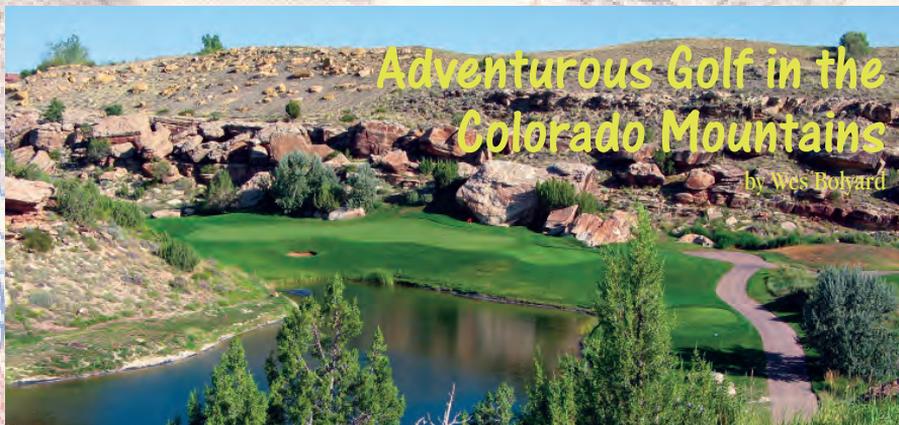


## Adventurous Golf in the Colorado Mountains

by Wes Bolvard



Before Arizona temperatures reach triple digits, consider planning a golf outing in cool, refreshing, pine-scented west-central Colorado. All along the I-70 corridor, from Grand Junction to Vail, you can find exciting golf and refreshing evenings.

Whether you take a day's drive by car or short hop by air to reach Grand Junction, you will be at the starting point of several great golf courses and 22 wineries. This thriving metropolis of 60,000 people sits in a perfect micro-climate enabling residents to boast about enjoying all four seasons, including relatively mild winters. There are 12 golf courses within an hour's drive with some offering great golf packages. Like Arizona, Grand Junction receives less than 10 inches of rain a year which provides numerous days for both golf and non-golf activities such as hiking, biking, fishing and camping. Early fall is a great time to visit for grape harvesting or for visiting the many orchards and fruit stands to get a taste of famous peaches and other seasonal fruits.

Besides being adjacent to the **Colorado National Monument** with all its canyons and 23,000 square miles, Grand Junction has seven National Parks within 90 miles. In addition to great views of Colorado National Monument and Grand Mesa, the world's largest flat-topped mountain, you can also comb through remains of eras long ago in the heart of the Colorado-Utah Dinosaur Diamond. Internationally known for its wealth of dinosaur excavation sites, exhibits, fossils, and hands-on paleontological activities, the area boasts more than 30 dinosaur species. Visitors can get up close and personal with dinosaur skeletons, a working paleontology lab and realistic robotic dinosaurs. Amateur paleontologists can join single- and multi-day digs. [www.museumofwesternco.com/dino-digs](http://www.museumofwesternco.com/dino-digs)

The Western Colorado Golf Trail starts in Grand Junction with **The Golf Club at Redlands Mesa**. Sitting adjacent to the red cliffs of the Colorado National Monument, this Jim Engh design has integrated a challenging golf course into and around the topography of outstanding rock formations. Elevated tees present magnificent views but result in the consequence of fairways far below. Add to that a starting elevation of around 4,700 feet, water that comes into play on five holes, and wildly undulating greens, you must carefully choose the right club for each shot. It offers a majestic terrain and visual splendor to enhance your game. Voted the number one course in Colorado by Golfweek's "Best Courses You Can Play" in 2015, this course lives up to its rating, both in beauty and playability. Be sure to bring your camera, and a few extra golf balls. [www.redlandsmesa.com](http://www.redlandsmesa.com)

Nearby is **Tiara Rado Golf Course** which was established in 1971. The front nine of this Grand Junction city course winds through a housing area along the base of the Colorado National Monument's red cliffs. The back nine recently completed an extensive renovation which greatly enhanced its beauty and challenge. The tree lined fairways, several lakes, and a couple of creeks,

helped Tiara Rado become a member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary program, and is home to quail, pheasants, owls, herons, deer, rabbits, foxes and all three species of bluebirds found in the United States. This 18-hole public course, featuring 6,442 yards and a slope of 127 from the championship tees, also provides spectacular views of the Colorado National Monument. [www.golfgrandjunction.net](http://www.golfgrandjunction.net)

