



AZ GOLF INSIDER

Spring 2017

LI'L COURSE. BIG STORY.

Wickenburg Ranch pumps up the volume on golf entertainment

Q&A WITH 'GOLDY'

NEW RULES

CENTRAL OREGON

SHORT 'N SWEET

WICKENBURG RANCH'S PINT-SIZED LI'L WICK DISHES OUT BIG-TIME FUN AS PAR-3 LAYOUT

BY JOE PASSOV

At the center of Li'l Wick sits Watering Hole, a full-service bar that is the hub of the action.

First you hear the banjo. Then the guitars come in. And soon Neil Young is crooning his classic rock lament, "Old Man, look at my life, I'm a lot like you were." You've just punched a three-quarter pitching wedge into the first green at Li'l Wick, the sun is shining and great tunes are piping from speakers all around you.

Now this is fun.

Word is spreading quickly about Li'l Wick, the nine-hole, par-3 short-game park that recently opened at Wickenburg Ranch Golf and Social Club, 75 minutes northwest of downtown Phoenix. If you're looking for a good time on a golf course, you've come to the right place.

"On a recent visit, I spotted two couples coming off the course and

asked them, 'What do you remember most about the round?' says course co-designer Bill Brownlee, managing partner of Phoenix-based M3 Companies, which developed Wickenburg Ranch in conjunction with Shea Homes. "They all said the same thing: 'The music! We've never played golf with music.'"

Wendell Pickett, managing partner in the Scottsdale-based land planning

and landscape design firm of Greey/Pickett, co-designed the Big Wick course with Brownlee and co-authored Li'l Wick as well. He explains the allure of Li'l Wick as the successful realization of three mandates: "It needed to be beautiful, it needed to be golf-worthy and it needed to be fun," he says.

From the early feedback, it's safe to say, mission accomplished.

Li'l Wick emerged from the former driving range of the previous incarnation of Wickenburg Ranch's championship course, which was partially relocated and re-routed in 2016 when a new clubhouse was built. Brownlee and Pickett began thinking about ways they could take advantage of the newly vacant space, with its hilly, cowboy-cool desert setting. Li'l Wick really