



GOLF

VICTORIA

  @golf_vic |  GolfVictoria

February/March 2017
Volume 58 - Number 1
PP 381 667 667 0038



OATES VIC OPEN
**Mel & Dimi's
Premier
Performance**

**FREAKY
FOOTY ACES**

**MATIAS THE
WIZARD OF OZ**

**GOURMET
GOLF**

FLY DIRECT TO KING ISLAND IN 35 MINUTES*

**BARNBOUGLE & KING ISLAND
GOLF TOUR SPECIALISTS.**

PLAY 3 OF THE WORLD'S TOP 40 COURSES



*ex Melbourne

Prepare to take off on golfing experience above all others.

Select your golfing adventure...

2 DAYS / 2 ROUNDS – Barnbougles or King Is (Cape Wickham & Ocean Dunes)

3 DAYS / 3 ROUNDS – Barnbougles & Cape Wickham

4 DAYS / 4 ROUNDS – Barnbougles, Cape Wickham & Ocean Dunes

Or if you have a group of 8 or more customise your own itinerary



**Fly by deluxe
twin-turbine
private aircraft
(faster, higher
and safer).**



"The general consensus amongst the group is that we doubt there's a golf experience of equal standing available anywhere else in the world."

W.C., United Kingdom

2 DAY BARNBOUGLES OR KING ISLAND GOLF TOURS FROM \$880 per person
(includes everything except meals and drinks)



Free call 24 hours / 7 days 1800 033 160

golf@airadventure.com.au

golf.airadventure.com.au



BOARD

Stephen Spargo AM (President)
 Peter Nash (Finance Director)
 Harvey Ashton
 Murray Cropley
 Brian Lasky
 Alison McCaig
 Sue Rea
 David Shilbury
 Dorothy Hisgrove
 Luci Bryce
 Mark Dunstan

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Simon Brookhouse

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

David Greenhill

**GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY
 RELATIONS MANAGER**

Fiona Telford

**MARKETING &
 COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**

Greg Oakford



is published by Golf Victoria

MANAGING EDITORS

Mark Harding

Mob: 0417 105 659

Email: mark@hardingmedia.com.au

Karen Harding

Mob: 0421 040 580

Email: karen@hardingmedia.com.au

ADVERTISING:

Ray Kelsall

Mob: 0408 196 729

Email: rgkelsall@bigpond.com.au

SUBSCRIPTIONS

All enquiries to Anne Maddock

Tel: (03) 8545 6200

Email: anne.maddock@golfvic.org.au

GOLF VICTORIA

Level 1, 47A Wangara Road,
 Cheltenham VIC 3192

PO Box 2168 Hampton East VIC 3188

Tel: (03) 8545 6200

Fax: (03) 9543 9307

Email: info@golfvic.org.au

No part of this issue may be reproduced, transmitted or otherwise copied without written permission from Golf Victoria.

Production: **Mustard Creative Media**
 Tel: (03) 8459 5500

Printed by **Printgraphics**
 Tel: (03) 9562 9600

February/March 2017

Volume 58 - Number 1

Front cover: Premier Performance ...
 Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews with
 Oates Vic Open champions Mel Reid and
 Dimi Papadatos.

Photo: Paul Shire



contents

GOLF VICTORIA REPORTS



- 14 Modern Media Drives Growth of Oates Vic Open
- 37 TAC and Golf Victoria Drive Towards Zero
- 42 Mazda Four-Ball Comes Of Age

FEATURES



- 16 Making Excellence the Norm
- 22 Riversdale Cup – Evolution at its Best
- 26 A Lesson in Simplicity
- 32 *Unique Country Experiences* – Gourmet Golf
- 44 Footy's Double Aces
- 47 Book Review: The Wee Ice Man Not So Cold After All

TOURNAMENTS



- 6 Oates Vic Open – Tournament of the Future
- 10 Mel's Mystical Moment
- 29 Long March to Glory
- 30 Victorian Amateur Just the Start
- 38 Jackson and Grace Stream to Victory

DEPARTMENTS



- 18 *Clayton Tees Off* – Magical Matchplay
- 40 Star on the Rise
- 41 Fairway
- 48 Update
- 49 *Gallery: Martin Blake* Finding a Point of Difference



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Golf Victoria and 13th Beach Golf Links wish to thank the following organisations for their support of the 2017 Oates Vic Open.

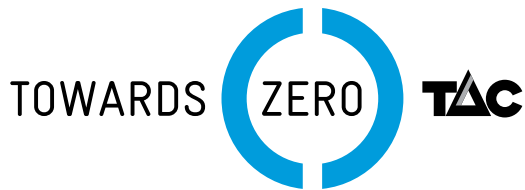


Golf Club Members of Victoria

NAMING RIGHTS PARTNER



PLATINUM PARTNER



PREMIUM PARTNERS



CHAMPIONSHIP PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



ASSOCIATE PARTNERS



The Oates Vic Open is a sanctioned event on the ISPS HANDA PGA Tour of Australasia, ALPG Tour and Ladies European Tour.



2017 Men's & Women's Oates Victorian Open Golf Championships



MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Victorian Government, I would like to congratulate all those involved in the Oates Vic Open 2017 for staging another successful tournament. The competition makes an important economic contribution to our state, and its presence and history have helped shape Victoria's sporting identity.

The Oates Vic Open, with its unique structure as a joint men's and women's tournament and its world-class level of competition, continues to distinguish itself from other pre-eminent events on the Golf Victoria calendar.

Thirteenth Beach Golf Links, the hosts of the Oates Vic Open for the fifth consecutive year, provided players and spectators with the

perfect opportunity to explore and experience Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula.

The Victorian Government is proud to support the Oates Vic Open 2017 and I would like to thank all involved.

I look forward to another successful tournament in 2018.

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER OF INVESTMENT & ATTRACTION, CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

The City is proud to be a sponsor of the 2017 Oates Vic Open Golf Championships.

The Oates Vic Open has become a hallmark event for our region and Thirteenth Beach Golf Links is the perfect fit for the tournament.

It's great to support an event where the men's and women's games run concurrently, and for the same amount of total prize money. This makes the tournament the only one of its kind on the world stage, and it's right here in Greater Geelong.

A number of international and home grown golfing stars and up-and-coming Australian talent were part of this year's Oates Vic Open. Spectators were fortunate enough to see the world's top ranked players and Australian greats such as Robert Allenby, Minjee Lee and Su Oh.

More than 30 countries were represented in the tournament featuring 20 Olympians from the 2016 Rio games in the field.

Spectators again had the opportunity to walk alongside golfers on the fairways as

the Open doesn't have roped off areas as seen at other tournaments. Getting close to the action makes this event stand out, creating an exciting atmosphere.

This year also marked the first time the Oates Vic Open Golf was co-sanctioned on the Ladies European Tour.

Barwon Heads is a beautiful part of our region and there's no doubt that events like the Oates Vic Open help stimulate the local economy and assist local traders, hospitality and retail outlets.

Special thanks and congratulations to the event organisers, Golf Victoria for holding yet another successful event and the Geelong Major Events Committee for continued support of the Oates Vic Open.

Brett Luxford
General Manager of Investment &
Attraction, City of Greater Geelong



Tournament *of the* **Future**



The Oates Vic Open just keeps getting better. More money, stronger fields, bigger crowds, wider inclusion of the community. MARK HARDING reports on the rise of the tournament which is helping to shape the future of golf in Victoria.

It was one of the most famous of all names on the Oates Vic Open trophy, the 1959 winner Gary Player, who popularised the saying: "The harder I work, the luckier I get."

Well, hard work was very much the theme for the ultra-modern 2017 version at Thirteenth Beach, Barwon Heads, in February. Hard work by men's champion Dimi Papadatos, who dumped his mates over Christmas to practise his game after a disappointing 2016. And hard work by women's champion Mel Reid, who hit the gym to get her body into shape for her first gruelling season on the LPGA Tour.

The theme was just as relevant for the event itself, because the Oates Vic Open is the hardest working tournament on the Australian golf scene, getting bigger by the year, and luck has nothing to do with it.

The decision to bring the men's and women's state Opens together on the Bellarine Peninsula five years ago has not only promoted gender equality in golf but has gone a long way towards future-proofing interest in the game among the next generation. Not even the squally winds which tested the resolve of players and spectators alike on the final day could deter galleries marked by the number of young families walking the fairways.

This was such a wonderful week that those who bemoan the long absence from Victoria of the men's Australian Open and the apparent demise of the Australian Masters might now have to accept the fallacy of the argument that says Victoria no longer has a big tournament in the state.

The Oates Vic Open now IS a big tournament. Prizemoney this year was \$1 million and in 2018, with additional state government support, that figure will rise to \$1.3 million. Yes, the two Opens will split the prizemoney \$650,000 each but it is still \$1.3 million on offer for four days of quality professional golf at the one venue.



Oates Vic Open winners Mel Reid and Dimi Papadatos just might inspire some future stars.

That's the equal of this year's four-day Women's Australian Open and \$50,000 more than the last four-day Men's Australian Open. Even if the prizemoney is split and the tournaments considered individually, the men's event is one of only seven Tier One events on the PGA Tour of Australasia and the women's event is the second richest on the ALPG Tour.

That's a remarkable achievement considering it was only 2014 that the prizemoney was just \$150,000 each.

The importance of the Oates Vic Open for both professional tours was reflected in the quality of the 2017 fields, particularly the women. "I think we stepped it up a little this year," Golf Victoria CEO Simon Brookhouse said. "The Ladies European Tour co-sanctioning brought a higher calibre of player and we were fortunate probably a dozen LPGA players came with us, going back-to-back with the Women's Australian Open.

"The increased prizemoney helped the men's event attract the likes of Brett Rumford and Robert Allenby and that makes a difference too."

Brookhouse is surprised more tournaments don't follow the Oates Vic Open format, although he has now

had numerous enquiries from around the world. "I hope they do follow suit because the one thing we do know is that the players love it."

That was instantly apparent on the tees, up the fairways and around the clubhouse at Thirteenth Beach, the air of friendliness and the interaction between players and spectators a credit to the competitors.

One of those competitors was Dimitrios Papadatos, a softly spoken, humble 25-year-old from New South Wales, who kept his head in the gruelling conditions thrown up by the winds of Barwon Heads on Sunday and, at 16-under, was a two-shot winner over South Australian Adam Bland and Queensland's Jake McLeod.

Tall and muscled, Papadatos fired nine birdies in his eight-under 64 in the second round on Friday and a total of 20 birdies for the week. But the winning stat was the single bogey he shot on Sunday, content to play within himself when the going got tough for every one of his rivals in the final two groups.

On the holes into the wind, he was using four clubs longer than earlier in the week. "It was a massive grind. I knew it was going to be a long, tough day but I played pretty solid golf and didn't take too many risks," he said.



Victorian Lucas Herbert played with aggression and hope and is a star of the future.

What he has now is a virtual three-year exemption on the Australasian tour, a couple more cracks at the European Tour through the co-sanctioned events, deeper entry into various qualifying schools later in the year ... and, most importantly, the confidence to know that his game holds up under pressure.

Winner aside, the most significant performance in the men's event came from 21-year-old Victorian Lucas Herbert, who left the 72nd green hurting badly but, with time, will remember all the great things he did during the week.

If Papadatos played conservatively, the big hitting Herbert literally threw caution to the Thirteenth Beach winds. Most of the field were content to lay-up on the heavily bunkered downhill, downbreeze 404-metre ninth hole ... but he smacked his drive pin-high into the rough, chipped it to half a metre and took the lead with a birdie.

He wasn't quite so lucky after that and when he bogeyed 14 and 17, he slipped two behind with only the par-five 18th to come, into a fierce wind. Eagle was always going to be as unlikely as it was necessary and in rolling the dice, he double-bogeyed and slipped four shots back to a tie for sixth.

On the Saturday, Herbert had birdied five of the final six holes. But Sunday over that same spread, he was nine shots worse. As tough a lesson as that will be, he'll be a better player for it.



It wasn't all smooth sailing for the Oates Vic Open winner but Dimi Papadatos played it smart.

Beach-loving Papadatos sacrificed his summer holiday to work on his game after a miserable 2016 when he campaigned in Europe but saw his world ranking slip into four figures after playing 22 tournaments with 15 missed cuts

"I just kept practising in my break. Last year I had a bit of a holiday, just cruised around with my mates and didn't do too much practice because I was golfed out," he said.

"This year I thought to myself 'don't worry about being fresh, you've got nothing at the moment so start working straight away, you don't need the holidays'."

Leading amateur in the men was another exquisitely talented young gun Min Woo Lee, whose perspective on the week was relevant given that older sister Minjee Lee was one of the headline acts for the women's Open.

"We never really get to spend time with each other so this week is really nice," he said. Minjee missed the cut for the final round, prompting little brother to declare: "I don't want to be too harsh on her but I got her this tournament." ■



POSTCARDS FROM THIRTEENTH BEACH



by Martin Blake
@martinj_blake

Photography: Paul Shire

Mel Reid had a feeling her week at Thirteenth Beach would deliver results.



Mel's Mystical Moment

Injected with funds, co-sanctioned with the Ladies European Tour and scheduled a week before the Women's Australian Open, the Oates Vic Open for women promised the strongest field in its history. As MARTIN BLAKE reports, it delivered big-time with two world stars going head to head.

Melissa Reid's struggles with the death of her mother, Joy, in a car accident were well-documented long before she arrived at Thirteenth Beach Golf Links for the Oates Vic Open. Reid, a dynamic British player, had seen her game disappear in grief after the head-on accident in Munich in 2012.

