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[Golf Life: High drama, delectable rewards await at Silvies Valley Ranch in Oregon](#)

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By Jason Lusk

It's a very simple premise: Hit "your longest drive" on No. 18 and win a specialty cocktail named the Horseshoe Nail.

But wait, nobody said what "your longest drive" means. Longest ever? Longest of the day? Longest in your mind only

Who cares? Nobody is measuring, and the bartender won't ask for pesky quantifiers. I reminded myself to not overthink it and just enjoy the downhill tee shot to the wide, firm and funneling fairway of No. 18 on the Hankins Course that leads to the clubhouse bar, Egan's Hideout, at the Retreat and Links at Silvies Valley Ranch.

Designer Dan Hixson fashioned two reversible courses that opened in 2017 at the remote Silvies Valley. The 18-hole Hankins Course and 18-hole Craddock Course have a combined 27 greens, nine of which are shared. The property also features a nine-hole par-3 course and an unlikely seven-hole short course named McVeigh's Gauntlet – complete with a team of goat caddies that have become social media stars – atop eastern Oregon's high-desert hills.



Egan's Hideout at Silvies Valley Ranch features a Western vibe with long views and a specialty drink players can earn with a long drive on No. 18 of the Hankins Course. (Silvies Valley Ranch)

It's a lot of wide-open golf, and the dry setting creates an equally wide-open thirst. A sign posted on the 18th tee of the Hankins Course reminds players to swing for the fences to earn their Horseshoe Nail on the par 5 that drops some 100 feet toward the green.

Those well-earned drinks – and probably quite a few that aren't so well-earned – are served in an open-air combination of pro shop and bar, where guests rest their sandy feet and relax with a 20-mile view of surrounding hills and mountains. A patio is suspended off the back of the cabin-like structure, a minimalistic Western building with wooden decor and wide rolling doors that let the outside in.

The signature Horseshoe Nail has a lot more bite to it than do the well-trained goat caddies. The drink includes whiskey and Drambuie and is garnished with a square nail and crabapple from the only fruit tree on the 140,000-acre working ranch. There are plenty of other options on the drink menu, but the Horseshoe Nail comes with bragging rights.

The resort features a new spa with an indoor pool and a communal dining room at the main lodge that serves gourmet, ranch-to-table Western cuisine plus 110 scotches and 50 whiskeys. There's even a beer tree, adorned with neon signs and a cooler full of canned coolness, up on McVeigh's Gauntlet. But as the sun sets and the stars pop out of a night sky unpolluted by ground light, there's no better place than the elevated Egan's Hideout. The air is crisp, the desert is serene and the conversation flows as easily as the drinks.

Even if you didn't really hit your longest drive on No. 18. **Gwk**