

QUAIL VALLEY'S FIRST DECADE HAS BEEN NOTABLE FOR THE RAPID EXPANSION OF ITS FACILITIES AND A GENEROUS CHARITY PROGRAM. WHAT NEXT?

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# Vero Beach

## *Magazine*®

TEN YEARS OF QUALITY  
AT QUAIL VALLEY



*Quail Valley Golf Club's first decade has been notable for the rapid expansion of its facilities and a generous charity program. What can we expect between now and 2022?*

## TEN YEARS OF QUALITY AT QUAIL VALLEY

BY MARY BETH VALLAR  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY L.C. LAMBRECHT





Golf course architects Nick Price and Tom Fazio II moved three million cubic yards of dirt onto what was originally an orange grove, creating dramatic vistas and elevation swings.



The 4,000-square-foot Learning Center features the latest high-tech training devices to help members improve their game. In addition to the Learning Center, Quail Valley Golf Club sports a 35-acre practice range and six par-three practice holes.

**Q**ual Valley Golf Club opened its doors 10 years ago this month. Built on the traditions of family values and community involvement, the club has stayed true to these themes, weathered the economic recession quite well, and looks toward a future of growth and continued success.

Quail Valley started with the golf course, which sprang from an orange grove on 69th Street, a flat piece of

topography that was transformed into hills, lakes and valleys to create 18 holes of superb golf. Within two years the club completed its “in town” component, the Quail Valley River Club on A1A. Today Quail Valley is Vero Beach’s most comprehensive country club.

The club is, however, much more than an all-encompassing social, sports, fitness center, spa and recreational oasis. Its original founders, Steve Mulvey and Kevin

Given, like to call it a “club for the community.” The designation fits.

For one thing, neither of Quail Valley’s sites is located within a gated residential development, and indeed it attracts members from the mainland as well as the barrier island. But more important, Quail Valley’s savvy management has harnessed the club’s energy and that of its members and catapulted it – along with a good bit of

their collective resources – into the creation of a highly successful organization called Quail Valley Charities.

To date the charitable program has contributed \$2.2 million to local agencies that focus on child welfare and education.

As Steve Mulvey puts it: “We really are involved in this community. The club is about community pride and we foster it in everything we do here.”



*The clubhouse, inspired by the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Long Island, N.Y., is perched on one of the highest elevations on the course.*



*Quail Valley's wide rolling and elevated fairways are dotted with oaks and pines, and there is not a palm tree in sight.*

**Q**n 400 acres of land located approximately 10 miles northwest of Vero Beach, Mulvey envisioned a golf course with a "Northern" feel, and that's what he got. Architects Nick Price and Tom Fazio II designed a decidedly atypical Florida golf course by moving three million cubic yards of dirt to create dramatic vistas and impressive elevation swings reaching a height of 64 feet above sea level on what is today the 16th, par-three hole. Quail Valley's wide rolling and elevated fairways are dotted with oaks and pines, and there is not a palm tree in sight.

Each year since inception, the club management has continued to enhance the golf course with numerous improvements, most notably the addition of 7,000 trees and native plants. As one member said, "We can't wait to return each year to see what's new on the course."

Something else that is not in sight is a house, because

the philosophy of the Quail Valley Golf Club is a return to the traditional, "pure golf" experience in a non-residential setting. This underlying theme is reflected in the club's active caddie program, as well as in the design of the course. "On most holes, golfers have the option of keeping the ball low and rolling it onto the green, as they do on traditional Scottish courses," says Don Meadows, director of golf.

**T**raditional it is. Yet the club's state-of-the-art, ultra-tech Learning Center, built at a cost of just under \$1 million, has launched golf at Quail Valley into the 21st century.

The 4,000-square-foot Learning Center makes the most of the ever-evolving technological advances in training devices, teaching methods and golf equipment. It has three hitting bays equipped with multiple cameras that



Animal trophies, such as this rogue lion, decorate the men's lounge, noted for its resplendent mahogany and dark hues.

photograph a golfer's swing from three angles, and features such computerized aids as the V1 visual teaching system to provide instant video analysis. The most recent device added to the Learning Center's arsenal is the Track Man system.

