

Course Review: Quail Valley Golf Course

Many Portland-area golfers make the mistake of driving west on Highway 26 (the Sunset Highway) to North Plains to play at Pumpkin Ridge time and time again but never venture 5.1 miles further west to play Quail Valley Golf Course in Banks. No, we're not saying Quail Valley is on par with Pumpkin Ridge, but it is a very nice golf course that's a heck of a lot cheaper than it's upscale neighbor.

Quail Valley opened in 1994. Forest Grove native Don very much wishes the course had been built 20 years earlier, when he was still in the area. Quail Valley's site was farmland — it's flat, imminently walkable and even maintains an old farm silo on No. 15 (pictured right) to reinforce its bucolic ambiance. The course is set amongst the rolling hills of the Tualatin Valley in the backdrop; Mt. Hood is even visible to the east on clear days.

Unusual for a western Oregon golf course, trees are rarely an issue at Quail Valley. Again, this was working farmland prior to becoming a golf course, so it's pretty wide open. There are landscape trees that have been growing since 1994 that, of course, get a little bigger every year, but there are still a lot of holes at Quail Valley where you can play the ball off of an adjoining fairway with little or no penalty. In fact, if the course isn't busy and you're not getting in somebody's way, there are holes where it's actually an advantage.

This lack of trees doesn't mean the course is hazard-free. Much of Quail Valley is a natural wetlands area, so there's a variety of water issues on the course. There are also plenty of bunkers awaiting errant shots. When you do get to a green you'll find it to be large and featuring a lot of undulation. There are some pretty good breaks on Quail Valley's dance



floors, so you need to take a little time to read the greens and adjust before putting.

We like courses where you get sort of an easy hole to begin with, and Quail Valley fits that bill. No. 1 is 340 yards and bends a little right, not really a dog-leg, and you can whack your ball a mile right onto the 18th fairway and really play the hole just fine. The most fun hole may be No. 11. Listed at 312 from the whites, it looks shorter and you feel like you can drive it. You can't, there's an elevated green and a big pond on the right. Right after that comes Quail Valley's hardest hole, the 420-yard No. 12 that you look at and think, "This isn't a par 5?" And when you get to No. 15, the one with the silo, savvy regulars know you can cut the left corner easily off the tee.

Finally, here's a tale Quail Valley would likely wish we don't mention, but we think it's worth a chuckle. For a couple of years in the late 1990s, Quail Valley hosted a charity tournament sponsored by a Beaverton-area "gentlemen's club." While the course was closed those days to the public and everyone understood it was an adults-only event, during the tournament the strippers did what strippers do, and what do you know, some neighbors were offended when they looked out their windows and saw naked women on the course. Not nearly as offended were male students from nearby Banks High School, who lined adjacent roads with binoculars in tow. Like that wasn't going to happen? ☺

Quail Valley also features a nice practice facility with grass tees, a well-stocked pro shop and a nice little restaurant/snack bar that has good food.