colorado Golf Association and the Colorado Golf Foundation work to support caddie programs in order to put more young men and women on the path to an Evans Scholarship. This year's recipients are **Ayanna Hwang**, **Isaiah Monroe** and **Ian Sevier Barrios** (Cherry Hills Country Club); **Joshua Garcia**, **Kalil Miles** and **Madison Rivas** (Denver Country Club); **Dietrich Berning** and **Elias King** (Boulder Country Club); **Quinton Kelly** (Bear Creek Golf Club); **Richard Biggs** (Lakewood Country Club); **Joseph Kamby** (Country Club of The Rockies); and **Jack Cohan** (Roaring Fork Club). A 13th finalist, **Luke Giusto** (Lakewood), had to reschedule his interview to attend the Presidential inauguration. *coloradogolf.org*

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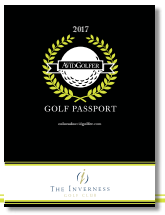
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Antler Creek, Falcon **EXCLUSIVE**	$28	$35	$35	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
Applewood, Golden	$30	$30	$30	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	2
Breckenridge, Breckenridge*	$75	$99	$75	SS: M-Sun, any time. PS: S-Th after 12	Yes	3
The Bridges, Montrose*	$35	$49	$35	Any day after 11	Yes	3
Broadlands, Broomfield	$40	$40	$40	M-Th after 12	No	3
Broken Tee, Englewood	$33	$33	$33	M-Th after 12	No	3 P/S = 9
Buffalo Run, Commerce City	$41	$41	$41	M-F any time, S-S after 2	Yes	3
Cedaredge, Cedaredge	$35	$40	$35	Any day, any time	Yes	Unlimited
Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs* **EXCLUSIVE**	$60	$75/$95	$60	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 1	Yes	3
Coal Creek, Louisville **EXCLUSIVE**	$40	$50	$40	M-F after 11	No	3
Colorado National, Erie	$45	$49	$45	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
CommonGround, Aurora* **EXCLUSIVE**	$49	$49	$49	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
Country Club at Woodmoor, Monument **EXCLUSIVE**	$36	$45	$36	Any day after 11	Yes	2
Deer Creek, Littleton	$35	$40	$35	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 2	Yes	2
Devil's Thumb, Delta	$30/35	$30/35	$30/35	Any day after 10	Yes	2
Eagle Ranch, Eagle **EXCLUSIVE**	$35	$55	$35	Any day after 11	Yes	2
Eagle Trace, Broomfield	$30	$30	$30	M-Th after 11, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
EagleVail, Avon*	$69	$69	$69	SS: M-Sun any time. PS: M-Sun after 1	Yes	3
Family Sports, Centennial	$19	$21	$19	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 11	Yes	Unlimited
Fitzsimons, Aurora **EXCLUSIVE**	$27/$31	$27/$31	$27/$31	M-F after 11, S-S after 1	Yes	1 P/S = 3
Foothills, Denver	$36/$51	$36/$51	$36/$51	M-Th before 8; after 1, F-S-S after 1	Yes	4
Four Mile Ranch, Cañon City	$35	$38	$35	M-F any time, S-S after 1	Yes	3
Fox Acres, Red Feather Lakes	$50	$60	$50	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 11	Yes	Unlimited
Fox Hollow, Lakewood	$48	$48	$48	M-Th after 1, F-S-S after 2	Yes	Unlimited
Golf Granby Ranch, Granby*	$25	$54	$25	Any day after 11	Yes	Unlimited
Grand Elk, Granby	$32/$39	$45/$54	$39/$45	M-Th after 11, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
Grand Lake, Grand Lake*	$35	$55	$40	M-Th after 11, S-S after 12	Yes	3
Green Valley Ranch, Denver **EXCLUSIVE**	$39/49	$49/59	$39/49	Any day after 12	Yes	1 P/S = 3
Haymaker, Steamboat Springs	$57	$77	$57	Any day, any time	Yes	Unlimited
Heritage at Westmoor, Westminster	$45	$45	$45	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 1	Yes	Unlimited
Heritage Eagle Bend, Aurora	$34/$40	$50/$56	$34/$40	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 11	Yes	3
Highland Meadows, Windsor*	$34	$44	$34	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
Highlands Ranch, Highlands Ranch	$48/$59	$58/$69	$48/$59	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	SS: 2, PS: 1
The Homestead, Lakewood	$38	$38	$38	M-Th after 1, F-S-S after 2	Yes	Unlimited
The Greg Mastriona at Hyland Hills *Gold Course*, Westminster **EXCLUSIVE**	$42	$42	$42	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3

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The Greg Mastriona at Hyland Hills *Par 3 Course*, Westminster **EXCLUSIVE**	$12	$12	$12	Any day, any time	Yes	Unlimited
Indian Tree, Arvada **EXCLUSIVE**	$37	$37	$37	Any day after 12	Yes	3
The Inverness, Englewood*	$60	$80	$60	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
Keystone Ranch, Keystone*	$75	$105	$75	Any day after 11	Yes	Unlimited
Kings Deer, Monument **EXCLUSIVE**	$25	$40	$25	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 11	Yes	2
Legacy Ridge, Westminster	$45	$45	$45	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 1	Yes	Unlimited
The Links, Highlands Ranch	$34/$39	$38/$43	$34/$39	M-Th any time F-S-S after 12	Yes	1 P/S = 3
Littleton Golf and Tennis Club, Littleton	$29/$31	$34/$36	$29/$31	M-Th after 11, F-S-S after 1	Yes	3
Lone Tree Golf Club & Hotel, Lone Tree	$56	$64	$54	M-Th after 11 F-S-S after 12	Yes	3 P/S
The Meadows, Littleton	$40/$54	$40/$54	$40/$54	Any dayafter 1,	Yes	4
Murphy Creek, Aurora **EXCLUSIVE**	$37.50/$45	$37.50/$45	$37.50/$45	M-F after 11, S-S after 1	Yes	1 P/S = 3
Omni Interlocken, Broomfield*	$60	$70	$60	M-Th any time, F before 12 S-S after 12	Yes	3
Pelican Lake Golf Club, Windsor*	$45	$60	$50	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	3
Perry Park Country Club, Larkspur **EXCLUSIVE**	$89	$89	$89	T-Th after 11:30	No	2
Pine Creek, Colorado Springs	$39	$44	$39	M-Th after 12, F-S-S after 2	Yes	2 P/S = 6
Pole Creek, Tabernash	$50	$50	$50	M-Th after 11. F-S-S after 12	Yes	Unlimited
Quail Dunes, Fort Morgan	$20	$25	$20	Any day, Any time	Yes	4
Raccoon Creek, Littleton	$39/$45	$39/$45	$39/$45	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	4
The Raven at Three Peaks, Silverthorne*	$55	$89	$55	Any day after 12	Yes	Unlimited
Redlands Mesa, Grand Junction **EXCLUSIVE**	$50	$55	$50	Any day, after 12	Yes	2
The Ridge at Castle Pines, Castle Rock* **EXCLUSIVE**	$50	$60/$75	$50	M-Th any time, F- S-S after 1	Yes	1 P/S = 3
The River Course at Keystone, Keystone*	$75	$105	$75	Any day after 11	Yes	Unlimited
Saddle Rock, Aurora **EXCLUSIVE**	$39.50/$47	$39.50/$47	$39.50/$47	M-F after 11, S-S after 1	Yes	1 P/S = 3
South Suburban Par 3, Centennial	$9	$9	$9	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12	Yes	Unlimited
Sumo Golf Village, Florence	$25	$30	$25	Any day after 12	Yes	2
Tiara Rado, Grand Junction	$35	$35	$35	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 11	Yes	3
Todd Creek, Thornton **EXCLUSIVE**	$40	$45	$40	M-Th after 10, F-S-S after 12	Yes	Unlimited
Vail, Vail	$50	$89	$50	Sun-Th after 1	Yes	2
Walking Stick, Pueblo*	$32	$32	$32	M-Th any time, F-S-S after 12:30	Yes	Unlimited
Yampa Valley, Craig* **EXCLUSIVE**	$30	$30	$30	M-Th after 11, F-S-S after 12	Yes	2

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The Rise and Rise of The Club at Ravenna

PARADISO FOUND: Homes in Ravenna's Estancia enclave don't intrude on holes like the 13th.

A sustained surge in home construction, course improvements and new members breathes renewed life into one of Colorado golf's most breathtaking developments. By Jon Rizzi

IN THE FALL of 2014, a friend asked Kelly Garland of Highlands Ranch to join him for a round of golf at The Club at Ravenna. "He said they were trying to attract him as a member," Garland recalls, "and it'd be for fun—which is the only way I would go, because I was, at best, a 36 handicap."

Garland doesn't remember what he shot that day—"I played like crap," he jokes—but he certainly recollects his astonishment at the rugged beauty of the 634-acre development nestled among the ravines, red rock formations and wooded slopes near Waterton Canyon and Pike National Forest. "I'm a fourth-generation Coloradan, and I was shocked this place was here," he admits. "I came back two days later and bought one of the original houses on the property."

At the time, Garland's purchase appeared risky. Despite the presence of impressive Tuscan-style residences such as the 6,700-square-foot beauty he purchased, Ravenna had just one home under construction and only 50 members. A large tent served as its clubhouse, and its only amenity was a golf course many considered too difficult. In addition, the brief history of the gated development—which opened in 2007, right before the recession—included a bankruptcy, receivership and the tumult of reorganization.

But Garland, who has spent 31 years in the real estate business specializing in distressed properties, identified an opportunity. "I figured out pretty quickly what was going on," he says.

Garland figured out that Kevin Collins, a successful energy executive who had lived at Ravenna since 2009, would become managing partner at the beginning of 2015. "I knew he'd been there, believed in it, and was going to stick with it," Garland says. "You have to have the right guy driving the bus on a development. He was that guy."

With the understated Collins at the wheel for the past two years, The Club at Ravenna has become Colorado's hottest luxury golf community. The business skills Collins had honed over decades as a COO compensated for any inexperience as a developer. His leadership has ensured that every element at Ravenna progresses in unison.

REAL ESTATE

"For the past 24 months, the activity has been off the charts," says Managing Director & Listing Broker Dale Schossow of LIV Sotheby's International Realty.

Ravenna, which had one home under construction when Collins took over, now has 34. Yellow trucks abound, as new homes sprout from every street and cul-de-sac in nine boutique enclaves. Of the development's 243 total homesites, 75 will be occupied by year-end—and by then, who knows how many more will be under contract or construction?

"To get to where we were to where we are now is Lazarus-esque," says Schossow, who enjoys the unique perspective of having worked at Ravenna since its inception. "Put another way, it's like growing 18 inches between seventh and ninth grade—but without the clumsiness."

Homesites at Ravenna all tuck into the natural piedmont without intruding on the course. The sites range from the low $300,000s to the low $600,000s; homes on builder lots and re-sales start around $1 million. Builders include Remington Homes, Thomas Sattler Homes and Sterling Custom Homes—each with spectacular elevations evocative of European country estates. In addition to the ultra-luxe Custom Collection at Ravenna, the Hollister Michaels Collection includes the architecturally authentic English Cottage, Italian Farmhouse and French Country Home.

Ravenna, you may recognize, is the Italian city known as the final resting place of the immortal poet Dante, who wrote the third and final part of his *Divine Comedy* there. While the first two parts, *Inferno* (Hell) and *Purgatorio* (Purgatory) describe some of the Colorado development's past, the third, *Paradiso* (Heaven) captures its present.

And just as The Club at Ravenna's Dante Drive leads to Paradiso Court, homes in all nine enclaves take you back to the Old World with names like Corda Bella and Terracina. A tenth, a jewel-box of 23 lots between the second and 18th fairways called Umbria, has not yet been released.

"People in this price range really have nowhere else to go," explains Schossow. "And now that we have price-point stability and comps,

as well as a dependable water supply and 24/7 manned gatehouse, the absorption has been brisk. Plus, when people see the construction going on, they know we're for real."

And for those who might think the location too remote, Garland says he and his wife can get to the grocery store faster now than when they lived in Highlands Ranch, and he's cut 20 minutes off his work commute to downtown Denver.

THE GOLF

Right before Collins took the reins at Ravenna, he set about making the golf course appropriately playable for all levels of golfers.

"The 'sage' and 'umber' forward tees have always been good but the black and the intermediate gold and forest were just too difficult," Kevin Atkinson of Phelps-Atkinson Golf Course Design says of the par-71 Jay Morrish layout that originally tipped at 7,263 yards with a Slope/Rating of 149/75.0. Modifications over the years had only tempered some of that difficulty.

Enlisted by Collins, Atkinson collaborated with PGA Director of Golf George Kahrhoff and Golf Course Superintendent Steve Datwyler to hatch a plan that would elevate the course's fun factor while not removing all its teeth. They even invited USGA representatives to give input.

To avoid the expense of outside workers and equipment, Datwyler and his 20-person crew created operational efficiencies, such as turning a rototiller into a "rotodozer" by reversing the blades.

The team began with the first and final holes (see box) and have most recently shaved down the hill to the left of the green on the par-3 ninth and reduced the slope of the green. "The ball used to kick off that hill and roll completely across the green into the junk," Kahrhoff explains. "The ball won't kick as hard now and the green will be able to hold it. It's a scoreable hole."

Throughout the course, explains Datwyler, the team did three critical things:

- Maintain the native grass so you can find your ball.
- Reduce the number of bunkers—the average course has 60,000 to 80,000 square feet of bunkers; Ravenna had 160,000 to 180,000. They shrank 17 bunkers and removed 29. "We're down to about 100,000 square feet," he says.
- Reduce the slope of the greens from 4 to 2 percent, which means the ball doesn't speed up as much on the downslope and the contours are subtler. He estimates the average green's pinnable surface has gone from 25 to 65 percent.

More pin locations gives Datwyler space to maintain the health of the green. "Also," Kahrhoff adds, "members don't get used to the same pin positions, and it sets us up for future growth."

The best part of the modification process? Atkinson, Kahrhoff and Datwyler—all of whom have worked at member-owned clubs—agree it's the lack of a greens committee. "Kevin Collins gives us the freedom and flexibility to get things done," says Datwyler. "It's that simple."

THE MEMBERSHIP

The playability improvements to the golf course please another Ravenna veteran, Membership Director Erik "Hack" Haberland. "The course did

THE FLOORPLAN: Ravenna's Old World-style clubhouse comprises 12,500 feet on the main level.



Softening the Course

It's How You Start...
HOLE 1





"You want to get off to a good start, so an obvious change was to expand the landing areas and remove the fairway bunker on the right," says Kevin Atkinson of Phelps-Atkinson Golf Design. "That bunker wasn't in Morrish's original design, and a lot of players—especially our women and juniors—would find their drives in there."

And How You Finish...
HOLE 18





"The view to the green or or fairway was nearly blind," says Atkinson. "We opened up the view to show off the drama of the canyon and provide golfers options on how and where they want to play their second shot on this reachable par 5. We also eliminated a bunker to increase the width and improve the view to the second landing area."

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not have a good reputation," he says. "To attract families, we had to make it more accessible—both in terms of difficulty, tee options and tee-time availability—and we've definitely done that."

In the two years since the management change, Ravenna's membership rocketed from 50 to 176. A full-golf membership, the most popular offering, costs $25,000, with monthly dues of $525. Because it's privately owned, Ravenna will never assess its membership. Not including social, national and junior members, the number of full dues-paying members caps at 300.

Haberland says that most prospective members no longer question the viability of the club because they see all the residential construction, and with home sales so brisk, nonresident memberships are in short supply.

Other selling points include activities and programming for members of all ages, as well as the tranquility of a stunning course in a gated community around which fun-loving residents tool around in their own carts.

THE AMENITIES

Amazingly enough, The Club at Ravenna has achieved its success without a clubhouse or any leisure amenity aside from golf. For 10 years, a giant tent has served as the restaurant, golf shop, event center and community gathering spot.

Two structures will soon change that.

Construction has already commenced on a 4,100-square-foot pool and fitness facility with men's and women's locker rooms, a multipurpose space and a rooftop "sunset terrace," where up to 100 people can spend many happy hours eating, drinking and entertaining. "This is huge for the community," Collins says. "Our members and residents like to work out and have a place to go." And by this time next year they will.

After completion of the pool and fitness facility, the clubhouse construction will begin. Designed by TKP Architecture of Golden and built by Mesa Properties, the Old World-style structure will overlook the course. The 18th green will reveal itself dramatically as you walk into the lobby from the porte cochère. The floor plan comprises 12,500 square feet on the main level, with another 10,000 in the walkout level below.

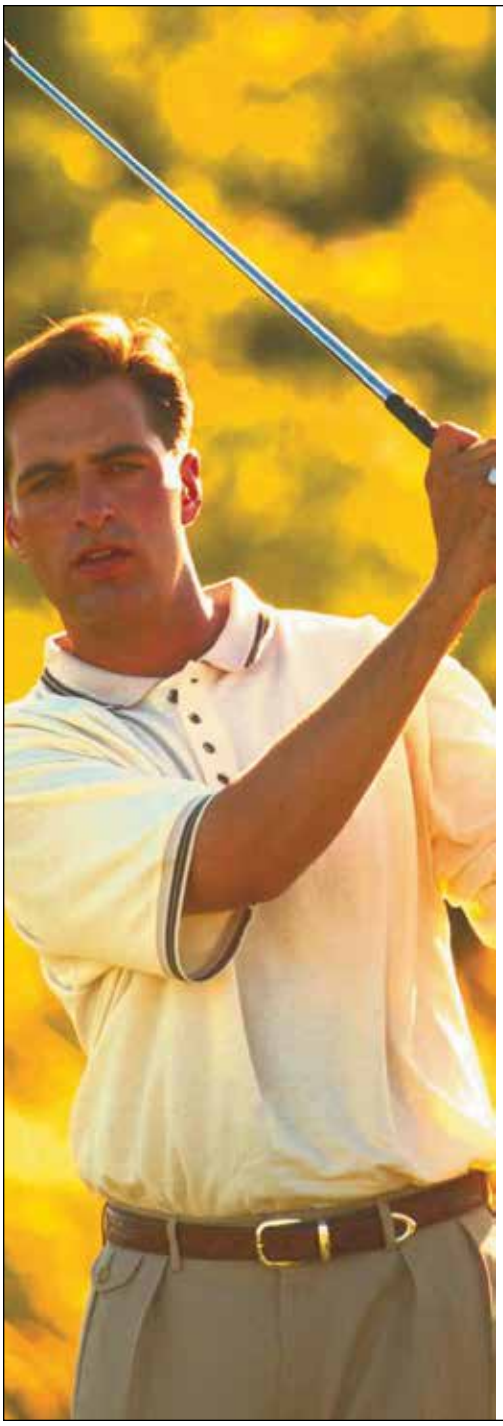
"We have a small membership," Collins reasons. "We don't want or need a lot of cavernous, unused space."

With that in mind, the first floor will feature areas for fine, casual and alfresco dining, a lounge and bar area, well-appointed golf locker rooms for both men and women, and private spaces for meetings and other activities. Executive Chef Christopher Moore will have a state-of-the-culinary-arts kitchen to prepare his delectable fare.

The golf shop will be on the walkout level, as will another private dining area and storage for golf carts and other items.

"I'm fine with the tent," laughs Garland, "but it's important to a lot of people who are joining the club for it to end up the way Kevin says it will. And if Kevin says we're getting a clubhouse, you can bank on it happening."

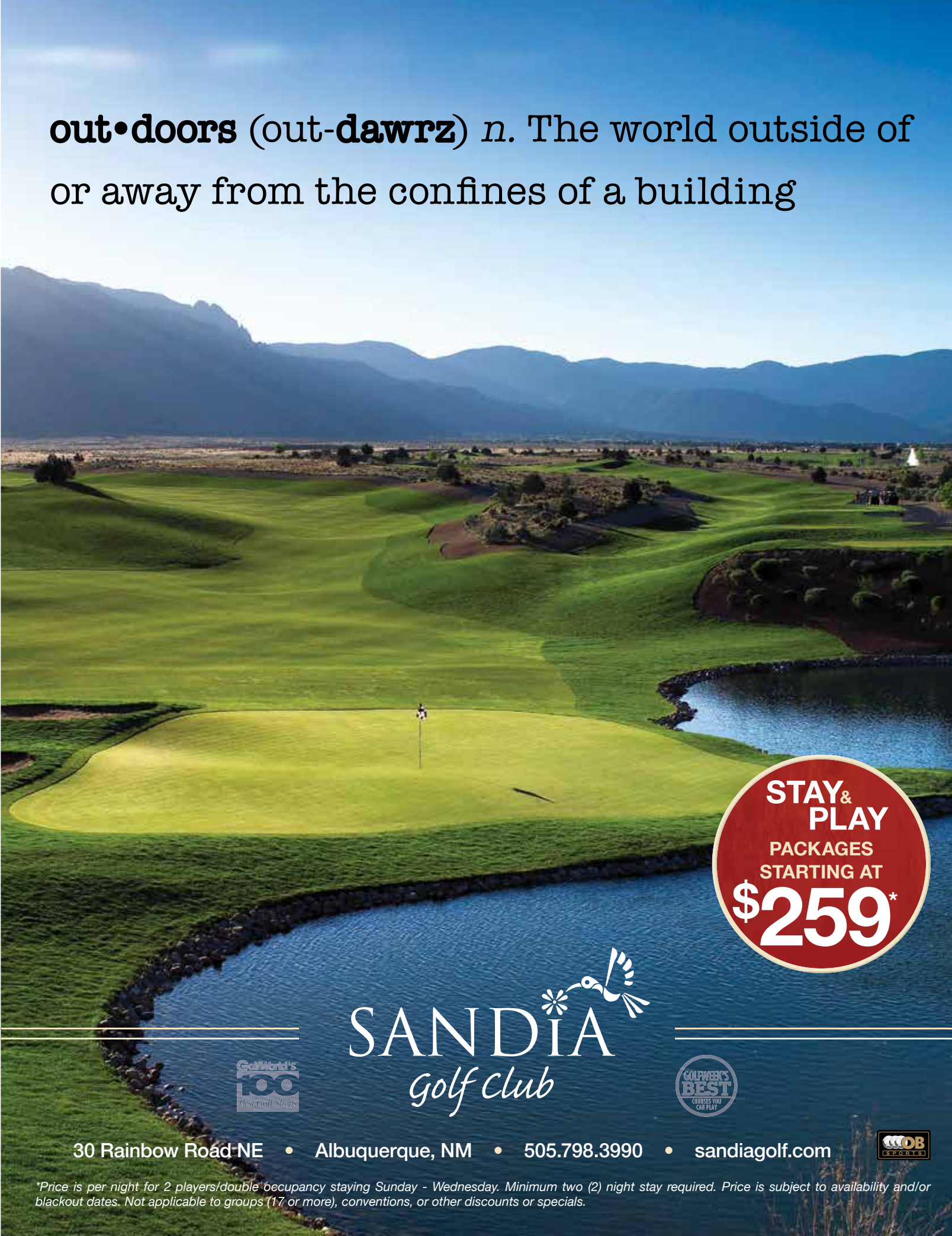
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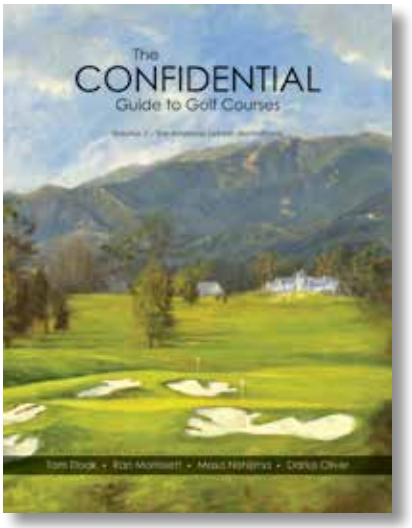
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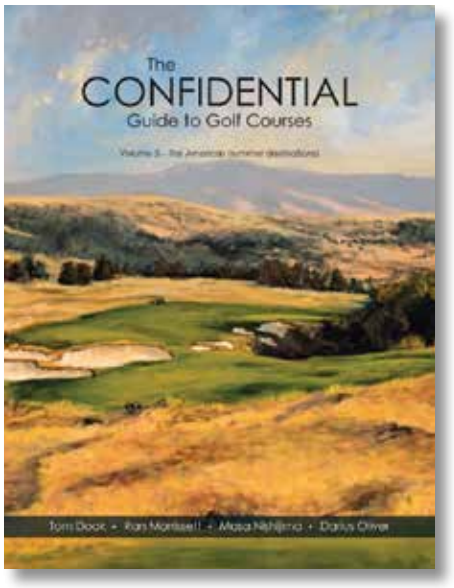
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Tom Doak Takes On the World

Scathing, entertaining and insightful, the architect's repackaged version of *The Confidential Guide to Golf Courses* spans five volumes and spares no feelings.

