



[Goat Caddies!](#)

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When I first heard that there was a magical place in Oregon where goats carry your golf clubs, I stopped everything that I was doing and booked my trip immediately. Yes, that's right, they have goat caddies in Oregon. In case I don't have your attention I will type it in capital letters.... GOAT CADDIES. The good news is that these goat caddies do not come alone. At Silvie's Valley Ranch you have first class hospitality, a massive cattle ranch, and 4 different golf courses. Oh and also, caddies that are goats... GOAT CADDIES.



Bruce the goat caddie gives me the stink eye after a missed short putt.

To fully understand the story of the goat caddies, we must first go back to the 1880's when a French Trapper named Silvie entered the land that would later become Silvie's Valley Ranch. He had come not for goats, but to trap the go to commodity of the 1880's... beaver. The removal of these beaver would

shape the landscape over the next 120 years eventually making way for the Campbell family to purchase the property in 2007. Over the last dozen years or so, the 60 square mile ranch has been ecologically restored and countless improvements have been made.

One of those improvements is the establishment of a very unique golf resort. Located in the remote town of Seneca, Oregon, Silvies has created a wildly fun and interesting place to play golf. Unfortunately, the ranch is not an easy place to get to, but once you arrive on the property, you will be instantly glad that you and your friends made the voyage. The staff immediately welcomes you to the property and makes you feel like you are part of the family.

With a dining lodge, spa, and spacious rooms, the golfer has everything that they need for several days of golf and related shenanigans. Each guest has their own personal golf cart to drive around the property and since there is no cell phone coverage, they give you walkie talkies to request anything that you might need from the staff during your visit. We used it to broadcast movie quotes and have conversations like this classic exchange from the movie Airplane. I am not joking.

Now, when I mentioned four different golf courses at the beginning of this post, I was serious. Not only are the golf courses different from each other but they are different from most of the other golf courses in the United States. Here are the vital stats on the courses at Silvies Valley Ranch.

- **Hankins Course**

- Dan Hixon Championship 18 hole course
- 7075 yards
- Played odd # days

- **Craddock Course**

- Dan Hixon Championship 18 hole course
- 7035 yards
- Played even # days

- **Chief Egan Course**

- Par 3 golf course
- 9 holes, 875 yards
- Goat Caddies available

- **McVeigh's Gauntlet**

- Challenging executive course (par 2's 3's and 4's)
- 7 holes, 1177 yards
- Goat Caddies available



The opening hole on the par 3 Chief Egan Course



Sunset on the Egan.

On the drive up into Oregon from California I phoned my friend Sean, from [BreakingEighty](#). I hadn't talked to Sean in a while and I wanted to get the latest on his adventures.

- **Sean:** "Hey Patrick, what's up?"
- **Me:** "Ah, not much man, just driving up to Silvies Ranch in Oregon."
- **Sean:** "You're driving to Silvies Ranch in Oregon? I am driving to Silvies Ranch in Oregon!!"

That is the story of how Sean and I found out that we were on the same Silvies' agenda for the week. We had no idea that we were scheduled to visit at the same time, but it was a welcome surprise. If there is one thing that I love more than golf it is beating Sean Ogle at golf.

Since we arrived in the afternoon, we started off the fun on the Chief Egan par 3 course. Sean had brought his friend Jamie and we decided to go with a 2 on 1 skins death match. After Sean and Jamie took the first two skins, I decided to get serious and stormed back to win the match with some clutch putting. Sean and Jamie would get used to this sort of devastation.



The 2nd on the Egan course

Up next we took on the heart of the Silvies Golf Resort, the Hankins and Craddock courses. Both of these 18 hole championship golf courses were designed by Dan Hixon. Named after the early pioneers of Silvies Ranch, they are also the most similar of the four golf courses on the property. That is because they are played on the exact same piece of land.

Yes, that's right, I am talking about a reversible golf course. The Craddock course is played on even numbered days and then the routing is reversed and the Hankins course is played on the odd numbered days.



The 15th hole on the Craddock course is the 3rd hole on the Hankins course. It is my favorite green on the property.





The 4th hole on the Craddock Course

The two courses share a majority of the green sites with 27 green complexes in total. The 9 additional greens provide completely unique golf holes for each of the two courses and adds great variety to both the Hankins and Craddock golfing experiences.

The most important aspect of the two designs is that you absolutely do not feel like you are just replaying some of the same green sites. You approach the greens from completely different angles and usually from a different length, making each approach feel like something brand new. It's also pretty fun to uncover the routing and see just how different the course unfolds playing the other way.



The 12th hole on the Hankins course is also the 5th hole on the Craddock course.



#16 on Hankins or #2 on Craddock



The sun sets over #16 on the Craddock course.



