



MAYACAMA

Situation Analysis

Prestigious private golf clubs are marketing minefields, treacherous turf where even savvy PR strategists can meet unhappy ends.

Major news outlets steer clear of such places (why cover destinations that their readers can't experience?). At the same time, members themselves often shy away from exposure. Their clubs are sanctuaries, and they bristle at the idea of selling out.

Such were the woes of Mayacama, a stunning golf and lodging club in Sonoma County, when C. Milan Communications came on board nearly in mid-2007. On the surface, Mayacama appeared to have everything. A prized location in the heart of wine country. A celebrated Jack Nicklaus Signature Course. And a membership roster that reads like a who's-who of California winemakers: Bill Harlan, Helen Turley and John Wetlaufer, Bart and Daphne Araujo, and Steve Kistler.

What Mayacama lacked was a sound marketing strategy for its Lodging Club, a newly launched collection of three-bedroom Villas and four-bedroom Hillside Homes. Sales of the properties had been sluggish, and dark clouds on the economic horizon suggested that grim times lay ahead.

The challenge faced by CMC and Mayacama amounted to a private club's Catch-22: How to generate press coverage from reluctant media without alienating members or compromising the refined and private climate that made the club so appealing from the start?

Strategy/Tactics/Solution

CMC Founder Charlotte Milan devised a plan as subtle and sophisticated as the club itself. It was built upon the idea of Mayacama as more than just a great place for golf. As Milan perceived it, the club could be positioned as the upscale embodiment of its surroundings—the sophisticated essence of wine country life. Membership not only gave you access to a course ranked #67 on *Golf Digest's* Top 100 list. It let you in on an entire lifestyle, allowing you to mingle with Silicon Valley moguls or to sip wine with some of the greatest vintners in the world.

Drawing on her vast network of media contacts, Milan and her team began by introducing Mayacama to writers for the most prominent national golf outlets, including *Golf Digest*, *Golf Magazine* and *Travel & Leisure Golf*—publications whose coverage extends beyond the game itself to the luxurious lifestyle that the club represents.

One connection led to another, and in less than a year, lifestyle and real estate features had appeared not only in golf publications but also in major outlets such as the *New York*

Times, Robb Report and USA Today.

At the same time, Milan highlighted Mayacama's Vintner Members to emphasize the uniqueness of the club. Where else could you play golf on one of the Golden Bear's best, then retire to a private wine cellar to sample Jayson Woodbridge's famed Robert Parker – rated 98 point "100 Acre" Cabernet Sauvignon with none other than Woodbridge himself? This wasn't marketing of the heavy-handed kind disliked by Mayacama members. It was a celebration of the very lifestyle that had given rise to their cherished club.

As part of her plan, Milan also capitalized on Vintner Member events and an annual charity golf outing that attracted A-list celebrities from coast to coast. Such events caught the eye of society and lifestyle writers at leading local and national publications ranging from *Travel & Leisure* to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Francisco Magazine*.

Milan's efforts struck another resounding chord in March 2009, when she and her team invested more than 400 hours working with a senior writer for *Fortune Magazine*, arranging site visits, wine tastings, vintner dinners and golf with foursomes of top vintner members and Mayacama owners. The work paid off with a glowing two-page feature spotlighting Mayacama as an elegant playground for discerning golfers and gourmands alike in *Fortune's* March 2009 golf issue. That same month, Mayacama's Lodging Club and new four-bedroom Hillside Homes were featured on the cover of the *Robb Report*.

