

# Private golf courses supplement income with non-member play

By Dan Hinxman, Reno Gazette-Journal

It used to be that if a country club's management suggested the golf course be opened to public play, its members would revolt.

That is still the case at established clubs such as Hidden Valley, but in this unique financial environment – that of a recession coming on the heels of the dot.com boom – some are taking that route with membership's blessings. And the result has been good news for both the club and public-course golfers who yearn to try new places.

"It seems to be doing well for us," said Rob Young, vice president and general manager of Grizzly Ranch near Portola, about 45 minutes north of Reno.

Grizzly Ranch is in a crowded boat – private courses that were built in the late 1990s and early 2000s to cater to a population that saw its discretionary income skyrocket. Others in the region that fit that description include Reno's ArrowCreek (Challenge), Montreux, Red Hawk (Hills) and Somerset; Washoe Valley's Thunder Canyon; and Truckee-area courses Gray's Crossing, Lahontan, Martis Camp and Schaffer's Mill (originally Timilick).

All have dealt with tough times. Some are doing well enough to maintain their fully private status, including Somerset, whose membership recently took over management of the course. Others, such as Gray's Crossing, Grizzly Ranch and Schaffer's Mill, are balancing budgets and exposing their courses to potential members.

And if there's a poster child for the movement, it might be Grizzly Ranch.

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