The good news is that time is doing the healing for her and at Barwon Heads, she showed how strong she has emerged from the maelstrom. Reid won her first tournament in Australia, beating Germany's Sandra Gal at the third hole of a sudden-death playoff, and promptly put the victory down to fate.

"Do you know what? I've just got a good feeling about this year," said Reid, the world number 145. "I don't know what it is. I had a good feeling about this week. There's been a few good things, I didn't want to mention to anyone at the start of this week but it was my Mum's birthday this week, on the Tuesday. So I just thought this week had to happen.

"We were warming up on the putting green (today) ... my Mum's favorite film was Dirty Dancing, and they're playing the theme (over the loudspeaker). I said to Benji (caddie Ben Brewer): 'I've just got a feeling about this week, it's fate, you know!'"

Golf being the most contrary of games, it was never going to work out so simply. At the par-five second

hole, Reid flared her drive a little right on a vicious left-to-right wind and watched it disappear into the ti-tree. A penalty drop and a chip-out later, she double-bogeyed to surrender the two-shot lead she had taken into the final round.

Plainly, on a day when the wind finally arrived to batter the players at the end of a mild week, it was a grind for everyone, but Reid was up for it. "I made a seven on the second and rethought it," she joked. "But I always come out here thinking I'm going to win. It's nice just putting myself in position again and getting over the line. Winning a golf tournament is the hardest thing to do, you know, if you've not done it, it really is the hardest thing to do. It doesn't get any easier no matter how many wins you've had. I'm just very happy I've managed to win in Australia."

It was a blanket finish, and five players -- Reid, Gal, Australia's Su Oh, American Angel Yin and Spain's Belen Mozo -- had a share of the lead at different parts of the dramatic final round. With the big names rising to the top and the women's field boasting higher-ranked players than the men's, the crowds came in big numbers.

Reid made her move with a chip-in for eagle on the par-five fifth hole. At the short seventh, she caught her best break of the day when a spectator behind the green stopped her tee shot from going too long and into bogey territory. All the while, her caddie implored her to remember that there were plenty of opportunities to come.

By the time she hit it close at the 10th and made birdie, she had the lead back but then surrendered it to Gal, playing in the previous group and on her way to a superb four-under-par 69. Reid made another birdie at the par-four 14th as Gal, the statuesque German who plies her trade on the LPGA Tour, posted a 16-under total and waited on the practice putting green.

Oh, the 20-year-old wunderkind from Melbourne, fell out of contention, although she was in with a slim chance until she three-putted the 17th green, and later blamed rustiness at the start of a new season. Yin, the 18-year-old, was right there but, needing a birdie at the last to reach the playoff, she bogeyed after driving into deep rough.



Thursday 67



Friday 70



Saturday 67



Sunday 72

The four days of Mel Reid produced rounds of 67, 70, 67, 72 for a tournament record 16-under par, 276.



The walking scarf... German runner-up Sandra Gal was protected from the wind.

So it came down to Reid, whose 67 on Saturday had pitched her into the overnight lead. A birdie at the par-five 18th would get her to 17-under and win it outright; a par would see a playoff with Gal. She had a chance of closing the door, too, just short of the green for two before overcooking her first putt from long range. The birdie putt from the back fringe for the win burned the hole but would not cooperate, she signed for a one-under 72, and the pair of European stars headed back down to the 18th tee for a playoff.

Once and then twice they made safe pars, unable to finish it as the sun

"It was one of the toughest winds I've ever had, especially with the start that I got. It was a true test of golf."

- Mel Reid



The traditional spraying of liquid over the winner ... but Mel thought there was a better use for the champers.

sank lower and the wind howled. Gal almost holed a wedge for eagle on the first playoff hole and missed her putt for the win from three metres, just right, then on the second hole she missed from 2.5 metres, this time to the left.

Reid's fate kicked in then, and Gal's poor tee shot at the third sojourn down the 18th hole left her a long way back. The German's wedged third shot missed the green long and left, Reid chipped it up on to the green (a "duff", she called it later) and two-putted for par, while Gal could not get up-and-down for her par so, after six hours on the course, they were done.

Reid pumped her fists after making a one-metre putt for par, equating the conditions with the kind of weather players experience in a Women's British Open, straight from the pages of Carnoustie or St Andrews. "The whole day was absolutely brutal out there," she said. "It was one of the toughest winds I've ever had, especially with the start that I got. I didn't even feel that I'd hit a bad shot to be honest, in the first five holes. So to be three-over after four holes was not ideal. It was a true test of golf. It brought a lot of character so, yeah, I'm over the moon to manage to get the win."

Gal, winless since 2011, took solace from the quality of her final round, with Reid calling it an "incredible score" by her Solheim Cup teammate. "It just played really tough today and I shot a great round, just to get myself in the playoff," said Gal. "I don't know if there was a lower round today (the lowest was 68 by Korean amateur Eon Jeong Seong). So I think I can be proud of myself and it was my first playoff. So I learned!"

Oh, a graduate of the Golf Australia and Golf Victoria amateur programs, had to be content with a near-miss, taking birdie at the last to finish third at 14-under, just two shots out of the playoff. The Melburnian led the tournament when she made birdie at the par-five second hole, and also made a great, curling birdie putt at the fourth hole but a lapse mid-round hurt her chances. "I played really well but I made too many mistakes, and the others played really well," she said.

But it was Mel Reid's day. And, no doubt, her mother's, too.

Reid has earned her card to play on the LPGA Tour in America this year and she has enough game to be a factor there. Three times a contender in Australian Opens, she has a love of Down Under. "I don't know what it is," she said. "I just feel very at home here. I really like the way of life here, I feel comfortable." ■



Laura Davies fired a brilliant first round 65, not even this awkward lie stopping the Grand Dame of English golf.

OATES VIC OPEN RESULTS

MEN					
1	Dimitrios Papadatos				
NSW	68	64	69	71	272
T2	Adam Bland				
SA	68	66	70	70	274
T2	Jake McLeod				
QLD	70	61	68	75	274
T4	Richard Green				
VIC	67	72	65	71	275
T4	David McKenzie				
VIC	69	63	72	71	275
Leading Amateur					
T6	Min Woo Lee (AM)				
WA	73	65	70	68	276

WOMEN					
1	Melissa Reid				
ENG	67	70	67	72	276
2	Sandra Gal				
GER	67	69	71	69	276
T3	Su Oh				
AUS	71	65	70	72	278
T3	Angel Yin				
USA	68	70	68	72	278
Leading Amateur					
5	Hye-jin Choi (AM)				
KOR	68	69	70	73	280

Ever considered where golf could take you?

The advertisement features a central shield logo for Golf Training Australia (GTA) with a golfer silhouette and the Australian flag. Surrounding the logo are several icons representing career paths: a golfer (Head Professional), a trophy (Professional Tour Player), a graduation cap (University Education), a group of people (Golf Management), a person with a club (Professional Club Fitting), a star (Professional Coaching), and a clipboard (Rules Official). The background shows images of people in various golf-related roles.

RTO Code: 45037 CRICOS Code: 03550A

Turning your passion into your career.



Diploma of Sport Coaching

Golf Training Australia
 475 Mt Derrimut Road, Derrimut, VICTORIA 3030
 email: info@gta.edu.au web: www.gta.edu.au phone: +61 3 9363 1691





Modern media drives growth of Oates Vic Open

Like any sporting event, the Oates Vic Open is the sum of its parts.

Staff and volunteers in operations, setup, rules, communications, hospitality and sponsorship work tirelessly year-round, on and away from the course.

Only when you get to peek behind the scenes, can you see how much work is done by so few.

Once the final putt is holed at Thirteenth Beach each year, preparations begin to make the next staging bigger, better, more lucrative and, most importantly, more attractive to a greater number of the world's best players.

Our event is the game's only professional tournament where both men and women play on the same course, at the same time, in two separate competitions.

Its format is a sporting rarity and, in a game where tournaments can look and feel the same week-to-week, the Oates Vic Open's unique nature is what makes it so popular.

In 2017, the Oates Vic Open's popularity was confirmed, thanks to those teeing it up and the countless interested onlookers around the globe. The tournament gained a profound identity on social media in February, thanks largely to a stream of tweets, Instagrams, Snapchats and Facebook posts put forward by some of the event's biggest names.

The final two rounds of the 2017 Oates Vic Open were broadcast live around the world for the second straight year via YouTube and for the first time on Facebook LIVE.

Fans, friends and families of those teeing it up in Barwon Heads could tune into a world-class production of Australia's premier state Open, giving a glimpse into a future where the Oates Vic Open can be brought to life on television screens around the nation.

Close to 100,000 people tuned in to the live stream of the final two rounds, approximately five times more than last year.

We were a little more aggressive in our promotion of the live stream this year, having had a successful trial in 2016.

There's no doubt some of our strategic Facebook advertising campaigns around the globe helped drive results. The final round replay of this year's Oates Vic Open had more hits in 24 hours than 2016's did in the last 12 months.

The incredible numbers stretched to Twitter, with the #OatesVicOpen hashtag reaching more than 2.2 million users. But the most interesting tweets throughout the week came from the golfers themselves.

A modern athlete praising a tour or one of its events over social media is nothing new, but the number of Australian and international players thanking tournament organisers and volunteers over social media was profound.

"This was a great week @13thBeachgolf. Courses, crowd, volunteers, staff, winners – just amazing," wrote LET player Ann-Kathrin Linder on Twitter.

"I swear every year the @VicOpenGolf surprises me in how it improves!! Awesome atmosphere out there," wrote local hope Lucas Herbert from his own account. These messages are just two of dozens.

The ability to spread this message has helped grow the Oates Vic Open to this point, with 'word of mouth' on Tour an invaluable asset in convincing the next big star to make the trip to Barwon Heads.

But the best way to spread the message to local golf fans about making the trip to Thirteenth Beach, or encourage those outside of Victoria to tune into the live stream and leaderboards, is through modern media.

No matter how good the product, if the latest news and information isn't shared with fans of the game both in Australia and to the far corners of the globe, then progress in growing our tournament will be slow.

Another key element in this process was the creation of the Oates Vic Open's standalone website.

Vicopengolf.com became the easiest place to find the weekend's live stream or minute-by-minute live scoring for both the men's and women's fields. The end result was staggering, with more than a million page views recorded at vicopengolf.com in the first two weeks of February alone.

As for the leaderboard pages, the total 2016 figure of just under 80,000 page views was obliterated.

During this year's tournament, the leaderboard pages were viewed more than 800,000 times, the men's page alone increasing by 1400% on 2016 numbers.

Between Michael Long's 2016 playoff win and the first tee shot being struck in February 2018, the total combined prize pool on offer at the Oates Vic Open will have more than doubled to peak at \$1.3 million.

The main aim for this is to continue to lure the world's best players back to Thirteenth Beach and to reward them for building this tournament from the ground up.

Without their support, the Oates Vic Open wouldn't be what it is today and without a continually growing reputation through all forms of modern media, our event won't reach its full potential.



Golf Victoria



SHANE DOHERTY MEMORIAL



25th Annual

TRI - STATE MASTERS

54 Hole Golf Championship May 21st - 26th 2017

at Riverside Golf Club, Red Cliffs Golf Club and Coomealla Golf Club

Major Sponsoring Partners



The House of Golf.



Mildura Rural City Council



Sunraysia Golf Tours

over
\$250,000
in prizes on offer

Entry \$269 includes:
Competitor Gift Pack
Opening Night Cocktail Party
3 rounds of golf
Presentation Dinner

Optional social functions

- Trivia Night
- Trentham Estate Wine Tasting, Gourmet BBQ & Music
- Social Golf 4BBB & Ambrose in 4's
- Social Lawn Bowls
- Country Roast Dinner & Evening with current No. 1 Australian Senior Amateur Golfer & Asia Pacific Senior Amateur Champion Greg Rhodes
- 25th Anniversary Dinner Dance Cruise
- Traditional Italian Luncheon



Door Prize
Mildura Houseboats Holiday



Included in \$234,000 of Hole in One Prizes
3 Honda Jazz Motor Cars



Tournament Director: Kym Doherty

Phone: 0408 310 532

Email: golf@sunraysiagolftours.com.au

Website: www.sunraysiagolftours.com.au

Entries Close April 21st 2017

MAKING EXCELLENCE THE NORM

Golf Victoria salutes Norm and Judy Emerson, Commanders-in-Chief of the Volunteer Army. Story by BRIAN MELDRUM.

Former state cricketer and keen golfer Norm Emerson could never have imagined what lay ahead of him when he agreed to co-ordinate the volunteers for the 1990 Australian Masters at Huntingdale.

Emerson had just been elected to the Huntingdale GC committee – he later served as Club President – and although he'd been a volunteer at previous Masters tournaments, had little idea as to how to actually run the show.

He was a quick learner, though, and, assisted by his wife Judy, brought order to a tournament that had somehow muddled along for more than a decade.

Since then, they have organised the 'Volunteer Army' at more than 50 events including last year's World Cup at Kingston Heath, two Presidents Cups, four Australian Opens, various Heineken Classics, Victorian Open and PGA championships and, of course, every Australian Masters tournament since 1990. And for the past three years they've done the behind-the-scenes organising for the Fiji International.

"We love it," Emerson said, and while admitting the tournament days can be punishing – dawn starts and late finishes, extreme heat and freezing cold – he reckons it's more than made up for by the great atmosphere, the

familiar faces, and being able to work with a fantastic team. "It keeps the brain ticking over."