By Andy Bigford

BALLYNEAL GOLF CLUB rises to the top in Colorado by a wide margin, and even ranks above Augusta National and Pebble Beach. Sanctuary is "further proof...of the infatuation some ranking panels have with exclusivity and great grass." Denver Country Club has seen so many redesigns that "there's not much to hang one's hat on." Despite its scenic appeal, Jack Vickers' Castle Pines Golf Club, former proud host of The International, is an artistic failure, while Arrowhead Golf Club gets a "Dumb Blonde" award—"gorgeous but lacking substance."

These and many other often-biting insights can be gleaned from architect Tom Doak's *The Confidential Guide to Golf Courses*, which PGA Tour veteran Brad Faxon calls "one of the ballsiest books ever written." Doak spent much of his youth travelling the globe to catalogue golf courses, and his sharp opinions were first published in book form in the mid-1990s, attracting such a cult following that copies were fetching up to $500 on the Internet. The *Guide* also served as a coming out for Doak, who railed against contrived, big-budget courses (and their designers) while advocating a natural, return-to-roots approach. He eventually applied those principles in designing some three-dozen acclaimed courses, from Bandon's Pacific Dunes to Cape Kidnappers in New Zealand.

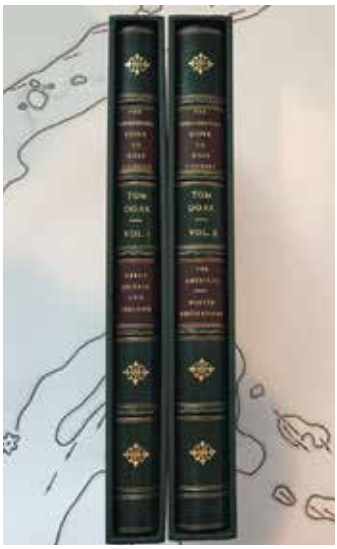
With new course commissions drying up over the past decade, Doak is now re-packaging and expanding the *Guide*, enlisting three other design experts to weigh in as well: Ran Morrissett, Masa Nishijima and Darius Oliver. This ambitious new effort, delivered in Doak's authoritative but conversational voice, will produce five coffee-table format hardcover volumes that will encompass much of the golf course universe.

The rankings are based on the 1-10 Doak Scale; in the U.S., only Cypress Point, Pine Valley and Sand Hills earn 10s from all four reviewers. I've played several courses ranked as a "3" that I'll happily play again, and a Doak "5" often can be a delight. Doak says the write-ups are more important than the numbers, and that the premise is to simply help you decide where—and where not—to play.

Doak designs what he likes and likes what he designs, so it's not surprising that his own courses get extraordinarily high marks. This does leave a fishy smell compared to the purity of the original *Guide*, when Doak didn't have much skin in the game. But Doak and his colleagues deserve credit for calling it the way they see it, and for consistently digging up obscure gems that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Just released in late 2016 is Volume 3, covering summer destinations of the U.S. and Canada—including musings on 29 Colorado courses. Doak's Ballyneal—"a riot of contour from tee to green"—scores 9s from all four experts. The Colorado Golf Club (7/6/6/7) in Parker, the work of Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, is a distant second (Doak laments the encroachment of housing). Cherry Hills Country Club, the William Flynn standard and host to six major championships, rated a 7 from Doak and 6s from two of his colleagues (not all four have played, and therefore rated, all the courses). Both the Doak-designed CommonGround (6/6/5/—) and Broadmoor East (5/—/5/—) earn mention in the back-of-the-book "Gazeteer" as "Sleeping Beauties"—"More than meets the eye."

If you embrace the intricacies of golf-course design and enjoy seeking out courses big and small, the *Confidential Guide* is a great read and resource, especially for those who travel frequently. Just don't take the reviews personally, or let them spoil your enjoyment of a golf course. When a friend recently invited me to play at his glamorous, challenging and impeccably maintained private club in California, I immediately summoned the *Guide*, only to read this: "Dullest Jack Nicklaus design ever." The course still got a 5, and I can't wait to play it.



Andy Bigford is a *CAG* contributor. For more information and to order *The Confidential Guide*, go to *renaissancegolf.com*. Each volume costs $60 plus $15 (S&H). You can save $20 and buy all five for $280, or spring for one of the 100 stunning hand-crafted, leather-bound and gilt-edged editions signed by Doak and his three co-authors. Each slip-cased book costs $1,000 ($5,000 for the set).


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The Shadow Creek of the South

Opening a year after Hurricane Katrina, Beau Rivage Resort's Fallen Oak Golf Club will blow you away. By Tom Ferrell

SOUTHERN ACCENTS: From left, the third on Tom Fazio's Fallen Oak; the Beau Rivage's waterfront setting and BR Prime Steakhouse.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN successful businesspeople and game-changers is almost always a matter of vision. And though the degenerative eye disease retinitis pigmentosa has affected billionaire developer Steve Wynn's ability to see clearly for much of his adult life, it has never taken his vision. It was Wynn who foresaw the potential of the Las Vegas Strip and anchored it with the groundbreaking Mirage Hotel – subsequently adding Treasure Island and the Bellagio. A decade later, in an even more audacious gamble, he brought Vegas glitz to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, crafting the 32-story Beau Rivage Hotel and Casino on the Biloxi waterfront.

Wynn introduced high-end hospitality to Vegas and, ultimately, to Mississippi, and guests flocked to the experience, which extended well beyond the gaming tables. To provide his high-rolling clientele with a daytime diversion, Wynn commissioned Tom Fazio to build a mirage-like oasis in the Nevada desert. Shadow Creek stunned the golf world with its $60 million fantasy world of sculpted hillsides, waterfalls and 21,000 trees. With tee times set one hour apart and access strictly limited to guests of the Mirage (and, later, to guests of Wynn's other properties), Shadow Creek dovetailed perfectly with Wynn's revolutionary concept. So it was hardly a surprise that the Beau Rivage would include a similar high-end golf course authored again by Tom Fazio.

In Mississippi, however, Fazio didn't have to create a faux-natural setting. Instead, he got to handpick a 510-acre parcel of rolling land dotted with ponds and studded with oaks, pecan orchards and stately magnolias. From this bucolic setting, Wynn and Fazio brought Fallen Oak Golf Club to life.

Steve Wynn sold Mirage Resorts to MGM Grand in 2000—a year after the Beau Rivage opened and six years before the debut of Fallen Oak—but he'll never be truly absent from the properties he conceived.

Take a walk into the lobby of the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino, and you will be blown away by the size and scale of the atrium, with its buzz of glam-retail shops and hum of activity. This sense of arrival transports guests immediately away from their daily lives and into a world of excitement and glitz. The resort lost a year to damages from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It reopened a year to the day from the storm, sporting a $550 million renovation. With award-winning restaurants, 1,550-seat theater that attracts top regional and national performers, and a throbbing nightclub to augment the sprawling casino, the Beau Rivage disproves the saying that you can't be all things to all people.

But you're here for golf.

The sense of arrival at Fallen Oak is similar, but in a completely different way. You encounter a surprising change in topography as you make the 20-minute drive from the hotel to the club. For the last five miles, the road winds through tall pines and across working fields. Then, if you're paying close attention, you catch the small sign that guides you toward the gate of Fallen Oak Golf Club.

Creating exclusivity in a resort golf course is no small feat. Indeed, most resorts are willing to relax their "hotel guests-only" policy in an effort to make an extra buck or gain a little more exposure. Not so at Fallen Oak. The coastal Mississippi climate is absolutely perfect for golf, with some 330 playable days during the year. Yet Fallen Oak sees only 12,000 rounds per year, and as with top private clubs around the country, the first thing you encounter is a sturdy iron gate with a small intercom that lets you buzz the golf shop.

Exclusivity…check.

Once on the inside, the physical beauty of the setting unfolds, and glimpses of the golf course quicken the senses. And at last, the Acadian-style clubhouse rises before you. This is where the experience kicks up another notch.

A member of the golf staff greets you by name while the valet hustles your clubs from the trunk and hauls your

INFO TO GO

The Beau Rivage is located in Biloxi, Mississippi, approximately one hour east of New Orleans and one hour west of Mobile, Alabama. Only resort guests can play Fallen Oak Golf Club. For reservations, call 888-567-6667 or visit *beaurivage.com*. For more on Gulf Coast golf, including courses around New Orleans, visit *coloradoavidgolfer.com*.



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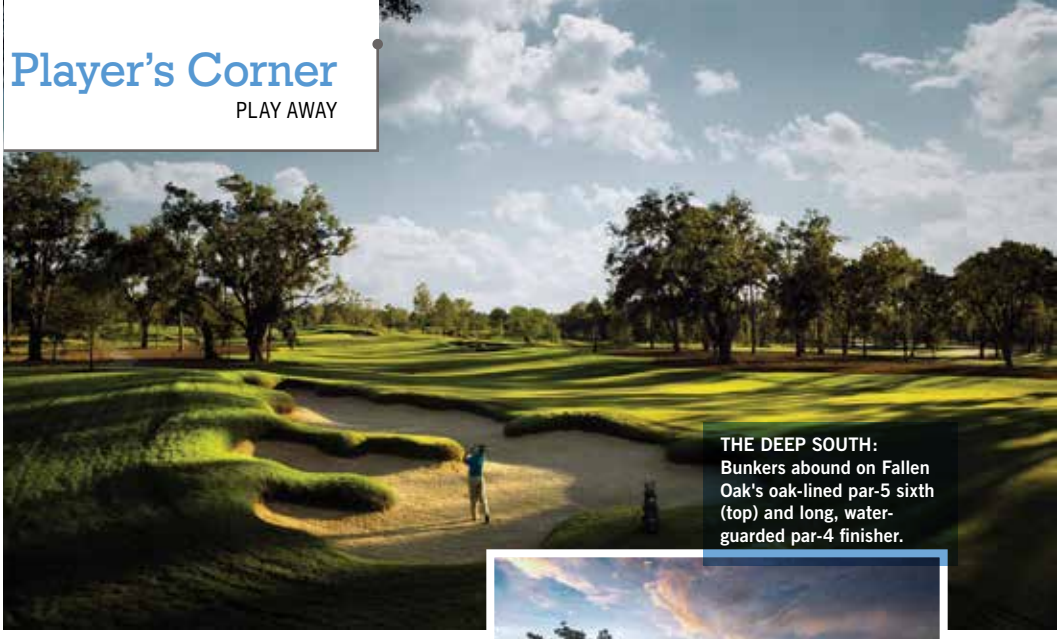
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THE DEEP SOUTH: Bunkers abound on Fallen Oak's oak-lined par-5 sixth (top) and long, water-guarded par-4 finisher.



shoes to the locker room. The staffer then gives you a quick tour of the clubhouse, complete with first-name introductions to the locker room manager and servers, and leads you to your locker, with its personalized nameplate. Emmanuel commands his locker room with the same presence and carriage of any top private locker room manager, exchanging your freshly shined golf shoes for your street shoes and pointing out the various amenities of the locker room. Then it's out to meet your caddie and get the golf experience started.

Attentive personal service…check.

Everything about Fallen Oak encourages you to slow down. Breathe in the thick, fragrant air. Soak in the sublime wooded setting. And take your time while warming up. The club's practice facility features three short game practice greens in addition to a broad driving range. And if it seems at first like overkill, consider that you aren't the only special guest that will visit Fall Oak this year. From March 30 to April 2, the club will for the eighth consecutive season host the Mississippi Gulf Resort Classic, a full-field PGA TOUR Champions event. Swashbuckling Spaniard Miguel Ángel Jiménez will defend his title against the senior circuit's best, many of whom rank Fallen Oak among the finest courses on the tour.

And then it's on to the course. Don't expect a gentle handshake to start your round. No, this opener is a 596-yard par-5 beast, with a pond eating into the left side of the green. Hope you weren't expecting a simple resort track. This is a private club with a championship golf course. At 7,487 yards, Fallen Oak will challenge the best in the world. From any of its other four sets of tees, it remains a stout test.

The front nine occupies the flatter southern part of the property. The 224-yard par-3 third is an all-carry long-iron over another pond. A solid drive on the 423-yard par-4 fourth will leave you with a mid-iron approach to a slightly elevated skyline green with plenty of movement to test any birdie opportunity. The fourth features the best of many outstanding green complexes on the outward nine. Anyone familiar with Fazio courses knows to expect at least one or two heroic opportunities over great, yawning hazards. You get it at the par-5 sixth hole. Go for it if you dare, or lay up to the right and challenge your short game with a tricky uphill pitch to a multi-tiered green.

The back nine at Fallen Oak perfectly complements the front. You move immediately from flatter, more open terrain to a much more rolling, wooded landscape immediately on 468-yard par-4 10th hole. Hardwoods border the fairway on the scenic par-5 13th and the short drop shot 14th provides a perfect chance to gather your forces and maybe pick up a birdie before you run the gauntlet of the finishing four holes. The round concludes with the most difficult hole on the course, a 493-yard dogleg left, with water protecting the left side of the green. Here you'll see the namesake of the course, the fallen section of a huge oak tree to the right side of the landing area. A par here might bode well for a good night at the table.

True championship golf…check.

As comfortable as the locker room might have been before the round, it's an even more inviting spot afterwards. Enjoy lunch overlooking the finishing hole, pick up a souvenir in the shop, take a shower and freshen up. The staff at Fallen Oak isn't trying pump the traffic through. Instead, take them up on their offer to sit a spell and enjoy your club for the day. After all, après-golf is one of the true luxuries of the private golf experience.

Exclusivity. Personal service. Championship golf. To enjoy these qualities, you generally have to stroke hefty initiation checks and commit to years of dues and personal involvement. At Fallen Oak, the private club experience is available for a $200 green fee and a thoughtful tip for a caddie.

Mississippi has come a long way, from its somewhat checkered history to its astounding recovery from one of America's most devastating natural disasters. Through it all, the folks of the Gulf Coast have never lost their welcoming spirit or their refreshingly personal way of life.

Go on. Be their guest.

Tom Ferrell is *Colorado AvidGolfer's* editor at large.



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AIR FARE: Clockwise, a B-52 bomber commands the view from Cafe Mercato; Lucky Cat's Interior and Hamachi Sashimi, Cafe Mercato Chef and owner Giancarlo Macchiarella.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ANTONATION

Uncommon Ground

Eschewing chain eateries in favor of chef-driven restaurants, Hangar 2 gives the Lowry Dining District a distinct neighborhood vibe. By Gary James

UPON BEING SEATED at Café Mercato, I looked out the window and experienced a sudden craving for crayfish, also known as "rock lobster." It made sense. A restored B-52 stood on display at the front door of the Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space museum—and, well, the B-52s first hit single was 1978's catchy "Rock Lobster."

Forgive my music/food free association. This was my first visit to the Lowry Dining District, located just two miles west of CommonGround Golf Course in a mixed-use development that once held planes inside Hangar 2 when the area served as a military base. The concept: local, chef-driven restaurants built from the ground up, affording Lowry residents four eating choices all within a stone's throw from each other. Café Mercato joins such establishments as North County, Masterpiece Kitchen and Lucky Cat.



You want heritage? Café Mercato is owned and operated by a true paisan, Giancarlo Macchiarella of Locanda del Borgo, the fabulously Sicilian room in Crestmoor. It features the same hallmarks—cozy atmosphere and modern design, attentive but not intrusive service—with an open kitchen.

"Locanda del Borgo is traditional; it caters to older clientele," Macchiarella says. "Café Mercato is a brand-new building—airy, full of windows, a modern design—so that dictated a menu with a little different presentation. But it's still my style of cooking!"

The seasonal menu naturally skews to southern Italian dishes. That is, the food embraces a beautiful simplicity—tangy tomato sauces, olive oil and fresh steamed seafood. Fresh ingredients are paramount, and Macchiarella uses local suppliers when possible.

"Actually, southern Italian is a concept that was born in the United States," Macchiarella explains. "In Italy, we never think of our food in terms of southern and northern. In reality, it's more regional, based on the ingredients that we grow, from tomatoes in Sicily and Calabria to the herbs and spices as you go north to Florence and Milano. We use cream in Sicily as well as in Milano, but Milano uses butter more than olive oil for a cooking base. That's regional."

This is true *cucina italiana*. Café Mercato does a sharp job with pizza (from a giant wood oven imported from Italy) and pastas (made in house—my favorite is the Tagliatelle, thin ribbons in a nest of homemade sausage, porcini mushrooms, garlic, white wine and shaved Pecorino Toscano cheese).

Authentic touches abound. A Burrata appetizer—fresh semi-soft mozzarella filled with even softer, stringy curd and cream—arrives with roasted red peppers and



More Than One Way…

WITH LUCKY CAT, his "unconventional" take on Asian fare, give ubiquitous chef Troy Guard credit for enduring the potential easy laughs (hey, a Lucky Cat is one that's not the main ingredient!). He's masterminded fare that is more Pan-Asian than Chinese in style, a variety of noodles, sushi and "new style" sashimi—where sauce and hot oil is poured over the thinly-sliced raw fish just prior to serving). For a rare treat, with a few days notice, you can order a whole Peking-style roasted duck. Prices in general are a tad high so Happy Hour is a draw. *luckycatdenver.com*



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ANTONATION

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HANGAR 2 HAUNTS: Clockwise, Cafe Mercato's tagliatelle; North County's Da Baby Del Pastor Tacos and spiked sodas; Masterpiece Kitchen's House-made Pastrami on rye.



arugula on toasted ciabatta. The addition of avocado and extra lemon in the dressing elevates the basic Caesar salad.

There are quintessential dishes—a Traditional Italian Meat Lasagna (with a rich slow-braised sauce), Chicken Parmigiana (is there a better comfort food?) and authentic risottos. The Clams and Mussels comes perfectly spiced in a tomato and white wine sauce that's ideal for *la scarpetta* (Italian for "the little shoe" formed by the piece of bread used to sop the plate clean). Dinner patrons rave about the Fish Trio, the chef's choice of three seasonal fish (i.e., halibut, tuna and salmon, or salmon, tuna and butterflied shrimp) seasoned and cooked on the grill, and served with roasted vegetables.

Throw in housemade gelatos and desserts (I caved for a pistachio cheesecake in a chocolate crust), an inviting wine library and a Sunday brunch, and Café Mercato is an unprecedented treat for Lowry neighborhood residents, golfers from CommonGround and B-52 fans visiting Wings Over the Rockies.

7561 East Academy Blvd.
cafemercato.com; 303-366-1315

Read more of Contributor Gary James' Fareways columns on *coloradoavidgolfer.com.*

Baja Branch

NORTH COUNTY celebrates SoCal bounty, with a menu of fish tacos (natch), ceviches, tortas and salads—all complemented by an extensive collection of libations, from craft beers to spiked sodas to handcrafted cocktails. The house margarita is superior, made with Exotico Reposado tequila, triple sec and lime agave sweet and sour, served in a mini cocktail shaker. A few of those at the bar with some charcoal-grilled oysters will put you in a shorts-and-flip-flops state of mind. *northcountydenver.com*





A Place to Meat

MASTERPIECE KITCHEN takes the best elements of chef Justin Brunson's Masterpiece Deli and Old Major, factoring in a neighborhood vibe with reasonable price point to create outrageous gourmet sandwiches such as a Truffle Egg Salad for $10. Your entry level entrée is the House-made Pastrami, a pile of cured, smoked meat oozing with melted Swiss cheese, coleslaw and just enough creamy Russian dressing on toasted rye—East Coast artery-clogging goodness! Bonus points for the polished dining space and the cleaver door handles in the bathrooms! *masterpiecekitchen.com*



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WELD FAMOUS: In only two years, Neil Fisher and Colin Jones have propelled Weldwerks to national prominence.

Greeley? Really!

A vibrant craft-brewing scene is among this growing city's best-kept secrets. By Cody Gabbard

THE RELATIVE IMMATURITY of Greeley's 10-year-old brewing scene belies the quality and variety of its beers. The city's crown jewel also happens to be its newest, **WeldWerks Brewing**, which opened in 2015 and was named best new brewery in the country by *USA Today*'s Readers' Choice 10 Best list of 2016.

The company enjoys a steady stream of beer seekers both from nearby Denver and Fort Collins. Accordig to Weldwerks' Director of Operations Kristin Popcheff, a couple from Chicago even made Greeley their primary destination on a recent beercation so they could specifically visit WeldWerks.

A regular on the beer festival circuit (I first had one of their beers at Denver's New Kids on the Block festival which highlights breweries under two years old) WeldWerks emerged from the Big Beers, Belgians & Barleywines festival, where homebrewer Neil Fisher won several awards. His success spurred him and fellow homebrewer Colin Jones to start planning their own commercial brewery, and since opening less than two years ago, WeldWerks has expanded its brewhouse by over 300% and grown the staff from three to fifteen, but with some "serious planning and meticulous thought and consideration," said Popcheff.

The taproom is evidence of this meticulousness. Expansive yet cozy, it inhabits an old car dealership, the showroom's shiny automobiles now replaced by glistening taps, sparkling beers and a rustic yet industrial feel.

Several beers that are making WeldWerks famous weren't even released until about a year after the taproom opened. Each represents the current trend of big flavors, and run the style spectrum from hoppy to malty.

Juicy Bits is a New England IPA known for over-the-top citrus flavors. Although East Coast versions such as The Alchemist's Heady Topper pioneered the style, WeldWerks has created a version that has rightfully developed its own cult status. It eschews the resiny bitterness coupled with a rich malty backbone of a "West Coast" IPA in favor of the light maltiness and citrusy, fruity hop flavor of a New England IPA. A first sip of Juicy Bits makes one peer into their glass to look for the bits of orange pulp that are



Wiley Roots

WILEY ROOTS BREWING CO. definitely stands out as Greeley's specialty beer brewer. An ever-rotating list may include fruit-infused beers such as blood orange Gose and cranberry Saison to traditional specialty brews such as a chocolate Porter—non-gimmicky, well-balanced beers where the flavors enhance the characteristics of the base beer. A perfect example was Something Came in the Mail, a hazelnut and almond Porter that suggested liquid Mounds bar, with hints of roasted and vanilla. The quaint and cozy taproom boasts a wall of wooden plaques and kiln-fired pottery mugs for beer club members.

