

THE OFFICIAL  
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# FORE

YOUR PASSION. OUR PURPOSE.

## **To The MAX**

One of golf's bright young talents with a Walker Cup and a US Open already under his belt, SCGA member **MAX HOMA** now embarks on a professional career

**Arizona Golf  
& Travel**

**Revamped La Costa  
Resort & Spa**

**Equipment Review:  
The Driver**

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FEATURES

# SCGA

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## 26

### SoCal's Rising Star

Walker Cup Team Member Max Homa is one to watch as he embarks on a professional career.

## 34

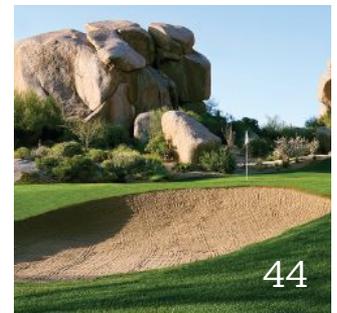
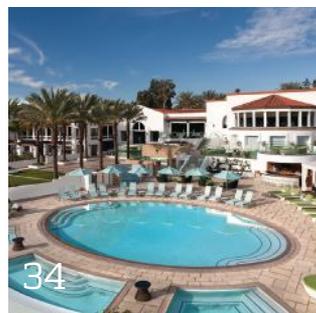
### Revitalizing a Classic

The latest golf course redesign at Omni La Costa Resort & Spa is the icing on the cake at this classic resort.

