

Tucson Treat

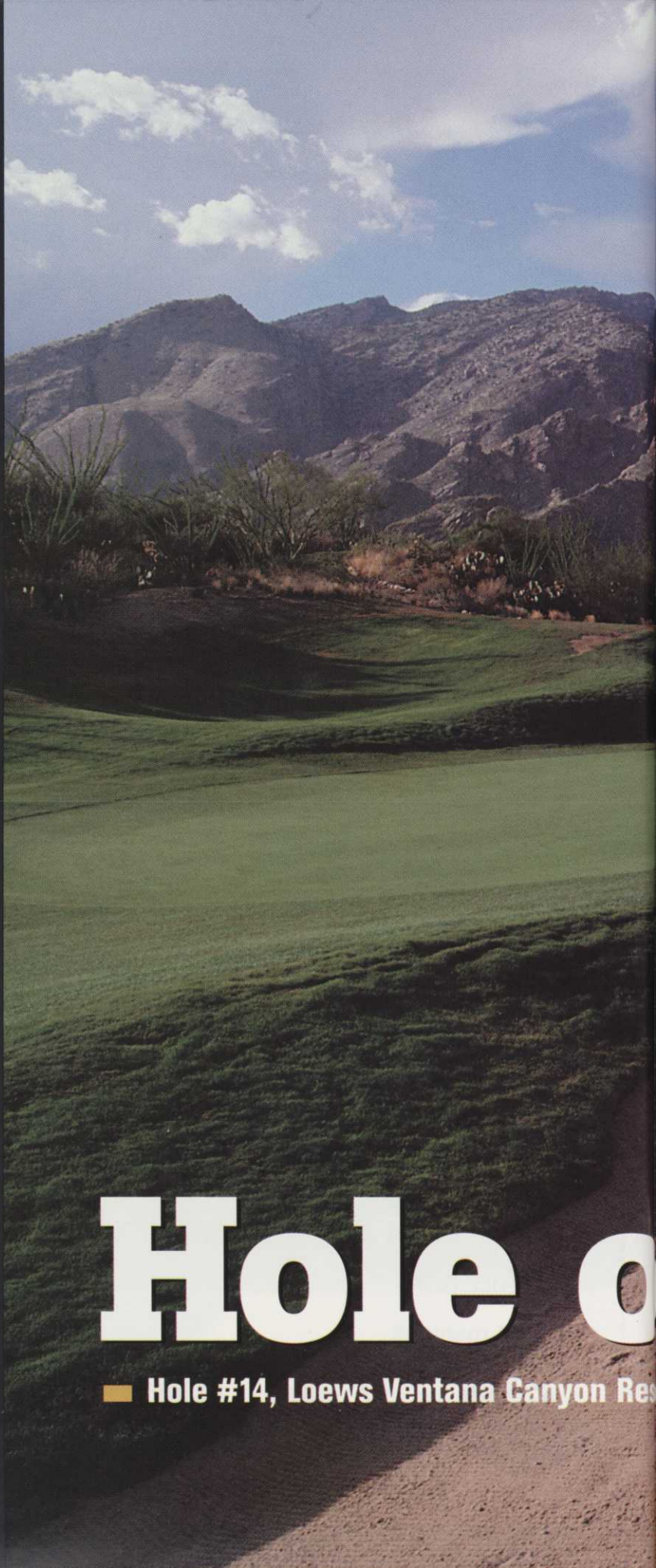
For Michigan native and Michigan State University turfgrass school graduate Wally Dowe, caring for desert-style target courses doesn't come naturally. But after five years of learning the subtle maintenance approaches necessary to guide Arizona golf courses through horrendous afternoon monsoons and bone-dry, 120-degree-plus temperatures, he's confident enough in his abilities to take an occasional break at his course's popular Flying V Bar and Grill.

As director of golf course maintenance for the Tom Fazio-designed Loews Ventana Canyon Resort GC in Tucson, Ariz., Dowe oversees a 54-person crew. With the help of assistant superintendents Kevin Phillips at the 6,819-yard Canyon Course, and Jim Sims at the 6,926-yard Mountain Course, Dowe makes sure the undulating bentgrass greens of the two par-72 championship courses don't wilt in the sometimes surprising humidity and beneath the traffic of more than 80,000 golfers a year.

The semi-private resort courses, both built in the mid-1980s, are nestled in Tucson's Santa Catalina Mountain foothills and have been the site of the PGA and LPGA Tucson Open Pro-Am tournaments. The Canyon Course winds its way through the spectacular Esperero Canyon, finishing with an island green on the par-5 No. 18. The Mountain Course, with a 146 slope rating, is built around the 9,000-foot Santa Catalina mountains and features a world-famous 107-yard par-3 signature hole, complete with a heating and cooling system below the green.

