

Course Review: Country View Golf Course

Country View Golf Course, located just outside of Ontario on the way to Vale, has been a labor of love and a family affair ever since it opened in 1999. “Unpretentious” is perhaps the best word to describe Country View, which is exactly what you’d expect from pretty much anything located on the far edge of Eastern Oregon.

For most of its existence, Country View “competed” with the city-owned Ontario Golf Club, although the McKinney family at Country View thought of their 9-hole layout less as competition and more as family fun. But municipal budget and water issues forced Ontario to close the golf course in 2014, so when we visited Country View as part of Golf Week 2015, we expected to hear that they’d had a big uptick in play. Some for sure, they said, but not a lot. Country View sort of has its own niche with area golfers, and apparently the more serious 18-hole players moved across the Snake River to Scotch Pines in Payette, Idaho (a very nice course, by the way).

Country View’s staff was unerringly friendly, from our initial phone call weeks ahead to set up a tee time to our brief visit. They were quick to welcome us, interested to hear about our Oregon golf adventure and patient to take photos for us even though picture-taking “isn’t my calling,” in the words of a laughing clubhouse attendant.

Country View is built on a hillside of what was once an 80-acre farm, and if you like to walk, be aware there is a lot of elevation change — in other words, you’re trekking up and down hills. (We took a cart.)



It measures 2949 from the white tees, a modestly longer 3125 from the blues. Generally speaking, the layout is pretty open. There are trees here and there, tending to cluster on certain holes, while other holes allow you to be far off-track and still in play if you can find your ball amongst the sagebrush.

For example, No. 1 is a 350-yard par 4 that slightly doglegs left. You could call the left side of No. 1 “tree-lined,” except those trees are the property border so if you’re over there you’re OB. You tee off out of a chute of trees on No. 4, but unless you go way right or left really quickly, your drive will land in a pretty open area, setting up a short iron on this 336-yard hole. There’s only water in play one time, a pond to the left as you approach the eighth green, a very short (290 yards) par 4.

Those aforementioned hills translate into the occasional blind shot, which can be troublesome if you’re not familiar with the course. The greens are relatively small in most instances, but with a surprising amount of indulgence and breaks. The day we played the greens were a hair slow, we don’t believe they had been mowed that day. But they were consistent, which is all you can ask of any course, and it was easy to adjust.

As you might expect, this is not a highly manicured course. When we played in August, there were a few brown spots and even the occasional patch of just dirt. A few bunkers dot the course, and they can be a little tricky. They’re not deep and they don’t hold much sand — you’re as likely to do well chipping out of them as you are blasting.