

SCATTERED SHOTS >>>

True Artists of the Game >>>

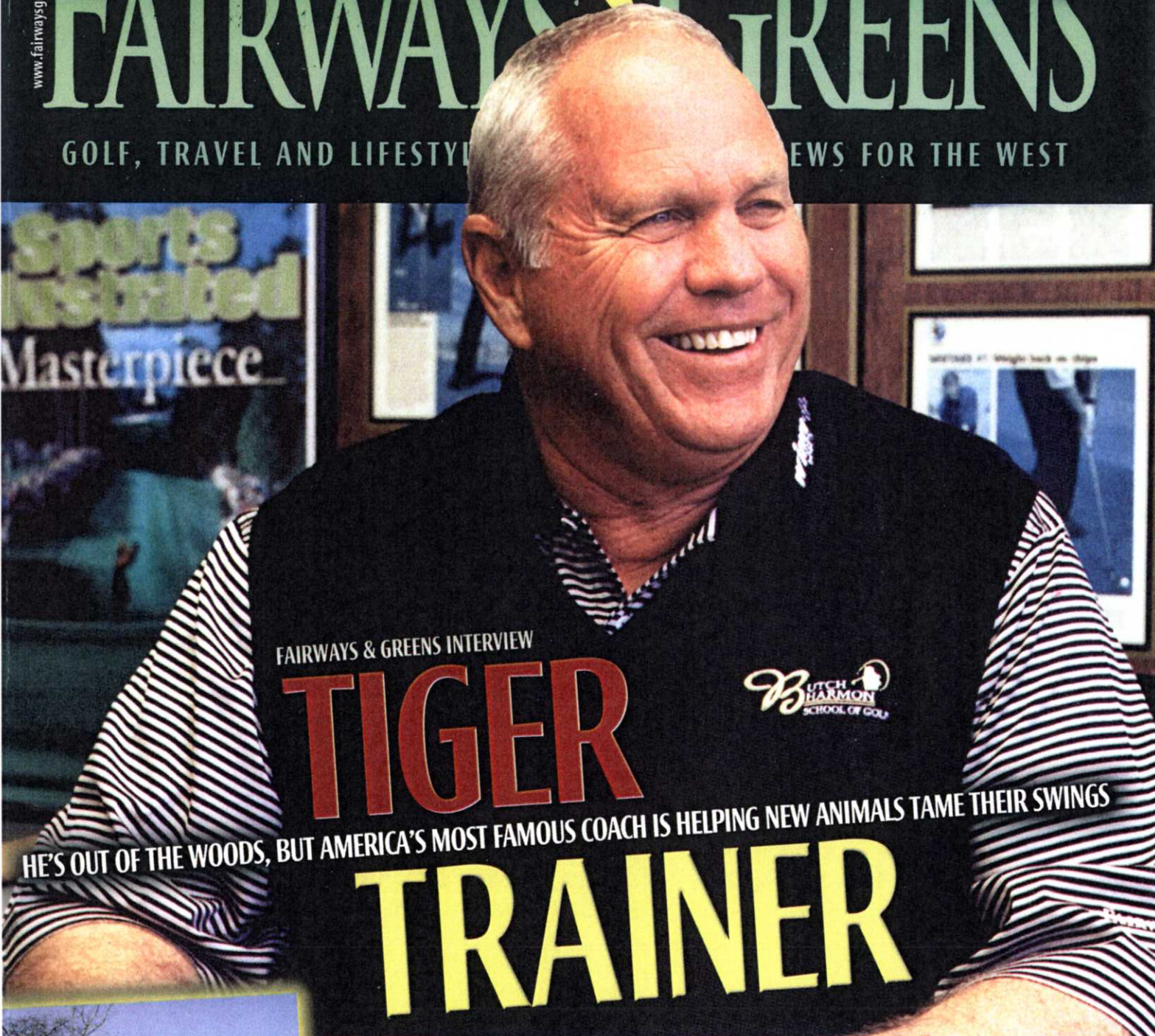


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# Valley of the Sun greens fees that won't burn your wallet



You know the ones: the Ubertracks affixed to posh resorts or spoken about in reverentially hushed tones and splashed across convention bureau promo pieces. You know the prices: merely expensive, slightly exorbitant, truly astronomical. Hey, it's great golf, all-star golf, play-'em-some-time-in-your-life golf. But most of us must get by on a more, um, worldly budget. Here's some memorable Valley of the Sun golf that won't cost you an entire paycheck ... far from it.

**LONGBOW GOLF CLUB** — If you played Longbow a few years back, forget the tight, somewhat dysfunctional layout of old. Designer Ken Kavanaugh came back to rework the Mesa course and he did so with a vengeance. The par-71 Longbow has been fundamentally rerouted and reconstructed, bringing a new practice facility and clubhouse, 250-plus additional yards (now totaling 7,003), more elbow room, and a logical flow with greens and tees spaced properly for those who still believe golf is a good walk. Yet what remains from before will warm purists' hearts: faraway views to the McDowell, Utery and Superstition mountains.