625 3rd St, Greeley
wileyrootsbrewing.com; 970-515-7315

Crabtree

GREELEY'S FIRST BREWERY, Crabtree Brewing Co., is a go-to community gathering space, busy but not overwhelming due to the spacious interior and 360-degree bar at the focal point. The menu is replete with classic styles, two cask ales and a range of "Brewer's Creations" that include barrel-aged, sour and seasonal beers—all of which are very approachable and anything but boring. A highlight is the Belgian Quadrupel aged in red wine barrels, which adds a fruity brightness and tannic bite to a rich and chewy base beer best described as true decadence in a glass.

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DRIVING BUSINESS: Weldwerks' glistening taproom inhabits a former auto dealership.

assuredly resting on the surface. Huge orange citrus is evident in both the nose and flavor with a pithy lingering bitterness much softer than that found in most IPAs.

The other beers gaining attention are Medianoche and Achromatic—both Imperial Stouts with Medianoche barrel-aged for a minimum of ten months. Their exceptionality owes to the versatility of the base recipe, which has been used to make about eight other versions with added adjuncts, including vanilla, coconut, coffee and maple. Barrel-aged and mixed-fermentation beers (or sours) are "Neil's babies," and the number of WeldWerks barrels has grown from twenty to about eighty since the brewery opened. This includes the addition of several foeders (pronounced *food-er* and basically giant barrels) that will be devoted solely to mixed-fermentation beers.

Recently WeldWerks started canning two of their year-round beers, Hefeweizen and Puesta Del Sol Vienna Lager. Limited releases such as barrel-aged varieties are available in bottles on a seasonal basis. Although its barrel-aged beers and flavorful IPAs create long lines on release days, Hefeweizen gave WeldWerks its first taste of the spotlight, garnering a silver medal at the 2015 Great American Beer Festival. Sours may be Neil's passion, but, if asked, co-owner Colin Jones' would say his favorite beer is likely the Vienna Lager.

According to Popcheff, each member of the 15-person staff probably has a different favorite beer, speaking volumes about the range and flavor profiles available at WeldWerks.

508 8th Avenue, Greeley
weldwerksbrewing.com; 970-460-6345

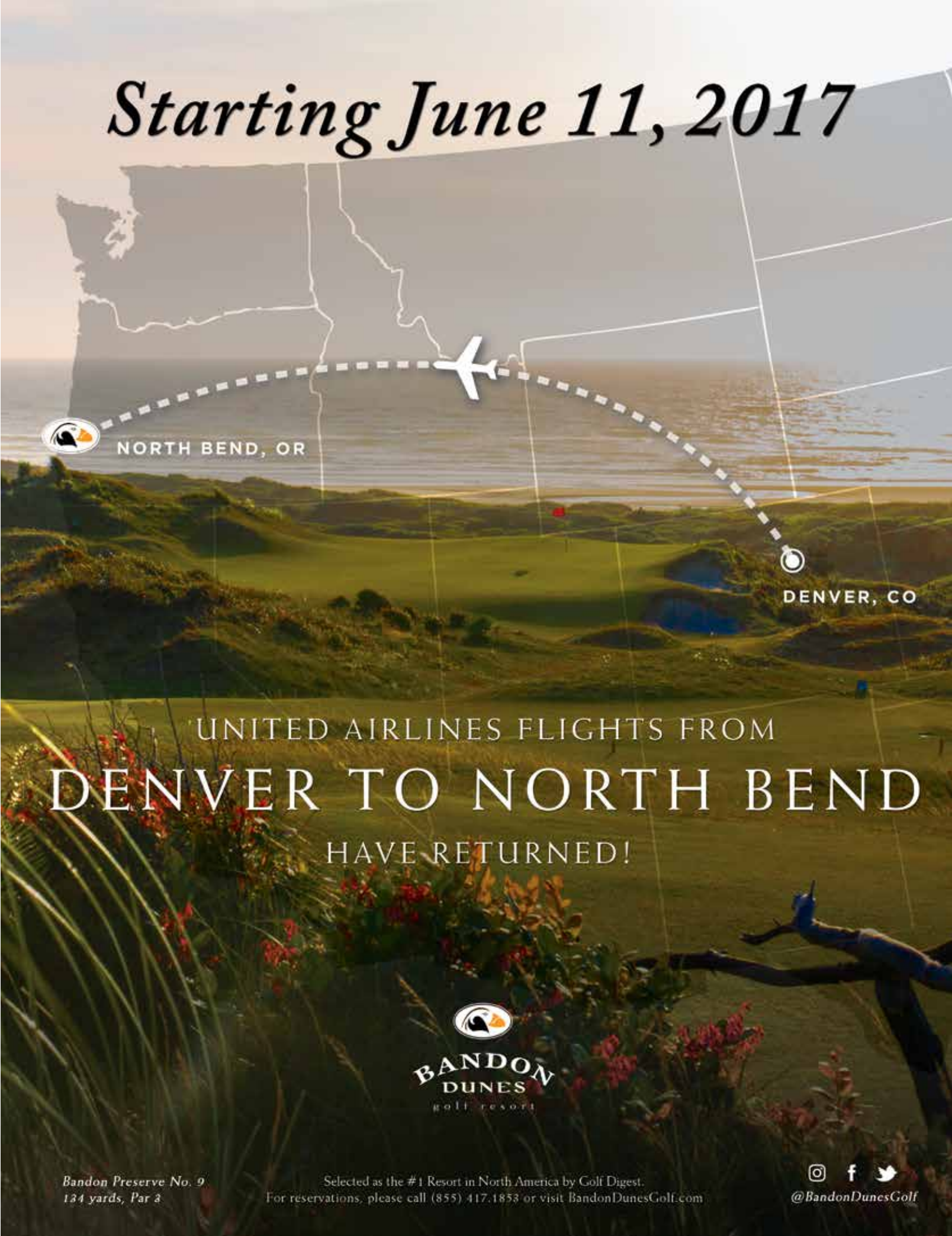
Read more of Contributor Cody Gabbard's Tapping In columns at *coloradoavidgolfer.com*.

What's a Crowler?

LOOKING TO TAKE HOME a half-gallon of WeldWerks brew to go? Don't expect a 64-ounce growler jug. The owners have replaced them with crowlers, quart cans that are filled and sealed right in front of you. Spawned by craft-can pioneer Oskar Blues and manufactured by Ball, crowlers ensure consistent quality, guarantee cleanliness, prevent oxygen from entering the vessel and preserve freshness four times longer than a growler. If you've never used one, do it now! Many breweries use them, and I guarantee you'll have the most talked-about beer at a party when you crack open this 32-ounce spectacle. —C.B.



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Honda Ridgeline

Better Great than Never

In the race for the year's top cars, many late arrivals are vying for the lead. By Isaac Bouchard

AUTO JOURNALISM can be like the movie business: often the best vehicle releases come out during the last two months of the year—sometimes two in the same week. 2016 was a good example of this; here are some of my favorites and a few honorable mentions.

2017 HONDA RIDGELINE

EPA ratings: 18/25mpg; 21mpg combined
0-60mph: 6.6sec
Price as tested: $42,270

Simply put, the Honda Ridgeline is far and away the best driving midsize pickup made. It is powerful, refined and boasts a superb chassis whose independent suspension imbues it with ride quality that's from a different planet than anything found in the Tacoma, Colorado or Canyon. Its handling inspires incredible confidence, meaning you can push much harder on challenging roads and through mixed weather. The unibody means the Ridgeline's interior is roomy and functional. Built of high quality materials, it has supportive seats, loads of storage, and aside from lacking a volume knob for the audio system, an infotainment systems that is easy to use.

The only real annoyance is a transmission selector that easily drops into the wrong setting, "L," which isn't much use in the real world—nor is the "D4" button on the shift lever; Honda needs to add a true manual shift zone, which would make it much easier to access the smooth 3.5-liter V6's 280 horses.

Regardless, the Honda is faster than the competition, more fuel efficient, and will still tow 5,000-pound loads. It complements its 1,500-pound payload with a tailgate that opens conventionally or swings to the side, making easy access to the useful under-floor compartment. Despite all these virtues, some will still be put off by its looks; in this regard it is like one of those art-house movies that's a critical darling but hard to stomach for mainstream audiences. But those who sit for the show will leave awed by what Honda has accomplished.

2017 LEXUS GS F

0-60mph: 4.4sec
Price as tested: $86,875
EPA ratings: 16/24mpg; 19mpg combined

As early, rave reviews started coming in from respected auto writers I had to ask. Why? The current GS is a nice Lexus, but how could its hot-rodded F version be good as—or possibly better than—stalwarts like the M5, S6 and E63? No AWD. No turbos. But after experiencing it for myself, I'd have to agree that this is one of the most surprising cars of the year.

What makes the GS F so special is the way it moves. Clichéd comparison it may be, but this Lexus reminds me of BMWs like the E39 5-series and E46 and E90 3-series more than almost anything the Bavarians make today. The entire GS F body machine moves as one, and the firmest setting in the selectable driver control menu is in many circumstances the best for ride as well as for handling—a sign of well-tuned damping. The Lexus' active rear differential, which can be set to Slalom and Track modes, contributes here as well, creating a rear end that adds alertness to proceedings without making the Lexus feel in any way unpredictable. The 467hp 5-liter may lack turbocharged torque, but revs sweetly with sonorous sounds and is more than fast enough to get one in big trouble. Lexus once again is teaching the masterclass in interior materials and quality. It is commodious, quiet and eminently practical



Lexus GS F



2016 NISSAN ARMADA

0-60mph: 5.9sec
Price as tested: $61,585
EPA ratings: 13/18mpg; 15mpg combined

The Armada combines most all the goodness and luxury of the Infiniti QX80 with the U.N.-approved, 3rd World-toughness of the Nissan Patrol in a more affordable, better-looking package. A seven-speed transmission ably harnesses the 5.6-liter's 390 horses, meaning raucous forward progress and towing power when needed and commendable refinement the rest of the time. Body control is on par with the newer GM and Ford fullsize rigs, though interior packaging is tighter and the infotainment system adrift the best. But the inherent integrity of the Armada and value of even the top-of-the-line Platinum model make it an excellent choice for those needing the talents of a classic, body-on-frame SUV.



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Mercedes-Benz GLS 550

(aside from the lack of AWD). The cohesiveness of the whole GS F package makes my mouth water for the outrageously gorgeous upcoming LC coupe and its new platform.

2017 MERCEDES-BENZ GLS 550

0-60mph: 5.6sec
Price as tested: $110,565
EPA ratings: 14/18mpg; 16mpg

Until Range Rover and BMW start offering full-size seven passenger rigs, the all-SUV S-class of Mercedes GLs is utterly unique. Yet this AMG-clad Benz doesn't drive like a SUV; punch up Sport mode and it shrinks down to merely the size of a largish sedan and turns almost playful, with sharp responses, excellent body control, responsive steering, and neatly contained handling. It also hustles, with its 449hp 4.7-liter twin-turbo V8s 516lb-ft minced into nine nicely spaced chunks of forward lunge via the latest Benz transmission. While a full-fat 577hp GLS63 still exists for those seeking one-upsmanship, this is all the ski panzer one could ever wish for, with a generally great, air-sprung ride (those proportionally correct 21-inch wheels tend to crash into potholes), sumptuous interior fittings and beaucoup room. The latest COMAND infotainment is graphically rewarding and fast, offers multiple ways to interact, and controls a thoroughly modern suite of apps. While it lacks a heated steering wheel, massaging seats take the sting out of long hauls. It also offers the kind of left-lane clearing ability usually reserved for aggressively driven one-ton pickups.



2016 VW GOLF R

0-60mph: 4.5sec
Price as tested: $36,470
EPA ratings: 22/31mpg; 25mpg

Is there a better real-world performance bargain? I doubt it. This is the ultimate People's Car made unholy fast and adept in the corners—no matter the weather—with the refinement a Subaru WRX/STI could only fantasize about. Is $36,470 expensive for a small VW? Maybe, but it is the price of the average car in the USA. Is the Golf R merely a cut rate Audi S3? Most assuredly; while its interior is decent, it's not the minimalist masterpiece of its platform mate, nor does it share the groovy "Virtual Cockpit" instruments. But it is $7,000 less, and comes in more useable hatchback form. Avoid the manual though, whose clutch take-up point is so high you can lick your knee; spring for the twin-clutcher and embarrass Mustang GTs, with sub-5 second acceleration. What one new car would I choose for the price? Probably this Golf R. It's like one of those movies that, ever time it pops up on cable, you find yourself watching it again, even if you've seen it a dozen times already.



2017 INFINITI QX60

0-60mph: 7.1sec
Price as tested: $60,045
EPA ratings: 19/26mpg; 22mpg combined

This is the Director's Cut of the originally released QX60, a decent but forgettable large, seven-passenger crossover. It has a new face, updated electronics and a freshened interior. And, like some films that went from merely okay to really compelling in re-release, this Infiniti sticks with you. It looks classy, and the interior is better conceived for real-world usage than ostensibly more compelling machines. It handled an early winter storm with aplomb and its terrific balance of ride and handling might just be best in class. The 3.5-liter's mating to a CVT isn't my thing, but at least the Sport mode's tuning kept it on pace. And if the test vehicle's fully loaded price was encroaching on the well-guarded territory of establishment players, more thoughtfully specc'd QX60s are quite reasonable for the amount of talent on display.

2017 VOLVO S90

0-60mph: 5.2sec.
Price as tested: $66,105
EPA ratings: 22/31mpg; 25mpg

After sweeping the SUV awards last year with the all-new XC90, Volvo continues its comeback with this all-new sedan. While the S90 will never match the size or sales numbers of the crossover, it's styling is so lovely it inspires admiration from both hardcore car aficionados and auto-agnostics. This continues inside, where the S90 displays the most elegant cockpit sixty-odd thousand will get you; what the company is doing with wood and metallic trim can even teach Audi a thing or two. Seating front and back is luxurious and supportive, the vertically oriented SensusConnect infotainment interface brilliant and the S90's semi-autonomous driving and safety systems are amongst the best on sale today. The corporate "twin charged" two-liter four cylinder engine, with 316hp and 295lb-ft thanks to a supercharger and turbocharger, moves the Volvo along smarty no matter the altitude. If the S90's low-speed ride is a bit choppy on the optional, polished 19-inch wheels, the aesthetic enhancement they provide is worth it. Dynamically, it's not as honed as the Germans, but the undeniable value the S90 represents, priced as it is between the smaller 3-series and similarly sized 5-series BMW mean it represents excellent value.

Automotive Editor Isaac Bouchard is the owner of Englewood-based Bespoke Autos (303-475-1462). Read more of his writing at *coloradoavidgolfer.com* and *bespokeautos.com*.



Volvo S90



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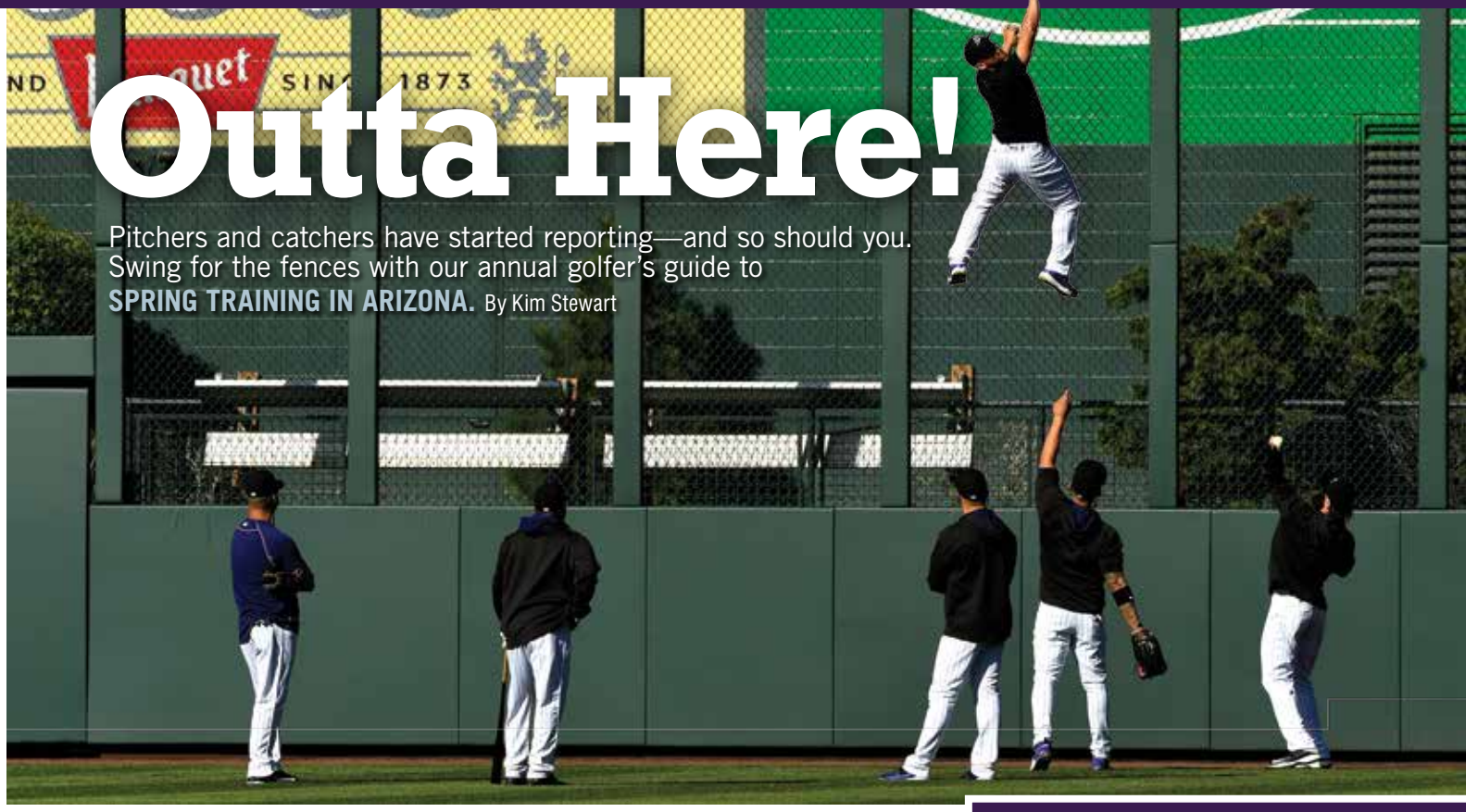
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Outta Here!

Pitchers and catchers have started reporting—and so should you. Swing for the fences with our annual golfer's guide to **SPRING TRAINING IN ARIZONA.** By Kim Stewart

THE 2016 WORLD SERIES WILL go down as one of the most memorable ever. Not only did players on two championship-starved franchises make us believe in the impossible, but each inning also held us in suspense through seven well-played games. Given that the Chicago Cubs and Cleveland Indians (and our own Rockies) perfect their game in Arizona during Spring Training, now is the time for a trip south to hear the crack of the bat and thwack of the club before the Colorado golf season begins.

Within a half-hour of picking up your rental car at the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, you can be attending a game or checking in for a tee time. But with more than 200 courses, 10 ballparks, 15 teams and thousands of things to do and sights to see, the choices can multiply overwhelmingly.

So, like a good caddie, we're dispensing some local knowledge. Locals divide the greater Phoenix region, known as the Valley of the Sun, into three areas: the central region of Scottsdale, Phoenix and Tempe; the West Valley (Goodyear, Surprise and Peoria) and the East Valley (Mesa, Chandler and Gilbert). We've done the same so you can easily get from game to game and course to course within a short time (see page 57 for teams, ballpark information and driving times).

We've also included an eclectic assortment of places to stay, eat, drink and bring the kids (not necessarily in that order).

Play away!

Field of Dreams

SALT RIVER FIELDS AT TALKING STICK Both the Rockies and Diamondbacks share this one of a kind stadium on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. The 140-acre complex and stadium, with the motto "Two Tribes. Two Teams. One Home," was designed to be respectful of the surroundings and traditions of the Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Deeply angled roofs provide much needed shade and frame the natural landscape. The Rockies dugout is on the first base side; the Diamondback's dugout is along third base. Fans love that there is easy access to players along the baselines for a prized autograph. If the kids need to burn off some energy there is a whiffle-ball field. Leave the car at the hotel, a trolley runs every 20 minutes from downtown Scottsdale to Salt River and Talking Stick Resort. *saltriverfields.com*

Eat, Imbibe & Explore

OLIVE & IVY RESTAURANT AND MARKETPLACE Southern Mediterranean warmth and provincial charm, open for lunch, dinner and weekend brunch. *foxrc.com/restaurants/olive-ivy-restaurant-marketplace*

MONARCH When special occasions call for white tablecloths, quiet conversations and the finest culinary talent. *cafemonarch.com*

SONATAS RESTAURANT Modern and Eastern European cuisine with tantalizing flavors that cross cultures for a dramatic and surprisingly wonderful experience. *sonatasrestaurant.com*

SCAPEGOAT BEER AND WINE Escape the DJs and hip hop to this lovely small intimate spot for a beer or a glass of wine. *scapegoatbar.com*

ODYSEA AQUARIUM This might be the desert but it's also home to penguins, otters, sea lions and 500 other sea creatures. *odyseaaquarium.com*

PENSKE RACING MUSEUM There is a lot of history and horsepower hidden behind the doors of this car museum, which features some of the most famous racing cars in the world. *penskeracingmuseum.com*



Penske Racing Museum



Talking Stick Golf Club

Golf Resorts and Communities

TALKING STICK RESORT AND GOLF CLUB *(Scottsdale)* Within a short five-minute drive of Salt River Stadium are two dramatic, breathtaking courses that top of the list for locals and visitors alike. The North and South courses, designed by the Coore-Crenshaw team, are as graceful and quiet as they are challenging. The 15-story Talking Stick Resort boasts nearly 500 rooms, mega-casino, a lounge pool concert area, cultural center and five restaurants—including the appropriately and dramatically named Orange Sky, where killer sunsets command a daily audience. *talkingstickresort.com*; 480-860-2221

WE-KO-PA GOLF CLUB AND RESORT *(Scottsdale)* Your first decision among many at this award-winning Scottsdale course: walk or ride? Saguaro satisfies the former, with short distances between greens and tees. The more undulant Cholla is better suited for carts. A recent renovation made Cholla's eighth far less penal than its previous iteration. The nearby resort hotel and casino is perfect for buddy trips, and its Anhala Mesquite Room serves exceptional food. *wekopa.com*; 480-789-5300

JW MARRIOTT CAMELBACK INN, SPA AND GOLF COURSE *(Scottsdale)* This historic property, Marriott's first resort, offers a tranquil respite that captures the quiet beauty of the desert. Pueblo-style casitas, with patios and balconies, tuck into the carefully manicured gardens. Thirty-six at Ambiente and Padre course, await at the Camelback Golf Club. *marriott.com*; 480-948-1700

THE BOULDERS RESORT AND SPA *(Carefree)* The name says it all. This recently renovated Hilton property nestles among stacks of giant rocks. Stay in a casita, suite, villa or single family home. The rock formations add to the challenge and the rugged beauty of the resort's two Jay Morrish-designed golf courses (North and South). *theboulders.com*; 480-488-9009

TROON NORTH GOLF CLUB *(Scottsdale)* Blue sky and desert glory come together in two resort courses, Monument and Pinnacle. Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish built this visually sensational pair by incorporating the rugged Sonoran landscape of boulders, cacti, arroyos and ravines. The Four Seasons Scottsdale is a five-minute drive. *troonnorthgolf.com*; 480-585-7700

EAGLE MOUNTAIN GOLF CLUB AND INN *(Fountain Hills)* Just renovated last year, the highly regarded Scott Miller design offers a panoramic view of Scottsdale to the south. The boutique hotel bestrides the course. *innateaglemountain.com;* 480-816-1234

FAIRMONT SCOTTSDALE PRINCESS/TPC SCOTTSDALE *(Scottsdale)* The Fairmont's new Sunset Beach features 9,000 square feet of sand, six pools and a water slide. The resort's three resturants—Bourbon Steak, La Hacienda by Richard Sandoval and Ironwood—are superb. Best known for the Waste Management Open, the TPC's Stadium course is a must-play. A highlight, of course, comes on the coliseum-like 16th. The sister Champions course is a favorite for its final home stretch. *tpc.com*; 480-585-4334

THE PHOENICIAN RESORT *(Scottsdale)* At 250 acres, this resort is a city within itself. The hotel property hugs the base of Camelback Mountain and encases glistening swimming areas, such as the famous Mother-of-Pearl pool. As for golf, the three nine-hole layouts—Canyon, Desert and Oasis—were designed by Ted Robinson and Homer Flint. *thephoenician.com*; 480-941-8200

RANCHO MAÑANA GOLF CLUB AND RESORT *(Cave Creek)* Once a dude ranch, the resort brims with history, including its female-friendly golf course and dramatic landscape. The adjacent resort has spacious group and family-style luxury casitas. *ranchomanana.com*; 480-488-0398

RIO VERDE COUNTRY CLUB *(Rio Verde)* If you are thinking about a new zip code in a warmer climate, consider a Discovery Stay in a private home at this exclusive Troon Privé-managed, 55+ community sequestered in the McDowell Mountain foothills at the edge of the Tonto National Forest, only 45 minutes from Sky Harbor. The lush, parkland-style fairways on the Tom Lehman-designed Quail Run and White Wing courses appeal to golfers of all experience levels. A par-3 layout, called the Roadrunner, utilizes regulation tee boxes off the fairways of Quail Run's back nine for quick short-game sharpening fun. Other outdoor activities take center stage at Rio Verde with tennis, pickle ball, hiking, cycling, riding and swimming. *rioverdearizona.com;* 480-471-9420.

