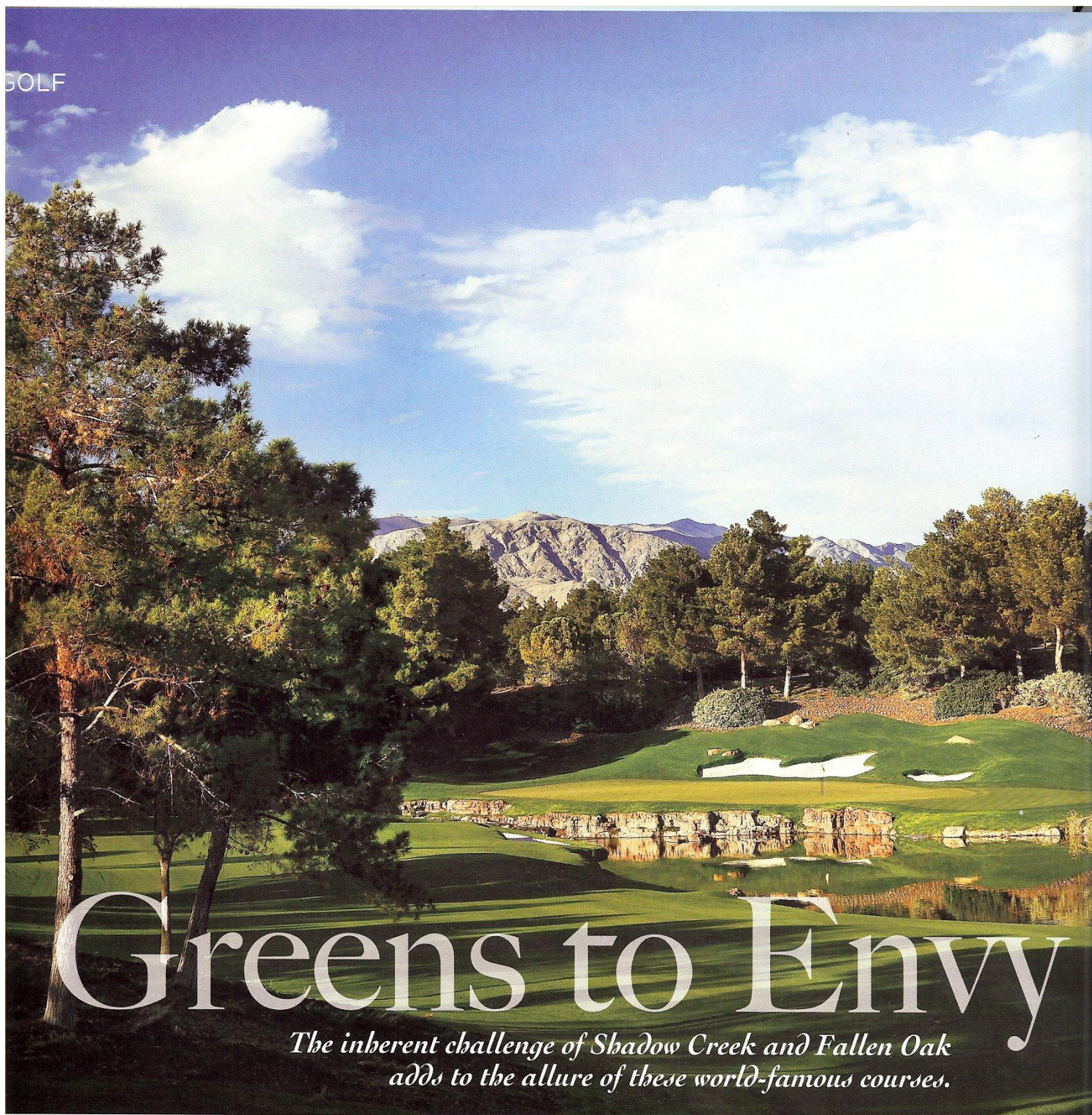


GOLF



# Greens to Envy

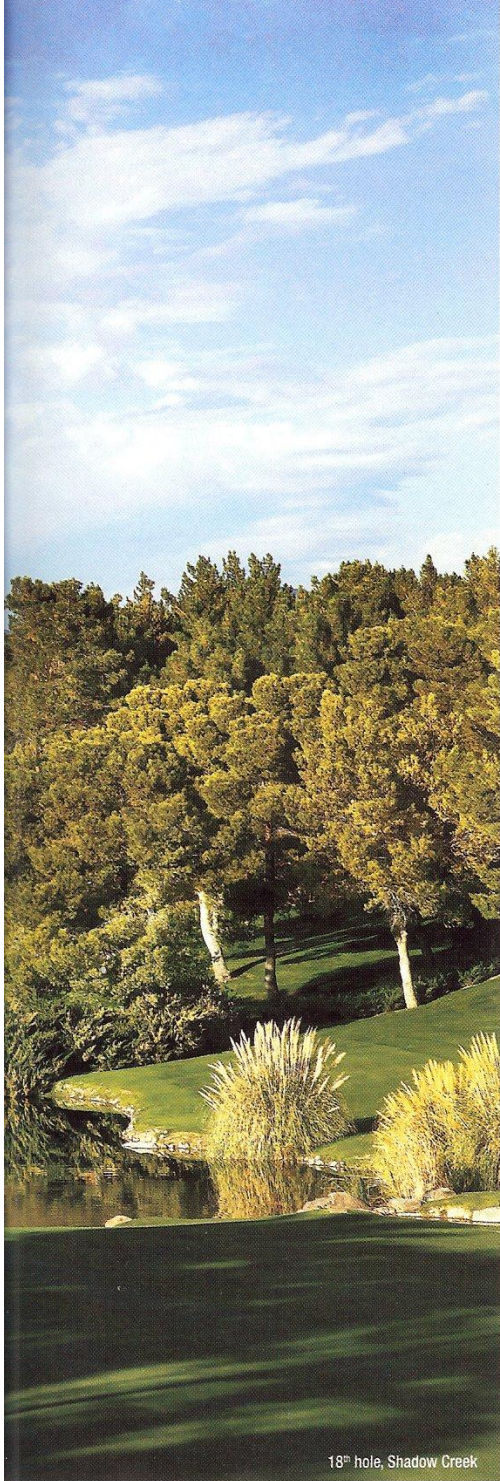
*The inherent challenge of Shadow Creek and Fallen Oak adds to the allure of these world-famous courses.*

