

Driving holiday

Craig Tansley looks at the best golf courses you can play this summer in Australia and New Zealand.

Barnbougale Dunes

When the wind roars down here, straight off Bass Strait and stinking of salt and kelp, Barnbougale Dunes can bring any golfer – even professionals – to their knees. For this is one of the world's toughest links-style courses, the equal of golf's greatest challenge – the Old Course at St Andrews (in Scotland). But when the wind dies, Barnbougale Dunes is a place of rare beauty, sprawling across 80 hectares of rugged coastal dunes and pastoral land and tumbling onto a desolate sandy beach – all that separates you from that notoriously feisty strait.

It's Australia's top-ranked public golf course – and like two of the world's best courses, Pebble Beach and St Andrews, it's entirely open to the public and not members (unlike most of Australia's top-20 courses) – but is tucked away in a forgotten corner of Australia.

Built beside the tiny fishing village of Bridport on Tasmania's north-east coast, it's the world's seventh-highest-ranked public-access golf course, and is ranked as the 35th-best on earth.

As it's built within sand dunes bordering the ocean, golfers must play in among the rugged coastal ecosystem. Each hole offers stunning vistas over ocean or across the hinterland, while extreme care must be taken to avoid an overwhelming array of natural obstacles.

And right next door, you can play Barnbougale's Lost Farm course, an immaculate 20 holes also overlooking Bass Strait.

Where is it? Barnbougale Dunes is one hour's drive north-east of Launceston, beside Bridport.

How much? Eighteen holes costs \$99, or \$70 for nine; \$130 all day.

Why do the pros love it? Because it's like playing a British Open in Australia. This is Australia's premier links course, so is the ideal training ground for a British Open challenge.

Services for beginners and amateurs? You can take a local expert as caddy for \$65 to plan your lines through the contours and against the wind. Former touring pro Brett Partridge offers lessons.

What's unique about it? There will never be a members' competition on



when you want to play. You can also fly in on your own chartered light aircraft to a runway beside the second hole.

Where to stay nearby Stroll from the first tee to one of 22 two-bedroom cottages or three four-bedroom self-contained deluxe villas with one of Tassie's best restaurants. **More** (03) 6356 0094, barnbougledunes.com.au.

Moonah Links

Where is it? Moonah Links is on the Mornington Peninsula, 1½ hours' drive south of Melbourne.

How much? Eighteen holes costs \$95 between November and January, \$85 in October and between February and April, and \$75 between May and September.

Why do the pros love it? They have no choice. As the site of two previous Australian Opens and with five more to come, the best pros have to overcome the long length of Moonah Links' Open course – the first built for a national championship.

Services for beginners and amateurs? Moonah Links has Australia's best golf training facility (including a three-level driving range). If you want to fix your swing,

then come to the same place that started Geoff Ogilvy's career.

What's unique about it? At Moonah Links, golfers can choose between one of Australia's longest and most challenging 18 holes – the Open course – or take it easier on the shorter, friendlier Legends layout.

Where to stay nearby Sleep beside the 18th green of the Legends course at Moonah Links' own suites and lodge rooms.

More 1300 362 386, moonahlinks.com.au.

Cape Kidnappers

Where is it? Cape Kidnappers is at Hawke's Bay, on the east coast of New Zealand's north island.

How much? Eighteen holes costs \$NZ285 (\$225) from May 1 to September 30 and \$NZ385 from October 1 to April 30.

Why the pros love it? When the wind's up (which is often), there is no bigger test in Australasian golf. Built on cliffs 140 metres above the ocean, it forces golfers to hit along deep ravines to heavily sloping greens.

Services for beginners and amateurs? Cape Kidnappers offers an unprecedented five tee-offs on each hole, meaning less-

Trip notes

Golfing there

➔ **Barnbougale Dunes** Fly to Launceston with Virgin Australia (virginaustralia.com.au, 136 789), then take a hire car for the one-hour drive to the golf course.

➔ **Moonah Links** Fly to Melbourne with Tiger Airways (tigerairways.com.au, (03) 9999 2888), then hire a car for the 1½-hour journey.

➔ **Cape Kidnappers** Fly to Auckland or Wellington with Air New Zealand (airnz.com.au, 132 476), then fly to Napier with Air New Zealand, where resort staff can meet you.

➔ **Bonville** Fly to Coffs Harbour with Qantas.

➔ **Jack's Point** Fly direct to Queenstown with Air New Zealand or Qantas, with Jacks Point just a 10-minute drive from the airport.

➔ **The Vintage** is in the Hunter Valley, which is a 2½-hour drive north of Sydney.

the world's top courses. It's almost impossible to believe the designer could fashion it among such rugged seaside cliffs. On two holes (the sixth and 15th) you'll have to hit across a huge ravine to reach the green. If you miss, watch your ball on its 10-second journey to the ocean.

Where to stay nearby Stay beside the golf course at The Farm, one of New Zealand's premier five-star accommodation options.

More +64 6873 1018, capekidnappers.com.

Bonville Golf Resort

Where is it? Bonville Golf Resort is a 10-minute drive south of Coffs Harbour on NSW's mid-north coast.

How much? From September to May, 18 holes from Monday to Thursday costs \$115 and \$130 from Friday to Sunday (from June to August, 18 holes costs \$105 and \$120 respectively).

Why do the pros love it? Bonville imitates Augusta National's feeling of isolation and privacy on every hole – on each one you won't see the fairway you played before.

Services for beginners and

experienced golfers can play the course with less trepidation. Instructors are available to play the course with you, providing advice both on your game and on mastering the course.

What's unique about it? Cape Kidnappers is recognised as one of

BUILD YOUR Bucket List AND Win

Which one of these experiences would you tick off your Bucket List?

Did you know that South Africa is the perfect destination to bring your bucket List to life?