

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

A review of Pine Valley golf books

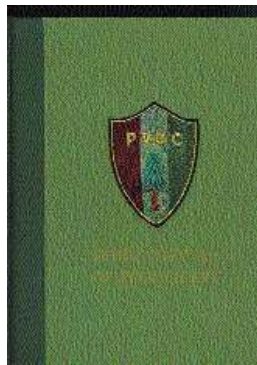
In this issue we review four books published about Pine Valley Golf Club in New Jersey. It's fair to say that the closest most people will every get to Pine Valley is reading a book about it. We count ourselves among the lucky few that have crossed the chain link fence and railroad tracks and experienced the perfection of the place. It is like stepping into a Norman Rockwell painting with the miniaturized town hall, perfectly manicured cottages tucked off the fairways, the sense of isolation and serenity and privilege. We will be reviewing books of various golf clubs in future issues and it is only appropriate that we start with the #1 ranked course in the world.

The most recently published book about Pine Valley was written by James Finegan, a member and a distinguished golf writer and historian. It was published by the club in 2000, is 250 pages, and was issued in a green protective hardcopy slipcover which contains the crest of the club in gilt. The book is titled *Pine Valley Golf Club: A Unique Haven of the Game*. It is by far the most comprehensive history of the course ever done. It has chapters on the early years and formation of the club and goes through decade-by-decade and gives a history of the course and significant events in the club's history. The book is profusely illustrated with both black and white and color photographs. The back of the book features two pages of photos for each hole. The photos show the views from the tee box and the approach to the green.

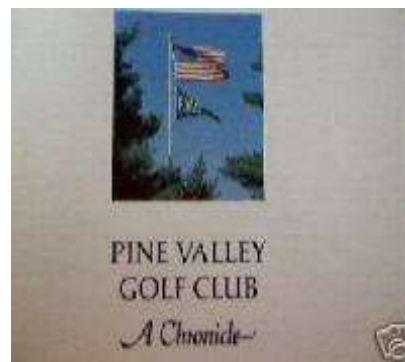


John Arthur Brown, who served as president of Pine Valley for many years authored *A Short History of Pine Valley* whose first edition was published in 1963, the second printing in 1968 and the third printing in 1974. All three printings were issued with a white protective slipcase. The first edition is the most sought after and expensive from a

collector's standpoint. It is a very short book at only 38 pages and the cover is illustrated below:



Pine Valley Golf Club: A Chronicle, by Warner Shelly was published by the club in 1982. The book is 116 pages and was published in green cloth with the club logo etched in the front. It was issued with a green slipcase. The illustration below is from the half title page. The book includes a hole by hole description of the course including many color photos. In describing the tenth hole, one of the most feared par threes in the world, the bunker in the front is described simply as the “D.A.H.” since for gentlemen, printing the Devil’s Ass H--- would be inappropriate. Our favorite part of the book is a section toward the back, roughly twenty pages which describe little anecdotes about the course and people that have played it or written about it. Items such as a sportswriter who describes the course: “It doesn’t have sand traps. It has a beach. It doesn’t have woods. It has a forest.” Or another who writes: “The card of the course might not seem formidable as the cards of half a dozen courses that could be mentioned, but, believe those who have played it, each stroke is a problem, each hole is a battle, each round is a campaign.” The book is skillfully edited and our favorite of all the Pine Valley books.



Collectors also seek out a series of yearbooks the club published from the 1960s through early 1980s. These are small books, about 5 ½ by 8 inches and generally less than fifty pages. These yearbooks contain a list of members and the rules of the club. They appeal to the hard-core Pine Valley collector and simply to those wanting to get an inside glimpse at this exclusive club. We did a quick analysis of the membership handbooks demographics.

The folks at the market research firm *Claritas* have divided the country into sixty-two different clusters based on shared socioeconomic characteristics. Although the course itself is located in a *Blue-Chip Blues* cluster, the club has a broad national membership and unsurprisingly the membership fits into the top three clusters of *Blue Blood Estates*, *Winner's Circle* and *Urban Gold Coast*.

The course also published a more modern version of its membership list, listing not only the members name, but also their addresses and phone numbers. This book is done in a white softcover with the green Pine Valley logo on the front. We have seen a 1990 version and it is 45 pages. Since the information contained in the book is obviously a guarded secret out of respect for the members' privacy, these are quite difficult to find.

The last book we can recommend is *Legendary Golf Clubs of the American East* photographed by Anthony Edgeworth and written by John de St. Jorre. While this book covers additional courses we find the chapter on Pine Valley captures the spirit of the place in a way that the other books do not. Edgeworth's photography and the accompanying text have the ability to transport you inside the club. There is something about the way they put the book together than gives you the sense that you are behind the scenes. His photographic images contain such a depth and clarity due in large part to his skills as a photographer and because no expense was seemingly spared in the design and production of the book. There are twenty-one pages dedicated to Pine Valley. *The Legendary Golf Clubs* book was published in 2003 in two versions: a hardcover with a dustjacket and a deluxe edition in green leather with a matching slipcase. As an added bonus the book contains extensive chapters on Merion, Seminole, Shinnecock Hills, the National Golf Links, Oakmont and several other courses.

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