Emerson, a medium-quick who played Shield cricket for Victoria in the early 1960s and for 36 years was a sports and physical education teacher at Scotch College, tends to play down his role as Chief Marshall. "I reckon Judy does more than me but, really, it's the volunteers who make it all happen."

David Greenhill, Golf Victoria's Chief Operating Officer, says the Emersons are legends of Victorian golf. "In the halcyon days of the Masters, Norm and Judy co-ordinated truckloads of volunteers at Huntingdale. And they needed to, because the crowds for those tournaments were enormous by any standard."

Some years ago, when the Oates Vic Open was moved to Thirteenth Beach at Barwon Heads, it was decided to do away with roped fairways and re-introduce the practice of allowing spectators to walk the fairways behind the players, a common practice in tournaments all over the world up until the late 1970s. "It made complete sense to co-opt Norm and Judy into helping us do that, and they did it brilliantly," Greenhill said. "They shared the vision of what we were trying achieve."

This year the Emersons, who live in Barwon Heads, were afforded the luxury of joining spectator galleries,



*Loyalty and respect...
Norm with Huntingdale
member and long-time
volunteer Charlie Savage.*



Norm and Judy Emerson (centre, top) surrounded by some of the volunteer army at the Victorian PGA at Huntingdale.

with Golf Victoria taking charge of the volunteer force. "They were keen to do it themselves; that's fine," Emerson said.

The idea of allowing spectators onto the fairways has always found favour with Emerson, so being the one to organise that at Thirteenth Beach gave him a lot of satisfaction. "It's been a huge success," he said. "The players don't mind having the spectators around; they're used to the noise. It's movement that disturbs them," Emerson said.

Emerson cited his favourite volunteer story concerning a former Huntingdale captain Eric "Dolly" Parton and suave English professional Maurice Bembridge. Parton played a major role in getting the Australian Masters up and running at Huntingdale in 1979 and for years after was the self-appointed head of the 'ropes and stakes' department.

Bembridge was a very good golfer – he won six times on the European Tour and played in four Ryder Cup teams – but possessed the extraordinary and very annoying habit of cutting the gallery ropes with scissors whenever they were in his way.

As Emerson tells it, Dolly had his own way of doing things. Upon learning of Bembridge's antics, he and his crew went and found him out on the course, but were content to wait in the wings rather than confront him

immediately. Then, right at the moment the Englishman was about to strike a putt, Dolly and his crew began banging a stake into the ground.

Bembridge scowled and marched off to the next hole. Dolly's men followed him, waited until he was about putt, and again started banging stakes into the ground. "Hey," yelled Bembridge, "stop that banging when I'm putting, do you mind?" Dolly walked up to him and said, "I'll do a deal with you. You stop cutting the ropes and we'll stop the banging." The ropes remained intact for the rest of the tournament.

Back in those days, the running of the Masters was a loose-knit affair, to say the least. "It was chaos," Emerson said. "There were groups from everywhere doing bits and pieces and little cliques of blokes running this and that. No one knew who was out on the course; it was absolute chaos." The Emersons brought structure to it and over time developed a streamlined operation that is now the envy of tournaments both here and overseas.

They have a database containing the names of more than 3000 volunteers and invitations are sent to those who will be needed for a particular tournament, sometimes numbering around 600. There are tasks aplenty - uniform packing and distribution, carry boards, helping in the media centre, manning the practice fairway, bus

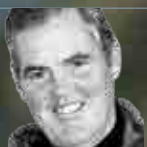
and golf cart driving, walking scorers, TV assistants, mobile marshals, hole marshals, etc, etc.

Each hole has a team captain who organises his or her team, many of whom will have come from the same golf club. There are 15 clubs which have been doing it since Emerson started the system of a single club being responsible for each hole. "The hole captains are responsible for the entire operation of their hole - the boards and crossings, the tees, the greens, everything."

Still, the buck stops with Emerson. If things go wrong, he has to take responsibility for it but in more than 50 tournaments across three decades, there have been few complaints. And the loyalty he has built with his team of volunteers is unshakeable.

Without question, the organisation of tournament golf in Victoria has, for several decades, been the equal of any throughout the world and Andrew Langford-Jones, the Australian PGA's Director of Tournaments, is in no doubt it's the Emersons who deserve the credit.

"Norm, Judy and their team of volunteers are the backbone of the tournaments. These events could get by without the likes of myself and other officials, but they wouldn't get off the ground without the volunteers." ■



MAGICAL MATCH | PLAY

With a national title on the line and 36 holes to negotiate on the superb Yarra Yarra layout on Melbourne's sandbelt, the pressure was on at the Australian Amateur Championships in January. 1978 Champion **MICHAEL CLAYTON** was there to report.

Matias Sanchez in the final thrust of victory on the 18th green at Yarra Yarra.

Nothing is more certain than the unpredictability of matchplay, but a 36-hole final makes it less likely that an unfancied player can get off to a hot start and hang on for an upset win.

At the Yarra Yarra final of the Australian Amateur between the U.S Junior champion Min Woo Lee from Perth and young Royal Melbourne man Matias Sanchez, it was the local who started as the underdog but had a brilliant start with three birdies.

Lee came back towards the end of the first 18, only to lose a couple of holes just before lunch, leaving him two holes down at halfway.

Coming to the extraordinary 11th hole at Yarra Yarra, the longer hitting Lee had reduced the lunchtime deficit by half and, with the pin cut in the far right corner, he hit a beautiful iron all the way across the longest part of the diagonal hazard guarding the front line of the green.

THE FAVOURITE MIN WOO LEE (Western Australia)



In 2016 Lee, 18, became the first Australian to win the US Junior Amateur Championship. Other wins include the WA Amateur and the Aaron Baddeley International in the US. In November last year he shot 67 in the second round of the Australian Open to make the cut and finish tied 30th.

Sanchez pulled his iron just far enough left to find the back bunker, upon which the 1958 champion Kevin Hartley recalled the great Ossie Pickworth taking three to escape the same bunker. "He wasn't best pleased," said Hartley, an interested observer of a championship he had won almost sixty years earlier.

Sanchez escaped on the first attempt but, predictably, given the difficulty of the shot, not close enough to save three and with seven holes to play, the match was back to square.

From there to the end it was a combination of great shots and basic mistakes which decided the winner.

The mid-length, flat and straight 14th hole is Yarra Yarra's equivalent of the fourth at Kingston Heath, Victoria's fifth and Royal Melbourne's 14th. They are neither onerous nor spectacular given their length and the relative blandness of the land they play over. It's not a criticism, rather a reminder of the great golf course designer A.W Tillinghast's dictum: "When I speak of a hole being inspiring, it is not intended to infer that the visitor is to be subject to attacks of hysteria on every teeing ground."

Sanchez drove safely enough but with the pin in the front right corner, 20m to the left would have been better. Still, it seemed not to matter as Lee pushed a long iron far to the right and into the trees.

Sanchez's pitch stalled in the wind and came up short in the front bunker. It eased the pressure just a little and from the trees Lee punched an extraordinary low slice through the narrow gap, his ball finishing within 15 feet of the flag. The gallery was well entitled to an attack of hysteria and it looked to have been the inspired shot to finally turn the match in his favour.

The short 15th is another of Alex Russell's fine short holes and, with the pin on the front level of the long two-tiered green, Lee safely found the target. Sanchez did not and went two down.

The fate of Sanchez looked sealed even after he drove well at the 16th, as Lee smashed an amazing drive, leaving him little more than a hundred metres to the flag and seemingly making a four a formality.

Sanchez hit a good second shot but it ran through the back right of the green by perhaps five or six paces. Four from there was likely but three certainly wasn't, and three looked to be what he needed.

Lee then pitched short into the front bunker, exploded to eight feet and eased the pressure just a little. Sanchez, with some expectation four might still be good enough, holed from off the green for a three and turned the match again.

One down now, he drove safely enough down the left of the 17th and watched as Lee hit the same tee shot he had at the 14th. This time there would be neither a path through the trees nor miracle escape and they stood on the 18th tee all square.

Sanchez drove low and left. The ball pitched high up in the face of the bunker and flipped out, finishing in the rough and leaving a precarious and difficult long approach off the steep slope coming down from the bunker.

Lee hit another huge drive but, to the amazement of every observer, his ball finished in the cross-bunkers Alex Russell built to make the long second shot more interesting for the shorter hitters.

Never could Russell have contemplated someone would reach them from the tee and it is a commentary on the madness of the modern golf ball and what it has done to effectively render obsolete all of our best courses, if the architect's original intent is the measure.

THE UNDERDOG MATIAS SANCHEZ (Victoria)



In 2016 Sanchez, 18, was runner-up in the Australian Junior Amateur. Twice Royal Melbourne Club Champion, in December he scored his biggest win in the Woodlands Open Amateur, incorporating the Victorian Champion of Champions. But he still sat more than 700 places below Lee on the world amateur ranking.

Of course, the 18th at Yarra Yarra is never again going to be a driver and a three-wood but Lee's feat of carrying the green with a nine-iron from the cross bunker was something to behold. The iron was perfectly struck but it carried the green, finishing 10 metres off the back edge.

Hye-Jin Choi with the spoils of victory.



Sanchez did all he could have expected with a long iron, leaving himself a straightforward pitch from 30 metres short of the green. Lee, coming down the hill from the back, was much closer to the hole but with the more difficult assignment to save par.

Sanchez chipped sensibly, finishing eight feet short and, importantly, with a putt straight up the hill. Lee chose to putt from the back but it was one of those shots you invariably hit either too hard or too soft, so difficult is it to get the weight just right.

So it was, as Lee came up short of the edge of the green then missed the second putt from five or six paces for the four. Sanchez, with a putt he could have easily missed, holed, completing a run of birdie, par, par from the 16th tee. It sounds simple enough but members play two of them as par-fives

and it was good enough to make him the first Victorian champion since Andrew Martin in 2004.

The Women's final was predictably played between two members of the very strong Korean team and it was Hye-Jin Choi and So-Mi Lee who fought their way through the draw to the final day where Choi won a high quality match.

They are a way ahead of our best young women amateurs now Min Woo Lee's elder sister Minjee and Su Oh have turned pro and they have become an almost indispensable part of the championship because they have raised the standards higher than ever before.

From my observation, there are a couple of factors behind the complete Korean dominance of the top levels of both amateur and professional women's golf.



Spot the ball ... Australian Amateur Champion Hye-Jin Choi fires to Yarra's mighty 15th green.

Golf is the number one sport for young women in Korea when, if we are lucky, it might be the 10th or 15th. Their best athletes play golf, the competition is fierce and those who reach the top of the pile do so because of fine technique and relentless work ethic.

Some may lament the Korean domination where in the past two years, six of the eight semi-finalists have been Korean - but not me.

They show how far behind we are and how much our women have to improve if they hope to compete on the world stage. People think the Koreans dominate women's golf now, and they do, but it's going to be an increasing dominance in years to come.

If we want to have any hope of keeping up, the first step is to set up top-level women's courses to demand stronger, longer and better shots. Anything around 5500 metres is employing a course designed for 20-handicap (at best) club play - and it's 500 metres too short for the best young women in the country. Certainly it is if they hold any hopes of competing with the best in the world.

Playing little more than pitch and putt golf protects weak players but it's not doing the top level of golf here any good unless, of course, the aim is simply the avoidance of embarrassing scores.

One assumes that is not the way forward. We are at a fork in the road with women's golf, with the Koreans clearly showing us the way forward. ■

AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

MEN'S FINAL

Matias Sanchez (VIC) d.
Min Woo Lee (WA) 1 up

WOMEN'S FINAL

Hye-Jin Choi (KOR) d.
So-Mi Lee (KOR) 4-2

MATIAS PRIDE

No matter what the sport, the greatest reward anyone who works in junior development can receive is to see one of their prodigies achieve success in adulthood.

Matias Sanchez is still only 18, with hopefully a world of success ahead, but he has already given countless Golf Victoria employees, coaches, volunteers and golf club officials a massive thrill with his win in the Australian Amateur Championship.

That's because Sanchez has passed through almost every junior program available since he turned up at the inception of Stuart Appleby Junior Golf at the age of five.

By eight, he had so impressed Golf Victoria junior organisers that he was given a spot in the 2007 Vic Open pro-am and made the television news and current affairs shows. It's not quite like Tiger Woods appearing on the Mike Douglas show at the age of two but that footage certainly has some significance today.

By 11 he'd won more than 150 club, school and regional competitions and stopped entering his own age categories at Golf Victoria events because he didn't want to discourage others by beating them so often.

By 16 he was in the junior state team and, with Ryan Ruffels and Cameron John, was part of the winning boys team.

Now he's part of Golf Victoria's Elite Squad, but it is not just High Performance Manager Ashley Marshall and State Coach Marty Joyce who thrilled to the poise and demeanour Sanchez showed in his thrilling victory over Min Woo Lee.

Tim Wendel, Head Coach at the Rowville Sports Academy, has played a massive role in his career and was on the bag as Sanchez did battle with Lee. "You are amazing, Tim, and I'm really grateful," Sanchez said with quavering voice at the Australian Amateur presentations.

Of course, he saved his biggest, most emotional thanks for his mother Fanny who has devotedly ensured Sanchez has been given every possible chance to develop his exceptional skills.

Making his parents proud was a given. But Matias Sanchez made a lot of people proud with the performance that will kick-start his adult life in golf and inspire other juniors to follow. ■



Matias Sanchez 2017
Australian Amateur
Men's Champion

RIVERSDALE CUP EVOLUTION AT ITS BEST

As golf adapts to the future, it must also learn from its past. DAVID GREENHILL reflects on the transformation of the Riversdale Cup since he played it in the '80s to the classic event today which continues to evolve.