Results

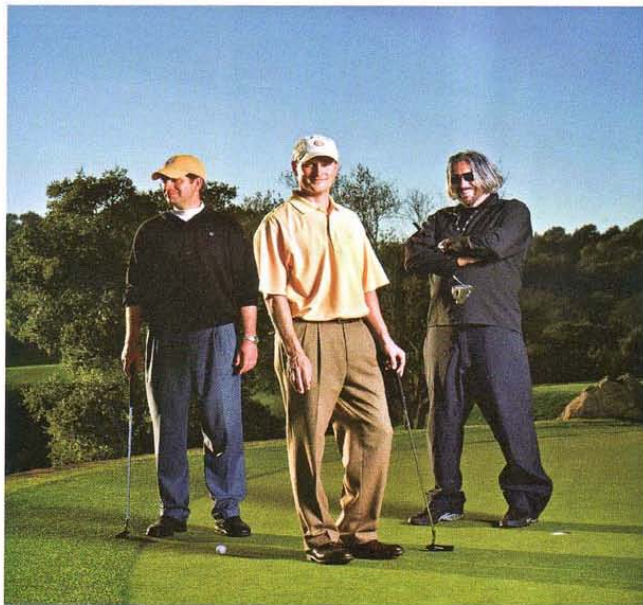
In the midst of a devastating economic downturn, at a time when private residence clubs around the country have been filing for bankruptcy, Mayacama has bucked all industry trends. As the real estate market sank from coast to coast, the club actually experienced a surge in sales. To date, Lodging Club sales have surpassed even the most optimistic expectations.

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LIFE AT THE TOP



DRINKING AND DRIVING FAR LEFT: EHREN JORDAN OF FAILLA & TURLEY; JONATHAN WILHELM OF MAYACAMA; JAYSON WOODBRIDGE OF HUNDRED ACRE & LAYER CAKE. LEFT: A CLUB MEMBER'S WINE LOCKER. BELOW: THE VIEW FROM THE 18TH FAIRWAY.



Another Round?

California's Mayacama features gorgeous greens plus the best wine list on the planet, courtesy of its cult vintner members. **BY JEFFREY M. O'BRIEN**

PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS AND HACKERS ALIKE try all sorts of unusual things to avoid the dreaded three-putt: cross-handed grips, staggered stances, elongated putters. Jayson Woodbridge has his own trick. He swings with one hand. The approach doesn't help his score, but it has an ulterior benefit. "How else are you going to putt when you're holding a glass of wine?" he says during a recent round, sinking a five-footer with a puckish grin.

Welcome to Mayacama, the seven-year-old Jack Nicklaus–designed treasure of a golf course and country club at the base of the mountain range that divides Northern California's Napa and Sonoma counties. Recessions are tough on any recreational club, but in this business as in all others, it helps to have a unique sell. And for anyone whose passions include golf and wine, Mayacama is mecca.

Built on land purchased from legendary cartoonist Charles Schulz in 1999, the club attracts the celebrities of the wine world with its unique vintner-member program. To qualify, vintners, who make up 31 of the club's 430 regular members, need to produce wines scoring north of 92 points from Robert Parker or Wine Spectator. In exchange for a

MAYACAMA SANTA ROSA, CALIF. MAYACAMA.COM 866-393-1819

MAYACAMA'S FIRST appeal is golf. But wine runs a close second. The prices might not seem like bargains to the average duffer, but these wines are either impossible to get or otherwise sell for multiples in Bay Area restaurants. Three highlights from Mayacama's wine list:

2004 Harlan Estate, Napa Valley (98 points, *Robert Parker*) If you could get on the allocation list (you can't), this wine would cost \$600 a bottle. Restaurant Gary Danko in San Francisco sells it for \$1,500. Thanks to the club's relationship with original vintner member Bill Harlan, it's \$510 at Mayacama.

2003 Araujo Estate Wines, Eisele Vineyard, Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley (98 points, *Robert Parker*) Eisele Vineyard has produced some of the country's best caber-

net for 40 years. Made by vintner member Bart Araujo, this bottle sells for \$580 at Gary Danko but is only \$255 at Mayacama.

2005 Hundred Acre, Ark, Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley (98 points, *Robert Parker*) Critical darling and self-taught winemaker Jayson Woodbridge is Mayacama's newest vintner member. This bottle sells for \$540 at San Francisco's Fifth Floor and \$250 at Mayacama.



19TH HOLE MEMBERS AT MAYACAMA INDULGE IN FINE WINES ON AND OFF THE COURSE.

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THE WORLD'S MOST



vastly reduced membership fee, they agree to host winemaker dinners and tastings and provide a barrel of the latest vintage at cost. Woodbridge, the owner and winemaker of Hundred Acre & Layer Cake, is the latest vintner to sign on. Others include wine legends Bart Araujo, Bill Harlan, and Helen Turley, of Araujo, Harlan Estates, and Marcassin, respectively.