On the Private Side

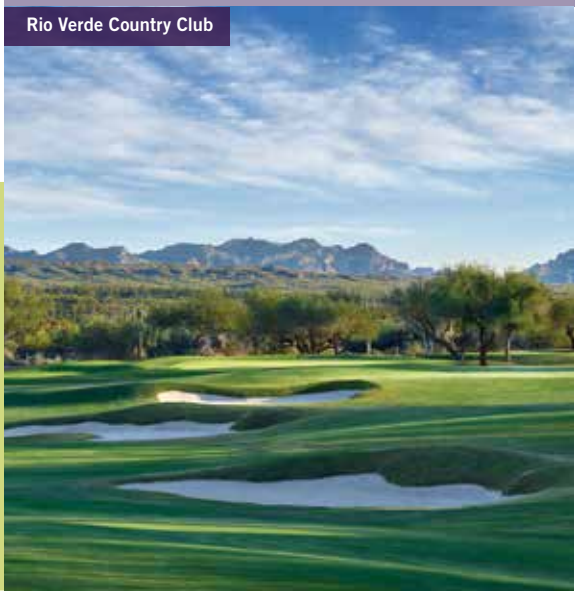
DESERT HIGHLANDS *(Scottsdale)* The pioneering 500-residence private golf community includes 18 holes by Jack Nicklaus (which hosted the first Skins Games in 1983 and '84), 18-hole putting course, 13-court racquet club and fitness center. *deserthighlandsscottsdale.com*; 480-419-3745

DESERT MOUNTAIN *(Scottsdale)* This private residential community is a golf mecca with six Jack Nicklaus layouts, each with its distinct character traits and clubhouse theme—from Southwestern to Tuscan. *desertmountain.com*; 480-595-4000

TONTO VERDE *(Rio Verde)* Private with public tee times, the facility offers two golf courses within this active adult community. Discovery packages, available through April 30, 2017, offer townhome accommodations, activities and other amenities. *tontoverde.org*; 480-471-2710

VERDE RIVER GOLF & SOCIAL CLUB *(Rio Verde)* The ubiquitous, talented Tom Lehman has finished renovating the course originally known as Vista Verde. New challenges, greater forgiveness and improved sight lines are waiting. The club is currently daily-fee but will will transition to a private club. *verderivergolf.com*; 480-471-3232

Rio Verde Country Club



ALWAYS ON



Talking Stick Resort offers Spring Training excitement, thrilling 24/7 gaming and award-winning dining just minutes from Cactus League stadiums and across the street from the Rockies' home ballpark. For a break from the action, relax in luxurious accommodations or in our spa with breathtaking desert views. No matter what you crave, find it at Scottsdale's top entertainment destination.

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- **Best Casino** by Phoenix New Times
- **Best Restaurant View at Dusk** (Orange Sky) by AZCentral

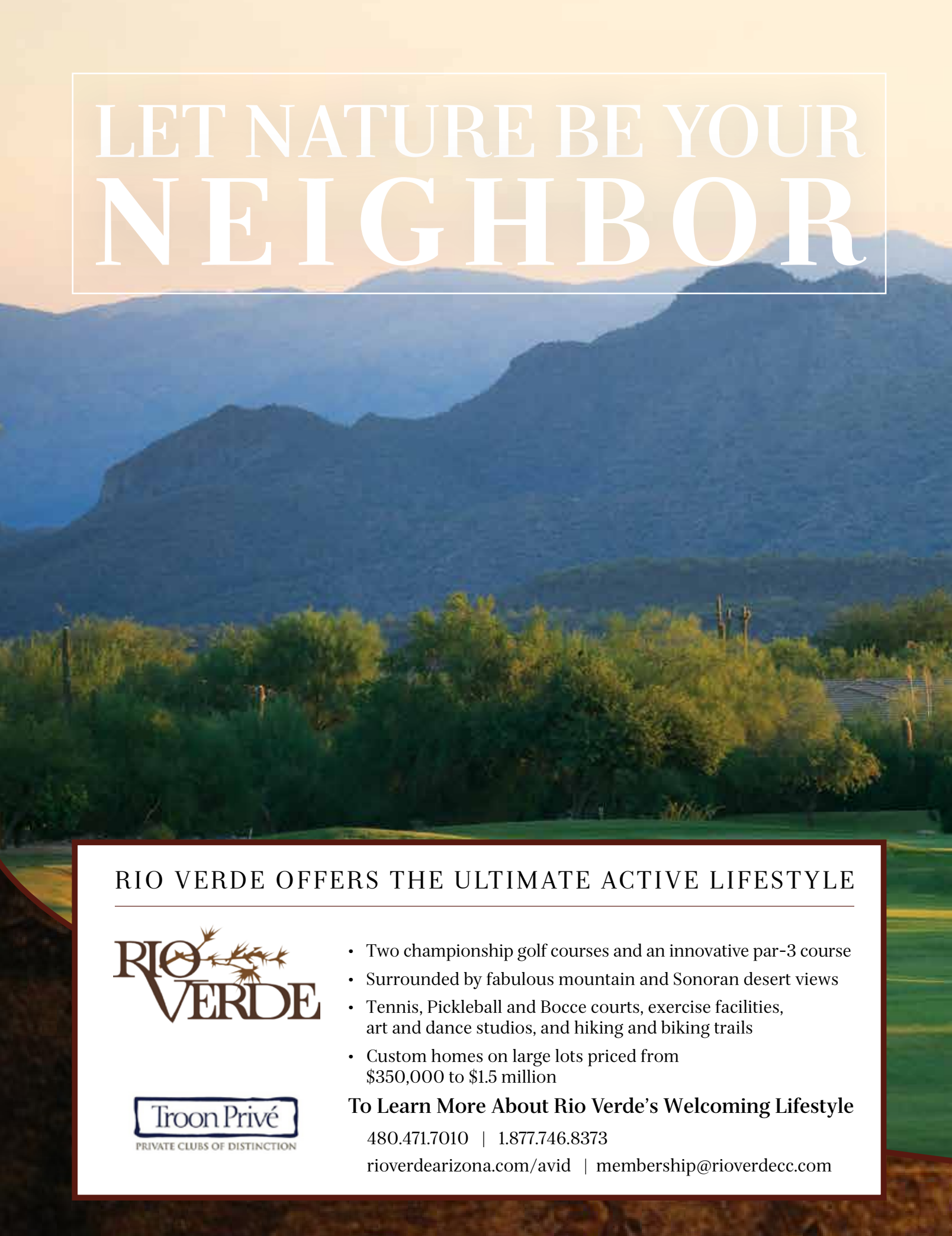
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Rustler's Rooste


Wildfire Golf Club

On the Town

MATT'S BIG BREAKFAST There are four locations (one at the airport) to choose from if you need a hearty morning fueling before a round of golf. This all-day breakfast spot is ideal for families and golf friends who want high quality, real food in a fun setting. *mattsbigbreakfast.com*

OCOTILLO Since this inventive new restaurant opened in Phoenix a few years ago, it has gained a loyal following for its big flavors and cultural twists on desert cuisine like the Ocotillo chicken, painted with honey, citrus and chiles. Coffee house open in am, lunch and dinner follows. *ocotillophx.com*

PEDAL HAUS BREWERY Coloradans will feel right at home at this bike-brewery with a massive patio. Gastropub food pairs well with any one of the beers from the two dozen taps. *pedalhaus.com*

RUSTLER'S ROOSTE Get fired up for this grilling centric gathering place on a mountain top. The indoor waterfall is a must see and the rattlesnake appetizer is the perfect snack for daring eaters. *rustlersrooste.com*

BEYOND THE BRICKS Thursday night rocks even more than usual in Tempe with live music at the Hayden Square Amphitheater. *downtowntempe.com*

LEGOLAND Everything is awesome at this wonderland of imagination. Two Lego rides, a 4D movie theater and 40,000 square feet of pure fun await. *legolanddiscoverycenter.com/arizona*

TILT STUDIO Family fun awaits at this new entertainment complex that includes video, pinball and arcade games such as Space Invaders, Pac Man and Asteroids. A restaurant and bar is onsite for hungry gamers and adults who need a kid break. *tiltstudio.com/tilt-studio-arizona-mills*

On the Tee

ASU KARSTEN GOLF COURSE *(Tempe)* Golf experts love this course and so will you. This par-70, Pete Dye-designed Scottish links on the Arizona State campus is known for exceptional playing conditions. Be sure to work off a few extra calories to indulge in a meal at the Trophy Room restaurant. The Ping Learning Center offers private lessons and state-of-the-art video technology to improve your game. *asukarsten.com*; 480-921-8071

RAVEN GOLF CLUB *(Phoenix)* Only five miles from Sky Harbor, this 7,078-yard Gary Panks/David Graham design is one big surprise—you'll find 6,000 mature pine trees and rolling hills juxtaposed with the desert landscape. Golfers of all abilities and ages love the five tee options and tiered greens. *ravenphx.com*; 602-243-3636

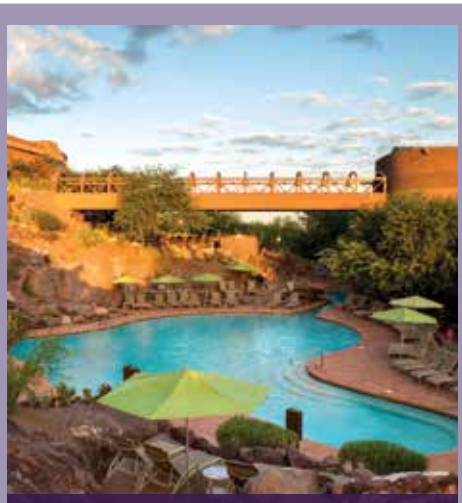
WILDFIRE GOLF CLUB *(Phoenix)* The J.W. Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort is home to two exquisite layouts designed by legends of the game. The Palmer Signature Course features forgiving fairways, superbly flashed bunkers and large, subtly undulating greens. Reminiscent of the Australian sand belt courses, the Faldo Championship Course boasts 108 bunkers, wide landing areas and saguaro cacti. Wildfire will host its seventh consecutive LPGA Founders Cup, March 14-19. Proceeds benefit the LPGA-USGA Girls Golf Program *marriott.com;* 480-293-5000

Staying and Playing

JW MARRIOTT DESERT RIDGE RESORT *(Phoenix)* It's rare that a hotel this expansive sits in the heart of a city. Marriott's Desert Ridge offers a one-stop resort with luxurious suite-style rooms, full-service spa, pool and fitness, and half dozen restaurants, bars and eateries. *jwmarriottdesertridgeresort.com*

PHOENIX MARRIOTT TEMPE AT THE BUTTES There is no more convenient high-end hotel and restaurant to Diablo Stadium than this resort in the heart of Tempe. The delectable On The Rocks pairs panoramic views of the Valley with Sonoran Desert fare made with locally sourced ingredients. Happy hour starts at 5 p.m.; dinner reservations are recommended. *marriott.com*

FOUND:RE Art and fun intersect at this new downtown Phoenix hotel with galleries and rotating exhibits that change out regularly. Try the freaky and fun lobby restrooms. A one-way mirror lets you see out, but others can't see in. *foundrehotels.com*


Phoenix Marriott Tempe at The Buttes

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ARIZONA

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Verrado Golf Club

On the Tee

VERRADO GOLF CLUB *(Buckeye)* If you like jaw-dropping views and rugged beauty amid a charming little town, this is the place for you. Two courses, designed by 1996 British Open champion Tom Lehman, are a little-known secret in the charming planned community of Buckeye. The **Founder's Course** and the newly opened **Victory Course** each encompass more than 7,000 yards and offer various tee boxes for newbies and a challenge for skilled players. *verradogolfclub.com*; 623-388-3000

WICKENBURG RANCH GOLF CLUB *(Wickenburg)* One of the most talked-about new courses to open in recent years, this homespun creation has earned near universal acclaim. Golfers who want to learn more about this residential and private golf community northwest of Phoenix need to call ahead for reservations. However, Lil' Wick, the stellar par-3 course, requires no reservations; sign up and have a blast. *wickenburgranch.com*; 928-668-5535

ESTRELLA GOLF CLUB, *(Goodyear)* Set in the foothills of the Sierra Estrella mountain range, this Nicklaus Design layout threads through the planned community of Estrella. The design follows the natural washes and land contours, creating no shortage of risk-reward decisions. As with other Troon Golf-managed courses, Estrella offers dynamic pricing based on demand. *estrellagolf.com*; 623-386-2600

SUN CITY WEST With seven courses, you can play a different one every day of the week. Join the locals on these affordable and approachable courses in the West Valley. golf.*suncitywest.com*; 623-544-6120

TRILOGY AT VISTANCIA *(Peoria)* Gary Panks designed this course with 70 bunkers to give golfers a bit of a challenge in this adult community course that is open to the public. *trilogygolfclub.com*; 623-328-5100

WIGWAM GOLF RESORT *(Litchfield Park)* Opened in 1929 by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co, this golf club with three courses and resort, rates as one of the most historic venues in the West Valley. Mature trees and streams ribbon through the course, giving it a park-like feel. Keep an eye on the website for local and golf events at the resort. *wigwamarizona.com*; 623-935-9414



Pump Track Bike Park

Family Fun

MAIN EVENT This newly opened entertainment spot comprises nearly 60,000 sq. feet of play area, including video games, air hockey, miniature golf, bowling and laser tag. *mainevent.com*

DAVE AND BUSTER'S With more than 160 games, this well-known gaming venue will delight your kids and give parents a little time to decompress while you watch the fun. *daveandbusters.com*

SPLASH PAD Little ones will love this safe and fun water park to cool off on a hot day. *goodyearaz.gov*

PUMP TRACK BIKE PARK The desert terrain is the perfect path for off-road bikers who want to catch some air at this looping bike track. *facebook.com/estrellafoothillsbikepark*

WESTGATE ENTERTAINMENT Outlet-shop 'til you drop at the Tanger shops and refuel in the eatertainment arena with 23 restaurants. Check the website for special events. *westgateaz.com*



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BOBBY Q Roll up your sleeves for authentic barbeque brisket, jumbo Texas ribs, pulled pork and "smoasted" smoked and roasted chicken. A local favorite since 2005- *bobbyqmesa.com*

ARIZONA BREWERY TOURS Put away the car keys and sit back for a craft brewery tour and tasting of the area's top beer makers. You'll visit Arizona Wilderness Brewery and Mesa's own Desert Eagle on Main Street, as well as the Beer Research Institute. *azbrew.com*

JOY RIDE TACO HOUSE This place will make you smile (or is it the margaritas?). Joyride is an ideal spot to quench your thirst and tame your tummy on game day. The patio is the perfect place to dig into a bandit taco platter of chicken tinga, carne asada and carnitas. *joyridetacohouse.com*

THE ORANGE PATCH. Squeeze in some time for a tour and tasting at this citrus farm. *orangepatch.com*

QUEEN CREEK OLIVE MILL This working olive orchard, mill and restaurant is a rare stateside treat. *queencreekolivemill.com*

WINDMILL WINERY Step back in time with a glass of wine at this rural farm and winery. *thewindmillwinery.com*

USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK & NATURE CENTER Hike through the lower Sonoran Desert and marvel at the Wind Cave Trail and the hanging gardens. *maricopacountyparks.net/park-locator/usery-mountain-regional-park*


Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club

Golf in the East Valley & South

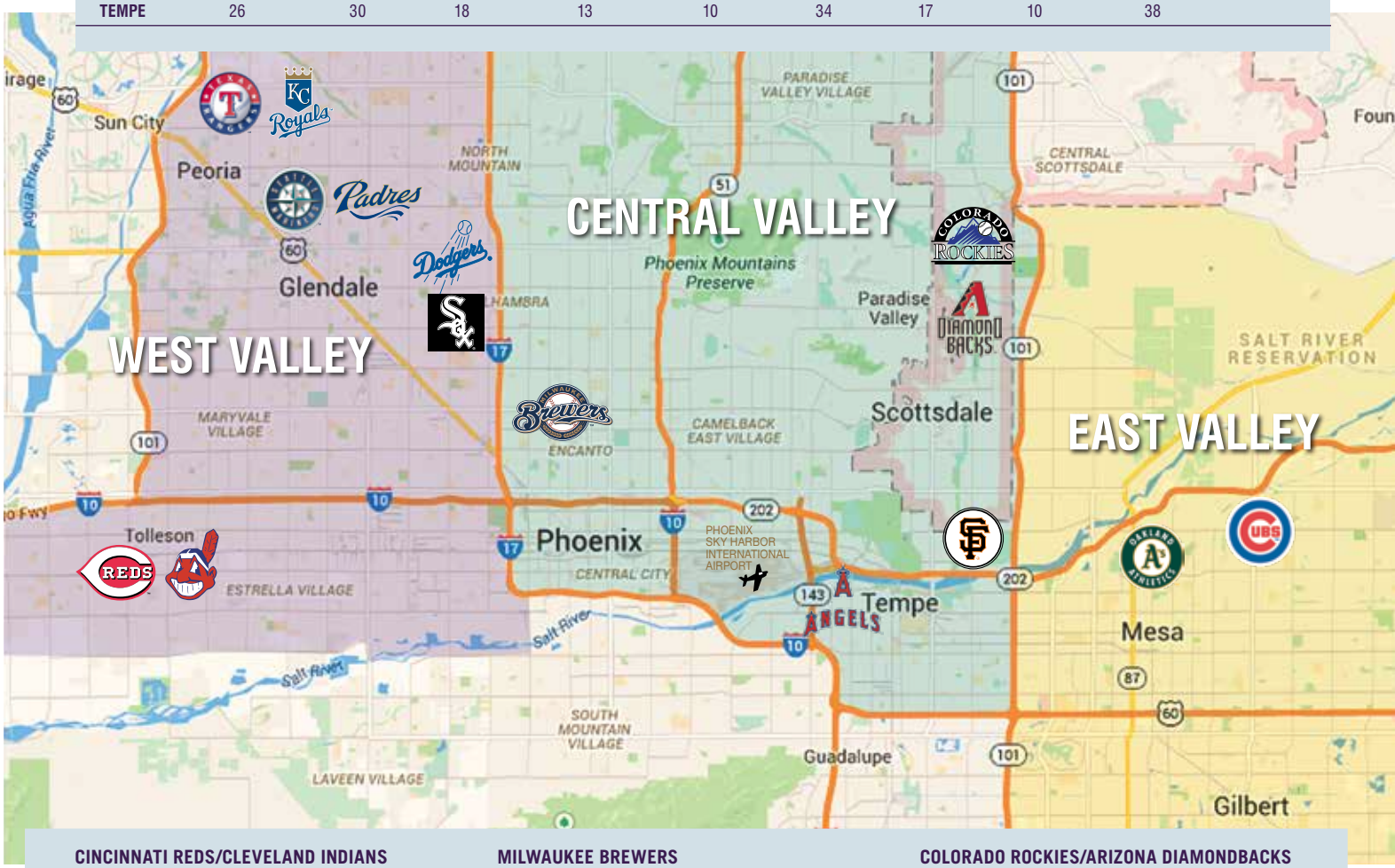
AK-CHIN SOUTHERN DUNES GOLF CLUB *(Maricopa)* This Troon-managed desert oasis is worth the 30-minute drive south of Phoenix on I-10. Fred Couples teamed with the Schmidt-Curley design team to create one of the area's most intriguing layouts. Instead of a traditional target-style desert course, it plays more like a Scottish-style links—that is, without the rain. No real estate hugs the fairways, which means natural beauty as far as the eye can see. Ak-Chin also has weekend group and private lessons, as well as a novel dynamic pricing system. The rates change daily, based on demand, which can save you money in the end. *akchinsoutherndunes.com*; 480-367-8949.

LONGBOW GOLF CLUB *(Mesa)* This course is a 20-minute drive from Sloan Park and HoHoKam Stadium, so you can play 18 and make the first pitch in the same day. This course, consistently ranked as one of the top in the state, is ideal for a group of mixed level players. From novices to the skilled, golfers will enjoy the rolling and generous fairways. The undulations and deep bunkers will give you something to talk about in the picturesque outdoor patio at the clubhouse. *longbowgolf.com*; 480-807-5400.

LAS SENDAS GOLF CLUB *(Mesa)* It will be tough to keep your eye on the ball at Las Sendas with views of the Phoenix skyline, Superstition and Red Mountains. This Robert Trent Jones course is also home to the Malaska Golf Academy. Mike Malaska, PGA golf instructor of the year, will get inside your head to help you figure out the how and the why of your game. *lassendas.com*; 480-396-4000.