It's easy to reminisce, to look back fondly on the way things used to be and perhaps wish we all still lived in those simpler times. But much can be learned from history and, as an old graduate of the discipline, I'm one of those who feel that what has gone before sets the platform for the future. From a golf perspective, the Riversdale Cup is a classic case in point.

The Riversdale Cup embodies modern elite amateur golf as well as honouring its rich and proud tradition. It's always been a superb event and continues to be so.

The Men's Riversdale Cup pre-dates almost all other major golf events held in this country including the Australian Open and Victorian Amateur, having been first played in 1896. Only the Men's Australian Amateur has been played for longer. Similarly, the Women's

Riversdale Cup is the oldest 72-hole amateur stroke play tournament in Australian women's golf, having been played annually since 1959.

My earliest recollection of the Riversdale Cup was as a student back in the shaggy hair and classic rock days of the early to mid-1980s. The Men's event was played over the March Labour Day weekend, from Friday to Monday, and after finally getting my handicap low enough, I got to play a four-rounder although, realistically, for me it was a 54-hole event as only the State team stars and decent amateurs went on to make the cut for the last round.

Still, it was exciting to dash out of Uni lectures and drive up Riversdale's tree-lined driveway to be greeted by a member volunteer, register my name and be told the best place to park. The

member involvement in all aspects of the event is a long-lasting memory and that tradition continues today with 168 Riversdale members voluntarily helping to give the Championship such a friendly feeling.

The Alex Russell-designed course itself has changed a little since I first played it back in the '80s, but it was always presented in outstanding condition on a beautiful expanse of rolling parkland. To a wide-eyed young man it felt like Augusta, walking up and down the undulating landscape amongst a vast collection of trees and putting on the smooth, holding but super-quick greens.

It was only much later that I learned that Riversdale is the second oldest golf club in Melbourne. Formed in 1892 as Surrey Hills Golf Club, it was one of the five founding clubs of the Victorian Golf



Association and six foundation clubs of the Victorian Ladies Golf League. The current St John's Wood Estate location was once the country retreat for Sir Redmond Barry, the judge who sent Ned Kelly to the gallows.

Successfully conducting separate Men's and Women's Riversdale Cups into the new millennium, the club was quick to note the success of the first concurrently staged Men's and Women's Victorian Opens held in 2012 at Spring Valley and Woodlands, effectively just down the road.

Christian Tanner, Riversdale's General Manager, said the club not only felt there was an opportunity to create efficiencies by combining resources but saw a chance to reinvigorate atmosphere. Feedback from the players, volunteers and officials during the inaugural 2013 combined event was overwhelmingly positive.

The combined event also meets a key Golf Victoria goal to jointly promote men's and women's golf as much as possible. In a nutshell, Riversdale made a great event even better.

This year's 72-hole Riversdale Cup from Thursday 9 to Sunday 12 March will be the 109th for the men and 59th for the women.

The men's starting field is set at 120 players with the women's field at 48 players. The leading 57 men's players (plus ties) and the leading 25 women's players (plus ties) will qualify for the final two rounds of the event on the weekend of March 11-12.

The honour role of both men's and women's winners represents a who's who of Australian golf. Men's winners include amateur legends such as Ivo

Whitton, Harry Williams, Bill Edgar, Kevin Hartley, Tom Crow and John Lindsay through to the era of players that went on to become successful professionals in Jason Day, Marc Leishman, Geoff Ogilvy, Mike Clayton, Robert Allenby and Aaron Baddeley.

The women's winners are no less impressive with past champions including Burtta Cheney, who won the inaugural event, Margie Masters, Sandra McCaw, Jane Lock, Louise Briers and Barbara Dillon through to the modern era where victors such as Sarah Kemp, Nikki Garrett and Whitney Hillier have made the move to the pro ranks.

Historically, the Riversdale Cup has attracted the best players from all over Australia and New Zealand to compete and over the past 20 years, in particular, the event has played a key role in

competition experience gained by players such as Adam Scott and Lydia Ko together with many leading amateur players from Europe, Asia and the USA.

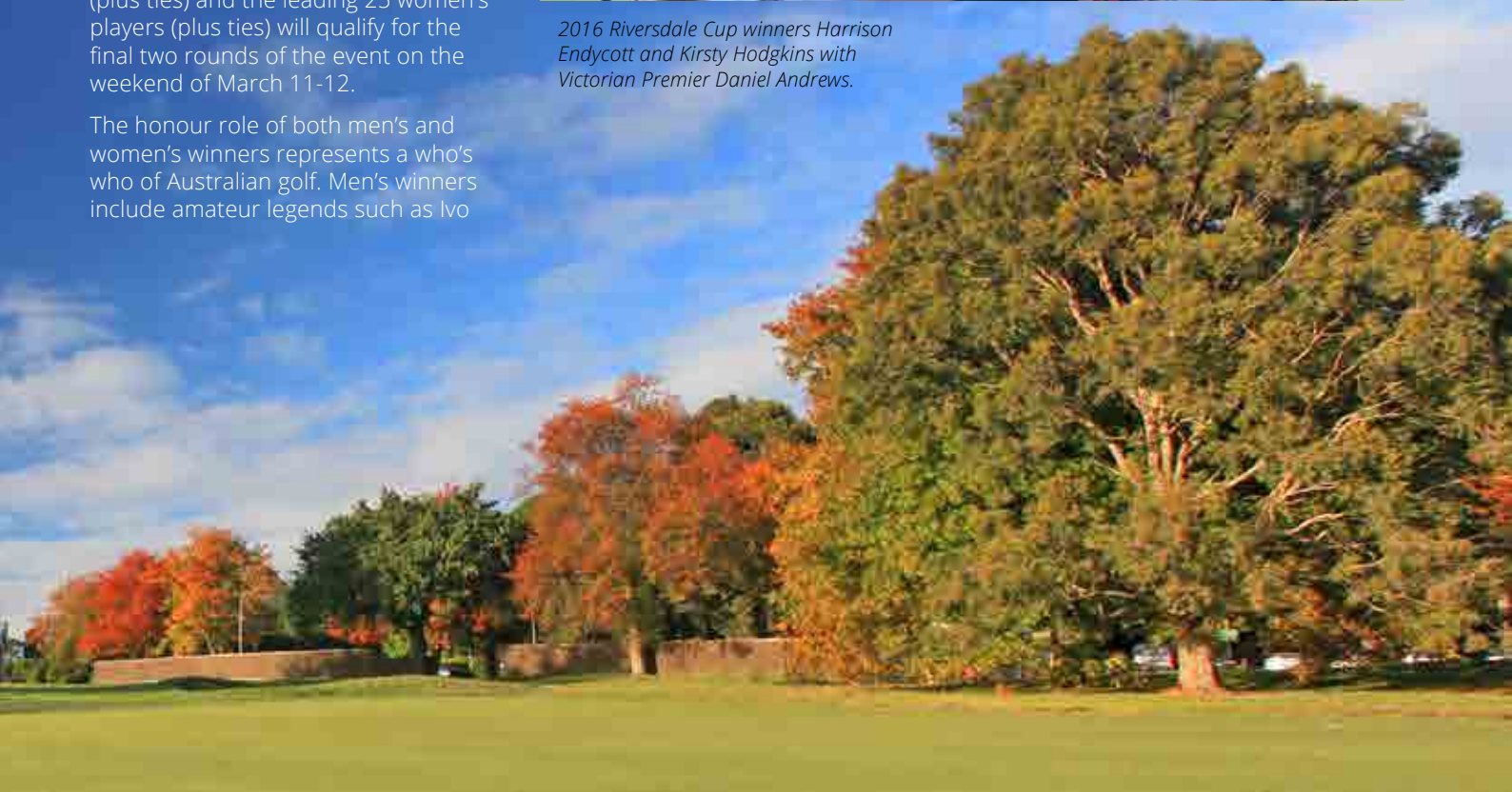
Spectators are welcome across the four days of the Championship and admittance is free. If you have the chance, get out to Riversdale and hopefully enjoy some autumn sun while soaking in a wonderful piece of Victorian golf history. You'll see talented young men and women playing golf together for two of Australia's most cherished amateur titles – the clear path for the way significant golf competitions will be conducted into the future.

Information on the starting fields, draws, scores and news will be available in the lead-up and during the 2017 Championship via the Riversdale Golf Club Website at www.riversdalegolf.com.au



Photograph: Anthony Powter

2016 Riversdale Cup winners Harrison Endycott and Kirsty Hodgkins with Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews.



Oates
cleans best!

Proudly sponsoring the



INDUSTRY LEADERS IN INNOVATION, ENGINEERING AND PRODUCT DESIGN

For over 85 years Oates® has been making great value cleaning products for the home and industry, designed to get the job done quickly and effectively.

From scourers to mops, brushes, brooms, buckets and sponges, Oates® cleans best.

**Whatever you clean,
Oates Cleans best!**





GERRI IS A LESSON IN SIMPLICITY



*Mixing work and play ...
foreman Gerri O'Callaghan
at Royal Melbourne.*

It's not often that work and play coincide. For the foreman of the East course at Royal Melbourne, it has. And she wouldn't have it any other way.

By KAREN HARDING.

When scratch marker Geraldine O'Callaghan from Southern Golf Club took out the prestigious Joan Fisher Plate and, not long after, the Sorrento Ladies Open Championship late in 2016, most people would have assumed that she had been working hard on golf all her life. Not so.

Gerri's approach to golf is the same as her approach to life – and it's all about simplicity.

Like most country kids, Gerri grew up playing a range of sports. Netball, basketball, softball you name it, she had a crack. Her journey into golf was neither planned nor expected yet it seems to have had an element of destiny to it all along.

Raised initially in Cohuna, Gerri was born into a non-golfing family. It wasn't until an end-of-school-year trip to the local golf course, aged around 14, that she first tried her hand at golf. And found she was pretty good at it.

Enter local Cohuna Golf Club members Fred and Marion Smith, parents of current Royal Melbourne member and fine player Sue Ellery. Fred and Marion took Gerri under their wing, teaching her the rudiments of the game and offering encouragement where needed.

As her game improved, Gerri came under the notice of Rob McNaughton at nearby Barham Golf Club. McNaughton oversaw the juniors in the Northern District and ran some junior clinics which Gerri attended, still just a country kid enjoying playing.

It's amazing, though, how kids just having fun are accidentally learning and in very quick time, less than two years later, Gerri was on single figures and selected for the intermediate level training squad for the Victorian state team. Steve Bann, then state coach, and Denis McDade refined her game, taking her to a handicap low of four.

If destiny hadn't had much more than a gentle association with her golf until this point, it soon stepped in with much greater impact.

Her mum passed away suddenly from a massive heart attack in 1997 when Gerri was 19 and, six months later, her father suffered a severe stroke. Lost, she initially sought solace in her golf.

By this time the family had moved to Echuca and Gerri had joined Rich River. Representing Goulburn Valley in Country Teams matches in 1998, she was spied by ladies from Southern and recruited for Melbourne metropolitan pennant. With her on board, the team won Division 2 the next year and she played another year with them in Division 1.

Then her father also passed away. At just 22 years of age, she had lost both parents and found herself at a crossroads.

"I was at a point in my life where I really didn't know what I wanted to do in life."

So she travelled - on and off for six years, playing no golf other than two social rounds in that time. When she returned to Melbourne in her late 20s, she was still uncertain of the direction life would take. She did, however, realise she needed a job.

A chance opportunity to work as a greenkeeper at Sandhurst Golf Club in Melbourne's south east arose.

"I thought, well, I love golf and I love the outdoors, coming from the country, so I took it and it's become a dream job."

Of course, that brought playing golf again to the front of mind. Despite wondering whether she could still hit a ball, she re-joined Southern in 2008 with no intention of doing anything other than what she did before – playing for fun.

What she did take seriously was her job. Whilst at Sandhurst, she graduated with a Certificate III in Horticulture followed by a three-year Diploma in Horticultural Studies, receiving the Diploma Award in her final year.

She was now at Sandringham golf course which was under the management of Royal Melbourne, the superintendent of which was, and is, the excellent Richard Forsyth. After two years at Sandy as assistant superintendent, she was offered an opportunity across the road at Royal.

As the Foreman of the East Course, Gerri answers directly to Craig Anthony, Assistant Superintendent East Course, and then to Forsyth. And she loves her life there.

"It's been a dream come true. I have learned so much from Richard and Craig. They are both very knowledgeable and both have been a mentor to me, Richard especially. He's very professional in the way he handles things. I have learned a lot from him and it's not just about greenkeeping."

With her professional life in golf burgeoning, her golf game began to improve too. In early 2016 she hit scratch. But it's happened around her job. No formal coach, no regular lessons, no scheduled practice sessions, no gym work.

"I love to play well and if something's going really bad, I'll just quickly have a five-minute chat with the pros at Southern but, touch wood, nothing's been going bad of late, so no formal coach, no formal lessons. I video my swing maybe two or three times a year to check that it's ok."

Both the influence of her parents and their tragic loss have had a significant role in Gerri's outlook. The mental

"I thought, well, I love golf and I love the outdoors, coming from the country, so I took it and it's become a dream job."

strength she acquired as a result has stood her in good stead with her golf – and helped form her attitude to life.

“It’s part of who I am today. As much as it was a tragedy, it has made me a stronger person. I always take the positive out of things and I hope they’ve instilled enough in me that I can be a good person. It does affect you in different ways but they’re always walking with me on the fairways when I’m playing in important events.”