One of the hottest winemakers around, Ehren Jordan, of Fallia and Turley, is also a member and playing in today's foursome, along with managing partner Jonathan Wilhelm. There isn't much open space left in wine country, so walking among a sprawling 675-acre expanse feels like a true escape. Jordan, an avid pilot, is known to fly to Oregon's Bandon Dunes for a day of golf, but

Mayacama is a lot closer to home. Not to mention the caddy here is happy to lug a couple of bottles of DuMol chardonnay along with two sets of clubs. Says Jordan: "I like to prune the vineyards about now, but there's no urgency to that.

This is a great opportunity to just refresh, and renew yourself."

Of course the real purpose of the vintner program is to attract run-of-the-mill members—i.e., anyone willing to pay an initiation fee of as much as \$250,000 for unlimited golf, as well as a wine list featuring impossible-to-get bottles at unbeatable prices.

As for the golf, Mayacama consistently

**THE CADDY IS
HAPPY TO
LUG A COUPLE
OF BOTTLES
OF DUMOL
CHARDONNAY.**



ranks among *Golf Digest's* top 100 U.S. courses. But that's not doing the experience justice. There are no tee times at Mayacama, and looking out across the serene course, it's easy to understand why. In three rounds I encountered a half-dozen or so other

foursomes, total. The course favors a left-to-right fade, as Nicklaus tracks often do. Not to mention a strong liver and a fair dose of humility. "Did you know Mayacama is an old Indian word?" jokes vintner member Tor Kenward of Tor Kenward Family Wines. "It means double bogey." ■

FEEDBACK jobrien@fortunemail.com

TO BEAT THE SLUMP

MARK HURD HAS GUIDED THE COMPUTER GIANT THROUGH THE DOWNTURN. SO WHY ISN'T HE SATISFIED?
BY ADAM LASHINSKY

"Great companies excel in tough times, and in tough times customers turn to great companies." —Mark Hurd, CEO, HEWLETT-PACKARD



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The Robb Report COLLECTION™

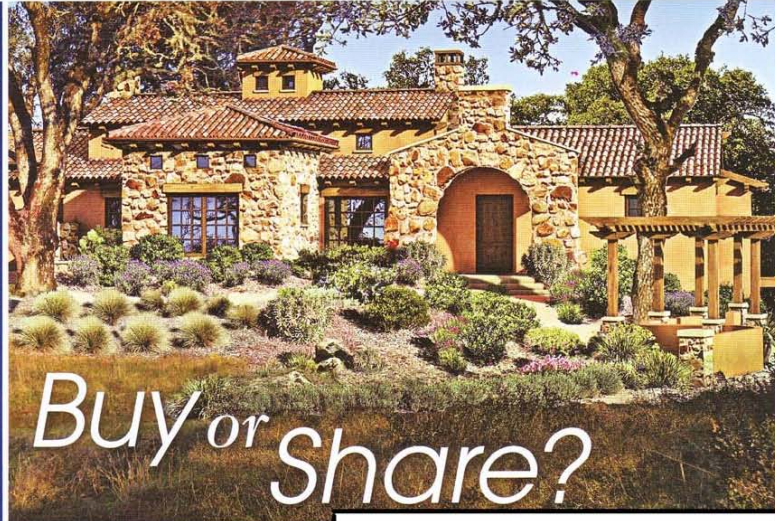
THE BUYER'S GUIDE FOR CONNOISSEURS

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Buy or Share?

Share and Share Alike

Weighing the benefits of fractional real estate.

BY JESSICA DAYNOR PUCCI

"When we come out of this economy, fractionalization
will make more sense than ever before."

