

## **Hacienda Riquelme Golf - Course Review**

Nicklaus Design featuring Steve Nicklaus - 18-hole Championship par-72.

### **First Hole**

Riquelme Best Golf opens with this 401 meter par-four. The longer length of this opening hole is offset by the downhill tee shot, offering sweeping views of the Spanish countryside. The fairway is guarded on the left by a large deep bunker while numerous smaller bunkers lay in wait on the right side of the fairway. A large bunker protects the green, favouring an approach from the left side of the fairway. Like the other greens on the course, players will find this large green features numerous random contours and undulations. The green generally slopes to the left falling off into a large mown chipping area. All of this combines to create one of the more demanding opening holes on the Nicklaus Golf Trail.

### **Second Hole**

Smart players should be able to pick up a shot at the 516 meter par-five second hole. The right side of the hole is protected by a series of bunkers while the native grasses encroach tightly along the left side. The fairway tapers to a very narrow slot just before the landing area forcing golfers to decide whether to lay up their tee shot or challenge the bunkers on the right. An aggressive tee shot carrying this narrow slot will get a strong bounce forward making the green very reachable in two shots. The second landing area is protected by two groups of bunkers while the green is guarded by a bunker on the left. Smart players can opt to take the left greenside bunker out of play by hitting their second shot to the right allowing the strong slope to feed the ball onto the green. Birdie is strong possibility on this hole.

### **Third Hole**

The 363 meter par-four third plays strongly up the hill, making the hole play much longer. The fairway features a large bunker on the inside left with additional bunkers framing the outside of the hole. A tee shot played along the bunker on the left will give players the best angle for the uphill approach. A large bunker guards the right portion of the green with another smaller bunker waiting on the left. Conservative play might be the key to this hole.

### **Fourth Hole**

Golfers will find another impressive downhill tee shot here at the 479 meter fourth hole. Again, players are presented with options on this very reachable short par-five. The crowned green is set on an angle and is best approached from the left. Players must decide whether to play aggressively over the two deep fairway bunkers to the left side of the fairway or play safe to the right side of the fairway. Those playing to the left side will get a strong kick forward but will then be faced with a daring shot over the edge of the lake to the green. Golfers laying up should play as close to the lake edge as possible to create the best angle of approach to the green. This hole is sure to be very tempting, but only the most daring players will be able to conquer it.

### **Fifth Hole**

Players now come to the first par-three on the course, the 188 meter fifth hole. While the hole plays over the corner of the lake, the hazard should really not come into play. The green sits into the side of the hill and is closely guarded by three bunkers. An opening is created in the front-right of the green allowing golfers to play a run-up shot that could catch the slope in the rear of green and feed into the centre of the green. The green features several quirky contours and those playing directly to a pin cut on the left side of the green will have to control their distance precisely to avoid finding one of the bunkers.

### **Sixth Hole**

Golfers now work their way up to the sixth tee, a tee offering more views out to the beautiful Spanish landscape. This 385 meter par-four plays strongly down the hill to a narrow fairway. A group of three bunkers protect the left side of the fairway and players need to decide whether to lay up short of them or hit an aggressive tee shot right of the bunkers into the lower part of the fairway. Those playing the longer shot will have a short approach to the green but will have to play delicately over the front-right greenside bunker. Those laying up to the left will have an open angle to this green that falls off into fairway lows on the left and in the rear. Golfers may need to play this tricky hole a few times to determine their best strategy.

### **Seventh Hole**

The 177 meter par-three seventh hole plays over the large lake to one of the most severely contoured greens on the course. A group of bunkers sit left of the green, but they also set up a bit of a kick-in allowing for golfers not wishing to carry over the lake to feed their shot into the front of the green. Another bunker is placed right of the green to help protect balls from rolling into the lake and water feature. The green is boldly contoured forcing players to be very creative with their short games. This hole is surely stunning to look at, but will also certainly create a fair amount of fear among players.

### **Eighth Hole**

Once again, players need to make some decisions at the 336 meter eighth hole. This short par-four features a large bunker to the left of the fairway and two smaller bunkers out to the right. Golfers can elect to lay up short of all of the bunkers, play an accurate tee shot out to the right between the bunkers, or try and completely carry the large left bunker. This large green features a severe elevation change in the middle and is probably approached best from the right side of the fairway. A large bunker guards the front-left of the green while another bunker sits along the right side of the green. Like the sixth, players may need to play this hole a few times before discovering the best strategy.

### **Ninth Hole**

The front nine finishes here at this 369 meter par-four. The tee shot is played over the corner of the large lake. Players need to determine how much of the lake they are able to carry. Some may wish to lay up short of the two left fairway bunkers or try to hit a precise tee shot between the lake and the bunkers. A small pot bunker lies just left of this long narrow green. The green is guarded on the right by the lake and is probably best approached from the right side of the fairway. Like many holes at Riquelme Best Golf, daring play here could result in the best scores.

### **Tenth Hole**

Although a short par-four playing to only 322 meters, the tenth hole could be very testing. Players are presented with a multitude of options here as the numerous bunkers create many different routes to the green. A bunker in the centre of the fairway will dictate play. Should players lay up short, carry the bunker, or play out the right? The small, tricky green features a strong swale cutting into the back of the green. Players coming from the right will face a very shallow target and will likely see this swale feed their shot off the back of the green. Shots coming from the left should have a better chance of holding the green's slope. The numerous options here could create the most interesting, if not frustrating, hole on the course.