"This is a Doppler-based radar device that measures club head speed, ball speed, launch conditions, and the distance that a golf ball flies," explains Meadows. "This helps with club fitting, ensuring that people are purchasing the right equipment. It also helps with teaching because it allows golfers to understand the position of the club face during all phases of the swing, and it charts the distance hit with certain clubs."

In addition to the Learning Center, Quail Valley sports a 35-acre practice range, six par-three practice holes and a talented staff dedicated to the pursuit of excellence of the game. "Everything we do provides an opportunity to

help members improve and enjoy the game," Meadows adds. "We are really committed to that philosophy."

The course plays from 5,145 to 7,350 yards, depending on the distance from each of six tee boxes. Course length, topography and strategically placed bunkers provide plenty of challenge for golfers. Once on the green they face a putting surface that is notoriously fast.

The greens are seeded with Tifagle, which is a newer, ultra-dwarf Bermuda hybrid. This unique turf and its meticulous care – which includes proper aeration, top-dressing with sand, and timely rolling of the greens – account for lightning speed and trueness of roll.

Because of the greens, as well as the overall condition of the course and the graciousness of the staff, Quail Valley Golf Club earned rave reviews from golfers and officials when the club hosted two significant golf events: the Florida State Golf Association's 2009 Florida Open and

*Comparing Quail Valley River Club to a "home run" is a clever metaphor, considering Mulvey's great-grandfather was one of the original founders of the Dodgers in 1912.*

the 2011 Final Stage Sectional Qualifying event for the U.S. Open.

For members, the magnificent course and extraordinary practice and teaching facilities are complemented by a vigorous golf program. "We do between 17,500 to 18,500 rounds of golf a year," Meadows says.

The golf staff has especially nurtured the women and couples golf programs, offering weekly events for each. Some are regularly preceded by complimentary golf clinics. Quail Valley also has active junior golf programs for youngsters 6 to 16.

The clubhouse, inspired by the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Long Island, N.Y., is perched at least 50 feet above the street level entrance, providing an elegant and comfortable hub for pre- and post-golf activities. Its interior is traditional, rich with mahogany and dark hues. Probably its most talked-about feature is the roomy men's locker room – decorated with numerous stand-alone and mounted animal trophies. Mulvey, a passionate wild game hunter, shot them all. His most spectacular prizes on display are the "big five," which are the five most dangerous animals to hunt: a lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros and Cape buffalo.

Given, who met and partnered with Mulvey 12 years ago, often comments that Mulvey's wife, Kathy, is the golfer of the two. "We typically hear about her golf shots more than his hunting marks."

While the founders acknowledge golf is an integral part of Quail Valley, they planned from the beginning to offer the full spectrum of country-club amenities at a barrier-island location. Mulvey called their acquisition of the old Riomer Yacht Club property and the building of the River Club "the real home run."

Comparing Quail Valley River Club to a "home run" is a clever metaphor, considering Mulvey's history with Vero Beach and the Dodgers. "My great-grandfather, Stephen McKeever, was one of the original founders of the Dodgers in 1912," he explains. As a boy Mulvey remembers many spring-training seasons in Vero Beach and said he



A view of the men's locker room adjacent to the lounge.



*The newly rebuilt marina at the River Club has moorings for yachts from 30–105 feet.*



*The Garden Terrace at the River Club is a popular outdoor dining area.*

had always wanted to come back. He realized that dream with Quail Valley. "We saw a need for a high-end, stand-alone golf club, with the River Club as the focal point."

If the acquisition of Riomer Yacht Club to build the Quail Valley River Club turned into a home run, a claim of "foul play" against the sellers marked the River Club's controversial beginnings.

The Riomer Yacht Club, owned by the Semon family,

had been a Vero Beach institution for decades. When sale of the 10-acre riverfront property came under contract, a handful of Riomer members brought a class-action lawsuit against the Semons claiming the proposed sale was a breach of contract. They demanded in the lawsuit that the Semons give Riomer members the option to buy the club.

The controversy was hashed out in the public arena for months, and eventually the lawsuit was thrown out and

the sale to the Quail Valley team consummated.

"Steve and I can laugh about it now," Given says. "But at the time there was a lot of negative publicity and we seemed to be in the paper every day. We had good support from many of the Riomer members who wanted us to build a new club on the site, but others claimed we would never succeed and they stood on the sidelines waiting to see if the club would be built and prosper."

