

OCEAN DUNES, ON TASMANIA'S STUNNING KING ISLAND,
IS ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED NEW COURSES TO OPEN
IN AUSTRALIA FOR SEVERAL YEARS.
PICTURE: MADDI REED.

AUSTRALIA'S BEST NEW COURSES

It's been a busy year for the golf course construction industry in Australia. Golfers: meet the class of 2016. From King Island to the Murray River, we think you're going to like what you see.

THE PAR-4 SIXTH AT OCEAN DUNES PLAYS RIGHT DOWN TO THE SHORES OF THE BASS STRAIT. PICTURE: MADDI REED.



AUSSIE golf, meet the new kids on the block.

They're green, pristine and keen to breathe life into an industry littered with clubs merging to survive.

Memberships aside, golfers never lost their appetite to try new layouts. Fortunately, it's been a fruitful year for domestic golf course construction.

But the class of 2016 is a slightly different breed to the resort-style layouts of the 2000s – in a really good way. There are two jaw-dropping seaside links courses on offer on Tasmania's King Island, a beautiful tree-less number on the Sunshine Coast called Maroochy River and a layout on the Murray River that throws back to the days of brutal signature stretches – to name a few. Put these courses on your to-play list this summer.

Ocean Dunes (King Island), TAS

We'll start with the rookie that arrived with the most hype. Ocean Dunes was one of the most anticipated new courses this country has seen for some time. Located 4 kilometres outside King Island's central town of Currie, Ocean Dunes is the passion project of Bernie McMahon, Graeme Grant, Richard Lees and Andrew Mitchell. There were some hurdles before its September 1 opening, but this golf course has delivered

a surplus on what was promised when the idea of a golf course carved out of rugged sand dunes, rock formations and natural vegetation along this majestic, 2-kilometre stretch of coastline was first proposed.

Almost every hole at Ocean Dunes is absolutely unforgettable. An awe-inspiring journey along the rocky shores will have you teeing off over mountainous dunes and breaking waves, as well as hitting approach shots to greens perched on the water's edge. Not only is every hole a thrill, but also a reminder of the hard work and attention to detail that went into the construction of Ocean Dunes. The 10th tee box – for which land had to be leased in order to have the most dramatic ocean carry possible – is just one example. "And the course is going to get better and better as the turf matures. With a full spring and summer under its belt, Ocean Dunes will go from strength to strength," says general manager Nelson Da Silva. "If you were to play Ocean Dunes tomorrow and come back in six months, it'll be even better. The club itself will also improve – we aim to have accommodation on-site and a permanent clubhouse up and running within the next 18 months. We're really excited about it all."

365 North Rd, Loorana, TAS 7256
Phone: (03) 6462 1633
Web: oceanandunes.com.au

TRAVEL TIP

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Sydney to Barnbougle or King Island in less than two hours? It's now possible thanks to **Express Golf** – a bespoke, Sydney-based aviation company focussing on golf charters to Tasmania direct from Sydney's Bankstown airport, primarily to the world-class Barnbougle, Cape Wickham and Ocean Dunes courses.

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For more information, contact Express Golf at troy.doak@gmail.com or call 0402 353 378.

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*As voted by The Golf Digest Magazine 2016



