

THE WENATCHEE WORLD

[Back to the Oregon frontier](#)

By Dan Sollom

Aug. 21, 2019



ABOVE: Greg Brown feeds peanuts to Mike the caddy. Right: Gateway to the Ranch.

SENECA, Ore. — We were last at Silvies Valley Ranch in June of 2018 and I vowed to return. So, for three days in August this year, we did just that and oh boy, what a trip it was. My long time friend and photographer, Greg Brown, was once again my wing-man. (Come to think of it, I've never had a wing-man before. I kinda like it.) When we made the trek last year, the McVeigh Gauntlet was not yet complete nor was the 7,000 square foot spa.

The McVeigh Gauntlet is a seven-hole wilderness course that a player navigates some pretty testy terrain and the real bonus to this course is your caddy is a trained goat. No 'kiiiiiding'.

Due to some recent health issues, we chose not to test the Gauntlet but rather play the par 3 nine hole course with Mike (the goat) as our caddy. How fun, how weird, how very frontier Oregon is that? It was an experience like no other.

Mike didn't really offer any useful advice over the short nine holes but, after all, he was just working for peanuts. (Sorry).

We, of course, played the reversible 18 hole championship layout both days and it's still a mystery to me how they came up with this totally one of a kind golf course. There are only three reversible golf courses in the world.

Dan Hixon, the architect for Bandon Crossing & Wine Valley Golf courses, spent six years moving dirt, shaping bunkers and building greens. Six years! The result is nothing short of uniquely spectacular. The 18 hole course has a total of 27 green complexes. This means that 9 greens are common to both courses; 9 are exclusive to Craddock, 9 are exclusive to Hankins. Who sits down with pen and paper and says, "Ya, this will work". Huh...really?

After the second day of golf, I decided to check out the spa before dinner. It opened in January of this year and at 7,000 square feet, it's the largest spa in the state of Oregon. It's got all the amenities you could ask for: A lap pool, full-service workout facility, private treatment rooms, hot tubs, men's and women's separate locker rooms with saunas for each.

It is 'State o' the Art'! I decided to take a long hot sauna bath, shower and get ready for dinner. An exceptional way to end a day on the Oregon frontier.

Dinner both nights was amazing. Seven courses of delectable delights. Each night, a Chevon (goat) course is served and it was 'delish'! We met some new friends from Portland that were visiting for the first time and they, like us, were raving about the Ranch.

The cattle operation is up to 6,000 head and the goat count is right at 3,000. That's a lot going on!

Fun fact: Silvies Valley Ranch is 160,000 acres. That is roughly the same size as the country of Singapore. Singapore has 5.6 million people. Silvies Ranch has 40, which is as frontier as frontier gets.

It is challenging for an amateur hack-writer, like me, to adequately paint the word canvas that fully captures the essence of Silvies Valley Ranch. My advice? See and experience it for yourself. Sure, it's right next to nowhere but if you have a hankering to bump up to the next level of adventure golf and you're up for a road trip, Silvies is a do not miss destination.

See you on the first tee.