



Course Review

The site offers stunning backdrops on an open tract of land.

By The Bushranger Golf Social Group
www.bushrangergolf.com.au



From the Carpark to the 19th

Amstel Golf Club Ranfurly Course

If you've ever considered becoming a member of a private or semi-private course, but haven't yet had the opportunity to play on one of these local gems, then Amstel Golf Club's Ranfurly Course in Melbourne's south-east may be just what you're looking for. Ranked in "Australia's best 50 courses" by Golf Australia (2004 and 2006), and host to the Australasian PGA Tour School since 2002, Ranfurly gives golfers and social groups the opportunity to "test-drive" the course as a green-fee player (which has thus earned the course a place in "Australia's best 25 public access courses" by Golf Australia). This month, members of the Bushranger Golf Social Club ventured to Ranfurly to see how it measures up to the other public and private courses in Melbourne.

Richard Fellner
Inside Social Golf
The layout of Ranfurly is reminiscent of many courses in the Melbourne outskirts. Gentle, undulating fairways, plenty of native trees and bushes, and long, wild grasses in the rough. The opening set of holes provide some

absolutely gorgeous views, lulling you into an almost dreamlike state – effectively distracting you from the multitudes of ball-grabbing bunkers throughout. In truth, the bunkering at Ranfurly is both superb and evil. For me, it felt as if designer Mike Clayton had predicted exactly where my tee shots would land, and then placed a bunker in that exact spot. So I found myself simultaneously praising him and cursing him in the same breath.

There are tests at every turn, and plenty of risk/reward options. Sure, you can try and "go for it" on the short par-5s – or even try to drive the green on the 272 metre par-4 16th – but you'd better be dead accurate. I wasn't, and I paid dearly for it.

Overall, I really enjoyed the course. Despite playing it in less-than-optimal conditions (off-and-on rain and wind), I found Ranfurly a real treat. Few courses play well in the rain, but Ranfurly held its own: the greens were amazingly quick (and true), the fairways were firm, and the puddles were generally confined to the bunkers and rough. This is a true testament to the amount of time, effort and care put in by

the ground crew, year-round. In addition, the smart, strategic directional layout of the course ensures that golfers aren't unduly punished hole after hole if the weather turns sour.

The clubhouse facilities at Ranfurly are top notch. From the well-stocked pro shop, to the comfy and warm member's lounge (what a view!), to the cleverly-designed functions area, it provides a great setting for a social group or corporate golf outing. And the staff are among the most friendly, professional and helpful individuals that anyone could ask for.

So if you're considering becoming a member of a course here in Melbourne, it's definitely worth giving Ranfurly a go.

OVERALL RATING: **8/10**

Mick Van Raay
Bushranger Golf

This was not my first time at Ranfurly; the last time I was there it was a reasonably pleasant day, so it was almost kind to me. This time around the weather had teeth, and Ranfurly was much nastier than I had remembered. I hear it can blow a gale there

on even a good day, which is no surprise given the course's elevated location. That said, you do get the most beautiful sweeping views over the whole of Melbourne, and on a clear day you can see both Melbourne and Frankston on the same horizon.

Now to the golf. I'll ignore the first seven or so shots I had on the downhill 538m par-5 10th that we opened our round with, and get straight to the greens. They were fast – not quite Oakmont fast – but considering they had just had 30mm of rain dumped on them the night before, I imagine they would be like greased lightning in the dry. And you have to love Melbourne's sand belt: even with that much rain, apart from the occasional "lakes" in the bunkers on the day, the fairways were relatively well drained for the most part.

Not being on the ocean, Ranfurly can't technically call itself a genuine died in the wool links course, but it gives it a red hot go. Very few trees, nice elevated tees, plenty of (rather troublesome) bunkers, wide fairways and thick rough that gobbles up your ball much like Charlie Brown's kite eating tree. Ranfurly will present a challenge for most golfers: On the

longer holes, it takes a brave driver to flirt with the rough and bunkers in the hopes of positioning yourself for the easier approach shot ... but leave it short and you've got a long, difficult shot home. Either way the course forces you to think about your tactics frequently. My favourite hole was the uphill Par-5 8th. Halfway up the fairway, it splits in two, and rubs shoulders with the 13th fairway (which, as can be expected by my swing, is exactly where my tee shot landed.)

The facilities and value for money at Ranfurly are fantastic. Very reasonable membership fees will provide you with 2 courses to choose from (membership also includes Amstel Park Course down the road). There is also a relatively new clubhouse and a brand-new, and very classy, member's bar upstairs that offers sweeping views of Melbourne's skyline for a 19th hole beer, meal or formal event.

OVERALL RATING: **7/10**

Michael Nolan
Bushranger Golf

It had been raining all night and morning so as I drove down to Cranbourne I was expecting a pretty sodden track. The rain

mercifully eased up right on cue (thanks Huey) and I was pleasantly surprised at how well the course soaked up the rain. While some of the bunkers held a little water, the fairways had drained well, and the greens played true and surprisingly fast given the conditions.

The course is an enjoyably undulating links style with a smattering of well established trees that provide little protection from the prevalent winds. The fairways were in great condition and boast generous landing areas, but when you miss them, expect a tough search of the long grass to find your ball.