Visitors presently pay \$75 and Arizonans \$65. Prime summer rates should be \$50 and \$42, respectively. Frequent flyers are advised to consider the Flight Card (\$260 annually). Cardholder rates are \$30-\$35 in the spring, \$20-\$25 in the summer — with similar deep discounts in high season — and one accompanying guest gets on for the same price and two others can join in for just a handful of bucks more per person. The card brings similar killer rates at other OB Sports-run courses in the southwest, including the Duke at Rancho El Dorado and We-Ko-Pa in greater Phoenix; Aliante, Legacy and Angel Park in Las Vegas, Tijeras Creek in Orange County, Calif., and others.

With the valley leapfrogging so far west, northwest and southeast, mid-Mesa seems almost midtown now, so Longbow, just off the 202 Loop, has a high accessibility quotient when compared with other wallet-savers in the area.

WWW.LONGBOWGOLF.COM | (480) 807-5400

**TRIOLOGY GOLF CLUB AT VISTANCIA** — One member of the Trilogy family of clubs has a famous desert address (La Quinta) and the Merrill Lynch Skins Game. For those who make it to Trilogy on the outskirts of Peoria, it's a better investment: Trilogy at Vistancia is a more compelling track.

Designed by Gary Panks, Trilogy does a great job of belying that it is adjacent to an age-restricted facility. The course tops out at a get-your-attention 7,259 yards, and with a fair amount of water, arroyo and desert, and big, ambling greens, a string of red numbers is far from guaranteed. The hit-and-see crowd, however, need not fear the type of metaphorical blood-letting that comes with a place like Panks' David Graham co-designed Talon beauty at Grayhawk in Scottsdale.

The Trilogy folks seem to have a knack for reversing nines, meaning that the outward sides feel more stellar than those coming in. At Vistancia, like La Quinta, that could be because residential development is more pronounced after the 10th tee. But that's not the whole story. After an indifferent — some could say appropriately warming — first hole, the next eight are a truly thoughtful design of reachable and legitimately three-shot 5-pars, think-on-the-tee 4-pars and corner-cutters (split the "uprights" on six with a power fade), and 3-pars that leave openings for beginners and places to tuck flags. The back nine is longer and more straightforward, and three holes could qualify for signature status, so perhaps it makes no sense to quibble. After your round, take in the imaginative southwestern-fused fare in the gorgeous, open clubhouse, sip a microbrew and come to your own conclusion.

Rates into early May are \$69 midweek and \$79 Friday through Sunday and on holidays. Arizonans get a \$10 break.

WWW.TRIOLOGYGOLFCLUB.COM | (623) 594-3585

## ArizonaShots

### SEEING RED IN SEDONA

Sedona is a bit of an architectural melting pot as Colonial Mexican meets European countryside meets indigenous southwestern meets Arizona Territorial, so it's fitting that the red rock burg's latest and greatest, oh-so-close-to-opening getaway retreat is named after the French word for red, and crafted in the spirit of Moorish Spain.

Sedona Rouge Hotel & Spa features 77 guest rooms, suites and spa accommodations (the latter with in-room whirlpool tubs), an American bistro — called Reds, of course — serving contemporary regional fare and a spa that offers a handful of "basic" treatments uniquely tailored to the specific needs and desires of patrons.

Golfers can arrange getaways with Sedona Golf Resort — a perennial best-of-Arizona contender — and other area courses, including Oakcreek Country Club, which was designed by the Joneses, Robert Trent Jr. and Sr.

Sedona Rouge is presently taking reservations for an opening in May. Grand opening rates begin at \$199.

WWW.SEDONAROUGE.COM | (866) 312-4111

### SMART GOLF

Have a handicap? Not exactly sure how it comes into play? You're not alone. The Arizona Golf Association has an answer, if not a replacement: the Golfers IQ program and certified scoring average.

Unlike a USGA handicap, players who sign up for Golfers IQ can track their scores and playing ability in a system that assesses current playing ability, not potential. Like the USGA system, scores are input and adjusted, but under Golfers IQ, the resulting number indicates how the player is performing at that point in time. There's even a predictor function — enter the stats for the course you are going to play and out comes what you should shoot — that is reportedly accurate to within one stroke 90 percent of the time.

The numerically inclined also can track performance in several categories, including greens in regulation, putts, pars, and even how they score on 3-pars versus 4-pars versus 5-pars. The system can produce a report card for gauging scoring highs and lows against others within the same ability range.

The service costs \$19.95 per year and membership brings discounts on a range of golf and related services. And of course a certified scoring average does not take the place of a USGA handicap for events that require the latter.

WWW.AZGOLF.ORG | (602) 944-3035