

A Desert Dream

Surrounded by all sides on mountains and hiding civilization from view, the 18th hole at the Fire Cliff course at the Desert Willow Golf Resort in Palm Desert, Calif., persuades golfers to turn off their cell phones and gawk, open-mouthed, at the beauty of the nature around them.

Superintendent Rudy Zazueta says the 545-yard, par 5's isolated existence provides golfers the opportunity to watch jack rabbits play and hummingbirds hum without civilization intruding.

"The hole lays out before the golfer as if it had always been there," Zazueta says. "You feel like you're out in the middle of the desert."

Its naturalness provides Zazueta with his greatest maintenance challenges. Grouped natural desert plants called

desert palettes surround the tee. While plants add to the beauty of the hole, Zazueta says, their allure belies the headaches they cause the maintenance staff.

"Most people will say it's only plants and shrubs, so how hard can the maintenance be?" Zazueta says.

"Keeping the weeds under

control and preventing runoff from washing the plants away is hard work, however."

With a creek to the left and nothing but desert to the right, Zazueta recommends that golfers play it safe on the hole – like he does.

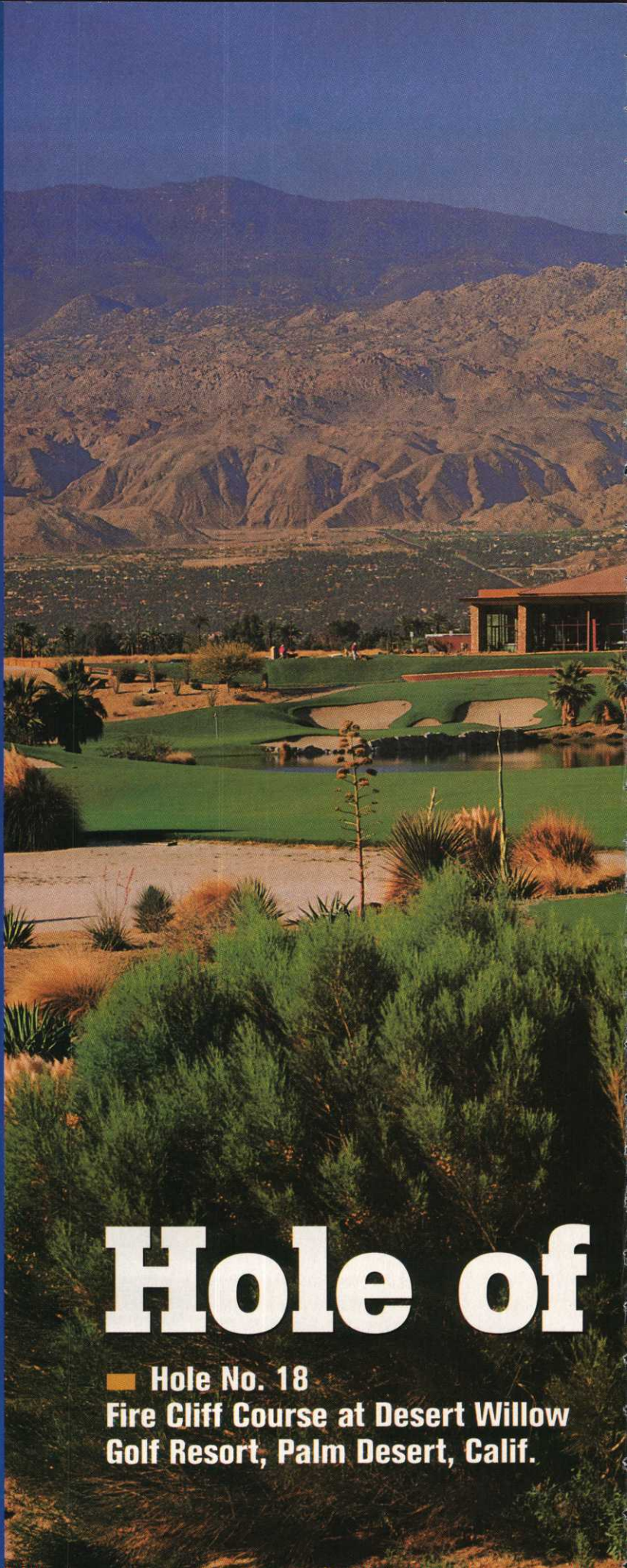


**Superintendent
Rudy Zazueta**

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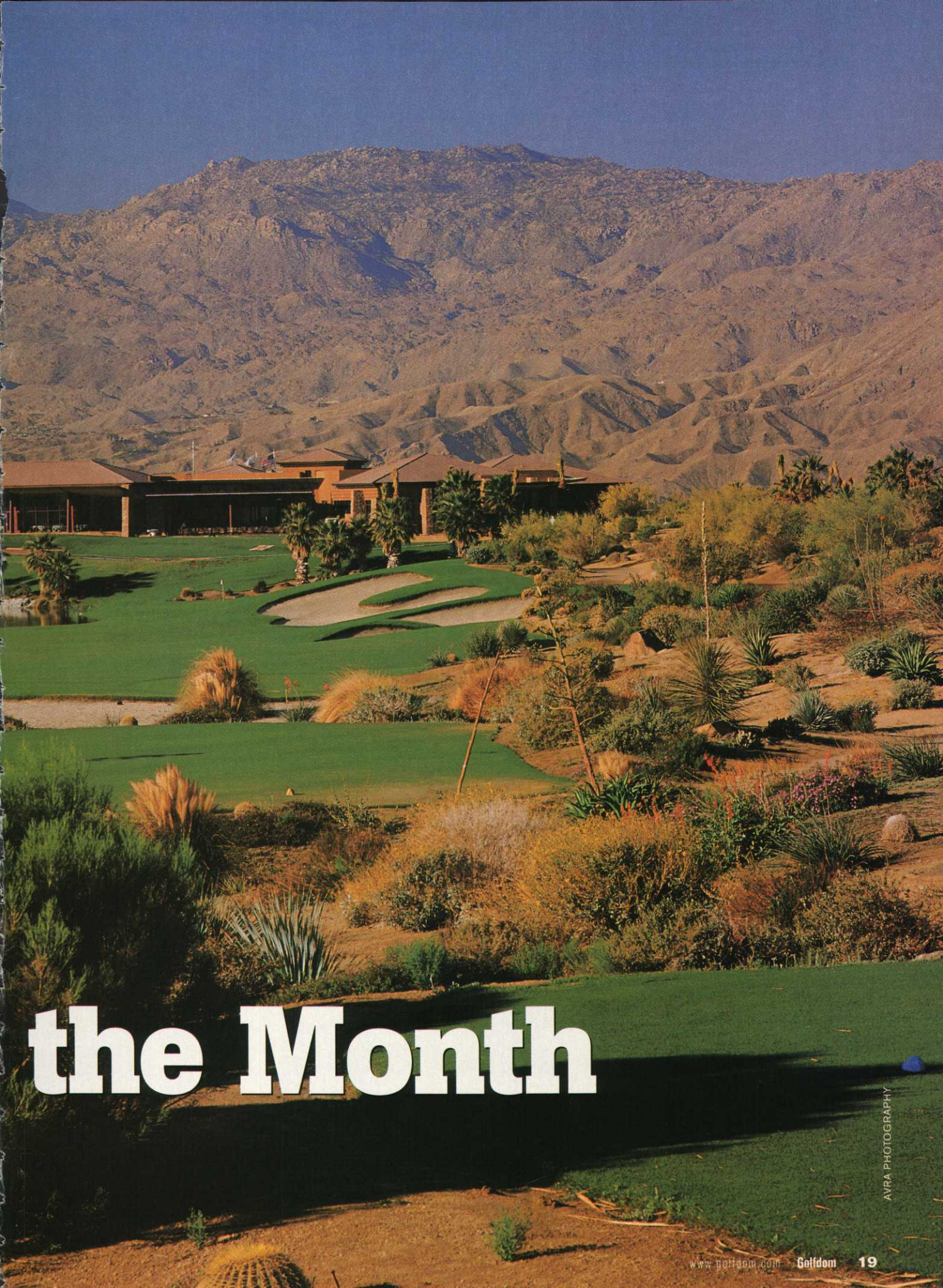


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Hole of

■ Hole No. 18
Fire Cliff Course at Desert Willow
Golf Resort, Palm Desert, Calif.



the Month

AVRA PHOTOGRAPHY