

The Country Club of Salisbury: "A Tar Heel" State Retreat



The COUNTRY CLUB of
SALISBURY
A Donald Ross Classic

The Country Club of Salisbury (Salisbury, NC; www.ccofsalisbury.com) is like your family's aging matriarch. She may not be big, mighty, and overpowering, but as time goes by, you admire and respect her for all that she stands for and has taught you over the years. And as all golfers would agree, lessons are often learned in golf as they are learned in life -- the hard way, usually with a message from that aging matriarch.

The Country Club of Salisbury, a Donald Ross design, is also like a fine French wine. It gets better with age. Like many Donald Ross courses, what the Country Club of Salisbury lacks in length -- less than 6,600 yards from the back tees -- is compensated by cleverly designed greens and well-positioned bunkers. At the Country Club of Salisbury, you can clearly see where you need to hit your tee shots, but that changes from day to day based on the proximity of the pin positions on the greens.

The 18 holes at the Country Club of Salisbury, which opened in 1920, appear rather benign on paper, but don't 'judge a book by its cover,' as they say. If you can move the ball with a fade or a draw, then you will do well on this course.

For the most part, the Country Club of Salisbury -- a par 71 layout -- opens with nine holes in the rolling hills of central North Carolina and finishes with nine holes in the low-lying valley. Of the first nine tee shots, four are downhill, three are uphill, and two of them demand a slight right-to-left trajectory. There are no simple, straightaway, 375-yard par fours at the Country Club of Salisbury, a private equity club located about 45 minutes northeast of Charlotte, just off I-85.

The first five holes of the back nine are fairly flat, but the sloping hill that crosses the 10th fairway is a piece of terrain that you must carry; the 11th and 12th fairways are heavily bunkered; the trees are a major concern on the 13th if your tee shot veers left or right; and a wide, rock-filled creek protects the entrance to the 14th green. Once you step foot on the tee of the par five 15th, you have a geographic roller coaster ride home where false fronts



are the key feature of the last four greens. The tee shot at the 16th is 'blind' and the approach is to a raised, crowned green -- a typical feature of a Donald Ross design. The most difficult tee shot on the course is on the par three 17th where you must carry the ball from tee to green in order to get a birdie putt. Anything short of the green will finish in a greenside sand trap or will trickle back down the hill, leaving a daunting uphill chip to a thin, rolling, ribbon-like green. The home hole, a right-to-left dogleg par four, presents a downhill tee shot followed by an uphill approach to

a well-protected green. If you can finish with four straight pars or better at the Country Club of Salisbury, that is worthy of a fist-pump.

Afterwards, while relaxing at the Grill Room, you will look back on your round and recall a number of 'woulda-coulda-shoulda' moments where potential pars turned into bogeys and possible birdies never materialized. So, when you play the Country Club of Salisbury, wear your 'thinking cap' and make sure it's working, otherwise you will continue to learn lessons the hard way, just as you have over the years from your family's aging matriarch. 🏌️