No more so than during the Joan Fisher against a crack field and the Sorrento Open against some tough elements, the wind blowing a gale.

There were two other big golf events in Gerri’s 2016. In pennant, Southern finished runner-up to Heidelberg in Division 2 and returns to Division 1 for 2017. And then there’s the big win at the Golf Management Victoria Staff Day at Latrobe. She was part of the Royal Melbourne team which included recently appointed General Manager Warwick Hill-Rennie and was victorious in the teams section.

Hill-Rennie was transported to the event in Gerri’s old Hilux ute. Gerri was initially mortified at the prospect but the two chatted happily and all was good.

Hill-Rennie: “There is no greater joy than watching someone accomplish fantastic balance in their life. Gerri has turned her passion for golf into an outstanding career.

“I had the privilege to witness her ball striking ability and have her in our team last year in a GMV Day. The pure simplicity of her swing and course management was a great lesson for me. Gerri is not only a great golfer but a valued employee, with her work on the East Course highly regarded.

“Above all, Gerri is a fantastic human being and great fun to be around. We are all very proud of her.”

Hill-Rennie is spot-on. Gerri is nothing if not a lesson in simplicity. Not for her, concern over technical know-how. Her favourite club at the moment is her 52-degree wedge but she’s not sure what the lie is. “I’d have to have a look at it.”

Not for her, the painstaking practice sessions either. Indeed, it seems her most serious practice is playing her mates for wine and chips in the Sunday comp at Southern.

“I might zip out after work and do two or three holes, two or three nights per week, but it’s not like I have a practice regimen or anything like that. During the pennant season I try and practise my short game and putting but I don’t hit 10,000 balls a week.”

And definitely not for her, the tortured anguish over her swing.

“People say, oh, you make it look so simple and I say, well, I just don’t try too hard, I just try and swing it the same every time.”

Whether it’s her work in greenkeeping or her golf game, Gerri keeps it uncomplicated. And she has no plans to change.

“It’s working, so I’m just going to keep going with it.”

It’s been a sometimes tough journey for Gerri but she’s happy with the destination.



Damien's Long March To Glory

There have been bigger tournaments than the Victorian PGA Championship but, as BRIAN MELDRUM reports, there haven't been many more deserving winners than the 2017 champion Damien Jordan.

The tree-lined, lush green fairways of one of Melbourne's famed sandbelt courses are a world - more like a universe - away from the desolate, sandy wastes of strife-torn southern Iraq.

But as 36-year-old Queenslander Damien Jordan strode down the 18th fairway at Huntingdale with a two-shot cushion in the Victorian PGA, his mind took a wander. To his newborn son who arrived just days before the start of the championship, to his wife Amber and their daughter, and to his two daughters from a previous marriage.

But it also visited a far different place, back to a time when Jordan and his mates woke up every morning wondering if it might be their last. Back to the years he spent serving his country in the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, including a five-month tour of Iraq in 2002, and another seven-month tour of that world hot-spot in 2005. Apart from anything else, those experiences gave him a different perspective on life.

"To come back from where I did, and do what I did in the places I've been, and the demons I've fought off to get here, it's a big achievement for me," was his heartfelt response to his first ISPS Handa PGA Tour of Australasia victory. The win secures his status until the end of 2018.

Jordan was a promising young golfer barely into his 20s when he decided it was his patriotic duty to serve his nation. He spent the best part of six years in the army and, in the hot cauldron of a 36-hole final day at the PGA Championship, it could be argued it was this strength that enabled him to fire a brilliant seven-under-par 65 in the morning third round to take the lead, then grind out a one-under-par final round to beat Aron Price by two shots.



Vic Amateur Just the Start

First played in 1894 for women and 1899 for men, the Victorian Amateur Championships for 2016 unearthed two young champions at the beginnings of their journey in elite golf. BRENDAN MOLONEY profiles the winners.



Victorian Amateur Champions Alizza Hetherington and Dylan Perry have already travelled far on their long golfing journey.

Parents of budding golfers might not work as hard as those who rise at ungodly hours to take their kids to swimming training - but Rod Hetherington goes close.

Rod's 16-year-old daughter Alizza is the reigning Victorian Amateur Champion after a win on the first extra hole in the final at Woodlands in December. To help her to this level, Rod and wife Deidre moved Alizza and her brothers Will and Josh from Darwin to Melbourne so they could all practise on good courses.

In January this year the Hetheringtons entered the pages of golfing history when the three siblings played in the qualifying rounds of the Australian Amateur at Yarra Yarra. Old timers can remember Peter and Tony Thomson, Tom and Peter Crow and Peter and Jeff Senior being good enough to enter the top amateur title but three from the same parents seems unprecedented.

Grandmother June Hetherington made the long trek down from Mildura to watch them play, while Rod caddied for Josh in the morning and Alizza in the afternoon. It is interesting to watch father and daughter combine on the course. They seem to enjoy each other's company and the former two-handicapper with the plus-one daughter was more than just a bag carrier.

Alas, all three failed to qualify for the matchplay component of the nationals but this was just a blip on the screen. The siblings are all talented players. Josh, 18, went through last year's pennant season undefeated for Royal Melbourne and Will, 21, played for Yarra. But it's Alizza who has been racking up the silverware.

When she defeated Queensland teenager Rebecca Kay at the 37th hole of the Victorian Amateur at Woodlands, it gave her the rare achievement of being both the current Women's Amateur Champion as well as the Victorian Junior Girls Champion. It's a feat she shares with some of the greats of Victorian women's golf including Jane Lock and Louise Briers.

Alizza took moving to Melbourne from Darwin two years ago in her stride and says she has settled in well. "It wasn't a big wrench to come down here. I go with the flow. The winter took a bit of getting used to



because I'd never experienced it before. It was a nice change from the constant heat of Darwin."

She admits growing up in a golfing family was pretty competitive. "We used to battle it out when we were younger but it was fun. That is why I got into it. My brothers have certainly helped my golf. I probably would not have taken it up without them. Also, they know a lot of golfers and they introduce me to them. The three of us have not played together for a while although Josh and I won the mixed foursomes at Royal Melbourne last year."

Alizza gives the impression that school is cool as well. She attends Haileybury College, where three other outstanding Victorian golf prospects - Zara Woodbridge, Gabi Ruffels and Alex Hilliard - also attend.

"It is important for me to complete my schooling," she said. "I did one Year 12 subject last year to make it easier." She is studying English, Maths, Accounting and PE, career-relevant subjects which should prepare her to give articulate answers in press conferences, keep score, count the money and stay fit.

"After school, I'm not sure which path to follow. I would like to go to college (on a golf scholarship in America). I want to be a pro but I'm not sure how I'll get there. I'm interested because Josh is off to college in North Carolina in August."

Like Hetherington, Dylan Perry was on a hot streak when he won the Victorian Amateur at Woodlands in December.

His run started in the middle of the year when he made the final-16 of the British Amateur Championship at Royal Porthcawl where previous winners include Sergio Garcia, Jose-Maria Olazabal and Matteo Manassero. Sadly, this momentum, which he hoped to carry into the British Amateur Stroke Play Championship, was

ended by a bout of food poisoning and he was a non-starter.

Back home, he won the Queensland Stroke Play and Amateur titles in quick succession and arrived in Melbourne with his confidence high in December. He won, but it wasn't easy. The final against John Lyras from St Michael's in Sydney ended at the 41st and he played a total of 182 holes in five days.

With support from his club, Perry plans to complete 2017 as an amateur and goes to Royal St George's in June to in a bid to become the third Australian after Doug Bachli and Bryden Macpherson to win the British Amateur.

"This year I am hoping to crack the top 100 in the world amateur rankings," he said. "My goal is to do it within the next few months and then crack the top 20 by the end of the year. Depending on how I play and how I feel at the end of it, I might look at going to a (professional) qualifying school overseas. The choices are the US, Japan and China but I am going to worry about this year first. I really can't wait to do it. I thought about it last year and after sitting down with Simon (Deep, his coach at Terrey Hills in Sydney), we decided to play another year as an amateur."

In Britain he also plans to make his delayed debut in the Open Amateur Stroke Play at the Woodhall Spa Golf Club at the end of May. The only thing he plans to do differently is to watch out for dodgy chicken, the culprit of his food poisoning last year.

by Graham Eccles

GOURMET GOLF

Country Victoria offers a vast array of unique experiences for the curious golfer. This time, GRAHAM ECCLES heads to the state's south-west where the charming townships of Port Fairy, Timboon and Terang offer great golf ... and so much more.

PORT FAIRY

Until the emergence of the Barnbougles and Cape Wickhams, Port Fairy Golf Club held a special place in the golfing firmament as the only course in the country that could be classed as a true links layout, its fairways sculpted from the Shipwreck Coast's sand dunes.

With its clutch of stunningly designed holes on the back nine framed by the often wild waves of the Southern Ocean, Port Fairy is golfing heaven for its members and the thousands of visitors who have sought the experience of playing a course typical of the great links courses of Scotland.

But it hasn't always been so. Although the club's history dates back to 1899, its origins were on Southcombe Park in Port Fairy township. The course at times resembled either a dust bowl or a squelchy swamp. And, when the notorious gales blew up from the Antarctic, it was a place for only the hardest of golfers.

By 1956, with membership stalled, it was felt the club would not progress unless it had golfing conditions comparable to

clubs like nearby Warrnambool. After negotiations with the Victorian Government, land at Fairy Park several kilometres to the east was granted to the club for a new course but it took a further seven years before nine holes were ready for play.

Lacking heavy equipment, members, friends and local farmers hacked their way through the sand dunes and the very unfriendly marram grass using lawnmowers, shovels and crowbars. Some farmers, who were members, used their tractors when conditions were suitable.

The "new" Port Fairy Golf Club finally opened in 1963. When plans for three new holes were finalised in the '70s, the president advised members that "the only possible way for the holes to be constructed in the near future was by working bees". At least the club by then had some equipment of its own to help with the task.

Like Topsy, the course inched its way to 15 holes and finally, in October 1985, Port Fairy could at last boast it had a



*The historic working port on beautiful Moyne River in Port Fairy.
Photo courtesy of Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism*

PORT FAIRY ATTRACTIONS

This historic 19th century shipping port, about 290 kilometres south-west of Melbourne, has more than 50 buildings classified by the National Trust, many of them 1800s and Georgian; Griffiths Island and the historic lighthouse; The Crag; vibrant art galleries and antique stores; charming boutiques; the historic working port and excellent pubs, cafes and restaurants. The Port Fairy Folk Festival (10-13 March 2017) has been held annually for more than 40 years.

Nowhere else in Victoria is golf played quite so close to the ocean as Port Fairy.

championship 18-hole layout. Except for the usual tweaking of holes and the ongoing removal of non-native ti-tree, the course has not altered greatly since that time.

From the blue tees, the par-72 layout is 5887 metres in length with two par fives and two par threes on each nine.

In his role as a course designer, Kevin Hartley wrote in the November 1990 issue of *Golf in Victoria* under the heading *Port Fairy Capitalises on a Scottish Landscape* that: "Port Fairy's coastline views are almost unique to a golf course in Victoria".

Golf Victoria contributor and course designer Mike Clayton goes even further. "It's a precious and unique layout. Nowhere else in Victoria is golf played so close to the ocean or along sand dune land of such quality."

Of course, not all the holes have views of the coastline but those that do, particularly through 12 to 15, are spectacular as well as being a sublime test of golf. Standing on the 14th tee with the hardest hole on the course sweeping over 400

metres down to a green seemingly a stone's throw from the ocean, the need of a camera tugs strongly.

And the glorious 178m par three that follows is just as captivating.

Without massive and costly contouring, change is not considered likely but one member, Mike Steel, CEO of Bamstone, Australia's largest supplier of bluestone, plans to at least "dress up" the approach to the 18th green later this year with a replica of the Swilken Bridge at St Andrews in Scotland.

"The idea came to me while I was at St Andrews watching the British Open and later playing at the new course," he said. "My father-in-law was Tom Bartlett, a pioneer who helped build the Port Fairy course, and I thought it would be a great way to honour him.

"He was in his 101st year at the time and he had always wanted to play St Andrews. I said I would play for him and got him to sign his name on three golf balls. I lost a lot of balls on that trip but didn't lose any of Tom's. My wife told him I had played for him and he passed away soon afterwards."

TIMBOON

Almost 80 kilometres closer to Melbourne, the not so sleepy hamlet of Timboon, famous for its cheese, has a golf course that has undergone two reincarnations since the club's inception, thought to be in the late 1930s.

Like Port Fairy, Timboon Golf Club began with a modest nine holes and sandscrapes opposite the cheese factory on land owned by Frank Russell, who kept a house cow that was partial to chewing golf balls.

One former member wrote that during a round his playing partner found the cow chewing his ball. The contented bovine kept chewing as the irate player chased it down the fairway and, huffing and puffing, demanded a drop.

Timboon's first course was abandoned in 1946 when a new owner sub-divided the land and houses began to appear on the course. When another Timboon resident offered part of his property, a former headmaster of the local school designed a course and work began on a second layout for the club.

According to a short history of golf in Timboon, "bracken ferns were cut, stumps grubbed out and hollows

filled. Grass was cut for greens. To the young and uninitiated, these jobs would have been done the hard way. No heavy machinery, only man and horse power. Ferns would be cut with a fern hook, grass mowed with a push mower and hollows filled in with horse scoops".