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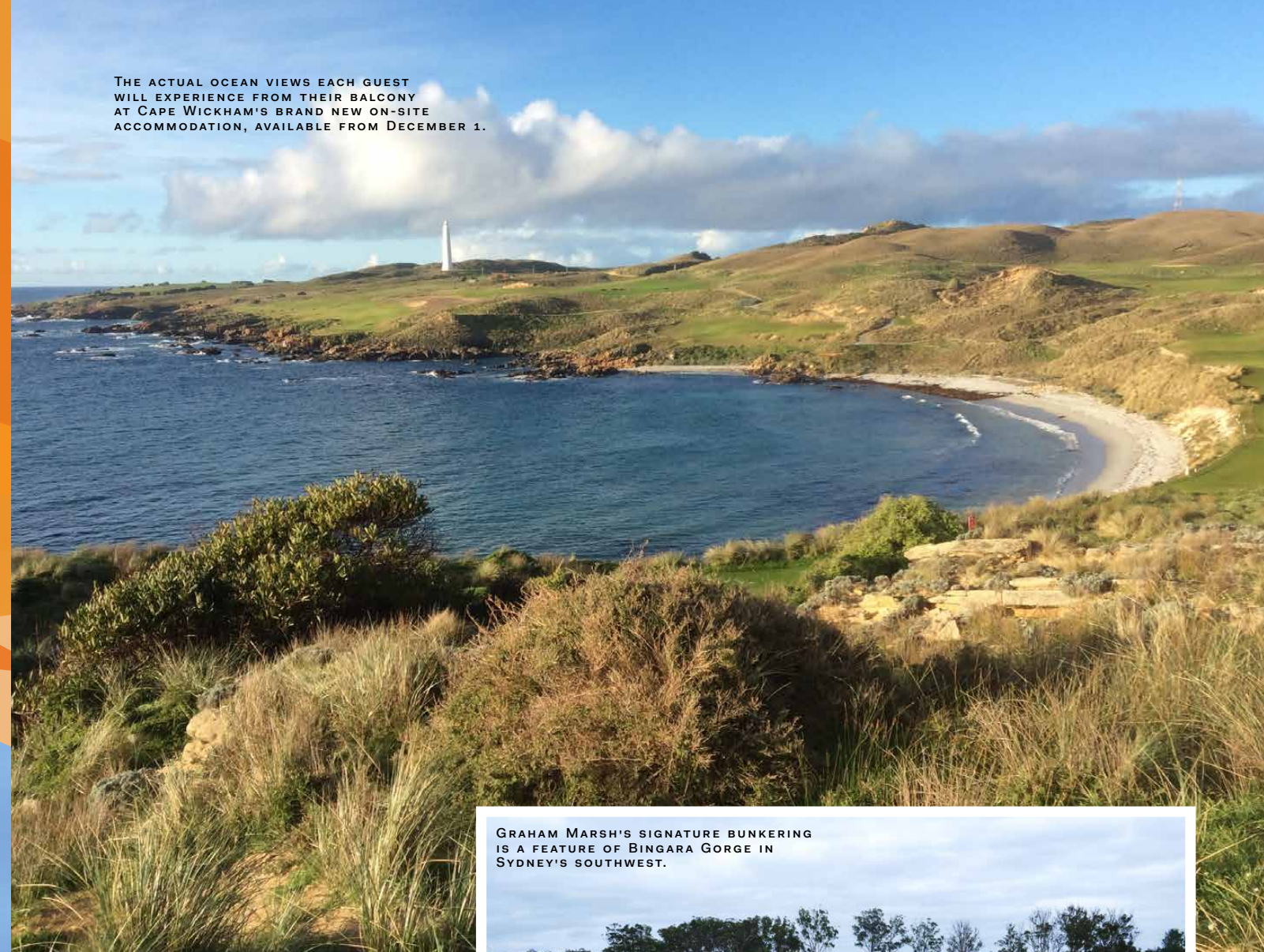
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GRAHAM MARSH'S SIGNATURE BUNKERING
IS A FEATURE OF BINGARA GORGE IN
SYDNEY'S SOUTHWEST.



Cape Wickham Links (King Island), TAS

TWELVE months have passed since one of the most important golf courses in Australia opened its doors to the world.

The feedback has been “overwhelming” according to co-designer Darius Oliver, who is grateful the golf world appreciated and understood Cape Wickham’s intention.

“And that was to build a course that was great fun, in an unbelievably beautiful location.”

There was just one thing missing that golfers usually demand: accommodation.

Or, that was until now.

On December 1, Cape Wickham will proudly unveil 16 large rooms for travelling golfers – each boasting jaw-dropping views from a spectacular (and private) veranda. The rooms are 50sqm (including the veranda) and come with WiFi, TV, reverse-cycle air conditioning. They are situated only 250m from Cape Wickham’s clubhouse.

