

COURSE REVIEWS

Laughlin Ranch brings sizzling golf to America's hottest town

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Winding its way through rough terrain in a location that often records America's hottest temperatures, [Laughlin Ranch Golf Course](#) gives a fast-growing patch of Western desert its most sizzling golf experience to date.

Named one of the country's top 10 upscale courses by *Golf Digest* in 2005, the semi-private club gives hardcore golfers the challenge they want and gamblers the bells and whistles they love in the exploding [Laughlin/Bullhead City area](#) on the [Nevada/Arizona](#) line.

Playing to a 73.9 course rating and 132 slope rating, Laughlin Ranch comes in at a healthy 7,155 yards from the tips. With 90 bunkers, water in play on several holes and plenty of wide-open and out-of-bounds desert spaces, it gives visitors a solid test.

"There are a lot of elevation changes," Assistant Professional Paul Carr said. "It can be as hard or easy as you want, you just need to know your limitations."

The centerpiece of the Laughlin Ranch housing development, the course epitomizes country-club class, from its well-manicured fairways to its restaurant, pool, day spa and practice facilities. Only two years old, it's already garnered some national attention as the host of the Pinnacle Exceptional Drivers Championship, nationally televised by [ESPN](#).

The course gives you a lot of different looks, with serious challenges on No. 4, a 478-yard par 4, and the monstrous 11th, a 650-yard par 5. To make up for such long-players, designer [Dave Druzisky](#) gives you a 279-yard, par-4 2nd and a 505-yard par 5 at No. 8.

To top it off, the undulating greens run fast, and difficult. Expect your round to feature a few 100-plus-foot putts.

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The verdict



Brilliant views of the desert and Colorado River will highlight your round at Laughlin Ranch Golf Course.

Simply put, Laughlin Ranch Golf Course is a beauty. From the moment you drive in through an immaculately designed water scene to the final hole with its pristine lake, the whole development is a treat for the eyes.

The golf itself is a treat too. Somewhat surprisingly for the area, which is known for its large elderly population (especially in winter, when the "snowbirds" migrate from colder climes), the course is strikingly unsuitable for seniors. That's obvious from the scorecard, which advises, "Play the tee to suit your game." There are many blind shots, and some par 4s that require oomph off the tee.

And the greens, at least during my October round, were brutal - well-maintained but lightning-quick.

"We couldn't believe the greens were this fast, and some of these blind shots were more than we expected," said Ed Blum of [Anaheim Hills, Calif.](#), golfing alongside fellow senior and friend Jim Bishop of [Irvine, Calif.](#) "We'll definitely be back, though. It's a fun course."

Laughlin Ranch is by all means is a fun course, though you'll have to pay for the fun. Green fees run from \$95 to \$105 off-season, \$115 to \$145 in peak times.

Still, this is a course any serious golfer will want to experience should the opportunity arise. The area is expecting many more golf courses (including a more resort-style course in the Laughlin Ranch development), but at the moment this is the hottest golfing attraction in one of the nation's hottest areas.

December 4, 2006

Any opinions expressed above are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the management. The information in this story was accurate at the time of publication. All contact information, directions and prices should be confirmed directly with the golf course or resort before making reservations and/or travel plans.

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