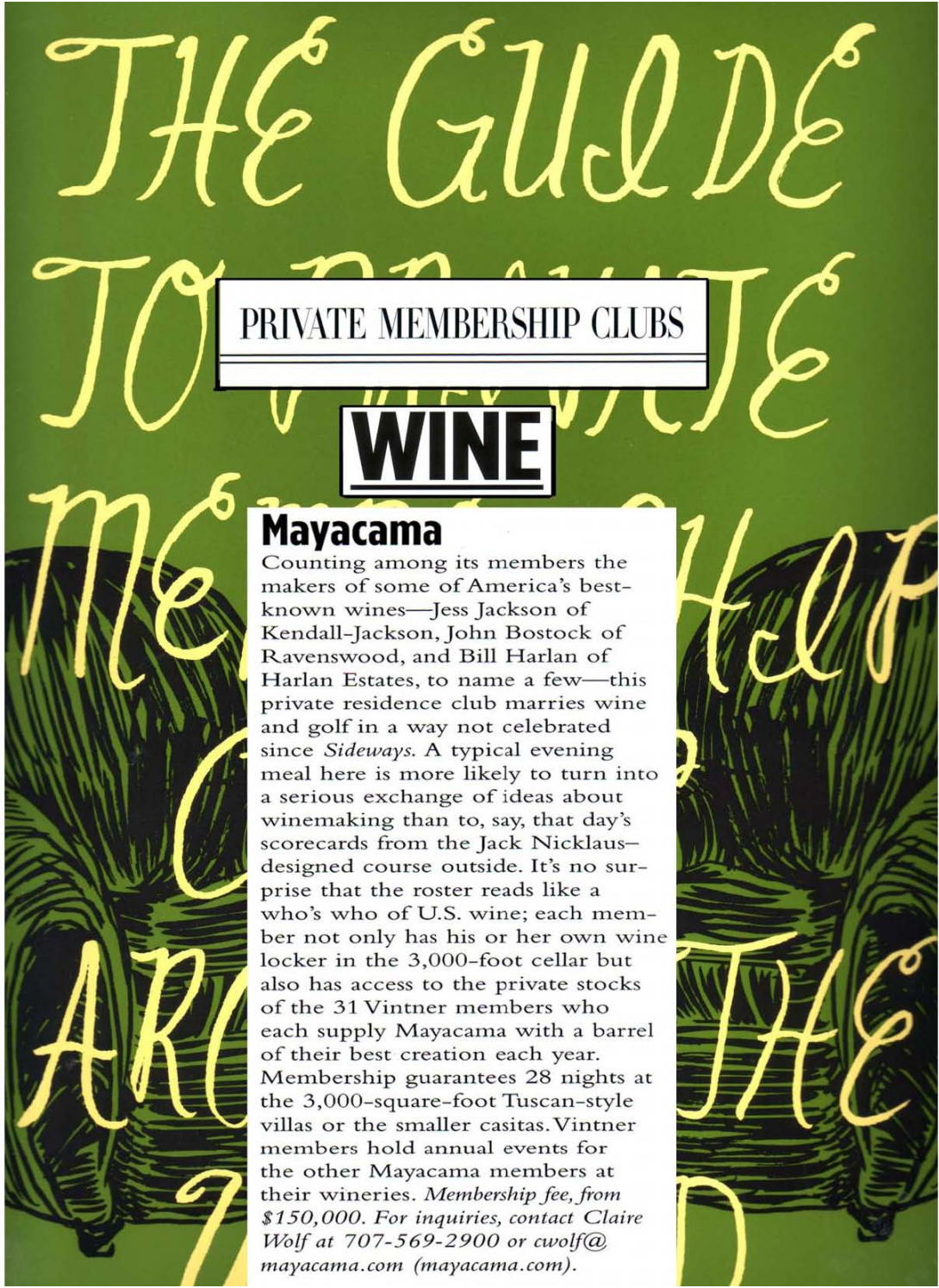
—Jonathan Wilhelm, Mayacama

New Bang

MARCH 2009
RobbReportCollection.com
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Mayacama

A members-only club in the heart of Sonoma County yet just minutes from Napa Valley, Mayacama offers its community the best of wine country through its innovative vintner program. Thirty-two winemakers (including Harlan, Jordan, and Araujo) give members access to rare wines, exclusive dinners, grape-picking experiences, and blending trials. In addition, the club features a top-ranked, no-tee-times Jack Nicklaus golf course. "We are a traditional private club in a sense; we have a set number of members who know each other," says Jonathan Wilhelm, the club's managing partner. "The fractional [part of Mayacama] is a way to use the experiences at the golf club and in wine country without necessarily burdening yourself with or finding the time to buy a whole-ownership property." Mayacama offers two fractional-ownership options: The first is a 28-night-per-year share of one of 12 one-bedroom casitas (from the low \$200,000s) or 19 three-bedroom villas (from \$300,000). Casitas feature outdoor showers, indoor/outdoor fireplaces, and alfresco entertaining spaces, while villas include four limestone fireplaces and outdoor kitchens. For longer stays, the community offers 90-day, one-quarter shares (from \$1 million) of 10 individually designed, Tuscan-style estates; each has a wine cellar and heated bathroom floors, and some have detached guesthouses. 866.393.1818, www.mayacama.com



