

golf living

LIVING

MAYACAMA

Members' Privileges

MAYACAMA GOLF CLUB:
THE BEST OF WINE AND
GOLF IN THE ROLLING
HILLS OF SONOMA COUNTY.

By Scott Gummer

Some plots of land seem preordained for a golf course. Pebble Beach and St. Andrews spring to mind, but perhaps more surprising and in some regards no less spectacular in its setting is Mayacama Golf Club in Sonoma County. The rolling terrain, oak-studded hills and valleys and picturesque vineyards for which California's wine country is renowned provide the backdrop for this exceptional Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course and its adjoining club and residential community.

The location is tucked away but not out of the way. Mayacama is only an hour-plus drive north of San Francisco, and since Horizon Air began commercial flights from Los Angeles and Seattle to the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport in March, it's just 10 minutes from leaving the tarmac to Mayacama's front gates.

The club is private in every sense—no reciprocal privileges with other clubs, membership by invitation only—and prides itself on being a walking-only course (save for members and guests age 65 and older or those with special medical needs).

Mayacama is a special place, a feeling that becomes readily apparent every time one pulls up to the magnificent Tuscan-inspired clubhouse, a stately yet intimate estate complete with vine-draped courtyards and expansive verandas that overlook the stunning 675-acre landscape.

There are only 31 homesites at Mayacama, and although the real estate component may be small in number it does not lack in size: sites range from one to three acres and can accommodate "cottages" from 3,100 to 3,600 square feet.



Members need not live within the gates, however, to enjoy this quintessential wine country getaway, as Mayacama currently boasts a dozen cozy casitas, each approximately 800 square feet in size with a sumptuous master suite, separate living area, kitchenette and patio. Nineteen additional three-bedroom villas are also slated for construction.

Jack Nicklaus decreed that Mayacama ranks among the best inland golf properties he has ever seen. The roller coaster analogy gets overused in golf writing, but here it is apropos, as Nicklaus designed a breathtaking course that rises and falls with great elevation changes and bobs and weaves in seemingly every direction but upside down.

The pedometer clocks the back tees at 6,785 yards, which is relatively modest by today's standards, though that carries with it a course rating of 74.2 and slope of 153. The middle tees (6,178 yards, 71.2 rating, 137 slope) are plenty enough golf for anyone with a double-digit handicap. Families should note that the course is not exactly kind to beginners, although the practice area is exceptional.

While the golf setting is spectacular, the most unique aspect of membership at Mayacama is off the course: in the underground wine grotto, each full golf member enjoys a private wine locker. And the club's 29 Vintner Members, comprised of local winemakers, annually provide some of their premier vintage to be enjoyed among the wider membership. Plus, each vintner hosts a private, members-only event at their vineyard, the tasting room or the clubhouse each year.

The Jack Nicklaus golf course and the Tuscan clubhouse are all fine and good, but that wine amenity alone gives new meaning to the adage, "membership has its privileges."

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866.393.1818, www.mayacama.com

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