“The bedrooms just complement what is already an unbelievably beautiful golf course,” says Cape Wickham owner Duncan Andrews.

“From each private, north-facing bedroom, the guest looks at four golf holes and also

across Victoria Cove to the tallest working lighthouse in the southern hemisphere.

“We believe it’s the best on-site golf accommodation in the world.”

A shortage of tradespeople on King Island convinced Cape Wickham to build the rooms on the mainland and transport them across Bass Strait to the island.

It seems as though there’s never been a better reason to experience Cape Wickham.

Cape Wickham Rd, Wickham TAS 7256
Phone: (03) 6463 1200
Web: capewickham.com.au

Bingara Gorge, NSW

LIKE Ocean Dunes, this residential golfing development at Wilton – 80 kilometres southwest of Sydney’s CBD – has had a few hurdles. And although the full 18 won’t be open until spring 2017, it doesn’t matter. The back nine has had more than a year to mature and we dare you to play this loop without wanting to double-back and tee off again (we had to). Graham Marsh has done a superb job of crafting natural bushland into an incredibly enjoyable round, which he similarly achieved at nearby Twin Creeks



The view from your room

World Ranking
#24
Australia Ranking
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IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BLACK BULL GOLF COURSE, DOWN ON
THE MURRAY RIVER, HAS ENJOYED RECORD ROUND NUMBERS.



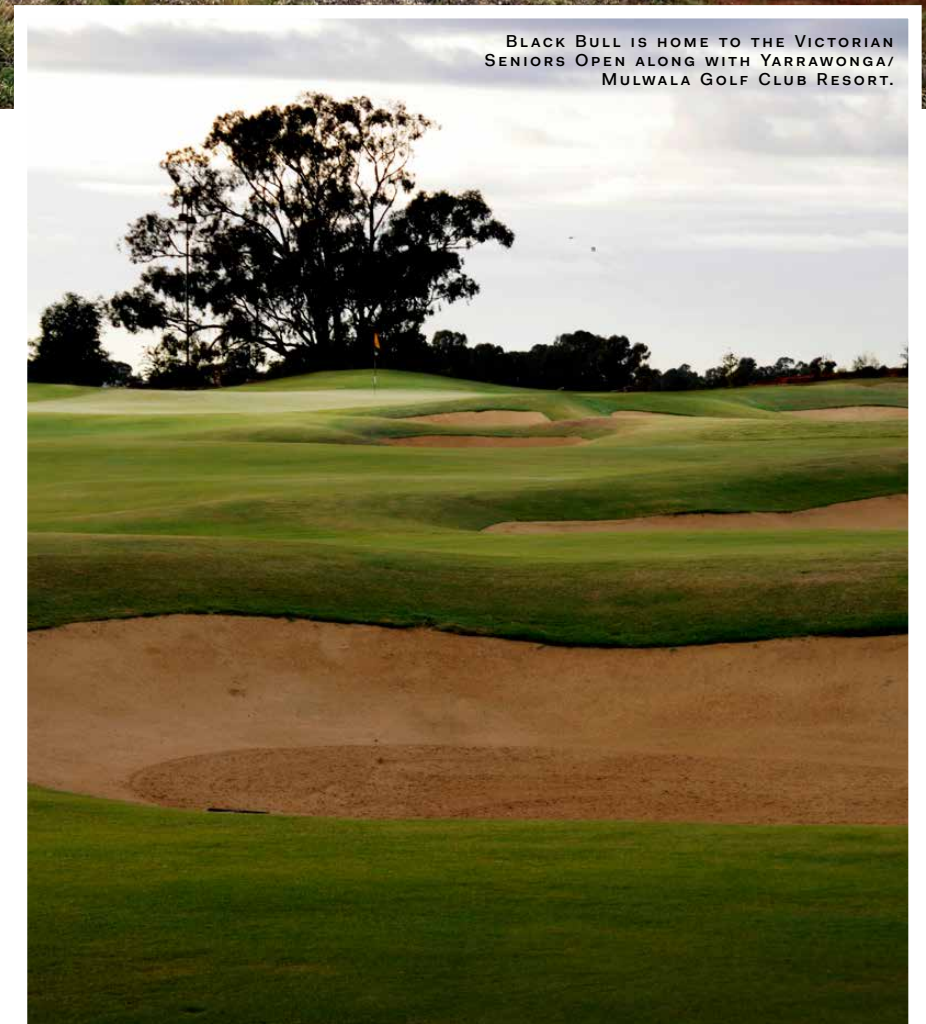
BLACK BULL IS HOME TO THE VICTORIAN
SENIORS OPEN ALONG WITH YARRAWONGA/
MULWALA GOLF CLUB RESORT.