PRIVATE MEMBERSHIP CLUBS

WINE

Mayacama

Counting among its members the makers of some of America's best-known wines—Jess Jackson of Kendall-Jackson, John Bostock of Ravenswood, and Bill Harlan of Harlan Estates, to name a few—this private residence club marries wine and golf in a way not celebrated since *Sideways*. A typical evening meal here is more likely to turn into a serious exchange of ideas about winemaking than to, say, that day's scorecards from the Jack Nicklaus-designed course outside. It's no surprise that the roster reads like a who's who of U.S. wine; each member not only has his or her own wine locker in the 3,000-foot cellar but also has access to the private stocks of the 31 Vintner members who each supply Mayacama with a barrel of their best creation each year. Membership guarantees 28 nights at the 3,000-square-foot Tuscan-style villas or the smaller casitas. Vintner members hold annual events for the other Mayacama members at their wineries. *Membership fee, from \$150,000. For inquiries, contact Claire Wolf at 707-569-2900 or cwolf@mayacama.com (mayacama.com).*

The New York Times

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008

Print

Escapes

The New York Times

BREAKING GROUND

Mayacama

WHAT A golf and wine resort community.

WHERE Santa Rosa, Calif.

AMENITIES A wine program and a spa, among others.

PRICES Lodging membership starts at around \$200,000. Fractional shares of houses start at \$1.5 million.

STATUS Additional villas, houses and a casita are planned to be built over the next few years.

DEVELOPER Windrose.

CONTACT (866) 393-1818 or www.mayacama.com.

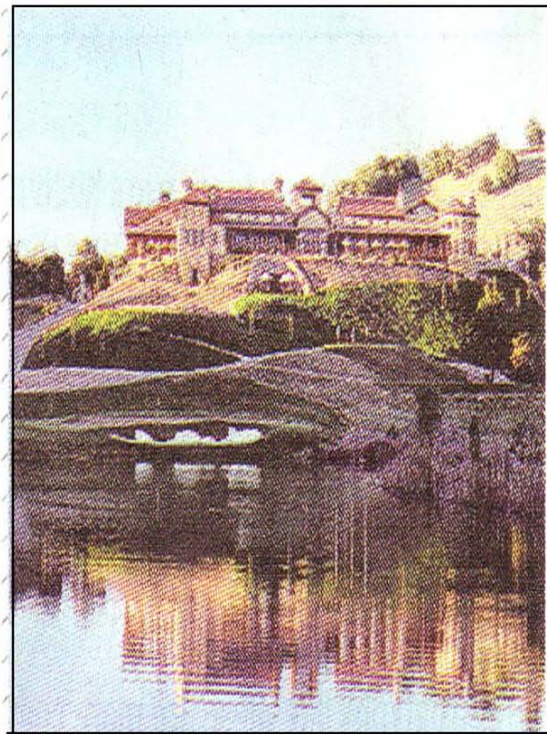
DETAILS Mayacama occupies an enviable position on the totem pole of American resorts. An exclusive, 675-acre development in central Sonoma County, it boasts not only a top-ranked 18-hole Jack Nicklaus golf course that opened in 2001, but, thanks to its location, also a wine program. Last summer, the development began tinkering with its residential offerings, which until then consisted of three-bedroom villas and one-bedroom casitas sold in fractional shares. Now the villas and casitas are part of a lodging club that grants members four weeks of use a year, and larger fractional-ownership houses are being built on hillsides overlooking the course. The development is planned to have fewer than 65 residences when complete. So far there are 3 villas, 11 casitas and 2 houses, with 2 more villas and another house expected to be ready soon. The houses, which are sold in quarter shares allowing for 90 nights of use a year, have three or four bedrooms and include ample outdoor living space, wine cellars, multiple fireplaces and private pools. Both villas and casitas have outdoor showers and fireplaces. A clubhouse offers a dining room, a bar area and the spa, and there are also a swim and tennis center and a hiking trail. Through the popular wine program, members are provided with wines from 31 Sonoma and Napa wineries and are invited to private events outside the resort and in the clubhouse's wine cave.