Cactus League Mileage Chart

	GLENDALE	GOODYEAR	MARYVALE	(A'S) MESA	(CUBS) MESA	PEORIA	SALT RIVER	SCOTTSDALE	SURPRISE	TEMPE
GLENDALE		12	9	33	31	12	37	28	13	26
GOODYEAR	12		17	37	33	23	41	32	19	30
MARYVALE	9	17		25	22	12	29	19	18	18
MESA (A's)	33	37	25		4	40	12	19	18	18
MESA (Cubs)	31	33	22	4		39	9	6	47	10
PEORIA	12	23	12	4	39		30	36	10	34
SALT RIVER	37	41	29	12	9	30		6	38	17
SCOTTSDALE	28	32	19	9	6	36	6		39	10
SURPRISE	13	19	18	45	47	10	38	39		38
TEMPE	26	30	18	13	10	34	17	10	38	



CINCINNATI REDS/CLEVELAND INDIANS
Goodyear Ballpark
1933 South Ballpark Way, Goodyear
goodyearbp.com; 623-882-3130
Closest Courses: Estrella, Palm Valley, Verrado, Wigwam

TEXAS RANGERS/ KANSAS CITY ROYALS
Surprise Stadium
15850 North Bullard, Surprise
surprisespringtraining.com; 623-222-2222
Closest Courses: Rancho de los Caballeros, Surprise Golf Club, Trilogy at Vistancia, Wickenburg Ranch, Wigwam

SEATTLE MARINERS/SAN DIEGO PADRES
Peoria Sports Complex
16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria
peoriasportscomplex.com; 800-677-1227
Closest Courses: Quintero, Trilogy at Vistancia

LOS ANGELES DODGERS/CHICAGO WHITE SOX
Camelback Ranch
10710 West Camelback Rd, Glendale
camelbackranchbaseball.com;
623-302-5000
Closest Courses: Palm Valley, Verrado, Wigwam

MILWAUKEE BREWERS
Maryvale Park
3600 N. 51st Ave., Phoenix
phoenix.gov/sports; 800 933-7890
Closest Courses: Maryvale, Verrado

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS
Scottsdale Stadium
7408 E. Osborn Road, Scottsdale
scottsdaleaz.gov/stadium; 877-473-4849
Closest Courses: Camelback, McCormick Ranch, McDowell Mountain, The Phoenician, We-Ko-Pa, Westin Kierland

LOS ANGELES ANGELS OF ANAHEIM
Tempe Diablo Stadium
2200 W. Alameda Dr. Tempe
tempe.gov/diablo; 888-796-HALO
Closest Courses: Ak-Chin Southern Dunes, ASU Karsten, Raven-Phoenix, Whirlwind

FOR DETAILS on stadiums, games to see, buying tickets and more, visit *coloradoavidgolfer.com* or *cactusleague.com*

COLORADO ROCKIES/ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS
Salt River Fields at Talking Stick
7555 N. Pima Rd, Scottsdale
saltriverfields.com; 480-270-5000
Closest Courses: Ak-Chin Southern Dunes, Grayhawk, Talking Stick, The Boulders, TPC Scottsdale, Troon North, We-Ko-Pa, Wildfire

OAKLAND ATHLETICS
Hohokam Stadium
1235 North Center Street, Mesa
hohokamstadium.com; 480-644-4451
Closest Courses: Ak-Chin Southern Dunes, ASU Karsten, Longbow, Raven-Phoenix, Superstition Springs, The Legacy, We-Ko-Pa, Whirlwind

CHICAGO CUBS
Sloan Park
2330 W. Rio Salado Pkwy, Mesa
sloanpark.com; 800-THE-CUBS
Closest Courses: Ak-Chin Southern Dunes, ASU Karsten, Longbow, Raven-Phoenix, Superstition Springs, The Legacy, We-Ko-Pa, Whirlwind





Paige before Beauty

Monument's **PAIGE SPIRANAC** *puts on her game face.*

By **SAM ADAMS**
Photography by **JUSTIN TAFOYA**/Clarkson Creative

ALL SEEMS PERFECT in Paige Spiranac's millennial world. She's a 23-year-old, affianced, extremely attractive and physically fit woman whose striking appearance has lured 908,000 Instagram followers, with another 112,000 on Twitter. More than a half-million YouTube subscribers have viewed "Paige Spiranac's How to Make a Viral Golf Video."

And that's the catch. Spiranac is first and foremost a professional golfer–and her reputation on the links isn't trending as high or as quickly as she would like.

That was evident at Green Valley Ranch Golf Club during the third and final round of last summer's CoBank Colorado Women's Open. When she teed off at 8:05, Spiranac had three followers: her parents, Annette and Dan Spiranac, and a reporter wondering if the Monument native was an over-hyped Web sensation posing as a golfer, or a true golf talent who looks like a fashion model.

True, she wasn't in one of the day's final pairings. Thanks to an opening-round 74–which could be partially attributed to her failure days earlier to advance in the first stage of LPGA Qualifying–and a second-round 71, Spiranac found herself tied for 16th with two-time Colorado Women's Golf Association Player of the Year Somin Lee.

Paired with Lee, Spiranac proved she was every bit the golfer. Producing powerful swings with her driver and 3-wood, she consistently split fairways, then flushed solid irons to reach the first five greens in regulation. However, she birdied only two, tweeting on the second and fourth.

When her 12-foot birdie attempt burned the edge of the fifth hole, Paige's mother, Annette Spiranac–a former Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre dancer once deemed "The Bodyguard" for shielding boys from Paige at junior golf tournaments–immediately started walking towards the sixth fairway.

Paige Spiranac gets plenty of hits on her social media accounts, but she also takes plenty of hits there. "A lot of people say that what I post is provocative or unbecoming of a young lady," Spiranac says during an interview at Green Valley Ranch days after the tournament. "My parents look at everything I post, and if they approve, then I think what I'm doing is OK. They're very religious–and I am, myself. A lot of people don't realize that.

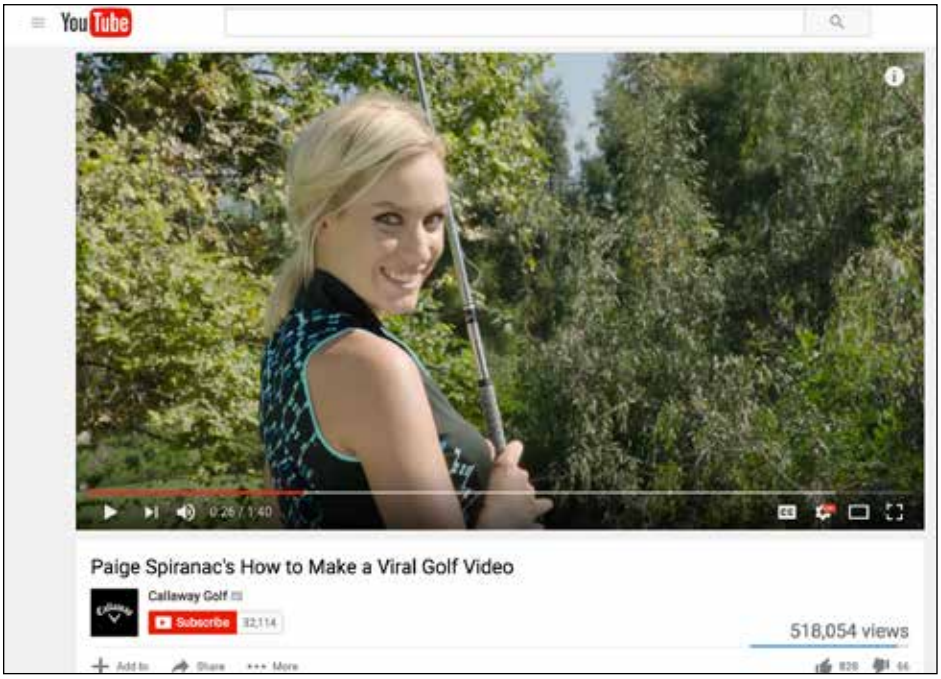
"I've turned down offers that would have me pose in a bikini or something like that. I dress how 23-year-olds dress these days. I don't see anything wrong with that.

"I feel like when I'm on the golf course I respect the game. I think that's what you need to preserve with golf, the sportsmanship. It's not what I wear. It's not the fact that I'm having fun–I mean, seeing me have fun on the golf course, is that so wrong?

"I think people need to have more fun, and that's why golf is struggling right now. The younger generation wants to go out on the course and have fun, but they're criticized for not wearing nice pants and a polo.

"I wish more younger players would be comfortable getting out there. But even I feel uncomfortable going to courses sometimes with the way the men look at me–and not in a sexual way. It's hurtful because they seem to think I'm not a good player."

Watching Spiranac play golf, and listening to her speak so vibrantly about it, one sees that she craves attention not for being the game's hottest player but for being





"My parents look at everything I post, and if they approve, then I think what I'm doing is OK."



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good enough to compete on the LPGA Tour.

"I don't think a lot of people take me seriously and that's what hurts the most because I'm grinding every single day to be better," says Spiranac, who was a team captain at San Diego State, where she earned academic all-American, all-Mountain West Conference and Dean's list honors.

"I'm not overconfident, but my mentality is that I want to prove myself–and I think that's more powerful," she says. "If I didn't have that mentality, I probably would have quit by now."

And that she is. Spiranac, who was home-schooled, won the 2010 Colorado Women's Golf Association's Junior Stroke Play championship and in 2015, she triumphed in the 100th CWGA Match Play in an epic duel with Brittany Fan.

Dan Spiranac never saw the missed putt at No. 5 at Green Valley Ranch because he turned his back. He's unable to watch whenever his youngest daughter has the putter in her hands. A walk-on football player at the University of Pittsburgh, Dan played safety on the same 1976 championship squad that featured Pro Football Hall of Famer and Heisman Trophy winner Tony Dorsett.

Paige inherited her will to compete from her father. "We are a competitive family–too competitive sometimes," Dan muses.

"We actually were banned from playing videogames together when we were little," says Spiranac's older sister Lexie, who was a Colorado Class 5A state champion high-jumper at Lewis-Palmer High School. "We'd end up ripping bloody blisters on our hands from trying to beat each other at Mario Party.

"At first I was getting a lot of negative comments and they would stick with me for a while," she says. "I've learned not to look at them … but sometimes I feel I have to respond."

"Paige is so competitive. She's also very shy and introverted–which I think surprises people because of her online persona. We've always been a really tight-knit family. I think for Paige, when everything started taking off with Instagram, we all knew we wanted to help her because it's a unique situation."

"The entertainment aspect of all this … I understand," Dan Spiranac explains. "People don't understand how much energy she puts into it. One of her main goals is to bring eyes to the LPGA. She wants people to know she can play. It's hard for her to take the criticism, and it's hard for us to watch as parents."

"My parents are great," Paige says. "I was a really high-level gymnast and the goal was the Olympics. But it got to the point where they could sense that I wasn't happy. Unlike other parents, they never pushed me. But they gave me the advice I needed to hear."

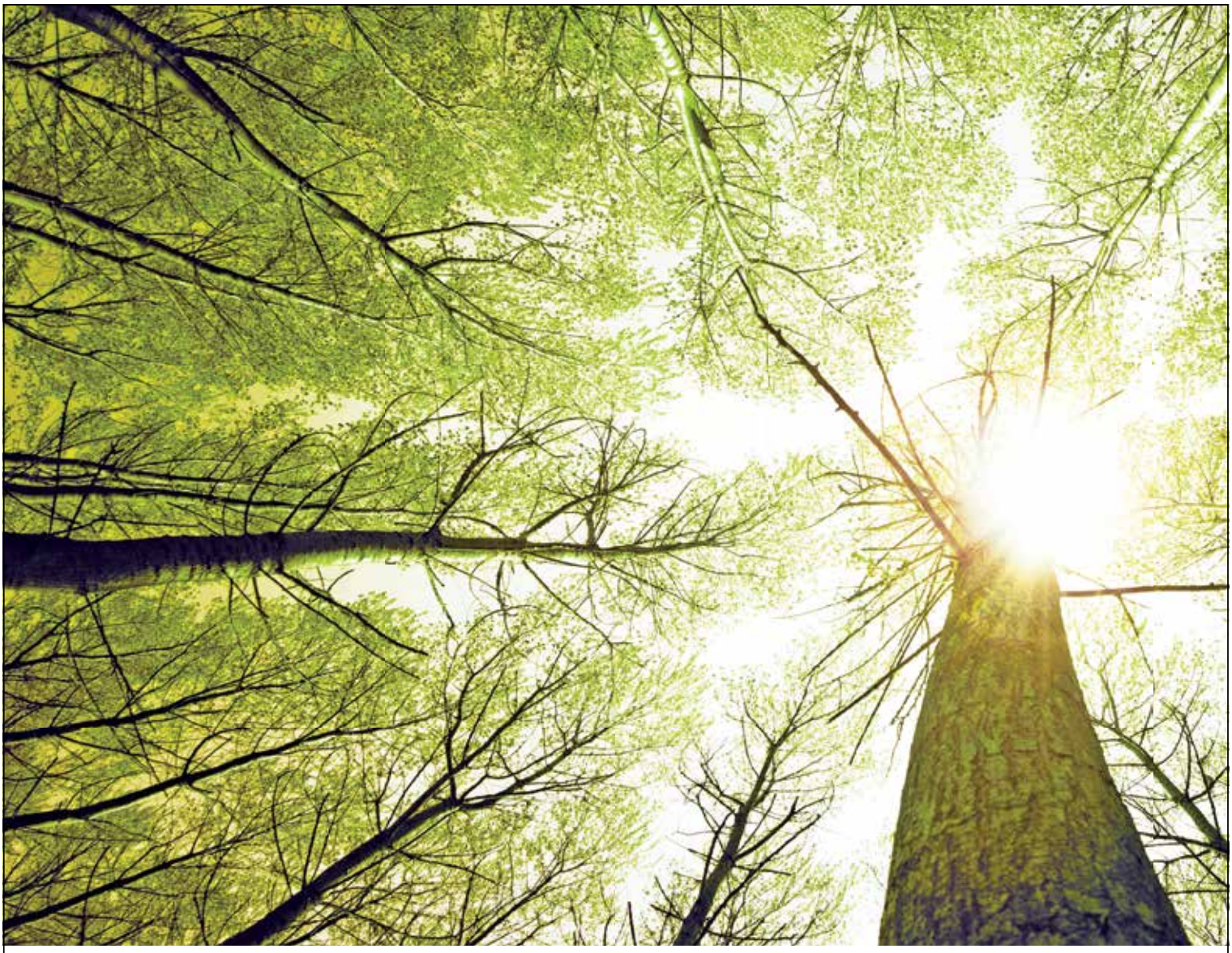
She gave up gymnastics at age 12 after two fractured kneecaps. She first tried tennis, but after two weeks with her mother's sister, former professional tennis player Bonnie Gadusek, Spiranac crossed the sport off her to-play list.

Paige's switch to golf almost mirrors Gadusek's to tennis. Also a gymnast, Gadusek at age 12 in 1976 broke her neck on the uneven parallel bars. She took up tennis as part of her therapy, and by 1982 was the WTA Tour's Rookie of the Year.

The world's eighth-ranked player in 1984, Gadusek earned the nickname "Animal" for her aggressive approach to practice drills. Spiranac often posts videos of her workouts, to show how intense she is about keeping fit.

"I don't want to do something unless I know I'm working as hard as I can to be as good as I can be," Paige says. "I think my Aunt Bonnie had that same mentality, and she got to a very high level by focusing on herself and





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working as hard as she could."

Last June Spiranac posted her first professional win, on the Cactus Tour. It was a far better outcome than her first professional outing–when she missed the cut at the Ladies' European Tour's 2015 Dubai Ladies Masters. Spiranac's invitation to play in that event–and the organizers' use of her to promote it–was heavily questioned by LPGA Tour veterans and golf fans. Her performance intensified the negative reaction.



FLIPPING THE PAIGE: Spiranac's first sport was gymnastics.

"I had a pretty tough tournament in Dubai," Spiranac remembers. "Christina Kim and Natalie Gulbis both reached out to me and gave me so much great advice. Natalie and I have had similar experiences, as far as our images. So I really respect what she says.

"When you get negative feedback, you feel like the whole world is against you. I thought everyone on the LPGA hated me and thought I was a joke. It meant so much to have someone at a high level in the golf world be so supportive. If I didn't receive that support I don't know if I'd still be doing this."

But haters will keep on hating. "Negative comments would stick with me for a while," she admits. "I've learned not to look at them... but sometimes I feel I have to respond.

"Usually it's something like a dad saying I'm a bad role model for young girls, or that I don't take golf seriously, or that I'm privileged. So I will respond, and they often apologize. They see I'm not as bad as they think I am. But there are people who just want to bring someone down, and that's sad and hurtful."

With a final-round 70, Spiranac tied for ninth in the 2016 CoBank Colorado Women's Open, finishing a respectable one-under-par. Then, trolls be damned, in December she returned to the Dubai Masters. She missed the cut but came home with hardware more significant than any trophy–an engagement ring from boyfriend Steven Tinoco.

"I know at the end of the day golf is what I'm passionate about and something I love," she says. "But there's more to life, and I always try to keep that in perspective. Maybe that's why I'm not where I need to be golf-wise right now. But I'm very happy with what I've accomplished so far."

What Spiranac has accomplished is quite remarkable. Her social media success landed her on the cover of last May's *Golf Digest* as one of "the innovators and influencers who are pushing the boundaries of the game."

But she knows she needs to push the boundaries of *her* game in order to be mentioned in the same sentence as past LPGA Tour "beauties" like Jan Stephenson. "The most important part of my career is what I shoot, not what I look like," said Stephenson, who scored 16 LPGA Tour victories.

Paige Spiranac doesn't have to hear that advice to heed it. Like all millennials, she lives on social media, but she refuses to allow her generation's obsession with it to photo-bomb her destiny as a professional golfer.

Contributor Sam Adams is an award-winning journalist and standup comedian.



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SETUP



STEP BACK

Coming "over the top"–when your swing plane becomes too steep and attacks the golf ball from an outside-in swing path–is one of the most common problems I see in golfers who slice or pull the ball. The problem often stems from your body getting out of sequence at the top of your swing. You'll notice that your back knee starts moving towards the ball, opening up your hips too quickly and causing that outside-in swing path. A simple way to remedy that is to take your regular stance and draw your rear leg back so your rear toe aligns with your front heel. When you begin your downswing, your knee will move towards the target, not towards the ball. This will keep your hips from opening too soon and put your club on a better plane.

Alex Fisher, PGA Professional,
Glacier Club, Durango

IMPROVE IMPACT



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIM O'HARA



PHOTOGRAPHY BY E.J. CARR

SETUP FOR IMPACT

Many golfers think that the setup position and impact position are the same but they are much different. The biggest difference between the two positions is the lower body.

At address the hips (belt buckle) are pointed at the ball and the weight is 50/50 on each foot.

At impact the hips (belt buckle) are turned or pointed more towards your target and the weight has shifted towards your front foot.

Think of your lower body starting your downswing. As you shift your weight forward, turn your belt buckle not just back to the ball but all the way back to your target.

Vince Buelk, PGA Golf Professional,
Collindale Golf Academy, Fort Collins



MAKE BFP YOUR BFF

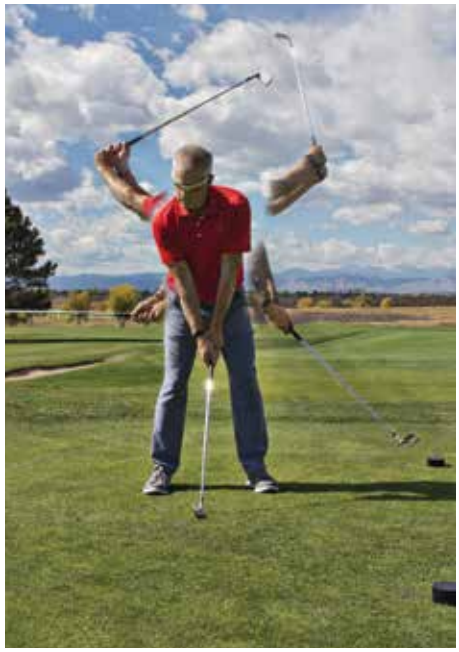
Nearly every amateur golfer's practice swing is more efficient, with better tempo and balance, than the one he or she uses to hit the ball. The culprit? Trying to hit the golf ball, rather than just swinging the club, engages the wrong muscle groups, reduces clubhead speed and leads to lunging and loss of balance.

Correct this by focusing on a balanced finish position (BFP). A BPF means nearly all of your weight is on your target-side foot, with a little remaining on the big toe of your back foot; your chest and navel face the target; and the back of your top hand is close to the opposite ear with your arms relaxed and elbows chest high.

If your finish position has good form and balance, odds are the mechanics that produced that result must have occurred.

Learning to swing into this BFP is easiest when swinging at a tee, not a golf ball. Start in your address position and swing through impact area into BFP, then swing from BFP all the way to top of backswing and then swing slowly down and through the impact area back to the BFP. As your swing becomes smoother and your balance better, gradually increase clubhead speed.

Dennis C. Murray,
PGA Certified Teaching Professional,
Valley Country Club, Centennial



PHOTOGRAPHY BY E.J. CARR

"QUIET" YOUR HEAD

Want more consistency in your shots? "Quiet" your head! I'm not talking about your thoughts; I'm talking about the head movement during your swing.Imagine trying to hammer a nail or write your signature while your head is moving side to side or up and down. When your head is "noisy"–moving up and down or side-to-side–consistently striking the ball on the sweet spot is very difficult. Up and down movements of your head often cause contact inconsistencies, such as fat and thin shots. Lateral movements of your head can lead to shots heading left and right.

As you can see in the swing sequence, my head stays "quiet." I like to picture my nose staying in the same place relative to the golf ball… from address until after the ball has left the clubface. If your nose starts moving, your shots start wandering. Try this on the range first! It may feel very different from what you are used to.

Geoff Greig, PGA Professional and Founder,
EVO Golf,CommonGround Golf Course, Aurora

IMPROVE IMPACT



PHOTOGRAPHY BY E.J. CARR

PLAY YOUR CARD RIGHT

This is a great drill to help the golfer keep the left wrist flat–and not "flip" the golf club–at impact.

Place a credit card 2-3 inches in front of the golf ball, towards the target.



If you hit the golf ball, and miss the credit card, you "flipped" your wrists and did not achieve the desired hands or handle (grip end) forward position with the golf club at impact.

To achieve a better flat left wrist or hands-forward position at impact, practice "wiping out" both the ball and the credit card after impact.

Chris Schultz, PGA Master Professional,
CommonGround Golf Course, Aurora



PHOTOGRAPHY BY E.J. CARR

COMPRESSION SESSION

Golf is a game of opposites. When the golf ball rests on the ground, we hit down on it to make it go up. Swinging down so that the divot is after the golf ball produces backspin with the correct loft on the club and results in a good shot with the correct distance.

So how do we do this?By compressing the ball with the club head and not trying to lift it into the air, As in the photo(s), you can see the club head lags behind my hands and my body, and does not catch up to my hands until impact or just after. If you start the downswing with the club head moving first, it catches up to the hands too soon. It may be counter-intuitive, but with a little practice you can master it.

Sherry Andonian-Smith,
LPGA and PGA Class A Professional,
Valley Country Club, Centennial





PHOTOGRAPHY BY E.J. CARR

HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

When confronting windy conditions or "jail" in the form of tree branches, you need to keep the ball down. Since the club controls the ball, the very best way to keep the ball down is by employing a club with less loft. Sound simple? It is.

Just pick the club that fits the trajectory of the shot needed. Narrow your stance slightly maintain your normal full swing balance, and practice hitting shots on the range with two to three more clubs than you usually need. For example, grip a 4-iron at the same length on the shaft as a 6-iron and try and hit it the distance of a 6. Pay attention to the trajectory and the ½ to ¾ swing length and speed it takes to hit the ball shorter distance with the longer club. This smoother shorter swing will create a shallower swing path, creating lower trajectory and less spin–all of which are needed to cheat the wind and keep the ball low.