(Luddenham). Bingara Gorge features elevated tee shots and well-conditioned couch fairways that wrap around spectacular gorges and water hazards, while panoramic views of the Razorback Range – and the peaceful sound of bellbirds – are the backdrop. Holes 11-14 are an excellent prelude to the signature par-3 16th, which highlights an intimidating gorge carry, before the wonderful par-5 finisher. AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST was also lucky enough to preview the par-4 seventh, par-3 eighth and par-4 ninth in September. The verdict? The back nine is fantastic, but we haven't even seen the best of Bingara Gorge just yet.

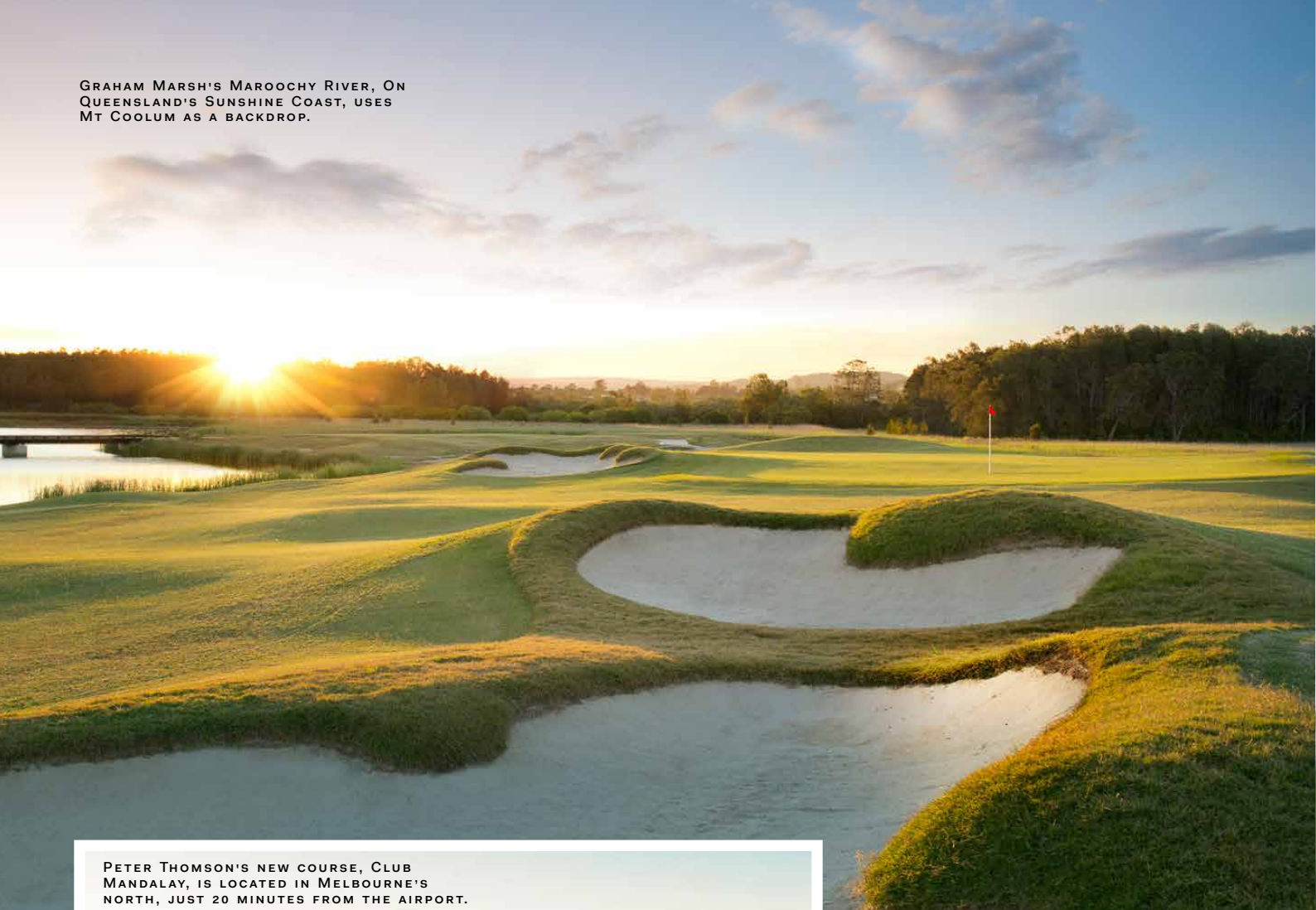
Ambrose Drive, Wilton NSW 2571
Phone: (02) 8016 6570
Web: bingaragorge.com