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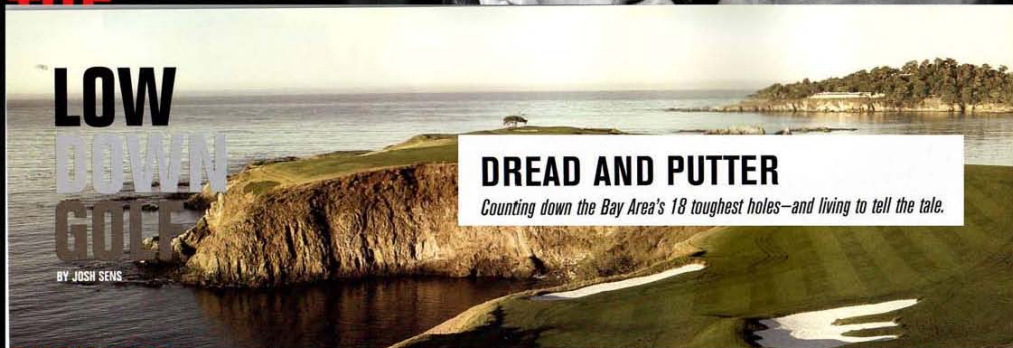
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RAISING
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LOW
DOWN
GOLF

BY JOSH SENS

DREAD AND PUTTER

Counting down the Bay Area's 18 toughest holes—and living to tell the tale.

BUSINESS

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TIME ZONE

15. MAYACAMA GOLF CLUB, SANTA ROSA | 5TH HOLE, PAR 5, 501 YARDS

The course sits on land once owned by *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz, but this hole wasn't designed for kids. You'll need a booming drive up the middle to contemplate going for the tiered green in two. Approach shots beyond the pin make for steep, ticklish putts. But balls that come up short can trundle off the green back to the fairway, forlorn and luckless, like Charlie Brown.

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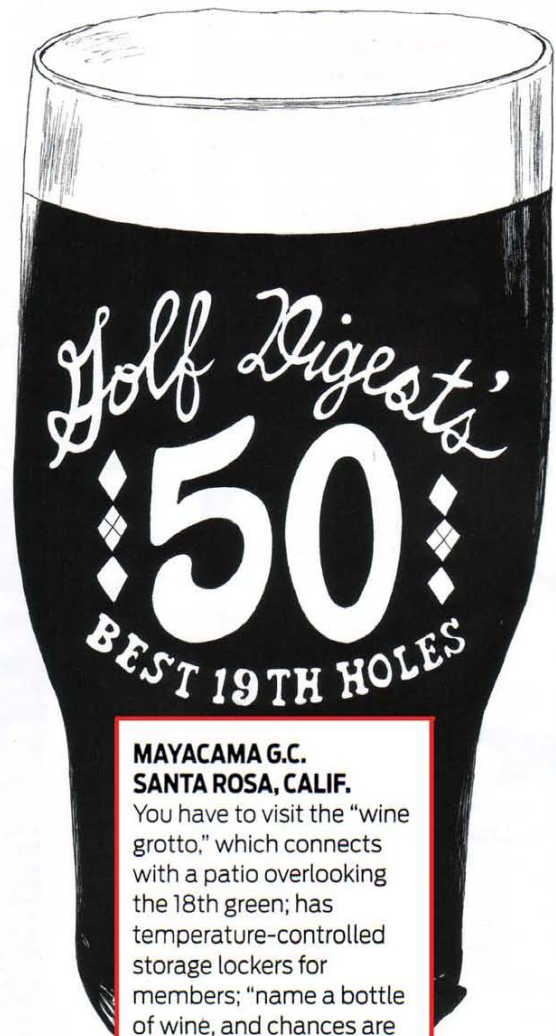
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**MAYACAMA G.C.
SANTA ROSA, CALIF.**
You have to visit the "wine grotto," which connects with a patio overlooking the 18th green; has temperature-controlled storage lockers for members; "name a bottle of wine, and chances are someone has it there."



**WHAT'S
THE BEST
SHAPE?**
PAGE 216

MARCH 2008



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