The par 5 5th hole on the Hankins golf course

The fine folks at Silvie's Valley Ranch believe that golf should be fun. The best part about this belief is that they just don't sit around believing it, they actually do something about it. In addition to the varied golf courses at the Ranch, they also offer a number of fun challenges that golfers can take part in. You can win prizes in the golf shop by accomplishing these challenges. It is a shining example of how to make golf fun.

Nailed It

The 18th hole on the Hankins course is at 5000 feet elevation, it is downhill, downwind, and very dry. If you know anything about golf ball aerodynamics, you know that this is the perfect setting for bombing a huge freaking drive. The hole has been designed to inspire the long ball and if you manage to hit the longest drive of your life they will provide you with a Silvie's Valley Ranch "Nailed it" flask filled with whiskey. Since this is golf, Silvie's goes on the honor system.

As was expected, both Sean and I swung like a couple of madmen on the tee box and actually made some pretty solid contact. Sean's drive measure 358 yards and mine came in at..... 366 yards. Neither of us could remember a time when we hit one further so the flasks were gifted upon us.

If you complete any of these challenges, you also get to sign the "Book of Winners." I signed my name right next to tour player [Graham DeLaet](#)... who hit his drive 390 yards.



The "Nailed It" flask on display.

One-Putt Challenge

The final four holes on the Hankins course offer a similar challenge in terms of putting. If you manage to one-putt all 4 of these holes, you will earn a round of the course's signature drink, "The Horseshoe Nail," for your foursome. We immediately managed to 3 putt like a bunch of fools and spoiled our chances.

Fortunately, the challenge also allows the golfer to one-putt the 18th green to earn their own personal drink. I decided to hole out from off of the green and Sean hit the flagstick to tap in for his drink. I donated my "Horseshoe Nail" to Jamie and continued [my journey of sobriety](#) for another day.



One putt the 18th and you are drinking for free in the clubhouse.

Lucky 7

The final challenge takes place on the McVeigh course. Complete all of the challenges below and you get to play for free golf at Silvies Ranch for an entire year. Good luck with #7.

1. Complete score on all 7 holes

2. Use less than 7 clubs
3. Use less than 7 balls
4. Drink less than 7 beers
5. Complete the course in under 77 minutes
6. Birdie the par 2 Bonus Beer hole, (which has a 7.7 inch cup)
7. Have a score of under 17

No one in our group even came close to finishing within 17 strokes. I don't think we even kept score. We were too excited about our new friend Bruce... THE GOAT CADDY.



Bruce the goat caddy arrives to the first tee with his goat handler, Hadley.

From the moment our group set eyes on Bruce, he was immediately part of the team. He strode right up onto the first tee and all of the appropriate introductions were made. This was by far the most excited that I have even been about a caddy (sorry, [Shuster](#)). You could tell that Bruce was eager as well, but I got the feeling that he would have been just as content to sit there and eat the bushes for an hour.

By the second hole, Bruce would get into the flow of the round and easily keep pace with our group. In no time, he was handing out clubs left and right while dispensing golf balls like the veteran goat caddy that he is.

I asked Bruce for advice several times during our round and both times he just kind of glared at me. I could read it all over his face. "You know what club to hit Koenig, just step up and pull the trigger, you pansy." Bruce is a no nonsense type of goat caddie and has little tolerance for indecisiveness. I stepped into line quickly.



Front view: Bruce The Goat Caddy



Rear view: Bruce The Goat Caddy.

Bruce is outfitted with a custom made double bag goat saddle from [Seamus Golf](#). It has got all of the pouches and accessories that one would want from their caddy. We only put 6 clubs in each of Bruce's bags and they fit nicely. Bruce carried it with ease.

Even though Bruce was stealing the show, McVeigh's Gauntlet was certainly holding our attention as well. The course is designed to be so difficult that it's fun. The greens are sloped, tiny, and elevated onto hill tops. If you miss your target even slightly, you will face a tough up and down from a potentially precarious situation.



Goat caddie selfies with the [@GoatCaddies](#) at [@SilviesRetreat](#)





The wildly difficult 3rd hole on the McVeigh Challenge Course.



The view from the tee box on the 1st hole.



Bruce keeps his eye on the paparazzi as I hunt down flagsticks.

Bruce the Goat Caddy Facts:

- Bruce has done 4 loops in one day.
- Bruce does not accept cash tips, he only accepts peanut tips.
- Bruce has appeared on Good Morning America.
- Bruce is not easily impressed.
- Bruce's selfie game is strong to very strong.
- Bruce has a goat caddy buddy named Mike.



Silvies Valley Ranch ranks as one of the most unique and fun golf destinations that I have visited. While the emphasis is on the goat caddies, the golf and the entire experience is first class. As my friend [Evan Schiller](#) would say, “Go for the goat caddies, the golf is not baaahhd either.”

I will leave you with the link to my Instagram story on the [goat caddy experience](#). You will want to click on it..