Conveniently located off I-70 and overlooking the lush valley and famous bluffs of the Grand Mesa Plateau, the contemporary Grand Junction Doubletree Hotel offers all the necessities for a fun-filled family vacation or a productive business trip. Spacious guestrooms, suites, and executive accommodations have two-line speaker phones with voice mail and data ports, and wireless high-speed Internet access. Extensive recreational amenities include a children's playground, lighted tennis courts, basketball court, putting green, horseshoe pit, volleyball court, seasonal outdoor pool and whirlpool, and fully-equipped Fitness Center. Don't forget about their signature warm chocolate chip cookies when you check-in at 743 Horizon Drive. [www.doubletreegrandjunction.com](http://www.doubletreegrandjunction.com)

Places to eat in Grand Junction, which all offer very good food, include: Bin707 Foodbar [www.bin707.com](http://www.bin707.com), Rockslide Brewery [www.rockslidebrewpub.com](http://www.rockslidebrewpub.com) and the wine bar 626 on Rood which has 32 wines on tap and 40 by the glass. [www.626onrood.com](http://www.626onrood.com)

Continuing east from Grand Junction, Red Sky Ranch and Golf Club can be found in Wolcott. The layout flows across the side of the mountains and integrates with pine and aspen forests while making an elevation change from 7,600 feet to about 8,000 feet. This is a private club with two outstanding 18-hole golf courses designed by Greg Norman and Tom Fazio. However, by staying at selected properties in either Vail or Beaver Creek, guests are able to enjoy this outstanding venue and enjoy magnificent scenery while enjoying the game they love. With very wide and



forgiving fairways, plus greens that have wide aprons for easier chip shots, both courses and the scenery surrounding them will make for enjoyable rounds. The Club alternates member and guest play each day so plan a multi-night stay to play each of them at least once. These exquisite courses are both on Golfweek's Top 10 list for Colorado for 2015. [www.redskygolfclub.com](http://www.redskygolfclub.com)

Just down the road from Red Sky is the enchanting town of Vail. As you venture into Vail, you are entering a new dimension where time and space cease to matter. This quaint Tyrolean village began in the middle 60's and has continuously grown into a wonderful all-season destination. Plan a Gondola ride to the top of the mountain for a majestic view of the surrounding mountains and enjoy a scenic lunch. If you like water, kayaking and floating on Gore Creek is great fun. Vail has always been an innovator of unique vacation experiences and offers the largest free municipal bus system in the United States. Guests can conveniently travel from East Vail to West Vail, between Vail Village and Lionshead, and everywhere in between. With Gore Creek ambling through the village, charming shops, and magnificent ski mountain setting, it will be easy to enjoy your holiday. One of the prettiest times of the year is in the fall when the quaking Aspen leaves are golden and shimmering in the sunlight. Vail is about a 2 hour (100 mile) drive to Denver.

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Be sure to book a tee time at Vail Golf Club where you will find an exciting time at an elevation of 8,100 feet. Although the course is relatively flat, the front nine wanders through several tree lined fairways and offers elevation changes on several holes. The back nine crosses Gore Creek several times and offers some contentious lakes. While the 15th hole is very short and over the creek, it offers a good test of club selection. The Club offers a “green” transportation alternative to walking or riding a cart, the Golf Bike. A new clubhouse is planned for Fall 2015. [www.vailgolfclub.net](http://www.vailgolfclub.net)

There are many choices for your stay in Vail, but after experiencing Arrabelle at Vail Square (A RockResort property), this is the place! Opulent, yet inviting, no other hotel can combine the same level of luxury with the type of old-world charm that inspired so much of the Vail Valley as it is today. Spacious, convenient and lovely, and possibly with the most comfortable bed I have ever slept in. Convenient dining at Tavern on the Square, concerts right outside on the patio a couple of times a week and a complete list of resort highlights on the website, too numerous to name. Tavern on the Square also offers a wonderful patio facing the mountain and when inside, a multi-port plug-in station for a great variety of re-charging devices. After all the fun playing golf, make an appointment at the spa to

relax those muscles, so you can get ready for the next round. [www.arrabelle.rockresorts.com](http://www.arrabelle.rockresorts.com)

Excellent dining in Vail can be found at Mountain Standard which overlooks Gore Creek, with both unique and traditional fare available ([www.mtnstandard.com](http://www.mtnstandard.com)). Plus, Matsuhisa serves a wide variety of sushi and seafood dishes while offering magnificent views of the ski runs on Vail. ([www.matsuhisavail.com](http://www.matsuhisavail.com))



If flying, Grand Junction could be your arrival point with Denver as your departure airport, or vice versa. Grand Junction offers spectacular views, splendid golf, excellent wineries, friendly people and never ending fun! If you have never experienced Vail, then it is time. If you have, you already know what is waiting for you again. West-central Colorado makes for a great summer vacation with much cooler temperatures, sightseeing and other outdoor adventures. [www.visitgrandjunction.com](http://www.visitgrandjunction.com) [www.vail.com](http://www.vail.com) [www.colorado.com](http://www.colorado.com)