

# Treat yourself to a Sand Belt ‘Stay and Play’ at the Victoria

# Golf Club

By Paul Prendergast  
Photography: Mark Wilson

The eyes of the golfing world will be on Melbourne for the Presidents Cup this November, reigniting awareness of not only the host course but also the surrounding ‘sand belt’ courses of Melbourne. One of the ‘bucket list’ experiences that true golfers must tick off the list is a sand belt golf tour and a stay at the Victoria Golf Club as a ‘House Guest’ in their historic clubhouse. For many a year, I had aspired to stay at Victoria and the experience was beyond my expectations when the opportunity finally arose this June.

The golf course at Victoria speaks for itself, one of Australia’s best ranked courses, host to three Australian Opens and most recently the JbWere Masters in 2010, won by Stuart Appleby. The course was established at its current site in 1927 and the revered Dr. Alister Mackenzie assisted in its design during his short visit to Australia, where he played the lead role in the design of the neighbouring Royal Melbourne West Course.

Greats of Australian and world golf have since trodden Victoria’s fairways: Palmer, Nicklaus, Player Norman, Graham, Rogers, Woods and of course, club members Peter Thomson and Geoff Ogilvy, and all

have lauded the world class quality of the course.

The clubhouse is a virtual museum with memorabilia on display from the early days of the club throughout the various halls and rooms. The club has dedicated a room to a pair of their most famous members, five-time British Open Champion Peter Thomson and 1954 British Amateur champion, Doug Bachli. The ‘Bachli-Thomson Room’ is a shrine to their achievements. In 1954, they were victorious in the British Open and Amateur Championships and their respective trophies sat side by side on the Member’s Bar at Victoria that year!

In more recent times, club member and 2006 US Open champion Geoff Ogilvy has been honoured with the naming of the 'Geoff Ogilvy Terrace' in the clubhouse, along with other displays dedicated to his achievements. The Stonehaven Cup, presented to Ogilvy for his victory in the 2010 Australian Open, is on display in the clubhouse.

The packages available are very reasonable given the quality of everything the golf club provides you in terms of hospitality. At the time of writing, the packages on offer included:

**Full Board**

Twin share accommodation, buffet breakfast and sumptuous *a la carte* lunch and dinner, and golf.  
Members & Reciprocal Members AUD\$220 pp, House Guests AUD\$285 pp

**Winter Special (June, July & August)**

Twin share accommodation, buffet breakfast, sandwich lunch, sumptuous *a la carte* dinner, and one round of golf.  
Members & Reciprocal Members AUD\$210 pp, House Guests AUD\$230 pp

**Bed & Breakfast**

Twin-share accommodation and buffet breakfast.  
Members & Reciprocal Members AUD\$170 per room, House Guests AUD\$210 per room

Green fees alone at golf courses of lesser quality often outprice the 'total' price of these packages, which include

golf and full board. Meals are served in the clubhouse dining room between certain hours where you are provided with an *a la carte* menu and one of the best wine lists my group had come across. The bar manager has been with the club for over 30 years and according to General Manager, Peter Stackpole, has an uncanny knack of finding some of the best and rarest boutique and vintage wines for the cellar.

Smart dress is required in the clubhouse and a jacket required at dinner, however this only adds to the traditional experience that has been enjoyed by members and guests at Victoria over the decades. The service and staff are exceptionally efficient, pleasant and well trained and nothing is too much trouble.

Following dinner, cheese platters are provided for guests in the neighbouring lounge in front of the log fire and the run of the splendid clubhouse is yours. We enjoyed the company of members and other house guests who had been staying for a week at the club, participating in a golf school on course by former ALPG professional, Nadene Gole. For them, the week had been the experience of a lifetime and they were not looking forward to their return home the next day.

The 15 twin and triple share rooms upstairs in the clubhouse all include *en suites* and are comfortably appointed.

Our breakfast experience was also quite a treat, with personalised name plates on our table when we arrived at 7.30am. We were the only guests for breakfast that morning and were looked after very well by a staff member for a 'cook to order' meal to start the day. Another touch of class that



Dining at the Victoria clubhouse.

we'd come to expect by this stage.

Victoria is located next door to Royal Melbourne's East and West courses and layouts of the quality of Kingston Heath, Metropolitan, Yarra Yarra, Huntingdale, Woodlands and Commonwealth are only a short drive away. There can surely be no better spot to base yourself for a Sand Belt Experience than at Victoria Golf Club. ●

**VICTORIA GOLF CLUB**

Founded : 1903  
Address : Park Road, Cheltenham, Victoria, Australia, 3192  
Postal Address : P.O. Box 2617, Cheltenham, Victoria, Australia, 3192  
Telephone : (61) 3 9584 1733  
Golf Telephone: (61) 3 9583 1170  
Facsimile : (61) 3 9583 7557  
Website : www.victoriagolf.com.au  
General Email : info@victoriagolf.com.au  
Golf Email : golfshop@victoriagolf.com.au



View of the entrance to the clubhouse.