Fences crossed the fairways and players had to get over or through them. Adding to these hazards, which were particularly daunting for lady members, was the dreaded ninth hole where a deep ravine ruined many a promising card.

There was, however, some compensation in the rules. A ball lying in cow manure could be dropped without penalty and a ball striking a fence across the fairway could be replayed, also without penalty.

By the late 1950s, the club felt it should no longer rely on the generosity of the landowner and successfully sought from the State Government 27 hectares of Crown land near the present site for a permanent golf course.

In April 1964, the third course was officially opened with a mixed foursomes event after several years of voluntary hard labour assisted by contractors and thousands of dollars worth of machinery brought in from farms. It began as another nine-holer but was extended to 14 holes in the '70s and remains that way today.

The president of Timboon Golf Club, local crayfisherman Kevin Plozza, says the club has land to extend the course to 18 holes, "but with an ageing membership, it is a bit hilly and we feel it is better to put all our efforts into the existing layout".

The par-3 seventh at Timboon.

Plozza says the course is rated a par 72 at 5618 metres in length with the par-5 first hole becoming a par four second time around. "We play the second and third normally but our big dogleg par-5 sixth hole has a tee on the elbow that becomes the par-4 18th hole.

"It's unfortunate if we have a big event because with so many people on the course there is always a wait to complete the last four holes. But there are worse things than having to wait beside the clubhouse."

The club has 120 members, a third of them women, and according to Plozza, is financially in the black helped by rent from three communication towers on the course and sponsorships from local firms. "We are probably in the best financial shape ever, which has enabled us to recently install an automatic sprinkler system," he said.

Lined by gum trees, the fairways undulate through a picturesque landscape. Four of them have recently been sown with Legend Couch but the heavy clay soil has slowed consolidation. And, unlike the first course, the greens are just that and play quite truly.



The Timboon Railway Shed Distillery.

Photo courtesy of Port Campbell Visitor Information Centre

TIMBOON ATTRACTIONS

Part of the 12 Apostles Gourmet Trail (a must-do for foodies), Timboon is about 210 kilometres west of Melbourne and just a short drive from the Great Ocean Road coastline. Tourist highlights include the Timboon Railway Shed Distillery, famous for its single malt whisky; Timboon Ice Creamery; Timboon Cheesery; Berry World picking farm and café; L'Artisan Organic Cheese; Camperdown-Timboon Rail Trail; the Heritage Listed Trestle Railway Bridge and Timboon Flora and Fauna reserve.

TERANG

Terang Golf Club, an attractive 18-hole layout to the north of Timboon beside the Princes Highway, has been in existence in one form or another since 1900 but its history is chequered to say the least.

Records show that the club has moved sites four times since its inception as a nine-hole course with sandscapes on a large area of common vacant land south of Terang that was shared with "a good number of the town's cows".

In 1908 the club was recognized by the Victorian Golf Association but when the land was required for other purposes, the club shifted to the nearby township of Noorat and resumed activities on land owned by one of its first members, wealthy pastoralist A.J. Black.

The club quickly realised the land was unsuitable for golf, particularly as it lacked water. Mr Black came to the club's rescue again – he offered the committee use of his private, beautifully-kept links situated in front of Mt Noorat House for a nominal membership fee of five shillings a year.

According to the book *Back to Terang* published in 1950, "the club was greatly indebted to Mr Black for his generous offer and enjoyed many years' play there". But as membership increased, so did the desire to be closer to town and an 18-hole course was laid out at the Terang Racecourse.

It also failed because of poor soil and drainage issues, forcing the club to re-establish itself on its present site, the once 25ft deep Lake Terang that had been drained a few years earlier when a peat fire in the bottom of the lake smoked out the town.

After volunteers worked with a single horse and minimal machinery to clear the overgrown lakebed of tussocks, weeds, thistles, reeds and ferns, as well as dealing with snakes and rabbits, the course opened for play in May 1938.

Even then, the layout was beset with water and drainage problems and the number of holes wavered between 9 and 18 for many years. It was not until 1988 when the club commemorated 50 years on the site that it was permanently reinstated to an 18-hole course.

President Gavin Simpson says the club's ups and downs through the years are well and truly behind it and today it has around 100 members and more than 20 enthusiastic juniors who turn up each weekend for coaching. And visitors are always welcome.

The course, which undulates over the front nine and then flattens out across the back nine, is 5674 metres in length with three par fives and four par threes, the longest of which is 170 metres.

"It's a challenging track right from the first hole, which is rated the hardest on the course," says Simpson. "The first hole makes interesting use of rare uphill terrain on this course. A 328m par four, the fairway is straight and fairly flat until it gently doglegs to the right and then sweeps uphill all the way to the green."

"But the par-4 fifth, the second hardest hole, is equally a challenge where a player needs to hit a long drive to position to be able to view the green."

Planted with stolons gifted from nearby Mortlake Golf Club, the course now has well-established Legend Couch fairways and excellent greens making it an all-season course with the travails of yesteryear now a distant memory.

Terang's current men's champion Caleb Perry, also a member at Warrnambool, is just 17 and playing well in state junior tournaments. But it is Lady Captain Judy Carmody who dominates the honour boards at this club.

Judy has just won the women's club championship for the 31st time! Dotted among her amazing achievements have been six holes-in-one – four of them at Terang and one each at Barwon Heads and Timboon. ■



*Terang is part of the 12 Apostles Gourmet Trail.
Photo courtesy of Port Campbell Visitor Information Centre*

TERANG ATTRACTIONS

Half an hour's drive north of Timboon is the 1840s Western District town of Terang, about 212 kilometres from Melbourne. Also part of the 12 Apostles Gourmet Trail, tourist highlights include 19th century buildings and heritage-listed trees; Heritage Trail including Terang Church, War Memorial and Old Post Office; Mt Noorat Volcano Walk; Terang Dry Lake Walk; Terang and Noorat Bike Trail and Terang Racecourse with its heritage grandstand. The Terang Country Music Festival (March 17-19 2017) is held annually at the racecourse.

*The signature hole
at Terang is the first.*

TOWARDS ZERO

An important partnership between Golf Victoria and the Transport Accident Commission aims to highlight the vision of zero road fatalities in our state.

Golf Victoria recently joined forces with the Transport Accident Commission in a two-year partnership aimed at enlisting the support of the golfing community in the state's Towards Zero mission. Towards Zero is a vision for a future free of deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

The partnership between Golf Victoria and the TAC was unveiled just prior to the 2017 Oates Vic Open, where tournament patrons were able to participate in initiative-focused activities including a four-hole mini golf course which illustrated the four key elements of the Towards Zero vision: Safer Drivers, Safer Cars, Safer People and Safer Roads.

There was also a Towards Zero public grandstand introduced near the 18th green of the Beach course near the Towards Zero interactive zone located in the spectator village.

Golf Victoria Chief Executive Officer Simon Brookhouse said the organisation is excited by the opportunity to help Victoria's golfing community understand Towards Zero.

"It is an important cause and we're thrilled to be working with the TAC to show golf fans how it can be achieved," he said. "Part of our inclusion golf strategy is to help empower those that may have unfortunately been involved in some type of road trauma via the sport of golf."

TAC Chief Executive Officer Joe Calafiore sees the partnership as an opportunity to highlight to the Victorian golfing public that Towards Zero is more than a campaign.

"Towards Zero is about recognising that we will make mistakes and building a safer system around road users so that those mistakes are not fatal," said Mr Calafiore. "We all have a part to play in Towards Zero and we're thrilled to be working with Golf Victoria to help the golfing community understand how they can contribute to a safer future on our roads."

For more information on Towards Zero, go to www.towardszero.vic.gov.au



JACKSON AND GRACE STREAM TO VICTORY



Jackson Kalz from Glenelg Golf Club and Grace Kim from Avondale Golf Club are the 2017 Victorian Junior Masters.



THE VICTORIAN JUNIOR MASTERS IN JANUARY ATTRACTED MORE THAN 200 OF THE FINEST YOUNG GOLFERS IN AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND. AND GOLF VICTORIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE NEW AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOK THE TOURNAMENT INTO NEW TERRITORY. STORY: STEVE PERKIN.

The growing impact of social media on sport was fully evident at the Victorian Junior Masters, played in January at the Churchill-Waverley Golf and Bowls Club.

The tournament was live-streamed for the second year running on the Golf Victoria website and, in a first for Australian amateur golf, the stream was simulcast on Facebook live via the Golf Victoria page.

This may not have interested too many of the grandparents of youngsters taking part but 13,496 viewers watched the action via cameras positioned at the 11th and 18th greens and the 12th tee.

The coverage was controlled by My Sport Live, a company launched in 2013 to allow sporting organisations to stream live events on the internet.

Doug O'Keefe from Golf Victoria says the streaming, made possible through the involvement of the event's major sponsor Sportscover, was an enormous success. "It was something we tried last year on the final day with promising results, so we tried it again this year. To attract more than 13,000 unique viewers was a fantastic result."

The Masters, contested by players under 18 years and held over 72 holes, was first staged in 1995 and this year attracted 183 boys and 56 girls. With a record-high field and no cut, players were divided across both the Waverley and Churchill Park sites in the morning with the tournament leaders teeing off at Waverley in the afternoon.

Jackson Kalz, from the Glenelg Golf Club, won the boys' section by a single shot from Zachary Maxwell from Queensland and three shots from Joshua Gadd from NSW and Hirok Miya from New Zealand.

Jackson, 16, described his win as the biggest of his career and says he went out in the final round three shots behind Maxwell but still believing he could get up.

"I knew if I played well I could catch him. I'm not very tall and rely on accuracy and consistency, so I don't have many blow-out rounds."

Going into the back nine on day four, Maxwell still led by two shots but bogeys at 15, 16 and 17 allowed Kalz to draw level down 18.

Kalz birdied the par five but Maxwell could only par, leaving Kalz with a final round 70 and a one-shot win.

In the girls' event, Grace Kim from Avondale Golf Club came from two shots behind Royal Melbourne's Alizza Hetherington going into the last round to lead by one as they started the final nine holes.

Hetherington struck real trouble on the 15th, hitting out-of-bounds with her approach shot and carding a triple bogey. This left Kim four shots in front, a lead that proved too large.

Hetherington finished two shots behind, tied for second alongside the fast-finishing Kono Matsumoto from Victoria Golf Club, who stormed home in 68 to equal the course record.

Kim, who has just turned 16 and is ranked 13 nationally, said she went into the Masters not expecting too much.

"I just wanted to play my game and not get overawed by anything, and I don't believe I did, although I did bogey the last hole."

JUNIOR MASTERS HONOUR ROLL

The Victorian Junior Masters is Australia's leading junior golf tournament. Past champions include Aaron Baddeley in 1998 and Jason Day in 2005.

2017 WINNERS

BOYS		GIRLS	
U/18	Jackson Kalz	SA	Grace Kim NSW
U/16	Tyler Duncan	QLD	Rose Zheng NZ
U/14	Nathan Page	VIC	Piper Stubbs VIC
U/12	Nivethan Kanthan	VIC	Anne Fernandez SING



ON THE RISE

Introducing a new section highlighting the wealth of young talent on the Victorian golf scene. The Huntingdale Golf Club's youngest ever club champion Piper Stubbs is our first Star On The Rise. By STEVE PERKIN.

It might be a bit much to describe Piper Stubbs as a prodigious talent from the moment she picked up a golf club - she was, after all, only three - but 10 years down the track, it's a pretty safe call to make.

In January, the Year Nine student added the under-14 2017 Sportscover Victorian Junior Masters title to a list of golfing achievements which, while in its fledgling stages, is already promising much.

Her three-shot win in the four-round event had those with knowing eyes nodding their heads in approval, especially as it came on the back of a stunning 2016 which saw Piper represent her state, take out the Victorian Junior Open at Thirteenth Beach Golf Links, perform admirably at pennant level and win qualification for the 2017 Oates Vic Open.

This year will also see the 13-year-old make her debut in Division I pennant, having crossed from Waverley to Huntingdale. Head golfing coach at the Rowville Sports Academy Tim Wendel has no doubt she'll acquit herself admirably.

"Piper is an outstanding young person with an amazing golfing intelligence which is growing all the time. She's very mature for her age."

This was never more evident than during the club championships at Huntingdale last year when, on her way to the final, Piper defeated five-time champion and seasoned campaigner Heather Gellatly. Her win in the final made Piper the youngest-ever winner of Huntingdale's club championship.

"That win, against players who were older and far more experienced, was really big for me."

Things were just as tense at last year's Victorian Junior Open where Piper's victory came via a three-way countback between herself, Linley Ooi and Shanaiah Fernando, and while her win in



Piper Stubbs on her way to the Sportscover Victorian Junior Masters under-14 title.

January's Victorian Junior Masters may not have been quite as tight, it had enough nervous moments to test any youngster.

"I made a double-bogey then three-putted late in the final round but not because of nerves. I was a bit nervous in the middle of the round, but not so much towards the end and a birdie on the last hole... that was a good feeling."

Piper's four rounds of 79, 77, 85 and 80 (321) gave her a three-shot win over Margaret Fernandez, from Singapore, with Keeley Marx, from The Heritage, a further shot back in third.

Originally from Paynesville in Gippsland, Piper was introduced to golf by her father Peter, himself a keen player. Golf was also strong on her mother Fiona's side of the family.

"My grandma Lyn Whatley won the Mount Alexander Club Championship the same year I won my first club championship at Waverley in 2015 when I was 12 and she was 73."

