

Course Review

The rolling landscape and low vegetation make the Beach Course a genuine links experience.



With two championship golf courses, a brand-new 4.5★ resort and a top-quality clubhouse facility, the 13th Beach Golf Links on Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula is a shining star of Victorian golf. Just over an hour's drive from Melbourne, The Beach Course offers a challenging links style course (voted 7th Best Public course in Australia) while the Creek Course (designed by Tony Cashmore & Nick Faldo) complements the facility with its broad fairways, sloping terrain and unique challenges. This month, the Bushranger Golf Social Club made the trek down the peninsula for a full-scale social golf weekend and sampled everything the facility had on offer.

Matthew Pitt
Bushranger Golf

In Scotland, a golf links is a course built on the sandy coastal links land between the beach and inland pastures. Over time, golf links has come to be a generic term for a golf course, whereas,

in fact, links golf is a very specific style of course layout and playing strategy. One of the critical elements is close proximity to the ocean and the changeable weather this brings. The wind shapes the environment of the links and it affects how the canny golfer chooses to negotiate the terrain. Heavy gusts require a low ball-flight and a ground game using bump and run shots rather than the lob wedge. This is possible on traditional links courses where the turf is tight and the ball can roll.

There are plenty of Australian courses designed in a 'links' style that are a great test of golf and a joy to play, but they aren't always by the sea. When you go to the 36-hole 13th Beach Golf Links, the layout is on true links land right by Bass Strait and, as such, it creates some classic challenges.

The Beach Course has a beautiful sequence of holes on both the front and back nines that wends along the ridge of the dunes of 13th Beach. While the picturesque 12th is listed as one of the top holes you should play before you die, for me, number 16 is a must. At a mere 105 metres off the blue

By Richard Fellner and
The Bushranger Golf Social Group



From the Carpark to the 19th

13th Beach Golf Links

tees, it seems incongruous on the card, but it is a classic. Perched on the dunes and exposed to the wind, it changes character with each swirling gust. Standing on the tee it looks a snack and yet our entire group walked off shaking our heads with not one par between us!

13th Beach offers a genuine links golf experience that will test your shot-making imagination and short game creativity. With two great courses and luscious accommodation on site at the Hawthorn Suites, it is well worth putting on your list of must-play golf destinations.

OVERALL RATING: 8/10

Mick Van Raay
Bushranger Golf

The 13th Beach Golf Links complex gets my vote for one of the best golfing weekend experiences I've ever had. We arrived at the course after a comfortable drive from Melbourne to swing into the welcoming gates directly to the on-course accommodation. You get a true feel of the quality

of the complex at 13th Beach just by checking out the accommodation and club house. All are relatively new, well designed, very classy and very practical. Maybe it's the fact that it's taken other Melbourne golf courses quite some time to recover from the scorching sun & drought, but I wasn't expecting to see such a green, lush golf course as what we saw on arrival at 13th Beach. Both courses were absolutely beautiful. And as we played smack dab in the middle of winter, one could be forgiven for thinking that we were on the old R&A courses of Scotland living our golfing dream.

With beautiful fairways, nasty rough, and par-5's that look like par-7's from the tee, you often find yourself wondering where the hole you are about to play actually goes. My favourite was the par-3 12th - it is a true jaw-dropper to look at and a ball buster to play.

Talking to my new friend Birchie (a proud member at 13th Beach) the thing he loves about it is that on a good day he feels he has a sporting chance on every hole, yet on a bad day...forget it. I agree with Birchie! I'm a high

handicapper, and while I had many a good hole, boy did I leave a few Barry Crockers out there. But, best of all, for nearly every hole you finish and enjoy, you find yourself presented with another beautiful hole. I fell in love with the entire 13th Beach complex. If you're a golfer living in Melbourne or thereabouts, make it your mission to get down there, you'll feel privileged for the experience.

OVERALL RATING: 9/10

Michael Mileo
Bushranger Golf

What a facility! The two courses on offer provide very different challenges.