Black Bull Golf Course, VIC

A NEW and exciting trend is returning to Australian golf course design – tough signature stretches. And in the age of social media, having an iconic few holes gofers can 'check into', and share photos of, is a great way for a course to get its message to the masses. 'The Bull Ring' is a three-hole challenge at Black Bull Golf Course, and it pays homage to the land that used to be a Prized Black Angus Stud. These three holes have become a popular addition to the Thomson/Perrett design on the banks of the Murray River.



GRAHAM MARSH'S MAROOCHY RIVER, ON QUEENSLAND'S SUNSHINE COAST, USES MT COOLUM AS A BACKDROP.



PETER THOMSON'S NEW COURSE, CLUB MANDALAY, IS LOCATED IN MELBOURNE'S NORTH, JUST 20 MINUTES FROM THE AIRPORT.



"In the past 12 months Black Bull has enjoyed record round numbers, and we're also home to the Victorian Seniors Open with Yarrowonga/Mulwala Golf Club Resort," says director of golf James McCully. In case you're wondering, there are two life-size statues of black bulls, one named 'Charlie' after the original farmer who owned the land. Further exciting news for Black Bull is the new pro shop and driving range facility will open before Christmas, and the clubhouse is scheduled for completion in 2018. It will be a part of The Point – a \$35

million recreational hub with a 120-room Sebel Resort, 300-seat conference centre, swimming pools, health spa, gymnasium, tennis courts and boat-parking facilities. **1 Phillip Hyland Drive, Yarrowonga, VIC**
Phone: (03) 5744 0044
Web: blackbullgc.com.au

Club Mandalay, VIC

CLUB Mandalay is the latest golf course to be added to an already impressive portfolio of layouts designed by five-time British

Open Champion Peter Thomson and his design partner Thomson Perrett. The course is located in Melbourne's north, just 20 minutes from the airport, off the Hume Highway in the new suburb of Beveridge.

The course is somewhat different to the traditional Thomson Perrett design, particularly in the bunkering. Their traditional rolling fairways and elevated greens feature prominently, but there isn't a pot bunker to be seen. Instead replaced by more 'Alister MacKenzie-style' bunkering with intimidating white sandy faces.

This par-72 course measures 6,285 metres off the back tees and offers stunning views and a golfing experience that can be enjoyed by all abilities. The par 3s are all challenging but spectacular at Mandalay, particularly the 173m 11th, which features a large dam on the right, hitting to an undulating green which is surrounded by bunkers.