The course has a great opening series of holes with the 2nd, a 485m par-5, a favourite. The elevated tee affords a great view of the hole and, hopefully, your ball rolling past the bunker on the left. Your 3rd shot is critical with the long split level green protected on both sides by bunkers.

The par-4s will test the shorter hitters with 3 around the 400 meter mark and another, the 6th, a whopping 419 metres. At the other end of the scale the 272 metre par-4 16th demands accuracy. From the tee, the further you hit the tighter the landing area. The green



Designer Mike Clayton has opted for minimal trees and wild bunkers.

is predictably small and nestled between deep bunkers.

The club facilities are excellent, with a large practice green and driving range, well stocked pro shop and spacious bar. There is also a separate member's lounge area on the second floor with comfy couches and a view over the entire course.

For those considering joining, membership offers the unusual benefit of access at both the Ranfurly and nearby Amstel Park courses. At around 45 minutes from the West Gate Bridge it is significantly closer than many

		MEN			WOMEN		
METRES	INDEX	PAR	Match	PAR S/FORD	METRES	INDEX	PAR
294	15	4	13	12	275		
485	12	5	2	1	456		
184	10	3	15	15	143		
372	7	4	11	11	313		
383	1	4	8	3	328		
419	4	4	3	6	366		
128	17	3	18	18	96		
468	16	5	4	7	407		
348	6	4	10	9	316		
3081	OUT	36		OUT	2700		
538	9	5	1	4	477		
177	11	3	16	17	125		
345	14	4	12	10	298		
397	5	4	7	8	347		
404	3	4	9	13	318		
149	13	3	17	16	124		
272	18	4	14	14	217		
407	2	4	6	2	352		
509	8	5	5	5	409		
3198	IN	36		IN	2667		
3081	OUT	36		OUT	2700		
6279	TOTAL	72		TOTAL	5367		

OVERALL RATING: **8/10**

NEED TO KNOW: Amstel Golf Club – Ranfurly Course

Par: 72. **ACR:** 73
Length: 6279 metres (Men), 5367 metres (women)
Green Fees: \$49 midweek, \$65 weekend. Motorised Carts available
(Note: first green fees refunded upon membership application – conditions apply)
Membership: Enquire at course. Current special: no upfront joining fees, flexible payment plans.
Designer: Mike Clayton
Address: 825 Cranbourne-Frankston Road, Cranbourne.
Phone: 03 9788 8288
Web: www.amstel.com.au **Email:** mail@amstel.org.au

HOW TO GET THERE

Take the Monash Freeway to the South Gippsland Freeway; Turn Left at Hall Rd; then Right at Cranbourne-Frankston Road.

AMAZING 2007 WINTER SPECIALS

STAY & PLAY MIDWEEK TWICE AS LONG FOR THE SAME RATE



Winter Special

\$195pp* for two nights quad-share or \$225pp twin-share
• Two night's 4-star accommodation • Two rounds of golf

OR

Midweek Winter Special – Stay & Play midweek for twice as long for the same rate! That is, \$195pp quad-share or \$225pp twin-share entitles you to four night's accommodation and four rounds of golf

Winter Day Tripper - \$15 discount on any full fee game of golf.

Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offers end August 31, 2007.

Other luxury inclusions:

- Spa in ensuite
- Tennis courts & swimming pools
- Austar & fully equipped kitchens
- Stunning views across golf course or manicured gardens & pools

Tallwoods Golf & Country Club
www.tallwoodsgolf.com
info@tallwoodsgolf.com

Hallidays Point 15mins from Forster
Accommodation: 1300 135 456
Pro Shop: 02 6557 3900

TALLWOODS

golf sydney tours

Specialising in Social Club Groups up to 24 players including all transfers

WEEKEND GETAWAYS & MID-WEEK BREAKS

Priced from **\$185**
Per Person/Twin Share/Including GST
• Nelson Bay • Hunter Valley
• Canberra • Southern Highlands
• South Coast • Orange

GOLFARIS (7-9 days)

- Gold Coast • Mornington Peninsula
- Murray River • Sapphire Coast

All Group Packages minimum of 10, maximum of 24



For further details, prices and conditions
www.golfsydneytours.com.au
Phone 02 4739 0362
Mob 0409 922 945

600,000 golfers and potentially \$3 million in the pool!

Share in it for as little as a dollar.

Back yourself now!

www.puttfor.com.au



Become accustomed...



To world-class golfing in the Hunter Valley

The Vintage is a Greg Norman-designed par 71 championship golf course. Situated in the heart of the Hunter Valley, The Vintage is located just 50 minutes from Newcastle and 2 hours north of Sydney. Our commitment to the development of a world-class golfing facility is second to none. We invite golfers of all levels to experience the newly upgraded golf course, along with a brand new state-of-the-art golf cart fleet.

Present this voucher to receive
The Vintage \$75 Midweek Special*
Includes 18 holes, golf cart and range balls prior to play.

Vintage Drive, Rothbury, NSW
(02) 4998 6789
www.thevintage.com.au



Expiry: 30.10.2007
*Midweek Monday–Thursday. Subject to availability.