

BY  
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Comparing golf courses is an interesting and revealing exercise where the results see-saw from the inevitable to the incredible.

# BARNBOUGLE OFFERS EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

TASMANIA'S LINKS COURSES, LOST FARM AND THE DUNES, ARE CHALLENGING YET ENJOYABLE

For despite many similarities in features, such as terrain, landscape, bunkers and greens, no two experiences on course are the same.

There are also other factors that come into play, such as weather, wind conditions, pin positions and even the company in which you are in.

That being the backdrop, I was asked if I would join a party of six media men on a golf mission to Tasmania to check out two renowned Barnbougles links courses that are inseparable yet distinctly different.

I was in two minds initially, for I had read about the two highly-acclaimed courses, and while the superb layout fascinated me, with my relatively high handicap index (18), I felt that I would not be able to extract the best out of the two "natural beauties", Lost Farm and The Dunes.

It was a feeling of pessimism, a negativity mainly borne out of my weakness in bunker play with never-ending images of the sand traps dotting the courses clouding my mind.

Still, encouraged by my buddies, I thought I should make the experience count, especially since I could add to my playing CV that had been highlighted with trips to Scotland, Spain, South Africa, Fiji and traverses across many countries in Asia.

A two-hour flight delay in Singapore meant my party missed the 50-minute connecting flight from Melbourne to Launceston, so a whole journey of nine hours became double the original duration by the time we checked in at the spacious luxury accommodation at Barnbougles.

But within minutes of play at the Lost Farm the next morning, the journey hassle was lost in the shifting winds of a superb layout that provided the wow factor as the seven of us were captivated by what we came for, saw and but never conquered.

We (save for one who had played there before) submitted to Barnbougles's Lost Farm, situated at Tasmania's North

East Coast and officially opened on 10 December 2010. It sits adjacent to The Dunes, and head architect Bill Coore created Lost Farm to complement the canvas provided by nature.

Lost Farm has 20 holes, with par-3 alternatives found on the 13th and 18th. Not pressed for time or by the group behind, we played the extra holes as they are both pretty and testing.

The short, 119m fascinating finishing hole is just what you need as a tie-breaker, what with the large bunker to the left of the green providing additional drama to the conclusion of your match.

Playing The Dunes after Lost Farm, you get the sense that both courses were cut from the same cloth but, seriously, they differ somewhat, probably because they are designed by different architects.

## BREATHTAKING LANDSCAPE

The Dunes is located on the pristine coastline. Opened in December 2004, the 18-hole course is a spectacular amalgamation of Mother Nature's beauty and craftsmanship of man.

Situated on 200 acres of undulating coastline dunes, the creative genius of famed architect Tom Doak and Australia's Michael Clayton, this world-ranked course has a breathtaking landscape.

The Dunes provides different facets at different times, and you will be bowled over by the par-3, seventh hole. At just 112m from the back tees, it looks relatively easy. But the raised green is not completely visible from the tee box, and the nasty bunkers to the front left, and right of the hole are score busters if you ever nestle into them.

So it is a welcome challenge at Tom's "Little Devil", even for a high handicapper like me who ambled to the tee box with hope, and came away sheepish as my golf ball went wayward into obscurity.

A 20-minute shuttle drive separates the two courses, but Lost Farm and The Dunes share the same piece of land as

well as the same weather features that come with their exposed location facing the Bass Straits that separates Tasmania from continental Australia.

As my colleague J K Tan, of Golf Digest, wrote: "Both courses demand a combination of strategy, and shot making ability, and an understanding of what the ball does when it hits the ground on an undulating links fairway."

"Comparatively speaking, the Lost Farm layout feels more open. Elevation changes are present, and the holes aren't as protected by high dunes as that found on the Barnbougles Dunes course. All this points to a greater effect from the winds when they kick up from the sea."

At Barnbougles, golf is a unique experience that strikes the senses. With the sun on your back, the wind in your body, the whiff of the sea and the roar of the ocean you will enjoy what Mother Nature has created for you with man making tweaks.

The course presents itself in a new dimension each day with the circumstances changing on a very challenging layout. It is a game of strategy that tickles the mental faculties, where each shot requires tactical thought. It's strong enough to test gifted golfers, yet fair enough to be enjoyed by even the less average players like me.

A blend of fescue and bent grass, the course matures in the coastal environment. Fairways at The Dunes are wide, the greens are lively, rolling with the natural undulation of the dunes.

Interestingly, its god-given topography was originally purchased as part of farmland. But owner Richard Sattler saw another vision in this stretch by the coast, and envisioned something grander, believing that the dune land was not arable for farming.

Much of the land currently functions as a working farm, and only small strips have been used for both the courses. But while cattle and sheep graze and potato is grown in the surrounding

areas, the holes on both Barnbougles Dunes and Lost Farm have put Tassie (nickname for Tasmania) on the calendar of travelling golfers around the world.

There is beauty, there is beast in the two courses. So to get the full Barnbougles experience you will need to play the two courses, as we did, although in submission.

Beaten, yes, but the surrender at Barnbougles only made us crave for more as we told ourselves that "we'll be back".

## DETAILS

### ● BARNBOUGLES DUNES

425 Waterhouse Rd, Bridport, TAS 7262, Australia

### ● BARNBOUGLES LOST FARM

429 Waterhouse Rd, Bridport, TAS 7262, Australia

+61-3-6356-0094 / [barnbougles.com.au](http://barnbougles.com.au)

## INFORMATION

### GETTING THERE

You can fly into either Launceston or Hobart from major airports in Australia. Barnbougles is about a 75-minute drive from Launceston and a two-hour drive from Hobart. Rental cars are available from both Launceston and Hobart airports. UOB Travel is familiar with arrangements.

### WHERE TO STAY

In addition to the lodging available at both Barnbougles locations, there are several hotels in Launceston that offer four-star comfort and luxury.

● Peppers Seaport Hotel is well located by the water in the commercial district of the town, and is walking distance from restaurants and shops.

[www.peppers.com.au](http://www.peppers.com.au)

● The Sebel Launceston is an equally well-appointed hotel that is part of the Accor group.

It is located within the city centre and walking distance to Launceston's vibrant café and shopping precincts, the Queen Victorian Museum and Art Gallery, as well as Cataract Gorge, and the City Park.

[www.thesebelllaunceston.com.au](http://www.thesebelllaunceston.com.au)