

TEMECULA VALLEY

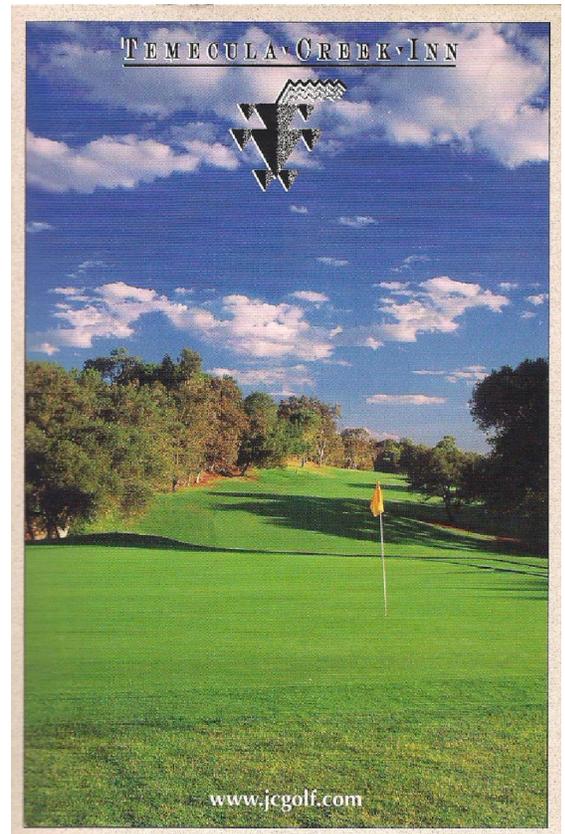
DAY 1: Some golf courses offer package deals. San Luis Rey Downs Golf Resort in Bonsall is just such a place. So arrive in the morning allowing yourself ample driving time, registration at the hotel, then check in at the pro shop, and whatever putting chipping and driving you normally need. Our package was ridiculously low, \$105 for two rounds of golf each and a room for one night, of course, this was some time ago. We got nine holes in after our arrival on Friday before the heavens let loose. Sniffleitis and Pneumonia were not high on our list of priorities, so we called it a day, received a half round rain check, and retired to the lounge for a great dinner and the occasional libation.

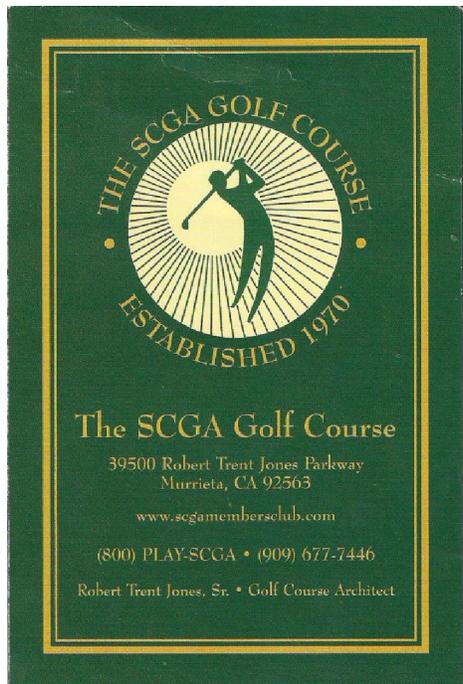
DAY 2: The next morning we got in a full 18 holes at San Luis Rey before heading to the Best Western just up the road in Fallbrook. We caught the early bird special of prime rib and flat iron steak at the Packing House. Another golfer recommended the Cask and Cleaver, but

that will have to wait for another day.

DAY 3: Fallbrook's claim to fame is being the avocado capital of America. The Fallbrook Golf Club is a forested setting with plenty of Sycamore trees, creeks, lakes and did I mention trees. The first tee box is elevated so you won't hit the cars driving below you, still it can be a bit disconcerting when there is plenty of traffic. We paired up with our old neighbors who had moved here to enjoy the rural atmosphere. Visited for a while and moved on to the Best Western in Temecula, another long drive of maybe 20 miles.

DAY 4: There is nothing monotonous about Temeku Golf and Country Club other than every hole is a unique sculpture, you will have to wait for another day, if you want straight, flat and wide. Mary Moppet NO NOs were the order of the day (swear words). Those are invectives directed at the course designer and his parentage. Being paired with a par golfer is quite the experience as they always have to wait because of the length of their hits. Can you imagine saying "Well I'll just have to birdie this last hole to shoot par." Must be nice! No motel change, but a nice buffet at the Pechanga Casino.



