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May 2015
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SPEND YOUR MONEY WELL

Edited by Joe Passov

Photograph courtesy of Wickenburg Ranch Golf & Social Club



If you like gorgeous terrain and great golf, you'll strike it rich at Wickenburg Ranch.

WORTH YOUR MONEY THIS MONTH

Golden Prospects

Eureka! With Wickenburg Ranch, an old Arizona mining town yields a brilliant new course—at a hard-to-beat price

Wickenburg Ranch

Wickenburg, Ariz.
7,059 yards, par 71; green fees: \$95
480-367-3610, wickenburgranch.com

There's gold in them thar hills! Well, there used to be. The town of Wickenburg, located an hour and 15 minutes northwest of downtown Phoenix, sprang to life in the 1860s from a patchwork of settlements that had accompanied a local gold rush. In 1863, a Prussian prospector named Henry Wickenburg discovered the Vulture Mine, 12 miles southwest of the city that now bears his name, and over the next 79 years it yielded more than \$30 million worth of precious ore. Today, gold mining and dude ranches have given way

to a brilliant new golf course, Wickenburg Ranch. And after soaking in the views and putting on these greens, we've come to a conclusion: All that glitters is green.

Wickenburg Ranch Golf & Social Club was hewn from the rolling, rugged high desert terrain by two amateur architects, Wendell Pickett and William Brownlee. The two designers didn't ace every test, but overall, they get an A for effort. Memorable holes arrive early and often, reaching a climax at 13 and 14. The former is a vertigo-inducing, 246-yard par 3 that plunges seven stories to a green framed by a vast lake to the right and

mountain panoramas in the distance. The 595-yard 14th also sports water and desert peril, as well as views of Vulture Peak. Home to a new Trilogy residential development by Shea Homes, Wickenburg Ranch will eventually go private. For now, the public gets a bargain green fee and temperatures that are usually 10 to 20 degrees cooler than they are in Phoenix. Wickenburg Ranch was actually grassed and ready to go in 2008 when the recession put the project on hold. But club management clearly learned a lesson from Wickenburg's early prospectors—persistence pays off.