



**DESTINATIONS: SILICON VALLEY**

## Golf 2.0

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Turn north on Highway 101 out of northern California's San Jose International Airport and you're quickly in the middle of Silicon Valley, where the emphasis on speed and progress is measured in nanoseconds and gigabytes. But drive south and the journey is in a very different direction, somewhat back in time, to a more relaxed kind of valley.

Within a few minutes you are driving past fields lush with cherries, mushrooms, artichokes, garlic, and the state's first vineyards. Head toward the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains and you come upon secluded dales laced with creeks and waving with wildflowers, gently rolling terrain that was once divided into huge ranches supporting cattle and orchards. This terrain is home to a handful of high-quality golf courses, all an easy drive from any business or pleasure trip that includes the area south of San Francisco Bay.

Most notable among golf options, especially for leisure travelers, is **CordeValle** — “the heart of the valley” — a 1,700-acre resort of quiet elegance and beauty about 45 minutes south of San Jose in the town of San Martin. The resort boasts a golf course, accommodations, and service on a level equal to anything this country can offer.

Those of us who live in the East probably haven't seen as much work from Robert Trent (“Bobby”) Jones Jr. as from his younger brother Rees, both offspring of the legendary architect Robert Trent Jones. Much of Bobby's American work is in the west, closer to his headquarters in Palo Alto, California. To see one of Bobby's wonderfully creative designs that proves how golf and nature can sublimely co-exist, go to CordeValle.



Toss out the usual facts — 7,169 yards from the tips; as many as seven different tees on some holes; subtle elevation changes and old-style bunkers — then forget them. For this is not a course that one is likely to remember hole by hole but as a continuum: It is a layout that flows, that meanders, that takes its own sweet time winding through the valley, along streams, and around ancient oaks and sycamores, with barely a home in sight. Many courses hope to be known as “a walk in the park,” but this one truly is a most pleasant stroll (with walking encouraged, aided by very good caddies).

From atop the ninth and 16th tees, the views extend for miles in all directions, and the course below shimmers and bursts with colors that change by the season (in spring, tiny purple flowers enrobe almost every fairway). That same ninth hole is one of the more confounding on the course, a not-too-long par four bisected laterally by a stream. The 16th is one of the quartet of par threes, all of which tilt gracefully with the land and are enhanced by bunkers and false fronts that can be difficult to perceive.

## Just the Facts

CordeValle Resort, [www.cordevalle.com](http://www.cordevalle.com); 408-695-4500 or 1-888-ROSEWOOD.

Stay-and-play golf packages are available.

Cinnabar Hills, [www.cinnabarhills.com](http://www.cinnabarhills.com); 408-323-7815, \$80-\$100,

Coyote Creek, [www.coyotecreekgolf.com](http://www.coyotecreekgolf.com); 408-463-1400, \$65-\$102

Eagle Ridge, [www.eagleridgegc.com](http://www.eagleridgegc.com); 408-846-4531

Shoreline Golf Links, 650-903-4653, \$38-\$54

Pasatiempo Golf Club, [www.pasatiempo.com](http://www.pasatiempo.com); 831-459-9155

There's a good score to be had, not so much wrested from a brutish foe but cajoled through smart club selection and judicious attacking. Not to mention “good putting,” says director of golf Travis Skeesick. “The greens may not have huge undulations, but they roll very true so your putting has to be sharp. If you can read the breaks, they'll go in.”

There are many other things to do at CordeValle besides play golf. At one end of the main building is the 5,000-square-foot spa, offering many different treatments, including some designed specifically for golfers and others employing grape seed from nearby vines: high in vitamins C and E, grape seeds are touted as good sources for antioxidants and polyphenols (the latter supposedly combat free radicals, which have nothing to do with Bay Area politics).

For those in search of still more activity, there's a fitness center, heated outdoor pool, tennis courts, and hiking trails through the hills. Bring a pair of sturdy walking shoes and use the resort's handy “Nature Guide,” found in every room, as well as the complimentary pair of binoculars to sight the property's abundant wildlife.

Also on the property is the 85-acre Clos LaChance winery, which is open for tours and tastings. Not just some resort-attraction replica, this is a real, working winery well worth visiting. Producing a wide variety of reds and wines, Clos LaChance has earned very good scores for its Pinot Noirs.

An excellent wine list (from Clos LaChance and elsewhere) can be found in the resort's restaurants. The Dining Room, run by Luca Rutigliano, formerly of New York's Carlyle Hotel, stirs together contemporary American cuisine, drawing heavily on local produce, with the chef's Italian heritage. Just off the main lobby, The Bar is just that, as well as a low-key choice for a light lunch or appetizers. Outside the pro shop, The Grill serves food and drink from breakfast till sunset.

CordeValle has only 45 rooms, situated in bungalows, secluded villa suites, and grand fairway homes. Every guest room has a private patio that overlooks the golf course and the valley, and each provides the latest and greatest in amenities. The attentive staff makes guests feel as if they are members of a very private club. So enjoy.