

# The Register-Guard

## Silvies the latest in Hixson portfolio

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The enterprise that is Dan Hixson Golf Design doesn't have a Web site, and its sole proprietor, and sole employee, ran out of business cards a few years ago.

Which doesn't mean that Dan Hixson hasn't been busy.

This summer, the 56-year-old golf architect who grew up playing golf at Hidden Valley Golf Course in Cottage Grove introduced two new 18-hole courses, the reversible Craddock and Hankins, at The Retreat & Links at Silvies Valley Ranch. They are Hixson's first new 18-hole designs since Bandon Crossings Golf Club (2007) and Wine Valley Golf Club in Walla Walla, Wash. (2009).

The Silvies Valley Ranch project has dominated Hixson's summers since 2010, but he's also carved a niche as an affordable and innovative architect-of-record for courses in the Portland area and the Willamette Valley. The short-game area at Emerald Valley Golf & Resort was his work, so too the practice facility at Shadow Hills Country Club. More recently, he's designed a new short-game area for the Oregon State University golf teams at Trysting Tree Golf Club in Corvallis, where he also built two new holes, and completed a project at Illahe Hills Country Club in Salem to rebuild a green and 45 bunkers.

In addition to doing fix-it work — a green or two here, new tee boxes there — he's the architect-of-record, developing and overseeing master plans for future improvements, for 11 country clubs, including Portland Golf Club, Oswego Lake and Riverside.

Hixson's inspiration to become a golf course designer came 50 years ago, when his father, longtime pro Harvey Hixson, showed him the renovation project at Eugene Country Club, where Robert Trent Jones Sr. remodeled the course by reversing its direction. But first Dan Hixson was a golf pro, playing mini tours and then working for a decade at Columbia Edgewater CC in Portland, which ultimately gave him an opportunity to co-design a short-game area and par-3 course with Bunny Mason.

That work led to more, and Hixson has found that club pros have been his best source of referrals, given the familiarity of the Hixson name in Northwest golf — his dad is an icon, his brother, Doug, the pro at Quail Valley — and a growing résumé and his willingness to not sell clients on more than they need.

"I kind of made a niche with that," he said. "Saying 'you don't have to blow this thing up.' "

Now, Hixson, who lives in Vancouver, Wash., is in the preliminary stages of designing a new 18-hole course in the Roseburg area, and he's intrigued to see whether his work at Silvies Valley Ranch provides opportunities beyond the Pacific Northwest.

"I'd love to see some of the great sites around the country, and have a chance to build on something like that," he said. "But I'm getting great sites in the Northwest."

Silvies Valley Ranch is the latest, and clearly not the last.