Doug Wherry, PGA Director of Golf,
Jake's Academy, Lone Tree





PREMIUM CLUB FITTING EQUALS INSTANT SUCCESS

8 OUT OF 9 GOLFERS ADDED AN AVERAGE OF 21 YARDS OFF THE TEE

By Leonard Finkel

With advances in club technology, most golfers could easily hit the ball further and more accurately. Yet, a *Golf Magazine* study found that 90% of U.S. golfers may be playing with improperly fit clubs. A *Golf Digest* study found that 8 out of 9 Club Champion custom fit golfers lowered their score by as much as 6 strokes per round and added up to 21 yards off the tee.

Club Champion is the country's premier club fitter, builder and retailer of the best brands in golf. The company delivers a Tour-quality fitting that produces longer, more accurate shots, with a nearly 100% satisfaction rate. Their approach is unbiased; no specific vendor is promoted. The only goal, for any skill level player, is to find the best combination of head, shaft and grip components to lower a golfer's scores.

Ranked by *Golf Digest* among the 100 best club fitters four times in a row, Club Champion's unique coupling system allows them to combine any head and shaft together, so golfers can hit the precise combination to be custom built for them. Most golf stores use fitting carts provided by club manufacturers and while these carts offer options, golfers are unable to mix and match from different carts to determine ideal combinations. Club Champion offers hundreds of shafts, many not available through most other fitters and retailers.

Frank D'Angelo (Malvern, PA) reveals, "I was a 12 index before I went to Club Champion and I've shaved about six shots off my handicap. It's a premium store and you get premium service."

Former PGA Tour player Jay Williamson says, "I had access to every brand of shaft and head, but I never understood what they did for me. I didn't have the opportunity to experiment like I do at Club Champion. They provide the same level of service players receive on Tour, including the newest heads and shafts and most advanced fitting technology. If you are a committed golfer at any level, I highly recommend it." Incidentally, Club Champion was able to add an average of 15 yards to Jay's drives.

"Club Champion is the #1 club fitter, builder and retailer of the best brands in golf. With over 35,000 head and shaft combinations, Club Champion will find the perfect clubs for you."

– David Leadbetter, World-Renowned Golf Coach

To obtain results like Jay's, Club Champion fittings utilize Trackman launch monitors and the Science & Motion PuttLab. Both are considered the gold standard in fitting technology and are used by Tour players around the world to improve their game.

Club Champion stands out because they actually assemble clubs in-house to exacting, unrivaled tolerances. Club variables such as shaft flex, swing weight, club length and loft/lie definitely alter performance. The experience and know-how in combining these intricate parts together is what separates Club Champion from its competition. Chuck Thiry, Vice President Strategic Partnerships – Cleveland Golf says, "In our experience, Club Champion represents the finest in the art of club fitting and building. We are confident that Club Champion will fit, service and support the most discerning golfers at the highest possible levels."

While any caliber of player can benefit from the premium club fitting, it's for the golfer who wants maximized performance. When Club Champion says you'll add 20 yards off the tee, they mean it. Whether you're looking to buy new clubs or optimize your current set, premium club fitting is the answer.

Fitting prices range from $150 for a driver to $350 for an entire bag. The company just opened a studio in 670 E. County Line Rd., Suite A2 in Highlands Ranch. Don't just buy clubs, buy guaranteed improvement! For more information, call 888-335-9692 or visit clubchampiongolf.com

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IMPROVE IMPACT



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAD CHISHOLM

DEVELOP A GO-TO SCORING SHOT

From 50 yards in, you need to develop a shot that will work whether you're facing a "good or bad" lie, whether the ball's above or below your feet, or whether the grass is long or short. Work on the following:

Put the ball in the middle of your stance with your weight evenly distributed and your hands held at the ball at address. Swing 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock–or back to your waist and through to your waist–and finish with a little air underneath your right foot.

Mark Kelbel, Head PGA Professional,
The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs







PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEREMY CANTALAMESSA

SHORT GAME

MAKE YOUR OWN BREAKS

A great way to sink those difficult left-to-right and right-to-left breakers is to adjust the ball position in your stance to help keep the ball on line.

On left-to-right breaking putts, move the ball slightly forward in your stance. This enables the putter face to release earlier and help the ball stay on line and not miss on the low side of the hole. On right-to-left breaking putts: Move the ball slightly back in your stance. This enables the putter not to release as much and not miss on the low side of the hole.

John Ogden, PGA Head Professional, Cherry Hills Country Club, Cherry Hills Village



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARRY STAVER

KNOW YOUR DISTANCES

You have different lofted wedges and short irons for a reason. Yet many of us grab the same club for every shot around the green. Learn the best for each situation. Chip one ball to every hole on the chipping greens using the same club. Then try the same shots with a different club. Keep going to different spots around the green, experimenting with wedges and short irons. This will help you realize which club is most suitable for a particular situation. You'll also enhance your feel and fine-tune your touch.

Trent Wearner, PGA
Trent Wearner Golf Academy, Englewood

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY E.J. CARR

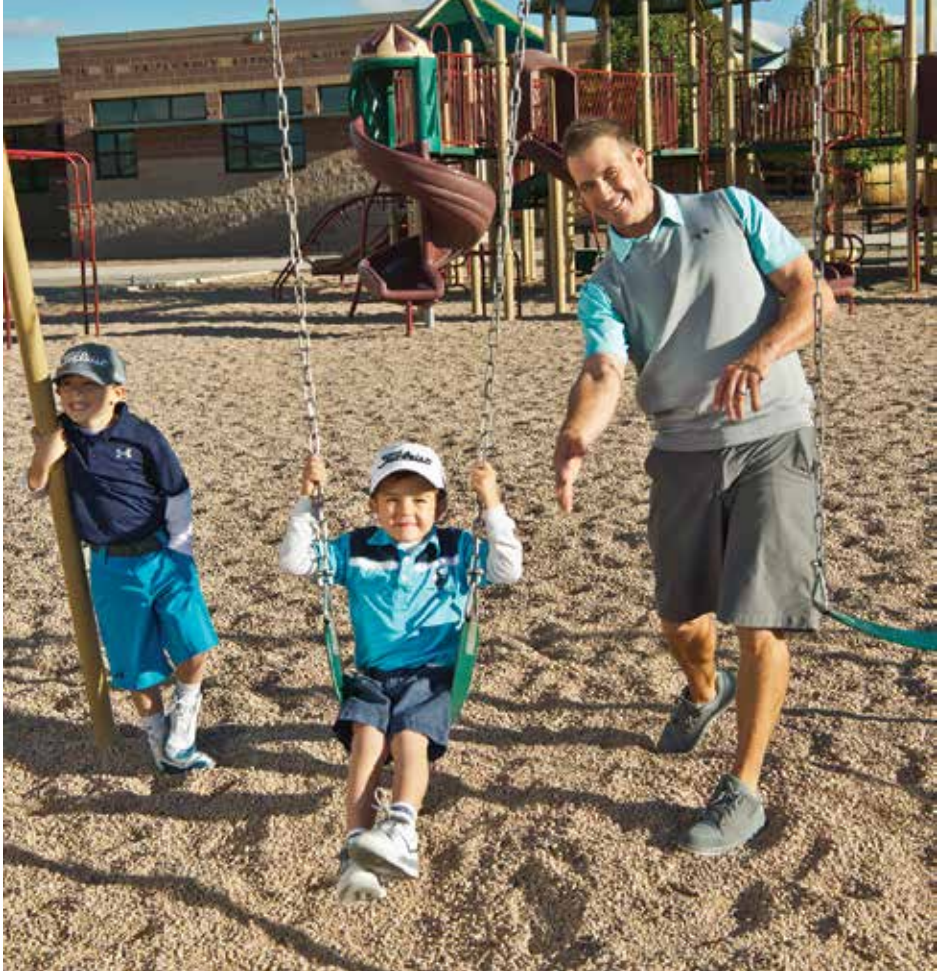
ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER COLLAR

When a ball nestles against the collar of thick grass that surrounds the green, it makes clean contact with a putter or a conventional chip shot next to impossible. This situation is perfect for the utility wood shot.

Utility woods have a wide sole and a lot of mass to create solid contact. Grip down so that your lower hand is actually on the shaft. Play the ball back of center and position the hands slightly ahead of the ball to create a more descending angle of approach on the forward swing, which will help negotiate the collar of grass behind the ball. Stand closer to the ball so that the shaft of the club is nearly vertical for increased control.

Just like in a regular chip, your hands should lead the way on the forward swing, being sure to keep your top wrist from breaking down through the hitting area. Just like a lag putt, make the length of the swing back and through appropriate to the total length of the shot. The ball should come out like a putt, rolling to the hole.

Lana Ortega, LPGA Professional,
Lana Ortega Golf, Aurora



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHIL MUMFORD

UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

SWING LIKE A KID

Parents of small children often complain of not having enough time to practice golf. I agreed–until I tried to push my 6-, 4- and 2-year old boys from behind and I realized I could not create any leverage.After watching them swing, I realized how similar it was to the "motion" of a golf swing. Watching my boys go backward and creating width to get speed, I never noticed them once go "up" and "down." It was always smoothly backward before allowing the momentum to create them to allow the "motion" to carry them forward.

Which means you can practice the motion while pushing the kids on a swing.For a right-handed player, stand on the left side of your child and wait until they get to the apex of their backwards motion, catching them for a moment, you will feel your right arm have maximum external rotation of the humerus area, which should open your chest while your lower body prepares to push your child forward.As you push your child forward with your right arm your body naturally responds and gets out of the way staying off your toes. While he/she swings forward you wait for them on the return and do it again.

Jason Witczak, PGA Director of Instruction, Green Valley Ranch Golf Academy, Denver

NEXT ISSUE

Pick up the April edition of *Colorado AvidGolfer* for the second part of "17 for '17." Our final five instructors will provide tips on bunker play, chipping and other scoring shots on and around the green. The story will be part of our 15th Anniversary celebration. Issues hit the racks April 1.

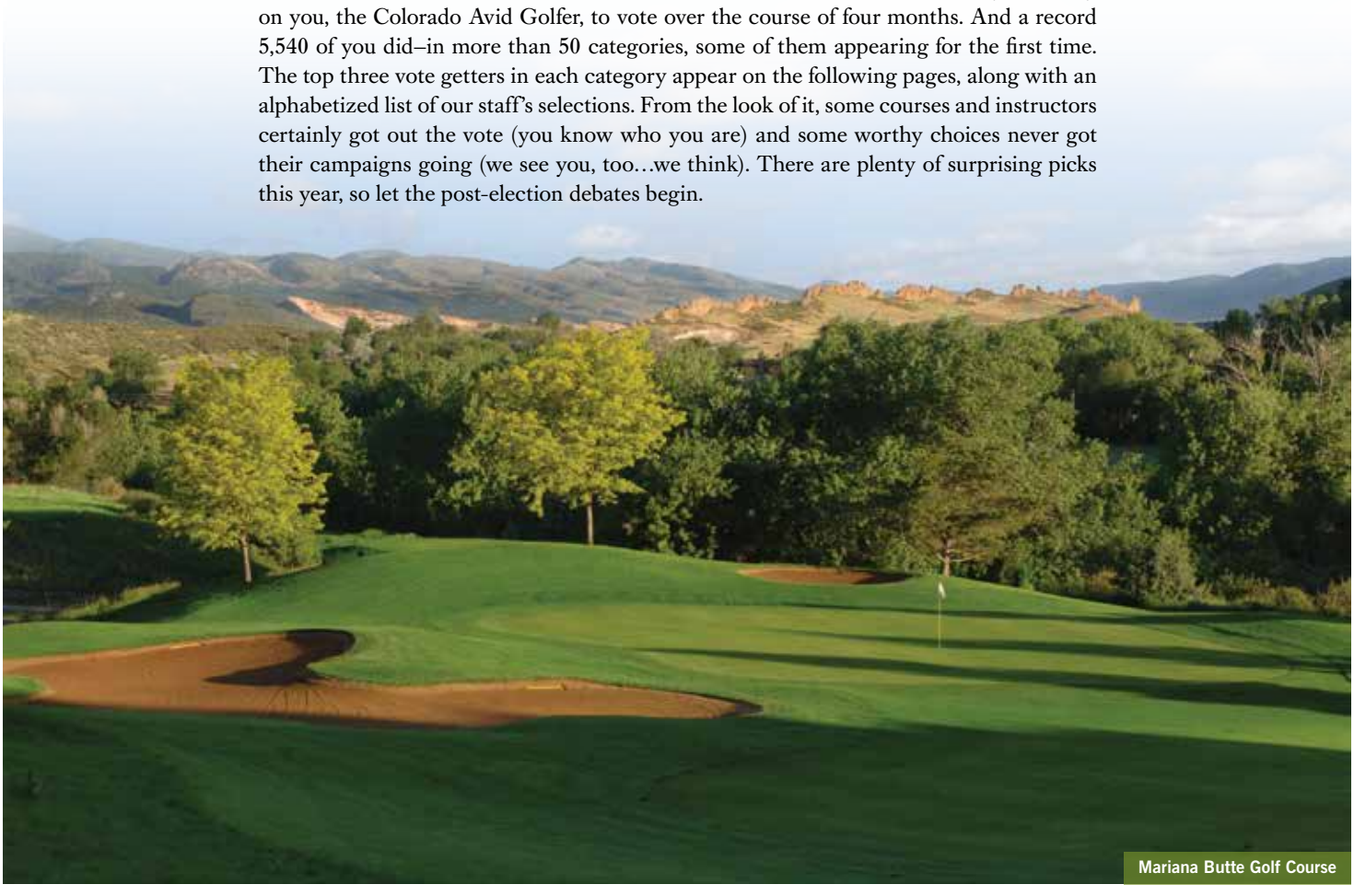
COLORADO AVIDGOLFER

CAGGY AWARD WINNERS 2017

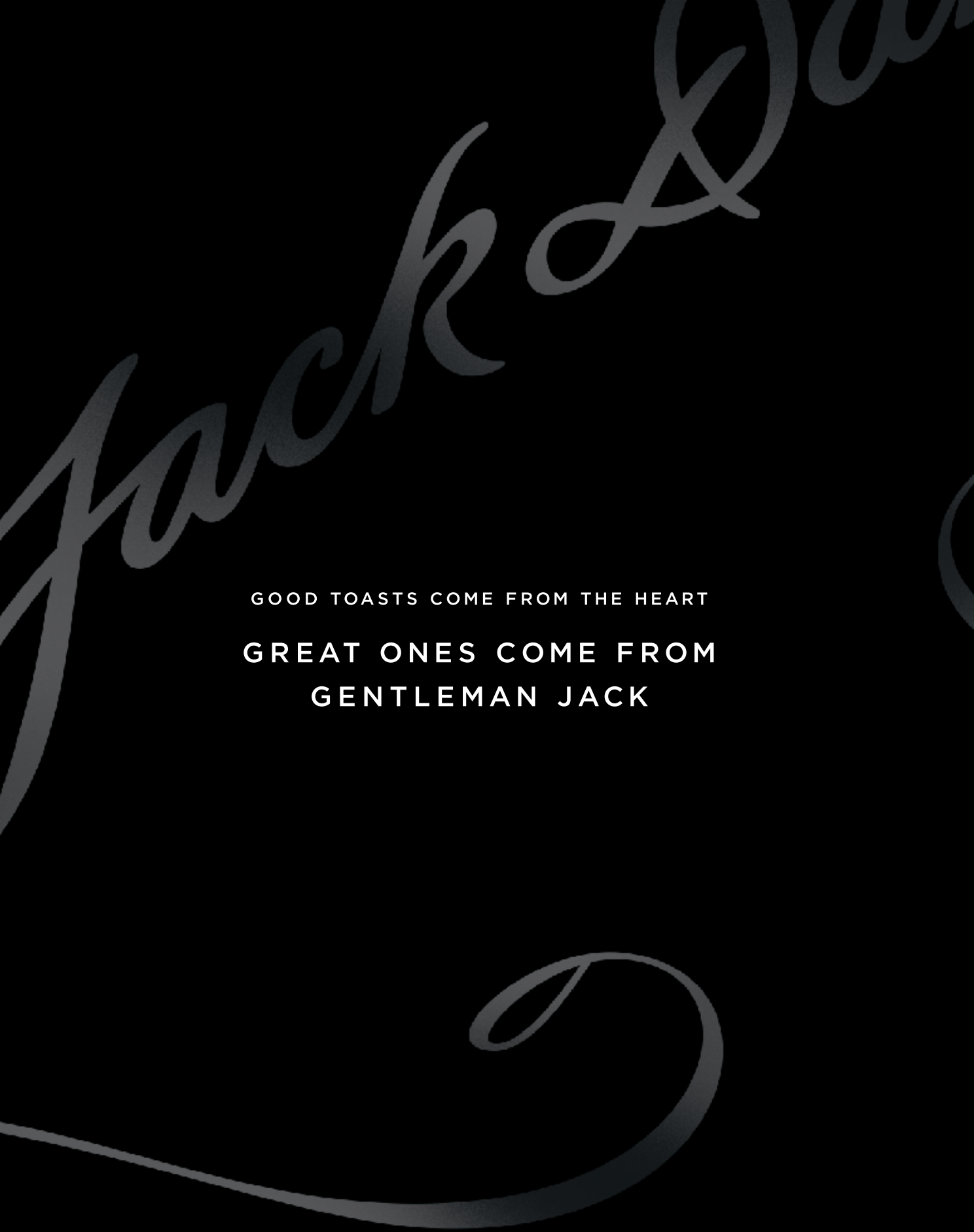
PRESENTED BY

JACK DANIEL'S GENTLEMAN JACK
DOUBLE MELLOWED • TENNESSEE WHISKEY

WELCOME to the 15th annual celebration of the Best of Colorado Golf, a readers' choice celebration known now and forever as the CAGGY Awards. Unlike other publications, we don't have course raters or pollsters. We don't send out surveys. We rely on you, the Colorado Avid Golfer, to vote over the course of four months. And a record 5,540 of you did–in more than 50 categories, some of them appearing for the first time. The top three vote getters in each category appear on the following pages, along with an alphabetized list of our staff's selections. From the look of it, some courses and instructors certainly got out the vote (you know who you are) and some worthy choices never got their campaigns going (we see you, too…we think). There are plenty of surprising picks this year, so let the post-election debates begin.



Mariana Butte Golf Course



GOOD TOASTS COME FROM THE HEART

GREAT ONES COME FROM GENTLEMAN JACK

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PUBLIC/RESORT COURSES


Colorado National Golf Club

AVIDGOLFER CAGGY AWARD WINNERS 2017
PRESENTED BY JACK DANIEL'S GENTLEMAN JACK DOUBLE MELLOWED • TENNESSEE WHISKEY

BEST DENVER REGION COURSE

1. The Golf Club at Bear Dance, Larkspur
2. Arrowhead Golf Club, Littleton
3. Colorado National Golf Club, Erie

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
CommonGround Golf Course, Aurora,
Green Valley Ranch Golf Club, Denver, The
Ridge at Castle Pines North, Castle Rock

BEST FRONT RANGE/NORTHEAST COURSE - PUBLIC/RESORT

1. Mariana Butte Golf Course, Loveland
2. Pelican Lakes Golf & Country Club, Windsor
3. The Olde Course at Loveland, Loveland

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Collindale Golf Course, Fort Collins
Highland Meadows Golf Club, Windsor
Pelican Lakes Golf & Country Club

BEST MOUNTAIN COURSE - PUBLIC/RESORT

1. Red Sky Golf Club-Fazio Course, Wolcott
2. Pole Creek Golf Club, Tabernash
3. Breckenridge Golf Club, Breckenridge

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Keystone Ranch Golf Course, Keystone
Raven Golf Club at Three Peaks, Silverthorne
Red Sky Golf Club-Norman Course, Wolcott
River Course at Keystone, Keystone

BEST SOUTHERN COURSE (COLORADO SPRINGS AND BELOW) - PUBLIC/RESORT

1. Broadmoor Golf Club-East Course, Colorado Springs
2. Country Club of Colorado at Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs
3. Patty Jewett Golf Course, Colorado Springs

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Broadmoor Golf Club-East Course, Colorado Springs
Country Club of Colorado at Cheyenne Mountain Resort
King's Deer Golf Club, Monument

BEST WESTERN SLOPE COURSE - PUBLIC/RESORT

1. Redlands Mesa Golf Club, Grand Junction
2. Lakota Canyon Ranch Golf Club, New Castle
3. Devil's Thumb Golf Club, Delta

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Bridges Golf Club, Montrose
Ironbridge Golf Club, Glenwood Springs
Redlands Mesa Golf Club

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COURSE - PUBLIC/RESORT

1. Green Valley Ranch Golf Club
2. Fossil Trace Golf Club, Golden
3. The Golf Club at Bear Dance

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Fox Hollow Golf Course, Lakewood
Green Valley Ranch Golf Club
The Heritage at Westmoor, Westminster


Broadmoor Golf Club

BEST EGO-BOOSTER

1. Eagle Trace Golf Club, Broomfield
2. Greenway Park Golf Course, Broomfield
3. Red Hawk Ridge Golf Course, Castle Rock

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Applewood Golf Course, Golden
Aurora Hills Golf Course, Aurora
Park Hill Golf Club, Denver


Eagle Trace Golf Club

BEST PRACTICE FACILITY

1. South Suburban Family Sports Center, Centennial
2. CommonGround Golf Course
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks(Alphabetical):
Broken Tee Golf Course, Englewood
Green Valley Ranch Golf Club
Colorado National Golf Club

FAVORITE GOLF PASSPORT COURSE (new category)

1. Colorado National Golf Club
2. The Ridge at Castle Pines
3. Broadlands Golf Course

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
All 66

BEST OPENING HOLE
1. The Broadmoor-East
2. The Golf Club at Bear Dance
3. Broadlands Golf Course

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Fossil Trace Golf Club
The River Course at Keystone
Willis Case Golf Course, Denver


Green Valley Ranch Golf Club

BEST BET SETTLER (18TH HOLE)
1. Green Valley Ranch Golf Club
2. Fossil Trace Golf Club
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
Broadmoor Golf Club
The Ridge at Castle Pines North

BEST CONDITIONS (PUBLIC)
1. The Golf Club at Bear Dance
2. Riverdale Golf Courses, Brighton
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
CommonGround Golf Course
Green Valley Ranch Golf Club

BEST CONDITIONS (RESORT)
1. The Broadmoor Golf Club
2. Omni Interlocken Resort Golf Club, Broomfield
3. Red Sky Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Broadmoor
Inverness Hotel & Golf Course
Keystone Resort

BEST COURSE FOR FAMILIES - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Colorado National Golf Club
2. Broadlands Golf Course
3. Buffalo Run Golf Course, Commerce City

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Broken Tee Golf Course, Englewood
Fox Hollow Golf Course, Lakewood
The Greg Mastriona Courses at Hyland Hills, Westminster

BEST COURSE FOR WOMEN (PUBLIC/RESORT)
1. Park Hill Golf Club, Denver
2. Colorado National Golf Club
3. Broadmoor Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Applewood Golf Course, Golden
City Park Golf Course, Denver
Green Valley Ranch Golf Club
The Links, Highlands Ranch