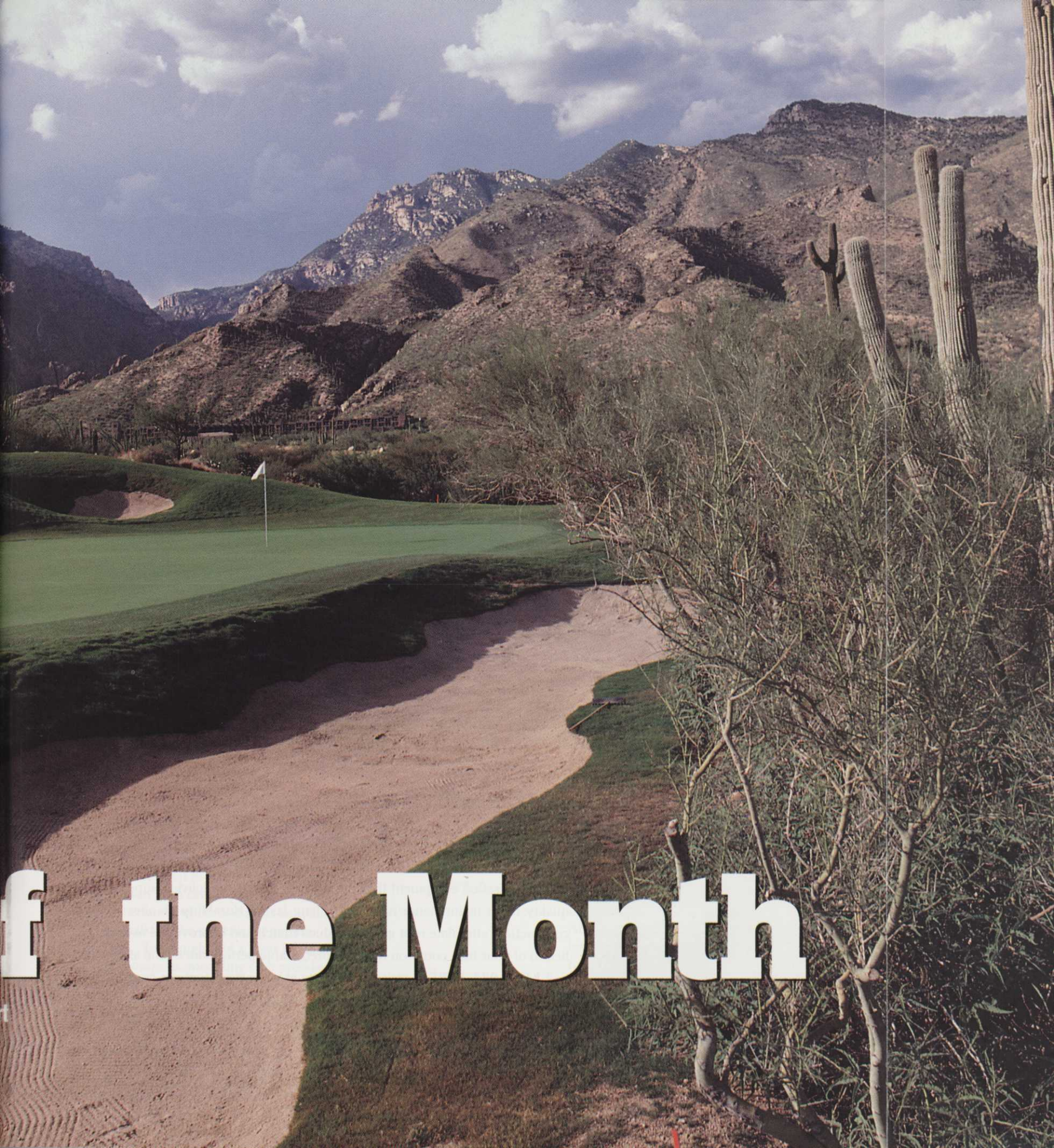
Pictured here is the Mountain Course's 14th hole, photographed by Mike Klemme. The 183-yard par-3 has birdie potential for golfers who can land their drives on the green's hilly left side and hope for friendly rolls.

Among the maintenance challenges for



Hole o

■ Hole #14, Loews Ventana Canyon Res



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Dowe is irrigating with effluent water, which has high bicarbonate and sodium levels. He treats the water with sulfuric acid, applies gypsum and regularly flushes greens to cope with effects of effluent water. He's also nearly "religious" about aerification in the summer, he says, using quarter-inch tines to keep the air flowing on bentgrass greens that prefer dry heat to humidity.

Dowe is overseeing the first real renovation work since the course was built, excluding the resurfacing of greens four years ago. Bunkers are being recontoured and relined as part of an ambitious renovation that will include removing rock and bringing in new sand.

Golfdom

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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