

# Golfweek

FOR SERIOUS GOLFERS



## THIS CAT CAN STILL PLAY

TIGER WOODS PROVIDES EVIDENCE AT THE HERO WORLD CHALLENGE THAT HE'S HEALTHY, CAPABLE OF CONTENDING

**PLUS**

- 2016 NUMBERS CRUNCHING
- A RIDE WITH ARIYA
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## BIRTHDAY BASH

We-Ko-Pa's Cholla celebrates its 15th in style

Fountain Hills, Ariz.

**Anniversaries are on everyone's minds at We-Ko-Pa Golf Club.**

It was 15 years ago this month that We-Ko-Pa opened its Cholla course, a Scott Miller must-play that gave Scottsdale golfers a reason to make the 15-mile drive east on Shea Boulevard to the resort on the grounds of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. Ten years ago, We-Ko-Pa followed with Saguaro, a Bill Coore-Ben Crenshaw collaboration that drew even greater acclaim.

The courses typically have resided among the top 5 on the highly competitive list of Golfweek's Best Courses You Can Play in Arizona, with Saguaro usually No. 1 and Cholla not far behind. At one heady point, they were ranked 1-2.

Cholla, however, slipped to No. 9 on the 2016 list. That ranking, which would bring cheers to courses across the Valley of the Sun, was seen at We-Ko-Pa as confirmation that some freshening was in order.

Cholla was shut down June 13 for a \$1.8 million renovation. It reopened for regular play Oct. 28.

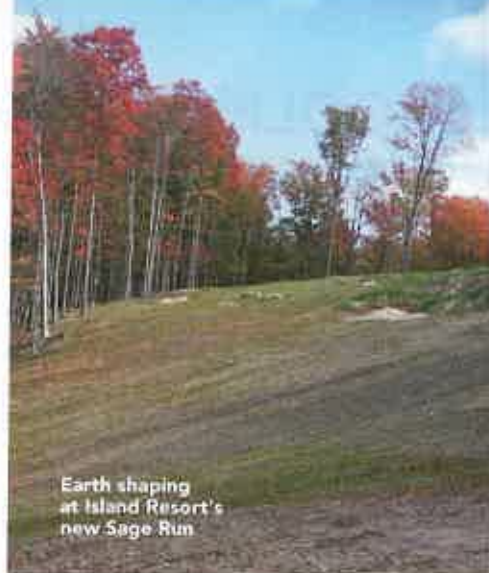
A MiniVerde variety of Ultra

Dwarf was installed on all 18 greens, replacing the Tifdwarf bermudagrass. Bunkers were overhauled with new sand and drainage. Importantly, nearly seven acres of managed turf was removed. That, combined with the installation of a more-efficient irrigation system, will save an estimated 12 million gallons of water annually, according to Matt Barr, We-Ko-Pa's general manager.

When Cholla reopened Oct. 28, the most striking strategic change came on the par-5 eighth, where the decision was made to grass part of a deep arroyo that often forced players to lay well back on their second shots. Now there's more incentive to rip the ball farther down the waterslide-shaped fairway.

The changes extend beyond golf. Barr said the Yavapai Nation hopes in 2017 to begin construction of a new casino next to the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center, located just down the hill from the golf club. Barr said the existing casino probably will be converted to additional convention space or a cultural center.

— Martin Kaufmann



## "YOOP" IT UP

Sage Run another reason to schedule some Island time

Harris, Mich.

**During a recent trip across Michigan's achingly beautiful Upper Peninsula, it was suggested that anyone concerned about overcrowding would be disabused of that notion upon visiting these parts. There's not much up here other than 1,700 glorious miles of Great Lakes coastline, hilly, rugged terrain along the interior and some 300,000 "Yoopers" – locals' nickname derived from U.P.-ers.**

Oh, yeah, and golf. The U.P. has several must-plays, though you'll log some miles on winding, two-lane roads to reach them. Greywalls at Marquette Golf Club, near the banks of Lake Superior, perennially ranks among Golfweek's Best Modern Courses, and TimberStone GC is No. 6 on Golfweek's state public-access list.

Those two commonly are packaged with Sweetgrass Golf Club at the Island Resort & Casino. This Paul Albanese design is prairie golf often played across wetlands and punctuated by some bold flourishes, including a full-on Biarritz at No. 12 and an island green at No. 15.

Now Albanese is nearing completion of Sweetgrass' sister course, Sage Run, which figures to be the U.P.'s next destination course.

No. 17 on We-Ko-Pa's Cholla course