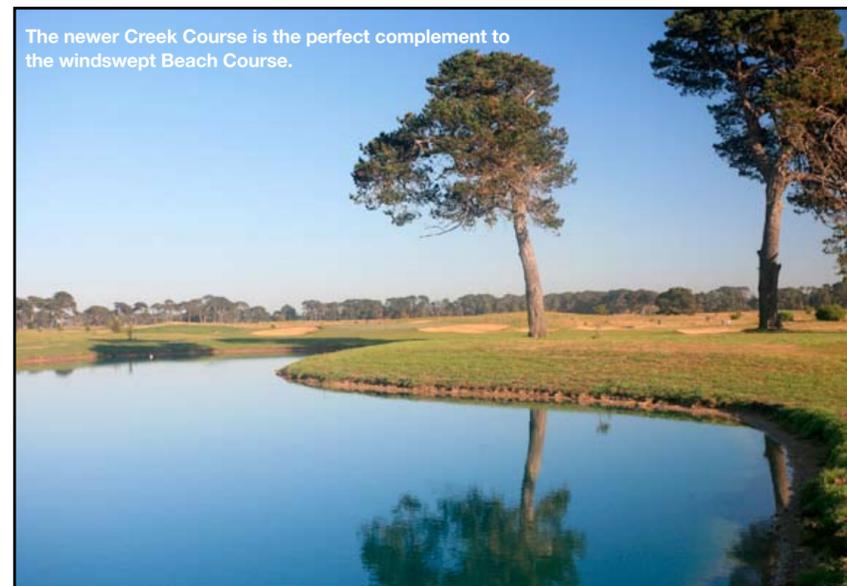
The Creek Course is relatively new and quite open in terms of fairways and rough. I envied the numerous house designs around the course where some very tasteful architecture blends in well with what is still recognisable as pastoral surrounds. This course does forgive you off the tee, with wide fairways and very empathetic rough. It does get tight from 150m in to the greens, where most holes are either well protected

by the greenside bunkering and some gnarly, tight greens that have a diversity of ridges and slopes to really make those 12-15 foot putts interesting. For me there were some standout holes including the par-4 8th with water on the right, rough extending down the left and a tight green well protected by bunkers. The par-3 15th is also interesting for the tiered green that leaves you relieved to walk off with three.

The Beach Course is one of the finest, most interesting courses I have played in Melbourne. I can't recall any tees being visible from the previous green which is part of the wonder. Unlike the Creek Course, this one is far less forgiving in the rough with the scrub and 'stony wastelands' calling for your best off the tee. The fairways were magnificent, lush and cushioned, rewarding tee accuracy with everything you could want in terms of lies. It was evident that this course was built with quality in mind; everything felt right.

The wind was gusting to 35 knots, often from different directions (as if the layout didn't challenge enough!) The par-3 16th was a favourite of mine, calling for laser accuracy off the tee and great brakes too.

The newer Creek Course is the perfect complement to the windswept Beach Course.



The theme of tiered greens continued throughout with the 18th worthy of special mention.

The absence of yardage markers from sprinkler heads was the only shortcoming of mention. (investing in the yardage books is a must). This is a class facility that represents great value. I'll be back!

OVERALL RATING: 9/10

Sidebar: The Food

The restaurant at 13th beach offers a full selection of tasty and hearty breakfast and lunch options (We highly recommend the Breakfast Sandwich - a great start to the day). If you're in a hurry at the turn, the pro-shop offers cut sandwiches and drinks at very reasonable prices.

Accommodation

While you're there, why not make a weekend of it? Conveniently located on course is the Hawthorn Suites, a new 4.5 star resort with 60 fully self-contained one, two and three bedroom apartments all with balconies and views. We loved these rooms: huge and comfortable, with a full kitchen, washer/dryer, flat-screen TV, practice facility in the back yard, and plenty of space for all your golfing gear, luggage and, of course, beer.

NEED TO KNOW: 13th Beach Golf Club

Par: Beach & Creek Course 72 (Book online & Save up to \$9 per player)
Length: Beach Course - Black 6391m, Blue 6139m, Red 5121m. Creek Course - Black 6401m, Blue 6060m, Red 5163m.
Green Fees: Beach Course: \$70 Weekend / \$55 Weekday. Creek Course: \$60 Weekend / \$50 Weekday. Twilight (4pm): \$45. Electric Carts: \$34
Designer: Beach Course - Tony Cashmore. Creek Course: Tony Cashmore/Nick Faldo
Address: Barwon Heads Rd, Barwon Heads, 3227
Phone: (03) 5254 2922 **Fax:** (03) 5254 1097
Web: www.13thbeach.net **Email:** info@13thbeach.net

HOW TO GET THERE

From Melbourne, take the Westgate/Princes Fwy towards Geelong. From Geelong, take Barwon Heads Rd towards Barwon Heads.
 Melways Ref: 482 D12

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