



LINKS

PREMIER CLUBS

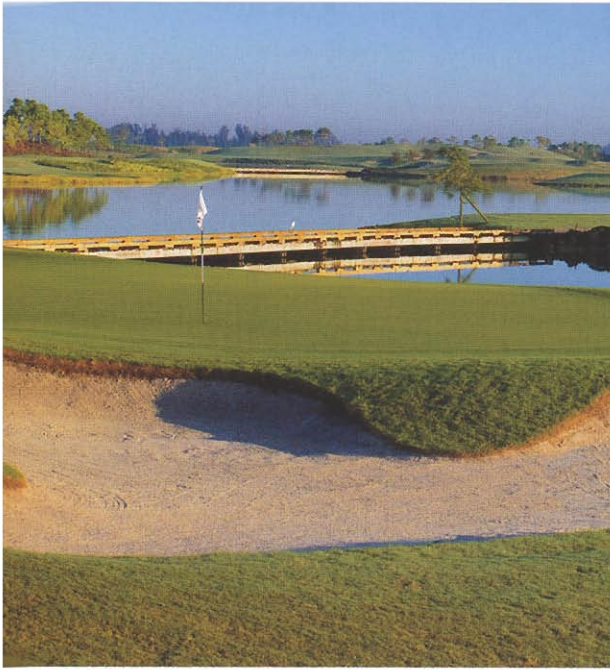
the best of
AMERICAN GOLF
2010



The 450-yard 18th plays uphill toward the classically designed clubhouse.

OPPOSITE: After playing holes like the 540-yard 14th (near right), members can enjoy al fresco sunset dining at the River Club (far right).

Quail Valley Golf & River Club



WITH A UNIQUE COURSE
AND A SPRAWLING BOATING,
TENNIS AND SWIM FACILITY,
QUAIL VALLEY OFFERS A
SPORTING AND SOCIAL
EXPERIENCE LIKE
NONE OTHER



With one of the best caddie programs in the state, those design secrets don't stay hidden for long. And with two men's groups divided into those above a 15 handicap and those below, with each teeing it up a couple of times a week, there's always a game to be found.

"We have eight of the best amateur golfers in the area, male and female," says co-owner Kevin Given, adding that they can often be found at the club's new \$1 million Learning Center. "The uniqueness of the golf course sets it apart but the practice facility takes it to a whole other level. It's drop-dead gorgeous."

Like most great clubs, Quail Valley, which hosted the 2009 Florida State Open, was built by word-of-mouth, friends inviting friends. "We have the best membership by far of any club I've ever owned or been associated with," says Mulvey, who has built, owned or operated 17 clubs, including venerable Hudson National in New York's Westchester County. "It's all based on service. The financial stability is a huge key for people too. We weathered 9/11 and this recent recession. We're probably the most financially sound club in Florida, if not the United States, right now."

What's unique about Quail Valley is that, unlike most country clubs, the golf and other amenities are completely separate. While the golf club is all about playing the game, the focus of the River Club, eight miles away, is social interaction. The sprawling complex is near the beach on the Intra-coastal Waterway. Says Mulvey: "This added so much. The members absolutely love it."



The River Club, which opened in 2003, has a 43-slip marina, fitness and spa complex, 25-meter pool, tiki bar, seven Har-Tru tennis courts and eight 900-square-foot suites with outdoor fireplaces that overlook the water. Many members who live in the Northeast don't even own homes in the area and just stay in the homey accommodations.

The River Club is pure Florida, with a 43-slip marina, 25-meter pool and seven clay tennis courts.

INSET: The fire pit is a popular spot.

OPPOSITE: The 437-yard 15th doesn't give up pars easily.

Located in the heart of downtown Vero Beach, the River Club is also the social center of the club, playing host to all kinds of fun events, like live music three nights a week and poker nights in the Boathouse. The main restaurant, the French cottage-style 2343 Prime, serves up certified Black Angus beef cooked on an 800-degree griddle and some of the best sunsets you've ever seen, while the sports-themed McKeever's Pub & Grille offers more casual fare.

As president of the hotel group of Starwood Hotels & Resorts, which includes the Westin and St. Regis brands, Avril knows a thing or two about quality and service. "It's fair to say I have high expectations when it comes to that," he says. "And I haven't seen any club that does it better than Quail Valley."