BEST APRÈS-GOLF EXPERIENCE - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Arrowhead Golf Club
2. Broadmoor Golf Club
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
Colorado National Golf Club
The Ridge at Castle Pines North

BEST FOOD - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Topgolf
2. Broadmoor Golf Club
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Applewood Golf Course
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
The Bridges Golf Club
The Ridge at Castle Pines North

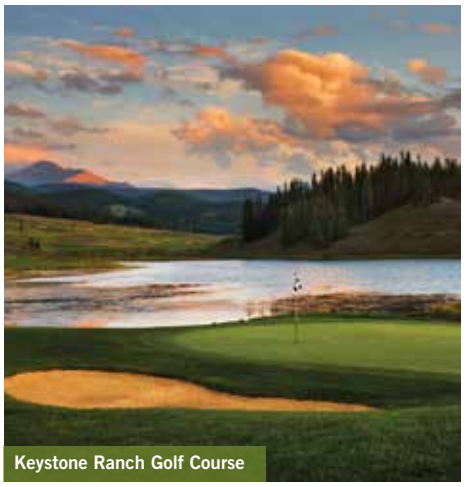

TopGolf

BEST WEDDING/PARTY VENUE - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Arrowhead Golf Club
2. Broadmoor Golf Club
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
Keystone Ranch
Inverness Hotel & Golf Club
Raccoon Creek Golf Course, Littleton

BEST VALUE - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. CommonGround Golf Course
2. Colorado National Golf Club
3. Riverdale Golf Courses

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Fox Hollow Golf Course
Plum Creek Golf & Country Club
Red Hawk Ridge Golf Course


Keystone Ranch Golf Course

BEST TO WALK - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Aurora Hills Golf Course
2. Eagle Trace Golf Club
3. Greenway Park Golf Course

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
CommonGround Golf Course
Flatirons Golf Course, Boulder
Foothills Golf Course, Denver

BEST ON COURSE VIEWS (PUBLIC)
1. Arrowhead Golf Club
2. The Golf Club at Bear Dance
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Arrowhead Golf Club
Redlands Mesa Golf Club
Keystone Ranch Golf Course
Raven Golf Club at Three Peaks

BEST WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. The Golf Club at Bear Dance
2. Beaver Creek Golf Club
3. Arrowhead Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Estes Park Golf Club, Estes Park
Evergreen Golf Course, Evergreen
Grand Lake Golf Course, Grand Lake


The Ridge at Castle Pines North

BEST COURSE FOR SENIORS - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Broadlands Golf Course
2. Broadmoor Golf Club
3. Buffalo Run Golf Course

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Broken Tee Golf Course
Heritage Eagle Bend Golf Club, Aurora
The Homestead at Fox Hollow, Lakewood
Indian Tree Golf Course, Arvada

BEST CHARITY TOURNAMENT VENUE - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Broadmoor Golf Club
2. The Greg Mastriona Courses at Hyland Hills
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Golf Club at Bear Dance,
The Ridge at Castle Pines North
Omni Interlocken Resort Golf Club

BEST COURSE LOGO – PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Broadmoor Golf Club
2. The Golf Club at Bear Dance
3. Colorado National Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
Heritage Golf Course at Westmoor
The Mad Russian Golf Course, Milliken

BEST SERVICE - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. CommonGround Golf Course
2. Colorado National Golf Club
3. Broadmoor Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Arrowhead Golf Club
The Golf Club at Bear Dance
The Broadmoor Golf Club

MOST UNDERRATED COURSE - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. CommonGround Golf Course
2. Colorado National Golf Club
3. Riverdale Golf Courses

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Buffalo Run Golf Course
Murphy Creek Golf Course, Aurora
Plum Creek Golf & Country Club
Saddle Rock Golf Course, Aurora

BEST PACE OF PLAY - PUBLIC/RESORT
1. Eagle Trace Golf Club
2. Greenway Park Golf Course
3. Aurora Hills Golf Course

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
City Park Golf Course
Riverdale Golf Courses
Vail Golf Club, Vail

PRIVATE CLUBS

BEST FRONT RANGE/NORTHEAST
1. Ballyneal Golf Club, Holyoke
2. Ptarmigan Country Club, Fort Collins
3. The Fox Hill Club, Longmont

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Ballyneal Golf Club
Fox Acres, The Golf Club at
The Fox Hill Club, Longmont


The Club at Pradera

BEST DENVER REGION CLUB - PRIVATE
1. Cherry Hills Country Club, Cherry Hills Village
2. Cherry Creek Country Club, Denver
3. Castle Pines Golf Club, Castle Rock

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Castle Pines Golf Club
Cherry Creek Country Club
Cherry Hills Country Club
Colorado Golf Club, Parker
The Club at Ravenna, Littleton

BEST MOUNTAIN CLUB - PRIVATE
1. Red Sky Golf Club, Wolcott
2. The Club at Cordillera, Edwards
3. Roaring Fork Club, Basalt

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Club at Cordillera
Frost Creek, Eagle
Red Sky Golf Club, Wolcott

BEST WESTERN SLOPE/ SOUTHWEST CLUB
1. Telluride Ski & Golf Club, Telluride
2. The Glacier Club, Durango
3. Bookcliff Country Club, Grand Junction

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Bookcliff Country Club
Glacier Club, The
Telluride Ski & Golf Club

BEST SOUTHERN CLUB - PRIVATE
1. Broadmoor Golf Club
2. Colorado Springs Country Club, Colorado Springs
3. The Club at Flying Horse, Colorado Springs

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Broadmoor Golf Club
Country Club of Colorado at
Cheyenne Mountain Resort
The Club at Flying Horse, Colorado Springs

BEST VALUE - PRIVATE
1. Black Bear Golf Club, Parker
2. Perry Park Country Club, Larkspur
3. Cherry Creek Country Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Black Bear Golf Club & Blackstone Country Club , Aurora
The Pinery Country Club & The Club at Pradera, Parker
The Ranch Country Club, Westminster


Cherry Creek Country Club

BEST OVERALL EXPERIENCE - PRIVATE

1. Cherry Hills Country Club
2. Cherry Creek Country Club
3. Broadmoor Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Cherry Creek Country Club
Colorado Golf Club
The Club at Cordillera
The Club at Flying Horse

BEST FOR FAMILIES - PRIVATE

1. Cherry Creek Country Club
2. Colorado Golf Club
3. Glenmoor Country Club, Cherry Hills Village

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Blackstone Country Club
The Club at Pradera
The Ranch Country Club

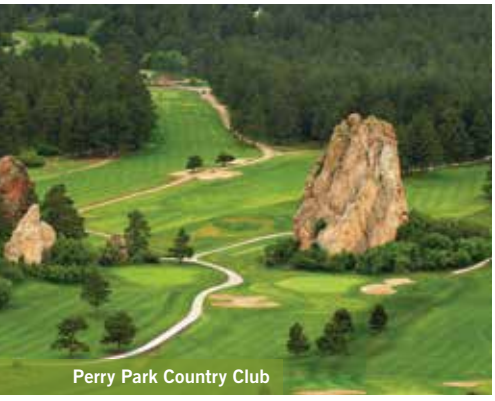
MOST UNDERRATED CLUB - PRIVATE

1. Perry Park Country Club, Larkspur
2. Black Bear Golf Club
3. Cherry Creek Country Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Blackstone Country Club
The Club at Flying Horse
The Golf Club at Ravenna

BEST COURSE LOGO - PRIVATE

1. Cherry Hills Country Club
2. Colorado Golf Club
3. Broadmoor Golf Club


Perry Park Country Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Castle Pines Golf Club
Colorado Golf Club
The Club at Flying Horse

BEST COURSE TO HOLD A TOURNAMENT - PRIVATE

1. Cherry Hills Country Club
2. Sanctuary, Sedalia
3. Colorado Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Broadmoor Golf Club
Inverness Hotel & Golf Club
Red Sky Golf Club
Sanctuary


Blackstone Country Club

MOST COVETED INVITATION - PRIVATE

1. Ballyneal Golf Club
2. Cherry Hills Country Club
3. Castle Pines Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Castle Pines Golf Club
Cherry Hills Country Club
Denver Country Club, Denver
Frost Creek Golf & Fishing Club, Eagle

BEST LOCKER ROOMS - PRIVATE

1. Cherry Hills Country Club
2. Cherry Creek Country Club
3. Colorado Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Club at Flying Horse
Lakewood Country Club
The Club at Pradera

BEST CLUBHOUSE - PRIVATE

1. Cherry Hills Country Club
2. Cherry Creek Country Club
3. Colorado Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
The Country Club at Castle Pines, Castle Rock
The Club at Flying Horse
Red Sky Golf Club

BEST CADDIES - PRIVATE

(new category)

1. Ballyneal Golf Club
2. Cherry Hills Country Club
3. Cherry Creek Country Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Ballyneal Golf Club
Castle Pines Golf Club
Colorado Golf Club
Denver Country Club

TOUGHEST TEST - PRIVATE

1. Ballyneal
2. Colorado Golf Club
3. Castle Pines Golf Club

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Bear Creek Golf Club, Denver
Castle Pines Golf Club
Colorado Golf Club
Red Sky Golf Club– Norman Course

BEST FOOD - PRIVATE

1. Blackstone Country Club
2. Castle Pines Golf Club
3. The Country Club at Castle Pines

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Cherry Creek Country Club
Colorado Golf Club
Glenmoor Country Club
The Ranch Country Club


Ballyneal Golf Club

MISC COLORADO

BEST COLORADO BUCKET LIST COURSE
1. Ballyneal Golf Club
2. Cherry Hills Country Club
3. Sanctuary

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Ballyneal Golf Club
Broadmoor Golf Club
Castle Pines Golf Club
Sanctuary

BEST PAR 3
1. Arrowhead Golf Club, No. 13
2. Perry Park Country Club, No. 12
3. Cherry Creek Country Club, No. 17

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Colorado Golf Club, No. 2
Pelican Falls Golf Club, Windsor, No. 9
The Golf Club at Redlands Mesa, No. 17

BEST PAR 4 HOLE
1. Perry Park Country Club, No. 6
2. Cherry Creek Country Club, No. 18
3. The Golf Club at Bear Dance, No. 6

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Ballyneal Golf Club, No. 7
Cherry Hills Country Club, No. 14
CommonGround Golf Course, No.15
Riverdale Golf Course (Dunes), No. 15

BEST PAR 5 HOLE
1. Cherry Creek Country Club, No. 14
2. Perry Park Country Club, No 4
3. Green Valley Ranch Golf Club, No. 18

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Sanctuary, No. 1
Cherry Hills Country Club, No. 17
The Golf Club at Bear Dance, No. 18

BEST GOLF STORE
1. D'Lance Golf, Englewood
2. PGA TOUR Superstore, Centennial
3. Lenny's Ski & Golf, Aurora

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Colorado Ski & Golf, Multiple Locations
Golf Galaxy, Multiple Locations
PGA TOUR Superstore

INSTRUCTION

BEST INSTRUCTOR - JUNIORS
1. Dennis Murray, Valley Country Club
2. Matt Schalk, Colorado National Golf Club
3. Terry Stearman, South Suburban Family Sports Center

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Ann Finke, The Country Club of Colorado
Trent Wearner, Trent Wearner Golf Academy, Englewood
Ed Oldham, The Ranch Country Club
Doug Wherry, Jake's Academy, Lone Tree


Chris Schultz

BEST INSTRUCTOR - MEN
1. Chris Schultz, CommonGround Golf Course /D'Lance
2. Dennis Murray
3. Nathan Morris, GolfTEC Westminster

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Steve Beach, Glenmoor Country Club
Stan Sayers, MetaGolf Learning Center
Jason Witczak, Green Valley Ranch Academy

BEST INSTRUCTOR - WOMEN
1. Chris Schultz
2. Lanny DeRoeck, Perry Park Country Club
3. Elena King, CommonGround Golf Course

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Elena King, Xperience Golf, Aurora
Lana Ortega, Lana Ortega Golf, Aurora
Sherry Smith, Valley Country Club, Centennial

BEST GOLF FITNESS INSTRUCTOR
1. Neil Wolkodoff, Colorado Center for Health & Sport Science, Denver
2. Dillon Johnson, RallySport, Boulder
3. Dee Tidwell, Colorado Fitness Club, Greenwood Village

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Stacy Montgomery, Valley Country Club
Dee Tidwell, Colorado Fitness Club

BEST MENTAL GAME COACH
1. Elena King, Xperience Golf
2. Geoff Greig, EvoGolf, Aurora
3. Nathan Morris, GolfTEC Westminster

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Elena King, Xperience Golf
Ed Oldham, The Ranch Country Club
Jason Witczak, Green Valley Ranch Academy

TRAVEL

BEST GOLF EXPERIENCE - ARIZONA
1. Troon North Golf Club, Scottsdale
2. We-Ko-Pa Golf Club, Fort McDowell
3. TPC Scottsdale, Scottsdale

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
AK-Chin Southern Dunes, Maricopa
Troon North Golf Club
Ventana Canyon Golf & Racquet Club, Tucson

BEST GOLF EXPERIENCE - NEW MEXICO
1. Paa Ko Ridge Golf Club, Sandia Park
2. Sandia Golf Club, Albuquerque
3. Univ. of New Mexico Golf Course, Albuquerque

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Rockwind Community Links, Hobbs
Sandia Golf Club
Towa Golf Club, Santa Fe

BEST GOLF EXPERIENCE - UTAH / NEV.
1. Wolf Creek Golf Club, Mesquite, Nev.
2. Sand Hollow Resort, Hurricane, Utah
3. Shadow Creek Golf Club, North Las Vegas, Nev.

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Cascata Golf Club, Boulder City, Nev.
Sand Hollow Resort
Wolf Creek

BEST GOLF EXPERIENCE - MEXICO
1. Cabo Del Sol, San Jose Del Cabo
2. Diamante, Cabo San Lucas
3. Quivira Golf Club, Cabo San Lucas

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Diamante
Four Seasons Punta Mita, Punta Mita
One&Only Palmilla, San Jose Del Cabo

BEST GOLF EXPERIENCE - INTERNATIONAL
1. Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland
2. Old Head Golf Links, Ireland
3. Ballybunion Golf Club, Ireland

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Muirfield, Scotland
Gleneagles Golf Club, Scotland
The Old Course at St. Andrews

BEST GOLF EXPERIENCE - U.S.
1. Pebble Beach, California
2. Bandon Dunes, Oregon
3. Pinehurst, North Carolina

Staff Picks (Alphabetical):
Bandon Dunes
Pebble Beach
Kohler, Wisconsin

Schomp BMW Corporate Cup

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June 2-3, 2017

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Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House

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Colorado AvidGolfer



TWO OUTSTANDING COURSES



The City of Lakewood has two outstanding municipal golf courses that offer golfers of every level an exciting golfing experience, coupled with spectacular views of Denver's iconic skyline and the snowcapped peaks of the Rocky Mountains.

Fox Hollow and Homestead offer a unique mix of terrain types and course challenges. Nestled next to Bear Creek Lake Park on native rolling prairie lands, both courses offer an opportunity for escape and relaxation with tranquil lakes, quiet streams and spectacular vistas.

FOX HOLLOW
GOLF COURSE

HOMESTEAD
GOLF COURSE

PRESENTED BY

CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN RESORT
colorado springs

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

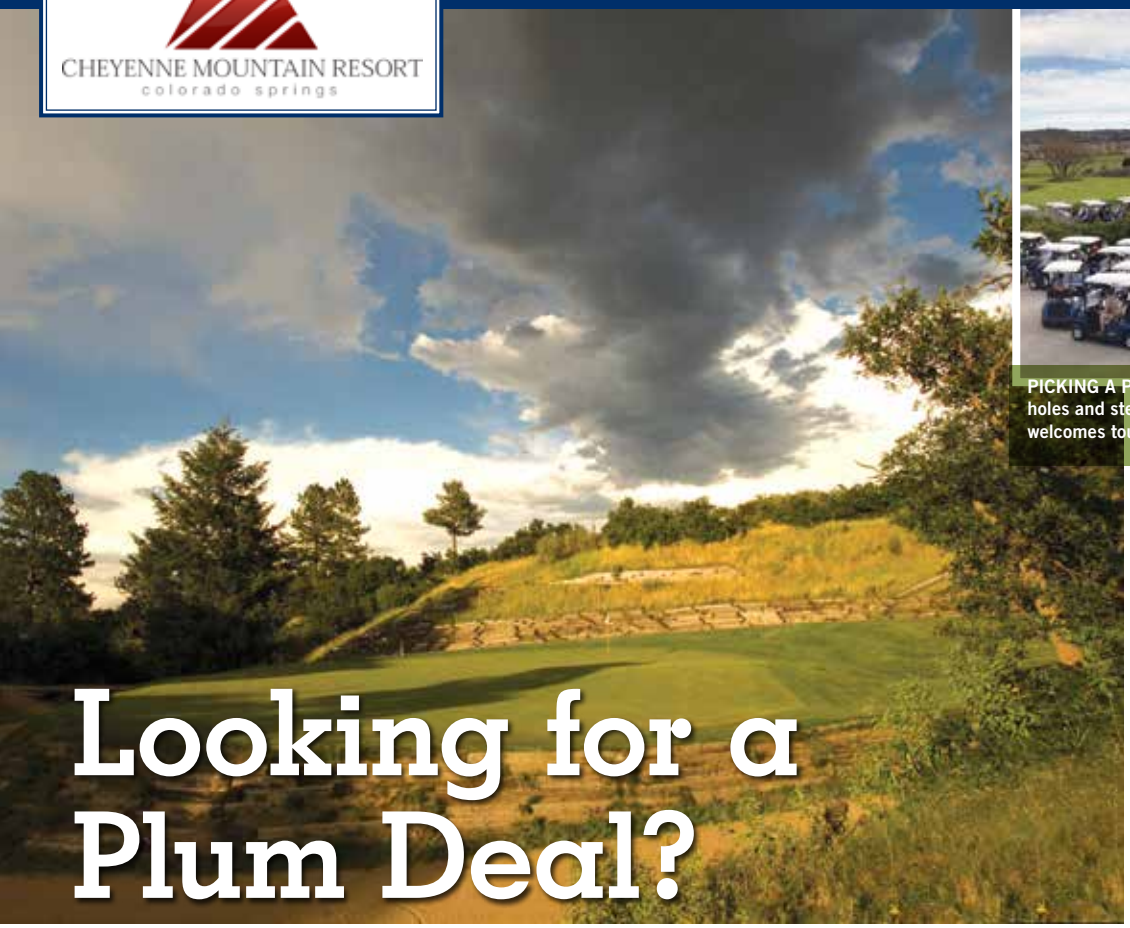
2017 TOURNAMENT GUIDE

COLORADO AVIDGOLFER



Colorado National Golf Club

MAKE THIS
award-winning
VENUE
THE HOME
of YOUR *next*
EVENT



Looking for a Plum Deal?



PICKING A PLUM: With classic holes and stellar service, Plum Creek welcomes tournaments of all sizes.



Committed ownership from Southwest Greens has brought the shine back to **PLUM CREEK GOLF CLUB**, and Colorado's tournament planners and players stand to benefit the most.

WHAT IF WE TOLD YOU your next event could be at a Pete Dye-designed former TPC that hosted four Senior PGA Tour events? And what if we told you it would only cost you $79 per player—all in?

Plum Creek Golf Club, which has admittedly endured some rough times during its 33-year existence in Castle Rock, has for the last two years been owned and operated by Southwest Greens, the same owners who run the multiple CAGGY Award-winning Golf Club at Bear Dance, just 10 miles south in Larkspur.

Southwest Greens has brought the "Bear Dance Way" to Plum Creek. They've upgraded the pro shop, customer relations, dining—you've got to try The Chophouse at Plum Creek—and, especially, the conditions of the course.

It's got great "bones," as they say; all it needed was some love, and that's what the agronomy team has given it, making it more playable without sacrificing the challenge faced by such stars as Gary Player, Arnold Palmer and Sam Snead during the Denver Champions of Golf events of the 1980s. Last year's conditions had regulars raving, and the course should come out of winter even better.

Plum Creek's staff is so proud of the improvements they've made and their commitment to service that they've aggressively priced tournaments to attract—and impress—as many people as they can.

The $79-per-player price point includes full tournament setup (registration, carts, driving range, contests, golf course and banquet room), bag handling service, pastry-and-coffee breakfast, burger-and-brat buffet (upgraded food options are available), TV monitor scoring and $10 per person in golf shop credit. And for no extra charge, they'll throw in their killer views of the Castle Rock.

The course offers this pricing Mondays and Tuesdays for groups of 60 or more (smaller groups run slightly higher, but any sized group is welcome). Wednesdays and Thursdays cost $86 per player, Fridays $91. Rates include all taxes and gratuities.

"We're all about service—especially helping first-time tournaments get their event off the ground," says Head PGA Professional Bo Heidrick. "We want to fill your event. We can blast out emails, post to our followers on social media and direct you to potential sponsors and vendors for prizes and donations. As part of Southwest Greens, we also can make available as prizes foursomes at Bear Dance, Riverdale Dunes and Colorado National."

Unlike other courses, Plum Creek welcomes bar and restaurant sponsors to set up tents. "We even had a national chicken restaurant set up a giant inflatable Holstein that served as a target to win free sandwiches," Heidrick says. "We'll put a pro on the tee on a long par-5 or on a tricky green to make a putt. Whatever you need, 'Yes' is always the answer."

That's the Plum Creek Way.

Reach PGA Head Golf Professional Bo Heidrick at *bo@golfplumcreek.com* or 303.660.2200 ext. 7

CHIPS AND PUTTS

As many as 250 people can fit comfortably in the spacious dining room in Plum Creek's 33,000-square-foot clubhouse. With its enormous west-facing windows looking out towards the course and Castle Rock, it makes for a dramatic reception and silent-auction staging area.

The intimate Chophouse at Plum Creek is available for tournaments of 24 or fewer. Larger events can avail themselves of Chef Michael Hendricks' inspired takes on steak, chops and other fine dining fare as part of an upgraded package.

Although no longer private, Plum Creek does offer memberships that also feature certain privileges at **Colorado National Golf Club** in Erie, **The Golf Club at Bear Dance** in Larkspur and the **Riverdale Golf Courses** in Brighton.

Rediscovering the Path Set by Golf's Greatest Champions

Plum Creek

Contact the Golf Shop for tournament specials and packages.

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Creating an Exceptional Experience

Whether part of a corporate retreat, business conference, team-building event or fundraising drive, **RESORT GOLF OUTINGS** always rate as the most popular addition to any event. By Curtis Bova

GOLF RESORTS have benefited greatly from the "destination wedding" trend. Creating an environment worthy of the most important day in a couple's life—a place they can forever call "theirs"—provides them and their guests with unforgettable memories and the unquenchable desire to return.

The same applies to any event, really. Whether it's a corporate retreat, family reunion, business conference, team-building event, golf tournament or any combination of the above, attendees always crave a unique and memorable sense of place.

Resorts hold the keys to unlock this elemental need. And some of the best destination resorts are right here in Colorado. At Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs, we know how to generate exceptional experiences from any event, delivering the quintessential Colorado adventure just a 75-minute drive from most points along the Front Range.

Set at the foot of iconic Cheyenne Mountain, Cheyenne Mountain Resort puts you in the heart of the glorious Pikes Peak region. Our locally inspired cuisine and carefully curated indigenous activities create a distinctive environment at a location that's equal parts world-class meeting facility, four-diamond resort and the region's premier family country club. Toss in our versatile selection of spectacular indoor and outdoor venues, diverse recreational amenities—from onsite spa, tennis, beach volleyball and boating to nearby rafting, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, zip-lining, rock climbing and more—and you have all the ingredients for a classic Colorado experience.