## 44

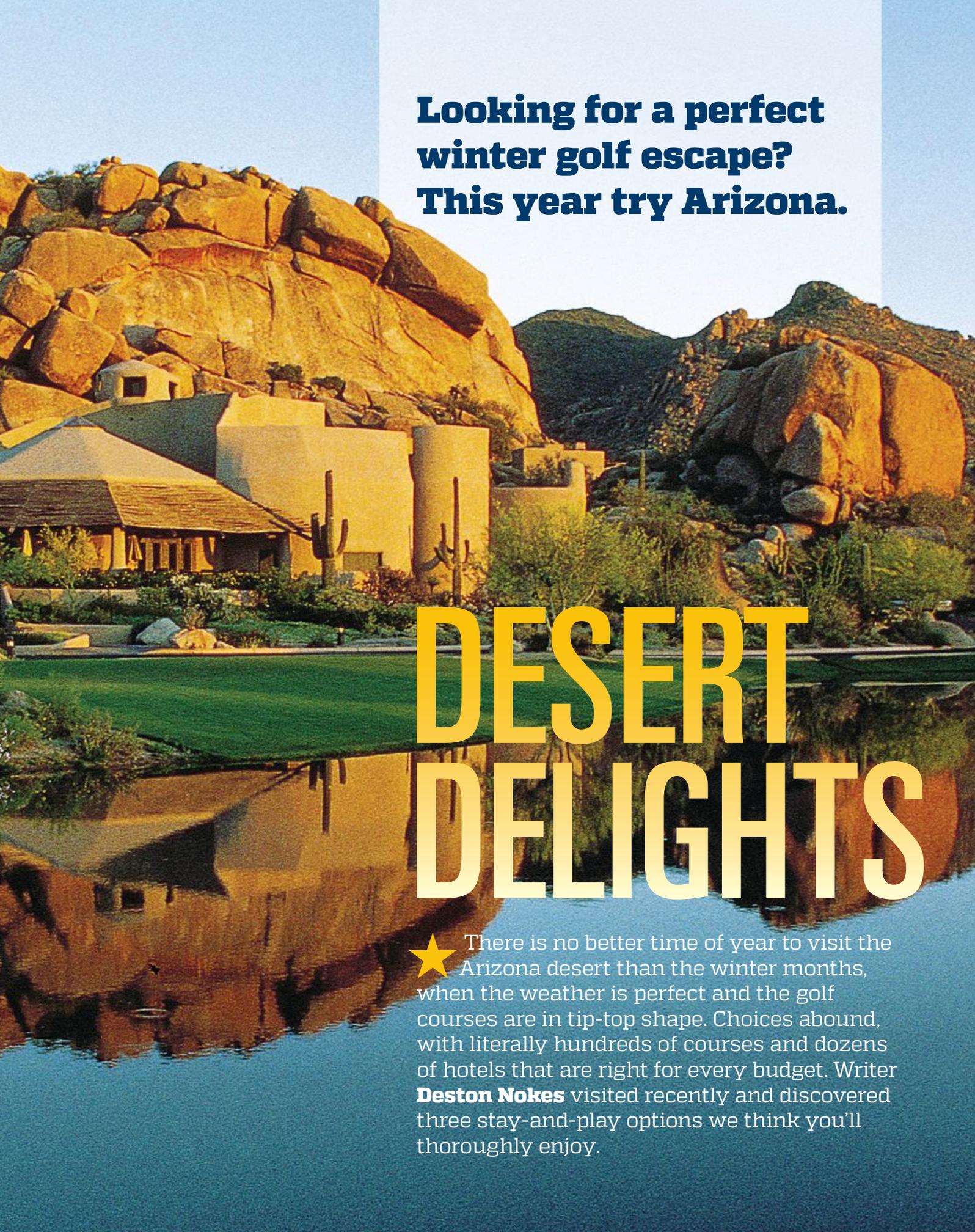
### Arizona

A superb golf trip to Arizona is possible on any budget.



ABOVE AND ON THE COVER: Max Homa by Vanessa Preziose.





**Looking for a perfect  
winter golf escape?  
This year try Arizona.**

# DESERT DELIGHTS

★ There is no better time of year to visit the Arizona desert than the winter months, when the weather is perfect and the golf courses are in tip-top shape. Choices abound, with literally hundreds of courses and dozens of hotels that are right for every budget. Writer **Deston Nokes** visited recently and discovered three stay-and-play options we think you'll thoroughly enjoy.

★ **Luxury:**  
**The Boulders**

CAREFREE

Golfers seeking a higher-end experience in their game as well as their accommodations will find everything they're seeking at The Boulders, a Waldorf Astoria Resort located just north of Scottsdale, about a 40-minute drive from Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport.

Visually, the resort showcases the 12-million-year-old granite boulder formations that grace the 1,300-acre property. The desert-hued color palette reflected on the boulders' surface at different times of the day adds to the resort's unique beauty. In addition to its two 18-hole golf courses, The Boulders also provides a memorable getaway for non-golfers, with tennis courts, four swimming pools, hiking, rock climbing and horseback riding.

Designed by Jay Morrish, the North and South courses reflect the natural contours of the lush Sonoran desert. "Both courses adhere to the natural environment," says Tom McCahan, director of golf and club operations. "They didn't have to move a lot of terrain to create the holes or manufacture scenery."

The North Course, a 6,811-yard par-72, is the older and wider of the two. It has large washes and boulders aplenty as it winds through the resort property. It also has a lot more grass than the target-oriented South Course.

The South Course, a 6,726-yard par-71, is shorter but a little more narrow. Here you will find more of the resort's signature holes and landmarks, such as Rosie's Rock, where golfers can tee off in the towering shadow of the giant,



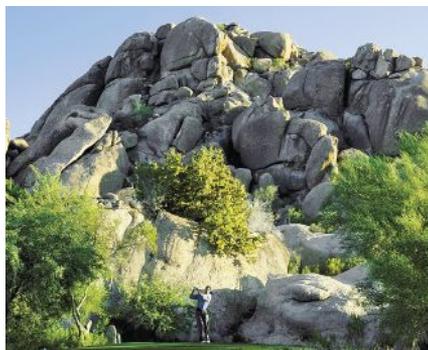
precariously balanced stone on the South's seventh hole. It appears that one good push could send the massive stone tumbling.

"Our courses are by no means easy," McCahan says. "But day-in and day-out, they're a lot of fun to play. When you hit a sweet one here, it's extremely gratifying."

Once your round is complete, you

might want to spend some down time at the Golden Door Spa, where massages and other treatments can be had, along with a yoga studio, cardiovascular and weight-training equipment, steam and sauna rooms, a tea room and even Japanese-inspired relaxation baths.