Of course, the new club was destined to succeed and Quail Valley offered Riomer members the opportunity to be the first to join. Given says about 125 members did. More joined over time, as did other residents of the community. Membership in the River Club is now capped at 500.

Currently, Quail Valley has 285 golf members, who have privileges at both the Golf Club and the River Club.

The 500 River Club members may use the Golf Club for six months of the year, from May through October.

Tradition and community involvement were important factors when it came to selecting members of the business community to partner with Quail Valley since its beginning. Most notable are the following prominent civic and philanthropic leaders: Susan Schuyler Smith, owner of Spectrum Interior Design; architect Tony Donodio; Don Proctor of Proctor Construction; Bob McNally of Palm Coast Construction, and Quail Valley founding members Tom Corr and Joe Corr of the George E. Warren Corporation. Smith was the interior designer of both Quail Valley clubhouses; Donodio was the architect of the River Club; Proctor was the builder of the River Club, and McNally was the builder of the Learning Center and the additions to the River Club. The George E. Warren Corporation stepped in as the major sponsor of Quail Valley Charities.

In 2002 Quail Valley completed the River Club's Nantucket-style, 12,500-square-foot clubhouse. It houses the 140-seat waterfront dining room and the informal McKeever's Pub & Grille, which was named in honor of Mulvey's great-grandfather. For outdoor dining it added a poolside patio terrace, tiki bar and garden terrace. Also completed in 2002 were a two-story fitness center and spa, a 25-meter pool, seven Har-Tru tennis courts and tennis shop, and a two-story boathouse adjacent to the 40-dock marina. Three years later the Riverhouse opened. This 10,000-square-foot guest house has eight suites for use by members and their out-of-town guests.

As a result of the most recent expansion project, completed in the fall of 2011, there is virtually no amenity lacking at Quail Valley for members of all ages. The expanded fitness center and spa and the new youth activities center are two areas of the club where usage is exploding.

"We added nearly 8,000 square feet to the fitness center and spa because we find that everyone, regardless of age, is making the commitment to get healthy," Given contends. "We have doubled the size of the fitness equipment room, where we have between 140-150 people a day working out during the season, and up to 100 a day in the summer."

Members using the exercise equipment throughout different times of each day give a good reading of the club's demographics. "As early as 5:30 a.m. we see working professionals at the fitness center," Given points out. "Then at around 8:30 there are young mothers who come in

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STEVE MULVEY

after seeing their kids off to school. From mid-morning through early afternoon we start to have retirees drift in. And at 5 p.m. and after, we again see the working members who stop in for a workout after they leave the office. So we get a good mix of people all day."

The spa continues to be a focal point of commitment. In addition to offering manicures, pedicures and massage therapy, the club recently contracted with Back in Form Physical Therapy Inc., owned by Michael and Shannon Hauser, to offer physical-therapy treatment for members on site at the fitness center.

Besides physical therapists on staff, Quail Valley also has a licensed nutritionist and acupuncturist. "We continue to be committed to offering amenities and services that our members are responsive to," Given says.

Another area of expansion to the River Club was the 2,000-square-foot addition to the tennis facility to accommodate the youth activities center. Given explains the club's focus on youngsters and families. "We have 300 families among the members with nearly 400 children under the age of 22 who are living at home or are attending college or university.

"Many of our members are two-career families with younger children, and these parents found that there is usually a 2-2½-hour gap between their leaving work and their kids getting out of school. We can fill that gap at Quail Valley by providing after-school activities, such as tennis, swimming, and arts and crafts, and a place for youngsters to do homework or just hang out in a safe, supervised environment."

The youth activities center is equipped with computers, as well as with Wii games, televisions, a Ping-Pong table, and other age-appropriate recreational gear. School buses making regular after-school drops at Quail Valley come primarily from Beachland Elementary School, Vero Beach High School and Saint Edward's School.

Thirty-eight percent of Quail Valley Golf & River Club members are full-time residents of Vero Beach. This means the club stays active all year and is adequately staffed year-round.



*The River Club offers a 25-meter pool, fitness center and spa, seven Har-Tru tennis courts and tennis shop, and a new youth activities center.*

"We keep around 130 on our payroll all year, and bring in another 20 employees from November to April. Our annual payroll is over \$3 million," Given says.