BY PATRICK JONES

A golfer on vacation without getting in at least 18 holes is akin to a poker player immediately folding with a pair of aces. They are rare-in-a-lifetime chances that you just do not miss.

Las Vegas is all about headlining entertainment acts, fine dining and the chance to hit the jackpot. It also is about golf. Las Vegas is home to some of golf's premium layouts designed by the sport's most revered architects.

Atop that exclusive list is Shadow Creek, a world-class oasis fashioned in the midst of the Mojave Desert. It ranks at the zenith of must-play courses in the country. Designed by renowned golf architect Tom Fazio, Shadow Creek can be mentioned in the same breath as the country's most iconic golf layouts.



18<sup>th</sup> hole, Shadow Creek

"We don't compete with other Las Vegas area courses. Our competition is very exclusive private clubs, which are nearly impossible to gain access to," said Shadow Creek General Manager Mark Brenneman, who does not hesitate to compare his club with the rarified Augusta National, home of The Masters, and Cypress Point on the California coast. "The difference is Shadow Creek is open for play, provided certain criteria are met."

Guests at Las Vegas' premier resorts including Bellagio, ARIA Resort & Casino at CityCenter, The Mirage, MGM Grand and Mandalay Bay, among others, are granted privileged access to Shadow Creek.



4<sup>th</sup> hole, Shadow Creek

*The soft elegance and intimacy of Shadow Creek contrasts with the jagged mountain hillsides enclosing the Las Vegas Valley.*

The unforgettable golfing experience begins when a private limousine whisks you to the course and returns you to your hotel after the round. And, not unlike Augusta National, a personal caddy, knowledgeable on every nuance of the fairways and greens, guides you around these spectacular 18 holes with insights to help you play your best.

The esteemed Fazio, awarded "Best Modern Day Architect" three consecutive times by *Golf Digest*, also was commissioned to design Fallen Oak Golf Club at Beau Rivage on Mississippi's Gulf Coast. Fallen Oak, located near Biloxi, was ranked No. 19 on *Golf Digest's* list of "America's 100 Greatest Public Courses." The club is open exclusively to guests of Beau Rivage. An accurate barometer for Fallen Oak's quality and reputation: it was selected to host the Champions Tour 2010 Mississippi Gulf Resort Classic.

Ranked No. 8 among "America's 100 Greatest Public Courses" by *Golf Digest*, Shadow Creek features huge pine trees lining its fairways (a rare site on Nevada courses), shimmering lakes and meandering creeks. Tee times are generously spread apart, meaning you and your foursome likely won't encounter any other groups on the course.

"What sets Shadow Creek apart is the serene beauty of the property," said Brenneman. "The soft elegance and intimacy of Shadow Creek contrasts both with the jagged mountain hillsides enclosing the

Las Vegas Valley, which can be harsh, and provides a peaceful escape from the busy casino floor."

The privacy and eminence of Shadow Creek have made it a favorite course of sports, entertainment and political celebrities. Don't be surprised if you see Michael Jordan, Reggie Jackson, George Clooney, Matt Damon or Joe Pesci on the course or in the clubhouse.

"Whether Hall of Fame athletes, Academy Award-winning actors, politicians, professional poker players or Presidents, if they play golf, they have played Shadow Creek," said Brenneman. "You never know who's coming next."

Brenneman said "if pressed, and only if pressed" he would select holes 9, 15, 17 and 18 as the best-of-the-best at Shadow Creek. He said the course builds to a "dramatic crescendo" in the closing holes.

No. 17 is a par 3 featuring a knee-knocking tee shot to an island green backed by a cascading waterfall. The hole plays up to 160 yards from the back tees.

"It is the type of course where you come off of it, you want to immediately play it again," said Brenneman.

Fazio's magic at Shadow Creek also can be experienced by guests at Beau Rivage at Fallen Oak, named the No. 1 "Course You Can Play" in the state by *Golfweek*. Situated adjacent to DeSoto National Forest, Fallen Oak is laid out on rolling terrain with