The Boulders offers several dining options, including Palo Verde restaurant, where diners can sit outside under the stars on warm evenings; Bogey's at the Clubhouse sports bar; The Grill steak and seafood restaurant; and the Spotted Donkey Mexican restaurant next door at El Pedregal shopping center.



★ **BOOK IT** ★

**Accommodations:** Winter rates start at \$279 per night for a standard casita and range to \$1,059 per night for a three-bedroom private hacienda residence.

**Resort Fees:** Resort fee is \$30 per night. Parking is free.

**Green Fees:** Range from \$139-\$189 per person

[theboulders.com](http://theboulders.com)

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**Tucson is an incredible destination for the holidays, with chili-pepper wreaths and lights on the saguaro cactus," McAbee says. "We're even starting a new tradition of ice skating in our pavilion."**

★ Moderate:  
**The Westin  
 La Paloma  
 Resort & Spa**

TUCSON

Not only are there outstanding golf options in Tucson, but there's a wealth of restaurants, museums, backcountry desert walks, acclaimed wildlife parks, art galleries and open-air markets that justify the city's reputation as a desert paradise.

For a terrific, moderately priced Tucson golf trip, head to The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa. It's just a two-hour drive from Scottsdale or you can fly directly into Tucson International Airport.

A \$35 million renovation this past year upgraded everything from guestrooms to banquet facilities and lobbies. New tennis courts were added, and the popular swimming pool was remodeled, and now includes a squeal-inducing, 177-foot Slidewinder waterslide. Plus, dining at the resort's Azul restaurant, featuring the creative cuisine of executive chef Russell Michel, is worth the drive from any corner of the country.

Those ready to tee off will get more than they bargained for playing La Paloma CC's 27-hole, Jack Nicklaus-designed golf courses, which also received a recent refurbishment focused on greens and bunkers. Originally designed in 1984, Nicklaus himself directed the redesign of the Canyon, Hill and Ridge courses. The courses are private, only open to members and resort guests staying at The Westin.

"With three different nine-hole courses, a player can have a lot of



★ BOOK IT ★

**Accommodations:** Winter rates range from \$208 per night for a traditional room to \$408 per night for a grand suite.

**Resort Fees:** Resort charge is \$20 per night, and includes access to fitness center, parking, internet and complimentary shuttle within two miles of the property.

**Green Fees:** Start at \$149 per person based upon seasonality, peak playing periods and number of holes.

Includes complimentary Callaway X-Hot rental clubs.

[westinlapalomaresort.com](http://westinlapalomaresort.com)



fun mixing and matching," says Kent Instefjord, club manager. The Canyon nine, for example, has more elevated tees and rewards golfers who can spank the ball across some small desert canyons for a better approach shot to the green. It also has some of the more spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. The Ridge Course, meanwhile, also has a wealth of elevated tees, and its par-three fourth hole is the most picturesque on the course. Pairing either of these nines with The Hill Course makes for a strong round.

"Nicklaus made the Hill nine accessible to get to the green, but once you get there, it's 'game on' and much more difficult," Instefjord says. "For example, the green on No. 8 is where I think Jack started to lose his mind — it looks like he buried an elephant in the middle of the green."

Marketing Manager Jacqueline McAbee urges folks to consider spending the holidays in Tucson. "Tucson is an incredible destination for the holidays, with chili-pepper wreaths and lights on the saguaro cactus," she says. "We're even starting a new tradition of ice skating in our pavilion."

★ Budget:

## We-Ko-Pa Golf Club & Radisson Ft. McDowell

SCOTTSDALE

Surrounded by five mountain ranges, We-Ko-Pa GC provides a stimulating and challenging desert-golf experience without pretention or distraction. There are no condos, hotels or homes to disrupt your enjoyment of the game or the sweeping views of the desert and mountains.

Located less than 30 minutes from Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport on the eastern edge of Scottsdale, We-Ko-Pa offers two very different courses: The newer Saguaro Course, which has been rated Arizona's top public golf course for six consecutive years; and the Cholla Course, rated third-best in the state.

"We preach our surface and the service," says general manager Brett Trenter. "We're in a very competitive market, and we know that our surface is going to exceed expectations. Our fairways are impeccable."

