

Bringing Fun To The Game

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region | November 3, 2017



A reward at the end of 18 holes awaits those that attempt to hit their longest drive ever.

Golf is the epicenter of the Retreat and Links at Silvie Valley Ranch in Seneca, Oregon; but unlike most golf facilities both of the 18-hole courses on the property are reversible. This alone certainly is a novel and fun concept, but they also expanded golf's fun factor in several other creative and subtle ways such as:

- 1. Bunker rakes with attitude** – We all know that bunkers seldom are a fun part of the game, but the bunker rakes at Silvie Valley Ranch, which were handmade from recycled materials, feature fun sayings such as "I'm a rake!", "Stupid club", "Need a drink?", "Do over?", "Aim for flag" and "Nice shot!" This simple idea can at least help put a smile on the face of golfers when they find themselves in a less-than-desirable situation.
- 2. Memorable finishing holes** – Both of the finishing holes at Silvie Valley Ranch have creative signs that explain potential rewards awaiting golfers. One of the signs, featured in the photo accompanying this update, explains 12 reasons why the golfer may hit the longest drive of their life. The signs and prizes help lighten the mood and are sure to leave a big smile on golfers' faces even after the last putt has dropped.
- 3. Unforgettable caddies when playing The Gauntlet** – In addition to two reversible 18-hole courses and a fun par-3 course, Silvie Valley Ranch is home to McVeigh's Gauntlet

Course. A 7-hole short course, The Gauntlet was designed to feature the types of holes that appear impossible to play and are frequently seen on calendars. The goal was to create a short, difficult, low maintenance and truly unique golf experience. However, they incorporated one unusual additional ingredient – the facility intends to train goats to serve as caddies! Hit your shot, put your club back in the bag and walk your caddy to the putting green. Tips are encouraged, but they recommend coins as the caddies will probably eat paper money.

We all like to talk about making the game more fun; the creativity at Silvie Valley Ranch is heading in the right direction.

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