Golf plays a pivotal role in that experience. Designed in 1973 by Pete Dye, the Country Club of Colorado at Cheyenne Mountain Resort ranks as the proflific course architect's first layout west of the Mississippi River.

It stretches to 7,055 yards, with the lake coming into play on five back-nine holes—including the stunning par-3 17th and challenging par-5 18th. More than 50 bunkers lurk, with many of them enhanced—

ROOM TO PLAY

Cheyenne Mountain Resort's 20,000 square feet of outdoor function space accommodates any size tournament or après-golf event. The non-golfers in attendance have endless alfresco options—including beach volleyball, boating, bonfires and other waterfront activities on the resort's 35-acre private lake.



Get an eagle's-eye view

Too many irons in the fire this summer? Load them in the trunk and drive to one of Colorado's best golf experiences at Cheyenne Mountain Resort. Once you've made the rounds on our Pete Dye championship golf course, have a round on us by the pool or tee up some relaxation at our new Alluvia Spa and Wellness Retreat. *Play more*.

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PAMPER, PUMP, PLAY

The impressively renovated Spa and Fitness building houses the new Alluvia Spa & Wellness Retreat, with six treatment rooms and nail salon, as well as a 9,000-square-foot fitness center. Get in your strokes on 17 indoor/outdoor tennis courts and five heated indoor/outdoor pools and hot tubs.

along with tees, fairways and greens—during a $4-million Rick Phelps renovation in 2012.

As a guest of the resort, you effectively become member for a day at the club. And whether you are planning a leadership retreat, a gathering of groomsmen, a family reunion or a charity event for 120, Cheyenne Mountain Resort provides an unparalleled variety of event space options and endless opportunities to weave a round (or two) of golf into your off-site agenda.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR EVENT

Golf outings and tournaments rate among the most popular additions to our conferences and meetings. Besides aiming for fun and camaraderie, organizations put on golf events to support charitable fundraising, promote team-building, entertain clients and recognize customers and employees.

To distinguish your event both on and off the golf course, our event-planning specialists and professional golf staff have the ability to customize every aspect of your experience—from theme to cuisine to outside-the-box activities, including canoe building and a post-tournament barbecue and beach bonfire on the resort's 35-acre private lake.

Don't have time for a scramble tournament? Allow the Cheyenne Mountain Resort team to customize a golf skills challenge—driving, chipping, and putting contests complete with event scoring—to meet your time allotment as well as the skill set of the group.

TAKE A SHOT IN THE DARK

And for something completely different, engage your group in some Glow Golf. This setup lets you enjoy golf like you've never enjoyed it before—under the twinkling starlight of the vast Rocky Mountain night sky.

We line three holes with glow sticks, light up the pins and give each player glow-in-the-dark golf balls. Glow sticks illuminate the course and the carts, and players can wear luminescent bracelets and t-shirts. Phosphorescent putting and chipping contests add to the fun and fraternity, as do the adult beverages and gourmet s'mores by the fire pit.

It's just another reason to make Cheyenne Mountain Resort your next group or meeting destination.

Curtis Bova is Interim General Manager and Director of Sales & Marketing for Cheyenne Mountain Resort. Reach him at *cbova@cheyennemountain.com* or 719-538-4010.

INFO TO KNOW

The 316-guestroom Cheyenne Mountain Resort boasts **40,000 square feet** of purpose-built meeting and event space, including 38 IACC-certified meeting rooms and ballrooms as large as 6,400 square feet.

The aptly named **View Restaurant** serves a sumptuous breakfast, lunch, dinner and brunch buffets featuring savory dishes and decadent desserts, while the **Elevations Lounge** plies guests with an array of Colorado comfort food options, locally-sourced beer pairings, and handcrafted cocktails.

The Country Club of Colorado has as its director of instruction Colorado Golf Hall of Fame member and PGA of America Award Winner **Ann Finke**, from whose expertise golfers of all levels can benefit.



experience The Ridge

Enjoy The Ridge's Newest Dining Experience

The Ridge, located in Castle Pines, Colorado is excited to announce that we will be re-launching our restaurant this Spring! Newly named Park Place, the restaurant is named after Grace Park, a 12-year LPGA Tour Player who collected a total of six victories and one major. New items will include enhanced ambiance, western theme, new menu and fresh BBQ selections! Visit **www.PlayTheRidge.com** or call 303.688.4575 for reservations today.

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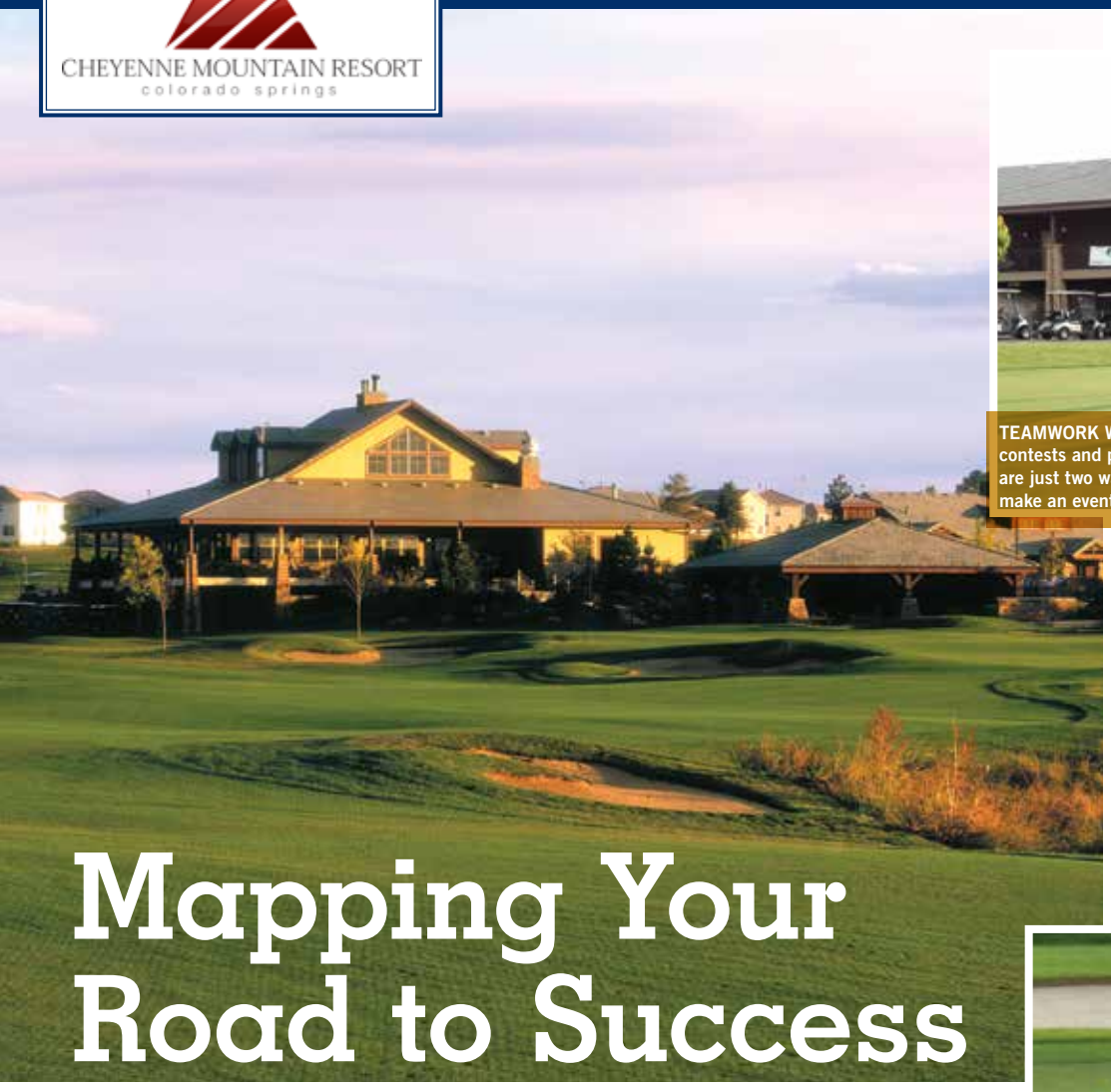






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TEAMWORK WORKS: Putting contests and par-3 rounds are just two ways GVR can make an event successful.

Mapping Your Road to Success

Working closely together, the **PLANNER AND THE COURSE** can chart the best possible route to a memorable event that runs seamlessly, generates excitement and raises major dollars. By Lisa Schmid

IN TODAY'S DIGITAL-DEPENDENT world, we rarely give or need directions. Punch in an address and a disembodied, programmed voice will guide you to your destination.

But you can't GPS a route to a successful tournament. Each one has a different road map, depending upon numerous factors, such as its history (or lack thereof), cause, sponsor base and the experience and enthusiasm of its tournament committee and volunteers.

Which is why, no matter where an organization holds its event, the tournament planner and the golf course need to be in lockstep.

At Green Valley Ranch Golf Club, we rely on forming these relationships to create a tournament-specific road map that will lead to a **full field, new and larger sponsors**, fun and **exciting contests and formats** and—above all—**distinguishing your event** from all other tournaments to create a lasting impression.

Here are some of the most critical ways a course and planner can work together.

DON'T ASSUME: Expectations are good. Assumptions are bad. The latter are the most common flaw in tournament planning. Never assume the course knows what you expect. Always articulate in writing who is responsible for what: pace of play, setup of sponsor stations, extra carts, gift bag distributions, etc. Most courses require this info a week before the event. If not, create a working document that includes everything from player pairings to who puts the bottled water on the carts.

FILLING THE FIELD: Your host course may help with ways to bring in players—email blasts to its database, website postings, online calendars and social media posts; it never hurts to ask. But it's up to the tournament planner to task each committee member with filling at least three foursomes. A 10-member committee will produce 120 players. Utilize social media. Build a Web page. Offer players an early-enrollment special.

GETTING CREATIVE: Collaborate on ways to entice casual or non-golfers and increase ancillary revenue at the event. Ideas can include beginner's golf clinics, putting contests, and fun par-3 course events (Green Valley Ranch has a superb short course next to its Golf Academy). Consider non-golf entertainment such as a fashion show, chef demo or a test drive of an auto sponsor's latest model.

We've found the most successful tournaments stay in touch with players and sponsors throughout the year, posting photos from the event online and promoting loyalty through creative pricing for multiyear commitments and early-bird specials—all while keeping the cause top of mind.



CONSTANT COMMUNICATION: Last-minute pairing changes, sponsor requests and weather conditions are all "day of" realities. Communicate often with your course contact on weather contingencies and player changes, and clear all sponsor requests (cars, outside food or liquor service) in advance with the course. Teamwork ensures a smooth-running event that makes everyone happy!

Lisa Schmid is the director of Sales and Marketing for Green Valley Ranch. Reach her at *lschmid@gvrgolf.com* or 303-371-8725.



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For more information on these memberships, contact Herb Miller at 303.681.3305, Ext 4 or hmiller@perryparkcc.com. And visit our website at www.perryparkcc.com.

PERRY PARK COUNTRY CLUB







WHO ARE THOSE GUYS?

Hole Hecklers founder Jon "J Marc" Chambers (far right) and David "Deacon" Gray turn any tee box into a glee box by genially ribbing competitors at charity golf events.

HOLE HECKLERS *holehecklers.com* 303-522-4200



SILENCE IS GOLDEN! Want to tee off in peace? The Hole Hecklers will "$hut the Buck Up" for a price. Then again, the pair also takes "Dough for Di$traction" for increased disruption that's "PG-13—never mean or profane." In either case, the money raised goes directly to the event's designated charity.



Making Funny Money

HOLE HECKLERS razz players and raise big bucks in the process.

"WE'RE JUST ANOTHER HAZARD," laughs Hole Hecklers founder Jon Chambers, a Colorado comic known as J Marc.

For a charity golf event at City Park in 2015, a sponsor asked Chambers and fellow funnyman David "Deacon" Gray to roast players on the eighth tee. "Hecklers are the bane of every comedian," says Gray, "and golf tournaments rank pretty high on the list of events you shouldn't heckle." But with lines like "the doctor who birthed me had a better backswing than you," they were a hit.

"We have 45 years of combined experience at reading an audience," says Chambers. "We're appropriate. With us, you're not getting a Pinto; you're getting a Porsche."

Chambers drove the business plan, registered the trademark, created different packages and, he says, "built it with a bigger purpose—helping charities raise money." At shotguns, he and an associate set up at a tee, introduce themselves to each foursome and start the banter. They take donations—as well as cash to shut up or amp up the gibes—in a tamperproof box, which gets ceremoniously opened after the round.

Hole Hecklers also emcee après-golf receptions. Last fall, the two did their schtick at a Make-A-Wish event at Topgolf. "We interviewed the kids and it went over really well," says Chambers, who has just published the motivational book, *BE #alive*.

As business grows, Chambers may enlist peers in Denver's tight-knit comedy community. In the best possible sense, he's proving that fundraising can be a laughing matter.

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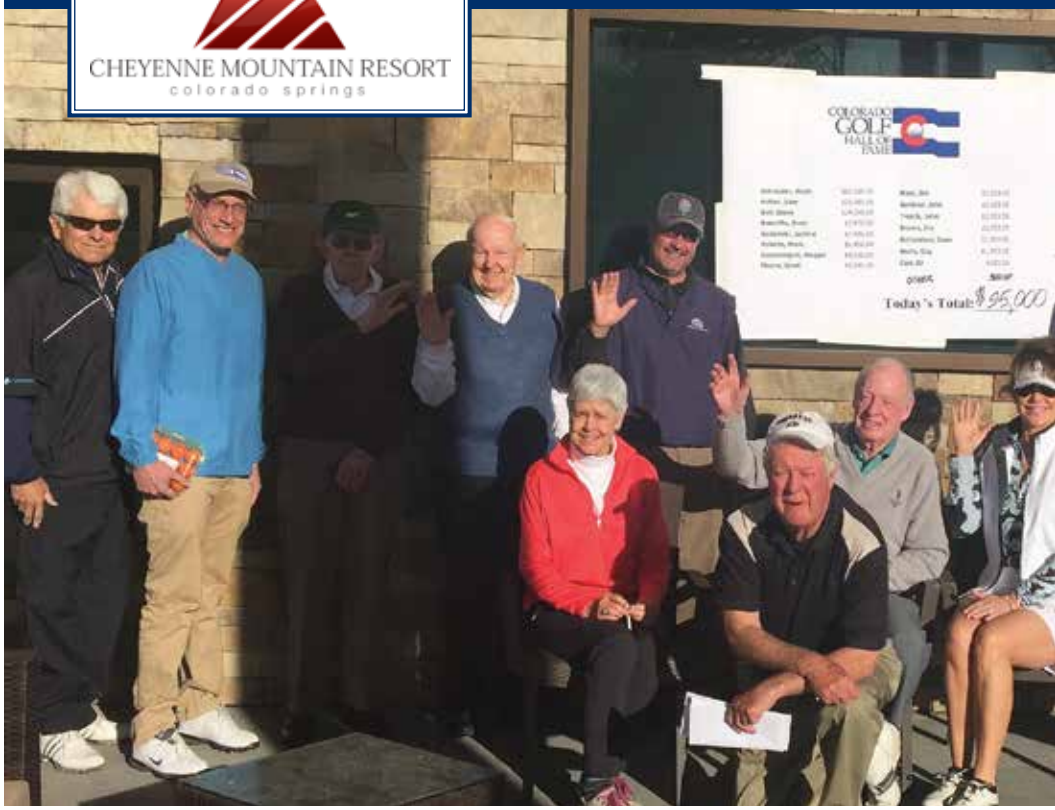
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One Hall of a Fundraiser

How **ProFundWest** helped the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame finance its foundation. By Jon Rizzi

DO YOU WANT TO have a golf tournament—or do you want to raise some significant funds for a worthy cause? One should lead to the other, but that's not necessarily always the case.

The board members of the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame know this all too well. After years of putting significant resources into annual charity tournaments, the Hall—just like any other nonprofit, 501(c)(3) and worthwhile organization—started looking into ways to be more effective, efficient and prosperous.

Last year, CGHOF board member Gary Potter asked Arizona Golf Association Executive Director Ed Gowan how his organization had been so successful in raising well over $1 million for the AGA Foundation.

"It's not from conducting charity golf tournaments," Gowan replied. "No way scramble golf events can raise significant dollars. Normal golf events take way too much time, effort and manpower. We were always frustrated with time and expense in 'golf events,' which always yield less-than-expected results."

Gowan explained that he had worked for a number of years with an organization called ProFundWest. "The program has been our way of maximizing contributions to the Foundation," he told Potter. "It has an amazing, creative and business-like approach to raising serious dollars."

How serious? After learning more about ProFundWest's turnkey, step-by-step process and how its fund-raising technology handles everything from donor pledge registration to pledge collecting, Potter brought the idea—and ProFundWest founder and president J. Michael Meadows—to the CGHOF executive board. The members agreed to the campaign, and 90 days later, the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame Classic 100 took place at the Greg Mastriona Golf Courses at Hyland Hills in Westminster.

The 15 participants raised $95,463 before lunch.

As one of those participants, I can vouch not only for our success but also for the fun we all had in achieving it. The 15 of us played golf—100 holes of it—as twosomes on the Par-3 course. Two players had aces and one shot 34-under par. The 15 of us had a total of 518 sponsors—and ProFundWest's technology took virtually all the effort and awkwardness out of soliciting them and processing their donations.

The money went directly into our account to help fund youth golf initiatives and maintain our growing museum at the Riverdale Golf Courses in Brighton. We still held our annual golf tournament later that year, with hole sponsors, foursomes and volunteers providing spirited support. Predictably,



PRO FUNDERS: Players in the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame Classic 100 reveal the money they raised at the Greg Mastriona Golf Courses at Hyland Hills

the tournament also required at least twice the amount of planning time, effort and work as the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame Classic 100 Campaign had, while netting less than half the money.

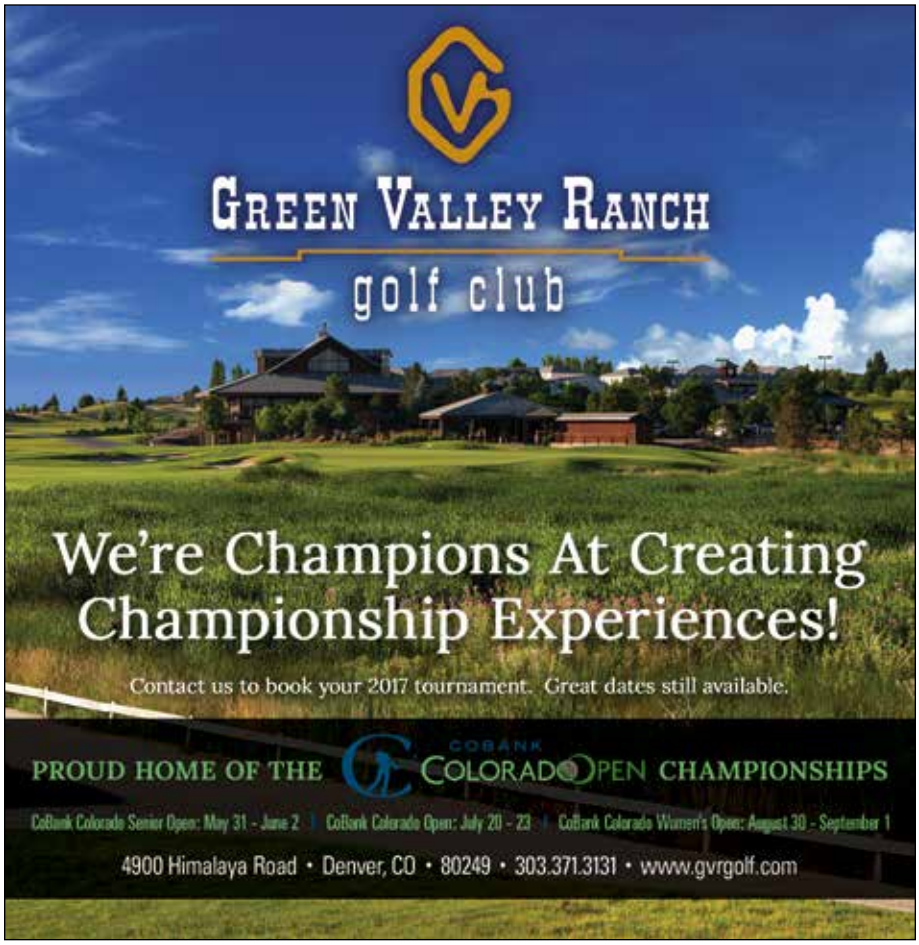
Successfully staging a ProFundWest campaign took the pressure off the tournament as the organization's sole funding source. The monies generated have allowed us to continue to create a foundation and golf tournament worthy of the standards of excellence recognized by a hall of fame. This year's tournament will take place June 29 at Sanctuary in Sedalia.

Since 1992, ProFundWest has staged more than 6,300 campaigns similar to the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame's, raising hundreds of millions of dollars for similarly worthy causes. The company has perfected and automated a seamless process that provides all the tools to reduce the time and effort involved in staging a successful fundraising event.

J. Michael Meadows and his team have expanded well beyond golf-related events. They know the goal behind any charity tournament is to make money, not to have board members stuffing gift bags, checking sponsor signage, serving as witnesses on prize holes and ensuring every player buys enough drink tickets to offset his inflated handicap.

A PROFUND DIFFERENCE

For more information about how the ProFundWest program can help reach your fundraising goals, visit *ProFundWest.com,* or call J. Michael Meadows at 602-252-5758.







PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN TAFOYA/CLARKSON CREATIVE

Facing Off

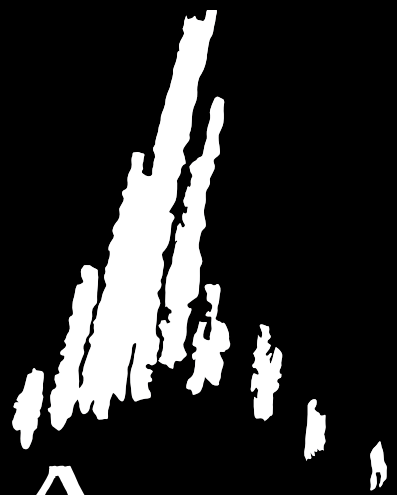
The Cover Story Backstory

SO I'M DRIVING the cart around Green Valley Ranch Golf Club while interviewing **Paige Spiranac** for this issue's cover story, and I can't stop thinking, "Dude, don't hit anything that will tip the cart over." As the 23-year-old golfer and I have some deep conversations about the advantages and disadvantages of social media, I mercifully don't hit any bumps or trees. She never falls out of the cart, and her camera-friendly features stay intact.

Of course, Paige Spiranac with a golf club in her hands is not just another pretty face. But did you know she has three of them? Game face, model face and goofy face. "I developed them when I was at San Diego State," she explains. "When I know it's time to focus, I switch to game face—and I don't even know it." Game face shows up when she's competing on the golf course. Model face appears on her social media pages. Goofy face? Let's just say it's Paige being Paige. It sounds like a cliché—or a Cyndi Lauper lyric—but the girl just wants to have fun. Like she's doing here with me.

— Sam Adams

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TOURNAMENTS

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