### **Eleventh Hole**

Courageous players should have another opportunity to pick up an additional shot here at the short 488 meter par-five eleventh hole. The tee shot is played downhill to a fairway featuring a large bunker on the right and two bunkers on the left. A window is created in the bunkers on the left allowing players the chance to carry the hazard and get a huge kick forward down the fairway making the green easily reachable in two shots. The stream cuts between the landing areas giving players the option to lay up short or carry to the fairway pad beyond. The green has a very narrow entrance and most shots will need to carry all the way to the green. Those laying up should favour the left side of the fairway along the lake as the large right greenside bunker

will create a very difficult approach from the right. All of this should combine to create a great risk and reward hole.

### **Twelfth Hole**

The 352 meter twelfth hole is one the more unique holes on the course. This shorter par-four is protected on the left by a series of bunkers. Those playing a precise tee shot along the bunkers will have a better view of the green. Players electing to play safe out to the right side of the fairway will find that the hillside obstructs their view of most of the green. Complicating matters, the green slopes from front to back, making the approach shot from the right difficult to hold on the green. A bunker guards the left side of the green, but plenty of chipping area surrounds the green making for an easier recovery shot.

### **Thirteenth Hole**

Golfers have another choice to make at the 360 meter thirteenth hole. This par-four features two distinct options from the tee. Players can opt to play to the wider right side of the fairway or try to carry the fairway bunker into the very narrow upper fairway. An enormous bunker sits short of the green making the approach from the right difficult. Those making the play to the upper fairway on the left will get a strong kick forward and will have the best angle into to the full length of the green. The front section of this green slopes away from those coming from the right, making it difficult to hold the approach on the green.

### **Fourteenth Hole**

While this 476 meter hole may be the shortest par-five the on the scorecard, it actually might play the longest. This hole plays strongly uphill and weaves its way through a maze of bunkers. The left side of the fairway is guarded by two bunkers while a collection of bunkers frame the right side. A series of diagonal cross-bunkering sets up the strategy for the second shot, again forcing players to make some decisions. The longest of players could elect to go for the green in two shots but will need to fly their shot onto the green to avoid the very deep bunker short of the green. Others may elect to lay up short of the cross bunkers resulting in a very difficult third shot to a shallow target. The best lay up strategy is to carry the cross bunkers into the right fairway pad allowing players to run their shots into the full length of the green. Smart, conservative play could be the best approach to this "short" par-five.

### **Fifteenth Hole**

Players will find another nice extended view of the countryside on the tee of this 190 meter par-three. This hole plays downhill to a long shallow green. A series of deep bunkers work their way from the front of the green around to the right portion of the green. The green features some of the most unique contours on the course creating numerous interesting pin positions. For those wishing to avoid a long tricky putt, playing to the correct portion of the green will be critical.

### **Sixteenth Hole**

Golfers will need to make some more decisions on the tee of this beautiful 348 meter par-four. A lake feeds a stream that runs down the entire right side of the hole. A group of bunkers protrude into left side of the fairway creating a very narrow slot along the edge of lake. Players can elect to lay up short of the lake and play a longer second shot or try and squeeze a daring shot between the bunkers and the lake. This will result in a kick forward leaving just a short pitch of a second shot. Two bunkers sit to the front and right of the green putting a premium on an approach from the left. Therefore, players laying up off the tee might want to try and place their shot as close to the left fairway bunkers as possible. Again, courageous players able to execute two precise shots should have a great opportunity for a birdie.

### **Seventeenth Hole**

The last par-three on the course is also the longest. This 198 meter hole plays to a large, boldly contoured green. The hole might not be quite as difficult as it appears from the tee. Players that can carry the large bunker can easily run their shot up into the green. A smaller bunker guards the left side of the green making it difficult to play a shot directly at a pin on the left side of the

green. A large group of olive trees sits closely to the right side of the green while the left side of the green falls off into a low chipping area. Golfers playing aggressively here might only find trouble.

### **Eighteenth Hole**

The course comes to a dramatic close at the intimidating 408 meter eighteenth hole. The tee shot of this long par-four is played over the edge of the lake to a fairway guarded by three bunkers. Again, players can opt to layup short of the bunkers, play to the area between the bunkers, or try a bold carry over the bunker along the lake. Shots carrying this bunker will greatly shorten hole and provide a good angle to approach the green. The green sits on the edge of the lake and is surrounded by bunkers. An approach from the right will help to take the lake out of play; however, players will want to be careful to avoid some of the deepest bunkers on the course protecting the left side of the green. The green features a strong elevation change and players will want to make sure they play to the correct level. Par will be a great score on this stern finishing hole.

### **Practice Area**

In addition to the course, players will find a very unique practice area at Hacienda Riquelme Golf Resort. This practice facility has been designed to focus on iron play and short game skills. The range itself features three target areas that are shaped to resemble actual golf holes. They feature the same bunker style as the course and should create a very unique setting for players to hone their iron and wedge play. The practice area also features a large practice putting green as well as a separate short game and chipping green. Players looking to concentrate on their iron and short game skills should look no further than this facility at Hacienda Riquelme Golf Resort.