430-450 Mandalay Circuit, Beveridge VIC 3753
Phone: (03) 9037 3700
Web: clubmandalay.com.au

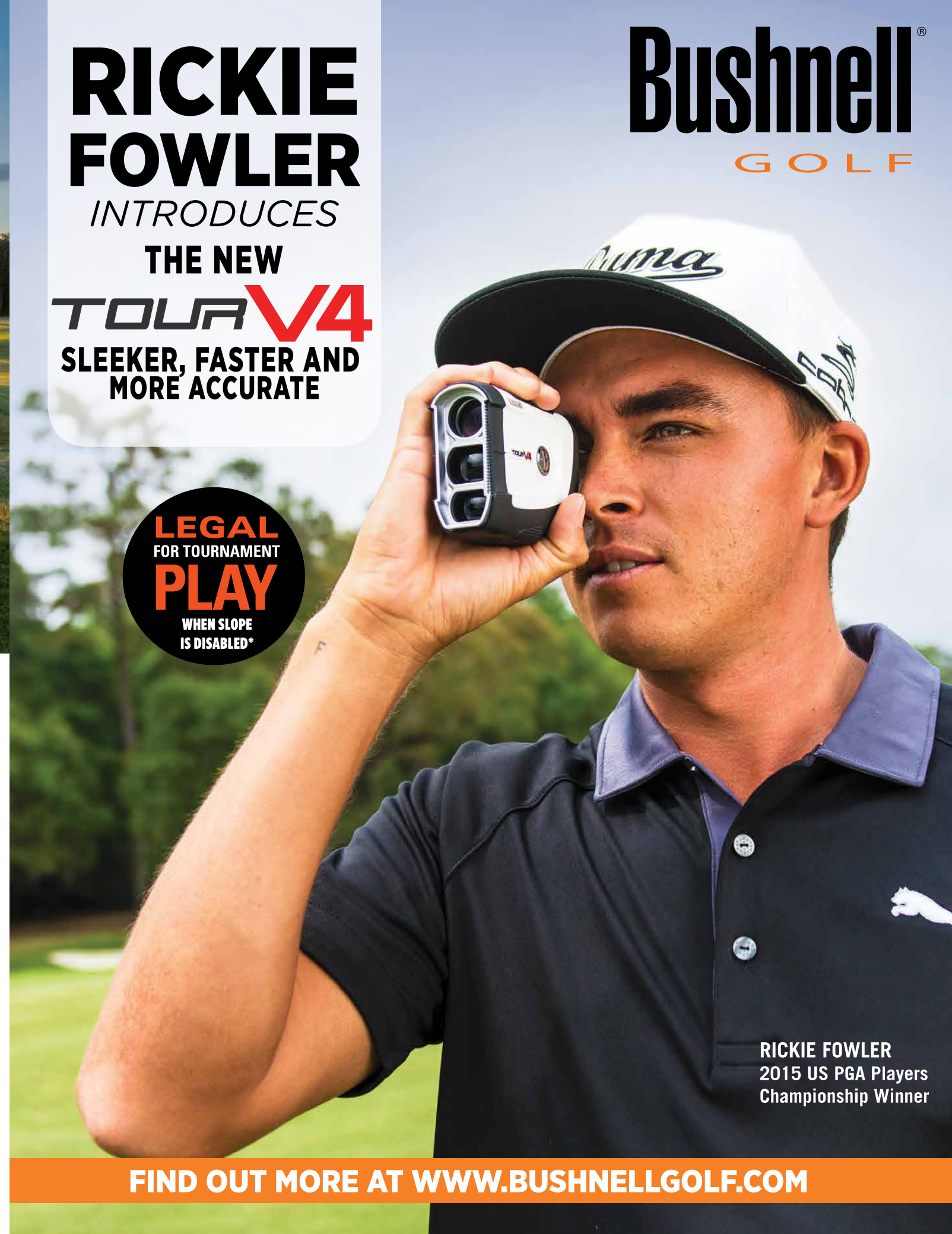
Maroochy River Golf Club, QLD

MINUTES from the pristine white beaches of the Sunshine Coast, this new 18-hole, par-72 golf course offers corporate golfers and keen amateurs the freshest challenge

