

LQ's Madison Club among "best damn clubs" in America

Larry Bohannon, The Desert Sun 10:06 a.m. PST November 10, 2014



(Photo: Richard Lui/The Desert Sun)

I question whether the folks who run The Madison Club in La Quinta would appreciate having their 18-hole golf course and facility called a "joint," but in the case of the club being one of the 20 "best damn clubs around," they might accept the description.

A new list by Golf Digest has The Madison Club listed as one of those 20 clubs across the country. As Golf Digest describes it, "Here we've identified places perhaps lesser known, but whose special atmosphere is tangible—almost hits you in the face the moment you drive in. Though members of the typical country club might share geographic proximity, similar financial health, a penchant for golf and maybe tennis or swimming, members of Best Damn Clubs share much more. The French call it esprit de corps, or the strong pride, fellowship and loyalty of a like-minded group."

Why The Madison Club? First, it is hardly a lesser-known course in the desert. But from the time the Tom Fazio-designed course opened, it has been a favorite among members and PGA Tour pros who flock to the course during the winter months and certainly in the week or so before the Humana Challenge in partnership with the Clinton Foundation. The reason is not just the stellar golf course, but also customer service that could best be described as over the top.

Listed with a \$200,000 initiation fee by the magazine, Madison is perhaps best known in the desert (for those lucky enough to have been inside the gate that is easy to miss on Ave. 52) for what the magazine calls the five-pound round. Locally, I've heard that reference as the 10-pound round. Two on-course grills allow a player to custom order a little food for the practice tee or on his way to the 10th tee. At other spots on the course, snacks, any kind of drink you might want and even more significant meals are available, all part of the experience.

And there is the golf course, a strong Fazio course with a bit more bit in it than many of the members' courses that Fazio is known for. Guys like Phil Mickelson, Ben Crane, Pat Perez and Matt Kuchar don't hang around a place (or hang around the place long) without great atmosphere and great service and a good golf experience.

Two other courses in California made the list, Lakeside Country Club in Burbank and California Golf Club of San Francisco.