Piper's family moved to Melbourne two years ago so that she and her two brothers Jasper, 15, and Fletcher, 17, could pursue their golfing careers without the enormous travel commitments required by living in Gippsland.

Piper was awarded a scholarship to the Rowville Sports Academy where brother Jasper is also carving out an impressive junior career for himself, winning the under-14s at the Victorian Junior Masters and making state under-age teams.

All this success comes through hard work but Piper says she tries to keep golf in some perspective.

"I focus on the academic side of things a lot because I know what the odds are like of being a successful professional golfer. I definitely want to finish school but I haven't thought too much about college (in America)."

All that will come in time. She is, after all, only 13.

Kings Cove Open To All



The story on Kings Cove at Metung in the December/January edition of Golf Victoria drew plenty of interest from readers enthusing over the picturesque Ted Parslow-designed course.

Unfortunately, the article incorrectly stated that memberships at Kings Cove are 'restricted to owners of property on the development'.

The club has many members who are not residents and prospective members are welcome to apply from far and wide. Golf Victoria apologises for the error.

MASTER DANN'S SECRET WEAPON

Queensland amateur Charlie Dann won the 2017 Australian Master of the Amateurs at Royal Melbourne in January – but he couldn't have done it without a sandbelt secret weapon.

One of Victoria's best known amateurs Olivia Kline caddied for Dann throughout the four-day tournament and used her knowledge of the vagaries of Melbourne's sandbelt and, in particular, the Royal Melbourne greens to help him through.

"Olivia just read so many of my putts this week and a lot of them went in," Dann said. "I really could not have done it without her."

Dann, 24, won the Master of the Amateurs in a playoff from 2015 winner Zach Murray and believes the victory against a crack field of international amateurs will give him the confidence to succeed when he turns professional sometime in the next 12 months.

Commonwealth's Murray, now fully recovered from a long-term finger injury, also took confidence from his performance. And he, too, had an interesting caddy – former Brisbane Lions triple premiership player and Brownlow Medallist Jason Akermanis.



Charlie Dann couldn't have won his Master of the Amateurs trophy without the sandbelt knowledge of Olivia Kline.



LIV'S HEATH TRANSFER

Meanwhile, Olivia Kline is stepping up for another challenge of her own. This season she is playing pennant for Kingston Heath, having transferred from Victoria where she played number one in the winning Division 1 team last year.

Kingston Heath is in Division 2 but with Kline spearheading the team, they will be strong contenders for what many would say would be a fitting return to the top division.

COBRA PUMA SANDGREEN 4BBB TOUR

The fast, undulating greens at Thirteenth Beach were 'a piece of cake' for four golfers who won spots into the Oates Vic Open Pro-Am, thanks to their proficiency on the sandgreen courses of country Victoria.

Peter Meighan and Paul (Milo) Condliffe from Mitiamo Golf Club and Denise Pappin from Campaspe Golf Club and Joan James from Pyramid Hill Golf Club were the winners of the 2016 Cobra Puma Sandgreen 4BBB Tour.

686 men and 383 women competed over 30 sandgreen locations in the Northern, Central Victoria and Kara

Districts in a unique 4BBB competition highlighting the smaller sandgreen clubs that are only open for business from April through September.

The event became known affectionately as the "Cream Cake Tour" because of the delicious home-made fare served up for afternoon tea.

Competitors scored points relating to field size with the aggregate winning men and women pairs receiving a \$1000 Cobra Puma Golf Voucher and entry into the Oates Vic Open Pro-Am.



Peter Meighan (left) and Paul (Milo) Condliffe (right) with pro Amelia Harris.



Joan James (centre) and Denise Pappin (right) with pro Michael Wright.



MAZDA FOUR-BALL COMES OF AGE

Now in its 21st running, the Mazda Victorian Four Ball Championship has well and truly cemented its place on the Victorian golfing calendar.

First played in 1997 with a little over 500 pairs participating, this year's event will have topped 1000 pairs competing across 23 venues in men's, women's and mixed sections. 100 pairs – comprising 50 men's, 25 women's and 25 mixed – will square off in the 36-hole final to be played at Sorrento and The National courses in late March.

In participation terms alone, this is the largest golf event conducted by Golf Victoria and the largest amateur golf event staged in the state.

The championship event came into being as a result of Golf Victoria (in those days two separate bodies, the Victorian Golf Association and Women's Golf Victoria) recognising that most state-level events centred on the elite player. So it was decided to provide an opportunity for club golfers, regardless of gender, age, handicap or geographic location, to play at a range of city or

country courses as part of a series of 18-hole qualifying events leading to a state final.

The four-ball format was chosen with men's and women's sections originally, to encourage family members, club mates and work colleagues to join together to enjoy the experience. Since 2015 a mixed section has also been added to the tournament structure. And the event continues to grow with each year.

Golf Victoria Chief Operating Officer David Greenhill is excited about what it offers to participants. "At its core, it's about club golfers from all over Victoria competing for a State Championship, firstly through qualifying at wonderful venues around the state in an effort to qualify for the final at Sorrento and The National," he said.

"The atmosphere at the final is one of celebration, really. Players from as far away as Mildura, Hamilton, Lakes Entrance and other parts of country Victoria join with qualifiers from many

metropolitan clubs to play golf together for two days and have a lot of fun in the process."

The Mazda car company has been involved in much of the journey, having been naming rights sponsor of the championship from its inception through to 2004 and again from 2015.

The exciting sponsorship has once again seen the opportunity for golfers to win a brand new Mazda3, on offer as a prize for any participant who records a hole-in-one on the designated par-3 of all qualifying events and the State Final.

Greenhill noted that, "the players readily identify with Mazda through its long-time involvement and having its great range of cars on show at the various venues undoubtedly adds flavour to the experience. The event feels important, as a result of which it is."



THE WEE ICE MAN

NOT SO COLD AFTER ALL

Melbourne writer Paul Daley has added to his impressive list of books for golf purists with “Ben Hogan, the Yardstick of Golfing Greatness”.
Review by Brendan Moloney

Some claim Ben Hogan (1912-1997) was the best ever but there are very few people still alive who saw him play. He won nine majors – only Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods and Walter Hagen have more – with his last being the 1953 US Open.

Seen by many to be a bitter human being, something his reclusive nature did little to dispel, his image as the hard man of golf became embellished with a legion of often apocryphal stories over the years. One of the best/worst concerns a woman pro-am partner who told him she had bet \$5 that she could get more than six words out of him in the course of the round. He replied: ‘Bad luck lady, you lose.’

Paul Daley has managed to take this edge off the man with his wonderful combination of text and one of the best collections of golf photographs ever assembled in a book. The story starts at the Glen Garden Country Club in Texas where, as a 15-year-old, Hogan beat Byron

Nelson in the caddie championship, and goes on to cover his uninspiring amateur career and early struggles on the pro circuit before it all came together for him.

The quality and quantity of the photographs make the book impossible to put down whilst also chipping away at the hard man reputation, because most show his highly photogenic smile, especially with children, around whom he was said to be a soft touch.

Hogan turned pro by simply paying his entry fee to the 1939 Texas Open and worked mopping floors, as a waiter, valet car parker, handyman at a bank and a mechanic on an oil well, before his breakthrough win at the North and South Open at Pinehurst the following year. Until then he was known as “Mr Runner-Up” because he’d finished second six times in 14 months.

Then people started taking notice. As fellow US Open champion Tommy Bolt noted, he often saw Nicklaus watching Hogan practise but never Hogan watching Nicklaus.

Two previous books by Daley were shortlisted for the United States Golf Association's International Book of the Year Award. This one, published by Full Swing Publishing, is available for \$150 plus postage if ordered prior to publication and \$175 post-publication. For further details, contact fswing@bigpond.net.au.



*The classic swing of Ben Hogan.
Photo: Courtesy of Full Swing Publishing.*

by Bruce Matthews
@BruceMatthews4



James Sicily has been playing just 12 months but already has a hole-in-one.

Photo: Andy Brownbill

FOOTY'S DOL

When Essendon play Hawthorn in the opening round of the AFL 2017 season, two combatants will share a nod and a knowing smile, after forging a bond in the off-season that only golfers can understand.

Story by BRUCE MATTHEWS

Footballers James Sicily and Brendon Goddard had only crossed paths on the AFL playing arena when they met on the first tee at Huntingdale in January.

Now they have forged a lifetime link after walking off the 18th green with an extraordinary sporting double, the odds akin to winning Tattsлото.

Sicily, Hawthorn's springheel forward, and Goddard, Essendon's gun midfielder, each had a hole-in-one during a freakish competition round alongside Collingwood's 1990 premiership defender Craig Kelly and touring pro Michael Choi.

Sicily, officially a member at Huntingdale for only three days, hit golf's perfect shot with a seven-iron at the 161m 12th hole. And just three holes later, Goddard, a scratch marker at Metropolitan and The National, incredibly matched the feat when his eight-iron shot at the 141m 15th took one bounce and hopped into the cup.

The young Hawk, who has only been playing golf for 12 months, admitted he was struggling to help his mate Choi in their four-ball duel against AFL player agent Kelly, also a Huntingdale member, and Goddard, Kelly's client and guest, when the group reached the 12th tee.

"I thinned it a bit but it kept going straight and we saw it drop in the hole and we threw our clubs in the air and gave each other high-fives," Sicily said.

As a relative golf rookie, the 22-year-old said he didn't immediately understand the significance of his rare shot. "Not until I told my mates and they pointed out that some pros have been playing for 30 years and never had a hole-in-one. I was excited, but I was playing pretty horrible up to that point. So it didn't alter things significantly in that regard," he said.

"I've been playing since last February and my membership at Huntingdale came through on New Year's Day. I wasn't in the comp because I didn't have a handicap at that stage. I'm familiar with the course but not to the point where I know where to go and where not to go."

IRLIE UDLE ACES

As the group played the next two holes, Sicily listened to tales of the other players' aces. Goddard had two at nearby Yarra Yarra and Barnbougale Dunes in Tasmania, Kelly holed out at Huntingdale's 169m third last year and Choi has seven, the first during the Tasmanian Open, one in a US Q-school, another in an amateur event at Woodlands and the rest in competitions at Huntingdale.

"We were sharing stories about our holes-in-one up 13 and down 14. James was still in shock, I think. He was on his phone letting his mates know and they were all in disbelief," Goddard said.

"As you would expect, his head was elsewhere and Ned (Kelly) and I were well in front in the match. We were sharing stories and Ned was telling us about his hole-in-one at Huntingdale with Michael.

"After we putted out at 14, I was walking with James telling him about my previous holes-in-one. Everyone gives me grief because the first one was on the spare hole (19th) at Yarra. The second at Barnbougale, we had played it earlier in the day and you can't see the pin from the tee. So I arrogantly told my two mates to go stand on the hill because this is going in. I had a nine-iron and my mates were calling it into the hole as it got closer. Both ran down the hill with their hands in the air and I couldn't see anything."

The 2016 Bombers' skipper was square with the card when he pulled the eight-iron out of his bag on Huntingdale's 15th tee.

"All I was thinking was to close with a couple of birdies. The pin was back right on the top tier. I just tried to hit it to the middle of the green because I play with a slight fade," Goddard said.

"I hit it exactly as I wanted and I was happy with it in the air. I was telling it to get in. It took one bounce and then disappeared because there was a shadow on the green near the pin. I wasn't sure whether it had gone in or over the back. When we got down to the green, I saw my pitch mark a couple of feet short of the hole and I walked up and the ball was in the front of the cup."



Brendan Goddard might be an AFL star but he says golf is the hardest sport in the world.

Photo: Darren Tindale



Pro Michael Choi was on hand to capture the moment on his phone.

Choi grabbed his phone to snap Goddard retrieving his golf ball and the young professional couldn't believe that he had been on the spot for three personal triumphs at the iconic club in Melbourne's south-east suburbs.

"It's pretty crazy. Craig had his first hole-in-one last year and I was playing with him then, too. So everyone in the group has had a hole-in-one while I was playing with them. That's amazing," Choi said.

"When James knocked his in, we went berserk. We threw our clubs in the air and James was like, whatever, he just walked down to the green and picked the ball out of the cup. I don't know whether he was just stunned or didn't realise how hard it is to get one."

Goddard stumbled as he attempted to build on his two-under-with-three-to-play scorecard and he mused at the psychological distraction of the hole-in-one that was followed by a double-bogey at the 16th.

"In the excitement I thought I refocused well and I stood up on the tee and cut it into the trees. Had to chip out and short-sided myself with the next shot. I parred 17 and then missed a four-footer on the last for bogey to shoot one-over," he said.

"I'm surprised there weren't more guys in the bar because normally word spreads. James and I rang the bell (that announces an ace) after each other. There were only about three other groups in the bar, so they got free drinks as with the tradition and we enjoyed a couple of refreshments ourselves."

Sicily and Choi, who met through friends, catch up at Huntingdale when the latter is home for a pro tour break. And they can now play comps as a team with the Hawks' goalkicker on an official 18 handicap.

"It's pretty good for around here to start on that number. His swing is sound, it's on plane and he will drop (handicap) very quickly. Like most footballers, he has good hand-eye coordination," Choi said.

Sicily caught the golf bug after he gravitated to Huntingdale with a group of Hawthorn current and former players who are members at the South Oakleigh club.

"It's very hard and it keeps you intrigued because you want to get better. But it's something that you can't master, especially someone like me who's very much an amateur," he said.

"I've been hooked on it for a while now. It's just good for getting away from things and worrying about something else for a change. A few of the boys are members here and it's good to get away from the club and enjoy each other's company in a light-hearted environment."