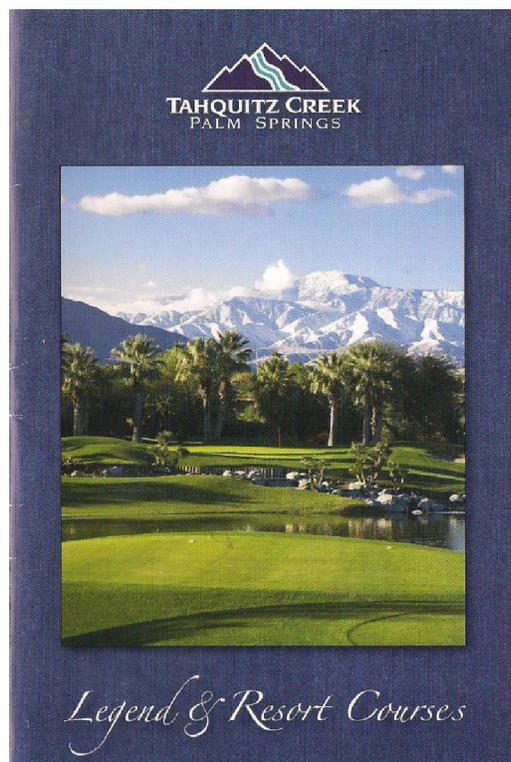


DAY 5: SCGA which is now the Golf Club at Rancho California in Murrieta! You had better stick your chips and not over hit your putt because gravity takes on a different meaning here, like black ice, the balls just accelerate off the greens, running faster than an Irish pickpocket. The San Jacinto and San Gorgonio Mountains are magnificent vistas in their snow covered splendor; that's the only pleasant thought I can come up with about this round. No motel change; just lots of cervezas and margaritas in downtown Temecula.

DAY 6: Our tee time at The Cherry Hills Golf Club in Sun City had apparently been made by mistake as it was the ladies club day. So we were fortunate to get in a round at the Menifee Lakes Country Club; fortunate, indeed, as we have since played Sun City. The man-made lakes at Menifee were built to accommodate my slice perfectly. Being a chocoholic is the kindest thing I can think to say about the lakes and their color. Best Western Hemet!

DAY 7: The Diamond Valley Golf Course is a narrow links style course with no trees, interspersed with huge rock piles. Lots of pictures around the club house of a young Tiger which may or may not have been taken on site. Course is located near Lake Skinner with the San Gorgonio Wilderness and Santa Rosa Mountains for backdrop. The drive on Highway 74, showcasing a virtually uninhabited high mountain forest is well worth the short cut to Palm Desert. We checked into the Westin Resort. Why you ask? Because if you try out their time share the stay and golf are free. AH HAH! You say.

DAY 8: We needed an early tee time at The Tahquitz Creek Legacy course in order to be back at the Westin Resort for the afternoon presentation. Paired up with a pleasant couple down here from Washington for the winter, they run a bakery 7 days a week. What happens to the bakery all winter? The homes along this course are unique in that they are not protected by walls, fences or screens, it seems as if they are challenging you to bring on those hooks and slices. You just know some inebriated golfer is going to put his cart right into the Jacuzzis and pools lining the fairway. Breakfast, lunch and cart are included in the green fees, what a great value. Yes, She Who Wears The Pants In The Family, made the commitment, but eventually we were able to back out of the timeshare deal when reality set in. Nice club lounge where we got all warm and fuzzy and actually were able to make it back to the room.



DAY 9: We selected the Arnold Palmer Signature Course over the Pete Dye probably because Arnie's name is more recognizable to me. We might have been more appreciative of the course had we not been recovering alcoholics. The Palm Springs Valley area is virtually flat so designing a course with some variations in contour must be quite the challenge. We were paired with a great couple from Colorado who came down to visit their dad. Very nice facility in all respects, but too pricey for us without the incentive. We drove up to Yucca Valley to spend the night with some old and dear friends. They have acreage that is reminiscent of western cowboy movie settings: huge rocks perfect for the gun fights, coyotes yipping back and forth to each other at night, no recumbent light to obscure the night universe.

DAY 10: The Blue Skies Golf and Country Club was not recommended by our host and is no longer in existence for very good reason. After a not so recent flood which drowned most of the grass and years of neglect, it was apparent the weeds were fighting a losing battle. Too bad as the elevation makes it substantially cooler than the valley, the trees are huge so at some point in a galaxy far far away, it might have been a nice club.

So there you have it, 10 days on the road which included a golf package, several discount book rounds, a time share accommodation, staying at the same motel to eventually acquire a free night stay, a night with friends. By doing a little research the savings mount up! This was our annual anniversary excursion, which sometimes coincides with Super Bowl weekend.