"This past summer we did a 5- and 10-year recognition program for our team members, and we honored nearly

75 percent of our staff who have been with us five years or more." First to join the Quail Valley team prior to the opening were Martha Redner, executive assistant and membership director, and Bo Estey, golf course superintendent. On board at the River Club since the beginning



JON PINE

Martha Redner, executive assistant and membership director, is flanked by Quail Valley founders Steve Mulvey and Kevin Given.

are Pam Cork, dock master; Anne Patrick, fitness and spa director; Sam Garcia, tennis director; Barbara Wolff, executive housekeeper; Joe Faria, executive chef, and Chris Gibbon, concierge. "Both Steve and I, along with the membership, readily acknowledge that our success comes from the contributions of our team members.

"As part of our charities program," Given adds, "we commit a portion of the money raised to scholarships. We currently have 13 team members on scholarships funded by Quail Valley Charities. They predominantly go to IRSC, and a few attend UCF and various vocational programs, as well."

Quail Valley Charities, a 501(c)3 organization, celebrates its 10th anniversary along with the club this year. It is, without doubt, an important aspect of the club's culture. "From the beginning it was our goal to be a part of the entire Vero Beach community, as opposed to an enclave unto ourselves," Given says. "We have worked hard over the years to increase member participation in Quail Valley Charities and to provide more opportunities for the community at large to get involved."

While Quail Valley Charities was Given's inspiration, he is quick to give credit to others for its ongoing success. They include the executive committee, comprised of an 11-person board of Quail Valley members; the Quail Valley staff, and Martha Redner, who also serves as Quail Valley Charities' executive director.

In 2002 the Charity Cup Golf Tournament was the inaugural – and only – fundraising event. Today the executive committee, staff and Martha Redner plan and execute a week's worth of events. Each event is open to the community and includes golf, tennis and bridge tournaments, dining events, walks and runs, an art show, Ocean Drive shopping day, and more.

In her role as executive director of Quail Valley Charities, Martha Redner is well-known to the nonprofits community for guiding agency applications through the grant process. Last year Quail Valley Charities awarded \$300,000 to 24 organizations to carry out specific welfare and educational programs for children in Indian River County.



DENSE RITCHIE

To date Quail Valley Charities has contributed \$2.2 million to local agencies that focus on child welfare and education. Last year's Charity Cup executive committee: Chris Gibbons, Susan Temple, Mary Knapp, Tony Marshall, Joanna Meyers, Suzanne Bertman, Martha Redner, Wanda Lincoln, Anne Patrick, Anita Kolleeny, Stacey Barnett, Trudie Rainone, Barbara Morgan and Carol Fischman.

*Each of Quail Valley's charity events is open to the community and includes golf, tennis and bridge tournaments, dining events, walks and runs, an art show, an Ocean Drive shopping day, and more.*

*All are geared for fun and to raise money for multiple charities. Last year, Quail Valley Charities awarded \$300,000 to 24 organizations.*

"We decided to donate to multiple charities because so many organizations are making an impact but they may be falling under the radar, so to speak, and are not as close to the community's philanthropic dollars as some of the larger and better known organizations," Given explains.

The grants are indeed meaningful to the recipients,

says Dennis Bartholomew, executive director of The Sun Up Center. "When I opened the envelope containing the check from Quail Valley Charities, I was floored! Thanks to the club, we will be able to provide a new, exciting and potentially life-changing 'Early Intervention' program for developmentally disabled children and their families."

With responses like that, Quail Valley's measure in the community goes beyond the corporate bottom line or a golf member's stellar round on the beautiful course – or even a perfectly prepared gourmet meal in the River Club's waterfront dining room. It is also measured by the significant impact its members are making on the lives of children.

"The management team looks forward to the next decade with the same enthusiasm and energy that went into the first 10 years," Given says. "Our members remain our No. 1 focus and their continued commitment to the club and its programs will inevitably spill over to benefit the entire Vero Beach community." ☀

# CELEBRATING OUR 10TH YEAR

*Proudly Preserving the Charm, Traditions and Values of Vero Beach*



*As our bonds of friendship continue to grow, we salute our Members  
with a promise to continue to exceed your expectations.*

*We also extend a heartfelt thank you to this wonderful Community  
for their overwhelming support of our Club and Quail Valley Charities.*

*As we look to the future, we assure you the best is yet to come!*

QUAIL VALLEY  
GOLF CLUB      RIVER CLUB

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