



The view from the Valleywood Golf Club restaurant is unbeaten, according to marketing director Jim Binkley. Binkley called the club, located in Swanton, the best-kept secret in the county.

MIRROR PHOTOS BY KERRI RALLS



The spacious restaurant at Valleywood Golf Club features a full menu of entrees, including a Friday night prime rib and seafood buffet for \$19.95. The restaurant, which is open to the public, overlooks the golf course and can accommodate 100 guests.

Valleywood Golf Club Offers Options For Everyone

BY KERRI RALLS
MIRROR REPORTER

Valleywood Golf Club restaurant is the best-kept secret in the entire county, according to marketing director Jim Binkley.

Certainly, there is no restaurant with a better view.

The club, under the direction of new general manager and head pro John Stewart, boasts a full restaurant, bar and banquet facilities overlooking the golf course.

"People just don't know it's open to the public," Binkley said.

While Valleywood, both the restaurant and the golf course, does take members, all facilities are open to the public.

Patrons of the restaurant can sit in the clean dining room, at the large bar or out on the patio, which overhangs part of the golf course.

Floor to ceiling windows allow a great view even in cold weather at the restaurant, which is open year-round.

"It's especially nice in (the spring and summer) when everything's lush

green," said Valleywood's Dan Lane. "You can sit out on the patio; it's a very nice dining experience."

Executive chef Patrick Young's menu offers a wide range of options that won't empty your wallet.

Entrees range in price from \$14.95 to \$19.95.

Lunch and dinner are served daily and can be ordered to go.

Breakfast is also available on Saturdays and Sundays, and a Sunday brunch takes place from noon to 2:00 p.m.

Perhaps the best deal at the restaurant, formerly called Louie P's, is the Friday night buffet.

Each Friday night, Valleywood offers a prime rib and seafood all-you-can-eat buffet for \$19.95.

"It's probably our signature meal," Binkley said. "It's an unusual combination; you can't find that very many places."

Young, who has been in food service for 15 years, says Valleywood offers a little bit of everything.

"We have regional favorites, like perch," Young said. "We have strip steak, prime rib, sandwiches,

pasta" and much more.

Young, a graduate of the Pennsylvania School of Culinary Arts, said while he doesn't have a "specialty" because he likes to try a wide range of foods, his personal favorite is the London broil.

"We also run daily specials, depending on the season," Young said.

One of the recent specials was roast beef and mashed potatoes for \$6.00.

For those with a sweet tooth, though the restaurant does not offer a specific dessert menu, daily dessert specials are featured.

For another kind of craving, the full bar offers the choice of virtually any drink.

Stewart suggested a martini or Manhattan, which he said are club favorites.

Young and the staff at Valleywood also do all the catering for banquet room events.

Valleywood boasts banquet rooms that can host anywhere from 10 to 250 people.

"We can have small business meetings to a reasonably large wedding," Binkley said.

Young added that part of the allure of the rooms is that he and his staff are willing to work with customers to design the perfect menu for each function.

"You're not locked into just what's on the menu," Young said.

In addition to the daily meals, Valleywood hosts special events throughout the year.

Young said the club offers meals on Easter, Thanksgiving and Mother's Day. In warm weather, it hosts patio parties and features a karaoke night once a month.

This year, the official opening of the golf season will be on Saturday, April 22, with an annual tournament, karaoke and, of course, restaurant specials.

Binkley stressed that the golf club is not an elite place.

"It was built with members and the public in mind for both to enjoy," he said.

To that end, Binkley said the club is reinventing itself in a way.

Valleywood is promoting the restaurant and is one of only a handful of clubs that boast a general manager and

a head professional in the same man.

Stewart, of Swanton, recently assumed that position.

"It's an exciting thing — exciting for (Stewart) and exciting in the area," Binkley said. He also noted that Stewart is the first-ever general manager at Valleywood.

He said many local golf clubs do not have a professional on staff.

Conversely, Valleywood has Stewart, who has been a PGA pro for 13 years.

Binkley said this a big benefit for golfers.

"Our guys can get their handicap signed by a pro and go somewhere else and get in a tournament," he said.

Stewart said Valleywood also offers full-service features not found other places.

"We have a fully-stocked clubhouse," Stewart said, "so whether you are a member or a guest you can come out, buy your equipment here and go out to play golf."

The clubhouse is open year-round and even offers club storage so golfers don't have to lug their heavy bags.

Additionally, members and guests alike can work up an appetite year-round on the golf course.

Valleywood recently hired Eric Kahl as the new superintendent for the course, which features an oasis and a 19th hole.

Kahl has a degree in turf management and has been in the golf course industry for 12 years.

He said his goal is to fine tune the course so members and guests can continue to expect a four-hour round of golf.

Stewart said the club offers a number of league and tournament opportunities.

Twenty-three tournaments are held throughout the year, as well as several golf outings.

League options include a Monday night league for both men and women, and a Sunday couples league.

Kids can get in on the action, too, in the club's junior golf league.

To decide for yourself if Valleywood really is the best-kept secret in the county, the club is located at 13502 Airport Hwy. in Swanton, or call (419) 826-5931.

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