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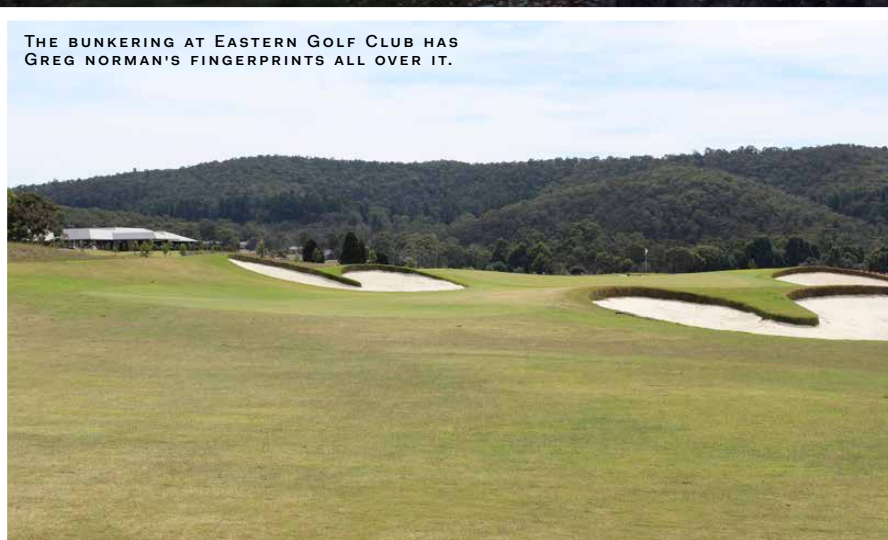
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THE EASTERN GOLF CLUB IS SET AMONGST VICTORIA'S TRANQUIL YARRA VALLEY.



THE BUNKERING AT EASTERN GOLF CLUB HAS GREG NORMAN'S FINGERPRINTS ALL OVER IT.



in the region. Formerly the Horton Park Golf Club, this stunning Graham Marsh-designed championship course uses the backdrop of magnificent Mt Cooloom as a visual feature. If that isn't enough to delight novices and low markers alike, Maroochy River has a unique drawcard: a complete absence of trees allows you to see every one of the 18 holes from almost any point on the golf course. And when a well-earned hunger strikes, Maroochy River's superb restaurant and bar has you covered.

374-514 David Low Way, Bli Bli, QLD
Phone: (07) 5373 1000
Web: maroochyrivergolfclub.com.au

The Eastern Golf Club

IT'S been a big year for The Eastern Golf Club. In July, the club celebrated its first birthday in its new location of Yering, located within Melbourne's food-and-wine haven of the Yarra Valley. Earlier this month, The Eastern opened the final nine of its planned 27-hole course. The club's nine-hole, par-3 course is expected to open for play in February 2017.

"We are really looking forward to the year ahead with the opening of the final nine holes, together with the nine-hole par-3 course," says general manager Ben Telley.

The Eastern also offers members and

“My responsibility at Eastern was to showcase the native flora and fauna Australia is renowned for” – *Greg Norman*

guests access to a TaylorMade Performance Centre, fitness centre, tennis, bushwalking, mountain biking, fishing and segways all within the club's 120-acre nature reserve.

The stay-and-play market has been identified as an opportunity of growth for The Eastern Golf Club, with boutique accommodation available at Yering Gorge Cottages by The Eastern Golf Club.

Enjoy self-contained one, two and four-bedroom cottages nestled into the hillside, alongside the Yarra River. Guests enjoy priority access to The Eastern Golf Club.

"My responsibility at Eastern was to showcase the native flora and fauna that Australia is renowned for," says course designer Greg Norman.

"Yarra Valley's The Eastern Golf Club is a truly special place where members can enjoy teeing off with kangaroos while taking in the spectacular views of the surrounding Christmas Hills and Dividing Ranges."

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