The Cholla Course opened in 2001. It was designed and built by golf architect Scott Miller, who routed the majority of the course's



golf holes over native desert washes, moving more than 500,000 cubic yards of material. The target-style design winds along an open expanse overlooking the Verde and Salt River Valleys, Red Mountain and the Superstition Mountains.

Cholla has plenty of risk and reward options, perfect for those who wish to play it safe as well as those who prefer to test their skills. "I enjoy the par-three holes as well," Trenter says. "They're strong but playable." A strikingly beautiful golf course throughout, hole 14 stands out, playing straight at four peaks which are covered with snow in the winter. And every evening, the Superstition Mountains in the distance turn purple.

The Saguaro Course, built in 2005 by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, is shorter at less than 7,000 yards. "It has an older feel, even though it's newer," Trenter says. "The tees and greens are closer

together because it was made for walking. We even provide speed carts for the walkers."

Crenshaw and Coore didn't move a lot of earth when they built Saguaro, so it's true to the original contours of the land. The real genius of the course is the order of play, which is routed almost like a bow tie. This not only helps ensure that the prevailing wind blows across the majority of the holes, but also that the course plays across the natural drainage of the site.

After a round, We-Ko-Pa Grill offers tasty burgers, sandwiches and shakes either indoors or on a patio with sweeping views of the desert and mountains.

At the nearby, reasonably priced Radisson Ft. McDowell, the pace quickens a tad with a full casino on the premises. Its 246 guestrooms are decorated with Native American accents. In addition to gaming, there's swimming, shopping, horse-





back riding and wild, backcountry jeep excursions. Both the hotel and golf course are on Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation land.

  
**★BOOK IT★**

**Accommodations:** Winter rates start at \$173 per night for a mountain view room; golf packages are offered for \$294 per night with golf for one person included at We-Ko-Pa.

**Resort Fees:** \$15 per night; parking is free.

**Green Fees:** Rates through November and December are \$145 per player (with advance purchase).

radissonfortmcdowellresort.com  
wekopa.com

## ARIZONA—State of Golf

It's hard to name a single destination with a better collection of golf resorts than Arizona. But its bevy of daily fee gems is just as impressive. Golfers can find classic desert target golf, tree-lined parkland golf, even mountain courses. There are courses to fit any budget, all year long.

From October through mid-May, with mild temperatures and bright blue skies, there's no place better to be than on a golf course in the Arizona desert. There are plenty from which to choose, but few better than the 36 holes at **Troon North**, Monument and Pinnacle. Located in North Scottsdale and long held aloft as the archetypical desert golf courses, Troon North combines majestic boulder formations, judicious use of grassed areas creating a "target" golf experience and expansive vistas across the Valley of the Sun.

Another Troon-managed facility well worth discovering is **Southern Dunes**. Set on 320 scenic acres in Maricopa — a 35-minute drive south of Phoenix — this Schmidt-Curley design is surrounded by desert, but is not a target course. Generous landing areas off most tees will keep your ball in play, but strategic bunkers and ample doglegs suggest a certain amount of accuracy is required to be in position to score.

A number of excellent choices are presented by OB Sports, including the **ASU Karsten Golf Course** in Tempe. Home to one of the strongest collegiate golf programs in the country, the Pete Dye-designed ASU Karsten Golf Course is a links-style layout set in the shadows of ASU's Sun Devil Stadium. A comprehensive PING Learning Center is also located here.

OB also manages **Eagle Mountain Golf Club**, located in Fountain Hills. This scenic beauty ambles across ravines and through canyons, with plenty of elevation change to enhance play. With new ownership in recent years, a lot of care and conditioning has been restored to this facility, once again making it a must-play course when in the Valley of the Sun.

**Zona Hotel & Suites** Scottsdale offers golfers a centralized location near golf, dining, shopping, and all the fun that Scottsdale has to offer. They also have an on-staff golf specialist who can assist with tee time booking, ground transportation and any other needs of the traveling golfer. It is a stone's throw from TPC Scottsdale, home of the Waste Management Phoenix Open, where Phil Mickelson will be defending champion in 2014 (Jan. 27 - Feb. 2). Other courses convenient to Zona include Grayhawk, Legend Trail and We-Ko-Pa.