Goddard has been in love with the game since he was five, tagging along with his father who was greenkeeper at a golf course in the Gippsland town of Toongabbie, 170 km south-east of Melbourne.

"I used to go out with Dad in the old Holden ute when he watered the greens. Me and my older brother would belt balls around and we eventually moved into Traralgon and I started playing weekend comps there. I would try to find time to get to the golf course after school and even on Sunday when I wasn't playing football, cricket or basketball," he said.

"I love the competitive side of it, the challenging side of it because it's without doubt the hardest sport in the world to play consistently well. What I also love about it is you get on a golf course, put the phone in the bag and you're there with three other guys just thinking about golf. You can forget about everything else that's going on in your life. When I come to training after a round of golf, I feel mentally refreshed, so I'm in a good space. It's my escape, my Zen place to go."

Goddard is working through a list, playing the US top-10 golf courses during the AFL off-seasons and he has four left, including Augusta National. But he will never forget his summer visit to Huntingdale.

Choi said Google quoted odds of 1.3 million for two amateurs in the same foursome to have holes-in-one. "It's a shame it wasn't Tattsлото," quipped Sicily. ■

IRELAND

*Come and share the golfing magic
with*

SWING Golf Tours & Promotion

TRADING AS
DQ International Travel Service Pty Ltd
Licence No. 30224

**9th Floor, 500 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000**

Contact Damian L. Quirk
Tel: (03) 9614 4588
Fax: (03) 9614 1185

Email: travel@dqinternational.com.au

SPAIN

*Experience a golfing holiday in Spain's Andalusia
region. There are more golf courses in Andalusia
than any other Spanish region, including the
Continents finest course, Valderrama and several
others rated among the best in Europe.*

with

SWING Golf Tours & Promotion

TRADING AS: DQ International Travel Service Pty Ltd
Licence No. 30224

**9th Floor, 500 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000**

Contact Damian L. Quirk
Tel: (03) 9614 4588
Fax: (03) 9614 1185

Email: travel@dqinternational.com.au

SCOTLAND

*The best of Scottish golfing
with*

Swing Golf Tours & Promotion

TRADING AS
DQ International Travel Service Pty Ltd
Licence No. 30224

**9th Floor, 500 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000**

Contact Damian L. Quirk
Tel: (03) 9614 4588
Fax: (03) 9614 1185

Email: travel@dqinternational.com.au

THE OPENING DRIVE

On Wednesday 17th October 1860, a group of Scottish professional golfers gathered at the first tee of Prestwick Golf Club in Ayrshire, on the west coast. They were present at the invitation of Lord Colville, Captain of the Club, to decide by competition who was the finest.

The tournament consisted of three rounds of the then-12 hole Prestwick links, the first two rounds preceding a mid-afternoon lunch before the deciding round.

At precisely 12 noon Tom Morris Snr, Keeper of the Green at Prestwick, struck the first tee shot, his opening drive thus inaugurating what would become the Open Championship.

Willie Park Snr of Musselburgh in East Lothian finished the day's play two strokes better than Morris and six ahead of Andrew Strath from St Andrews, and was declared "the champion golfer of the year", the expression still used today to celebrate the winner of the Open.

With no photographer or artist present, this important occasion in the history of golf was unfortunately not captured. Until now.

Following five years of detailed research, Professor David Purdie, an Honorary Fellow at Edinburgh University and renowned golfing historian, commissioned distinguished Scottish landscape artist and portraitist Peter Munro to depict the iconic moment of Morris teeing off. Completed in 2016, Opening Drive was unveiled at Prestwick Golf Club in a private ceremony.

Professor Purdie visited Melbourne recently to speak about the painting and its story. Purdie himself has an interesting history in the golfing world, having been Sam Torrance's speechwriter for the 2002 Ryder Cup at the Belfry, the author of "The Ancyent and Healthfulle Exercyse of the Golf", a humorous history of the game, and a highly regarded speaker. He is a member of several fine golf clubs including Sunningdale Golf Club in Surrey and Pine Valley Golf Club in the United States.

For further information, visit www.openingdrive.co.uk



GOLFING HOLIDAYS WITH AIR ADVENTURE



Travelling to golf tournaments by private plane has become commonplace amongst the world's top professionals but, now, amateurs are getting in on the act, too, using charter flights to arrive in comfort, and in quick time, for golfing holidays. Destinations such as Barnboughle in Tasmania and King Island are ideal for this mode of transport.

With various private charter groups operating in the Australian golf holiday industry, travellers need to be discerning in their choice of carrier. There can be significant variation in comfort, safety, flying time and pilot experience.

One airline that ticks all the boxes is Air Adventure. From operating two Cessna Conquest aircraft, the highest quality and fastest charter aircraft operating in the golf industry, to organizing every element of the planned holiday, whether it be accommodation, dinner reservations, golf or on-ground transfers, Air Adventure takes all the worry out of planning that dream golfing holiday.

Air Adventure offers a range of King Island/Tasmania trips centered around the new Cape Wickham and Ocean Dunes courses, including one- or two-day tours giving the option of either a day trip with a full round of golf or overnight with two rounds of golf plus accommodation. Prices are \$595 per person (day trip) or \$880 per person (overnight) and include airfares, golf, accommodation, pull cart and transfers to/from airport.

For golf tragics looking to add even more excitement to their trip, Air Adventure also offer a three-day Barnboughle + King Island tour. This includes flying directly from the fairways at Barnboughle Lost Farm to King Island. Pricing starts at \$1790 pp and includes private charter flight, two nights' accommodation, three rounds of golf and transfers.

A four-day option with four rounds of golf is also available from \$2075pp and has become the more popular option.

For more information: golf.airadventure.com.au, email golf@airadventure.com.au or phone 1800 033 160 .

RT Edgar



3 Warwick Hill Drive Point Lonsdale

A Golfers Dream Home - Unique architecturally designed home with private garden aspect, adjoining The Point Lonsdale Golf Course. Easy access to the course ensures your game is always on point. The perfect lifestyle balance, close to the beach and village centre. Passive solar design, sandstone and recycled Cypress exterior. Plenty of space to entertain after a golf game. Stylish Kitchen, 4 bedrooms in total, 2 with views to the Bellarine Hills and 2 stylish bathrooms.

FOR SALE | PRICE \$1,000,000 - 1,100,000
Nicole Rowe 0428 640 509 | Point Lonsdale Office 5258 1811
rtedgar.com.au



FINDING A POINT OF *Difference*



Anyone with a passing interest in the success of the Oates Vic Open, with its unique simultaneous men's and women's tournaments, will acknowledge that a point of difference is a good thing when it comes to running golf events in this country.

The Australasian PGA Tour's innovative new Perth tournament in February, the ISPS Handa World Super 6, with a six-hole matchplay format on the final day, also will be closely monitored.

Golf Victoria has led the way in all this. The brave decision to play simultaneous Opens at Spring Valley and Woodlands in 2012, followed by the groundbreaking move to Thirteenth Beach on the Bellarine Peninsula in 2013, has seen the tournament reinvigorated. It is the success story of Australian tournament golf.

Elsewhere, of course, it is a tougher game. The Masters has gone, leaving Melbourne without a big tournament of any sort - a remarkable notion given the facilities available in Victoria's capital city and the golf culture that goes with it. Really, it is unthinkable and we can only be thankful that the Oates Vic Open is thriving to make up for the fact that the Emirates Australian Open, for instance, has not been played in these parts for more than a decade.

The Australian Opens for men and women are strong and they have their history but it is a constant struggle for Golf Australia and its partners to keep them running at the levels that they would like. Jordan Spieth's class, grace and good humour (not to mention his brilliant play under pressure) gave the men's Open at Royal Sydney a nice sign-off point last November but drill deeper and you would see that the field was thin once Jason Day withdrew because of a back injury.

The Open needs to sort out with which tour it wants to co-sanction. The current deal with the OneAsia Tour expires soon and many people believe Golf Australia would be better-served linking with Europe, a view it is easy to agree with. Having said that, the PGA Championship on the Gold Coast has been part of the European Tour for the past couple of years and the fields for that event, flaky at best if you are being honest, show that Euro co-sanctioning is not a guarantee of a good field.

What tends to happen is that second-tier European players take up the spots on offer but with all respect to Darius van Driel of the Netherlands and Romaine Langasque of France, they were not about to put the event on the media radar no matter how they hit the ball. With no Jason Day (injured), it was a terribly hard sell for the PGA.

It's about the money, you see, and at \$1.5 million (for the PGA) and \$1.25 million (the Open), we are small beer compared to the big European, American and Asian tournaments. The Open, for instance, is not part of any big tour and is not, unlike its tennis namesake, part of the majors. How lucky the tennis authorities are in Australia that our Open was designated as part of the Grand Slam by the ITF back in the 1930s; it is the lifeblood of that sporting event because the Djokovics and Federers and Serena Williamses want to come.

In golf, we have to pay for the talent. Which means appearance fees and decisions about who moves the needle, as the television executives will say. At best guess, Spieth as a major champion may well have extracted high six figures just to tee it up at Royal Sydney and he is worth the coin. He is a champion of the game, epitomised when he nailed that birdie putt in the playoff to beat Cameron Smith and Ashley Hall, and his win validates the Open again.

But who else would you pay to watch play? The best thing I saw in golf last year was Henrik Stenson's final round shoot-out with Phil Mickelson at the Open Championship at Royal Troon, arguably the greatest two-man show in that storied tournament's long history.

Mickelson is a favorite, the Greg Norman of his times for his great ability to not only dominate but to shoot himself in the foot. Stenson is a machine with his stiff-armed swing, a man who could make your hair curl with his stinging three woods. What is more, they were both white-hot on this Troon day, birdie for birdie until the Swede put the exclamation mark on his first major win with a 10th birdie of the round at the 72nd. Mickelson shot 65 and lost; Stenson's 63 equalled the low round in a men's major. They were 11 shots clear of the next player and it was a beautiful thing.

So I'd love to see either of those two guys in Australia and would not mind if the game had to pay for them.

But, of course, there is another option available, and it is too obvious for words. Tiger Woods is trying to get back to playing tournament golf after recovering from back surgery and its after-effects. He cannot be the player that he was – no-one could manage that -- but the great fascination of 2017 golf is going to be the path of a reborn Tiger.

Think back to 2009, when his appearance at the Australian Masters at Kingston Heath brought crowds of 100,000, and 25,000 on the final day when he won. Of course, a lot has changed in golf and for Tiger since then.

But stick him in your field and your tournament takes off. Now there's an idea! ■



Zero is the only acceptable number

Towards Zero is a vision for a future free of deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

It acknowledges that as humans, we make mistakes. But when those mistakes happen on our roads we come off second best, because our bodies aren't designed to absorb forces from impacts at high speeds. They never have been and never will be.

That's why we need to ensure we have a safe road system in place. Road safety has come a long way and together we are building a system that protects us from our own mistakes and those of others. A system that will change road safety for good.

Visit towardszero.vic.gov.au



SAFE ROADS



SAFE SPEEDS



SAFE VEHICLES



SAFE PEOPLE

THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE



NEW MAZDA3. BE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

There's nothing like being in control of a Mazda3. SKYACTIV TECHNOLOGY offers outstanding responsiveness while controlling fuel efficiency. For extra peace of mind Smart City Brake Support (Forward) is now standard across the range, helping you avoid low speed collisions. Mazda3 also includes new G-Vectoring Control, integrating the powertrain, body and chassis to help you master the road ahead. Explore Mazda3 now and discover how imagination drives us.



Metropolitan Dealers

BERWICK	Berwick Mazda LMCT7254	8796 6222
BRIGHTON	Brighton Mazda LMCT10963	9559 0777
BURWOOD	Penfold Mazda LMCT444	9268 1222
CAROLINE SPRINGS	Caroline Springs Mazda LMCT11524	8308 0200
CITY	City Mazda LMCT11621	9329 2000
ESSENDON FIELDS	Essendon Mazda LMCT11043	9374 2222
FRANKSTON	Graeme Powell Mazda LMCT11147	9786 2011
GEELONG	Geelong Mazda LMCT10477	5221 7233
MORNINGTON	Mornington Mazda LMCT4180	5975 1111
MULGRAVE	Garry & Warren Smith Mazda LMCT506	8562 5555
PRESTON	Max Kirwan Mazda LMCT1293	9480 3555
RINGWOOD	Ringwood Mazda LMCT11143	9870 9322
WERRIBEE	Werribee Mazda LMCT3919	9974 5666
mazda.com.au		

Regional and Provincial Dealers

ALBURY	Alessi Mazda LMCT7659	(02) 6041 0810
BAIRNSDALE	Bairnsdale Mazda LMCT6100	5152 6644
BALLARAT	Ballarat Mazda LMCT10056	5331 5000
BENDIGO	Bendigo Mazda LMCT10151	5445 8900
ECHUCA	Echuca Mazda LMCT10527	5481 0200
HAMILTON	Taylor Motors LMCT403	5572 2087
HORSHAM	Morrow Mazda LMCT8353	5382 6163
MILDURA	Mildura Mazda LMCT10074	5021 2999
PAKENHAM	Pakenham Mazda LMCT11565	5942 5238
SALE	Sale Mazda LMCT10439	5144 1311
SHEPPARTON	McPherson Motors LMCT7861	5823 2100
TRARALGON	Traralgon Mazda LMCT11276	5173 0800
WANGARATTA	One Mile Motors LMCT1060	5721 5677
WARRNAMBOOL	Warrnambool Mazda LMCT10977	5561 2341