

*An Adventure in Life*

# Traveling Down Under to Tasmania

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One of the highlights each year for me has been attending the Golf Industry Show, with my first being in Minneapolis back a few years ago...well, more than a few years, I guess. It has always been a great way to network, keep up with the industry trends, take in a couple of educational seminars, meet old friends and get psychologically geared up for another golf season. This year, I chose to skip the New Orleans experience and attend the 25th Australian Turfgrass Conference and Trade Exhibition in Hobart, Tasmania in mid-July. With a great sense of anticipation, I was looking forward to a new show experience, some sightseeing, and some cooler weather "down under."

July 9th saw us leave Hong Kong at 11:30 pm for about an eight-hour flight into Perth, Australia aboard Quantas Airlines. Hopping a six-hour flight to Melbourne, and then a short flight from

until the conference was to kick off, we rented a car and toured the island, first driving to the north, then to the east, and finally back south to Hobart. Traveling the countryside reminded me a bit of being back in Wisconsin, with once major exception. The fields and hillsides were populated with sheep rather than dairy cattle and beef. Driving across the northern coast area provided for some great photography opportunities, but the going was slow. The two-lane road consisted of a series of switchbacks going up the mountainous coastline and then back down as we made our way to the eastern coastal area. 30 to 40 mph was the persistent speed for about five hours, but the sights were astounding. Seeing kangaroos and the actual Tasmanian Devils definitely were a couple of the high points of our travels. Stopping in a small village for lunch or breakfast, and an evening meal

and refreshment in a small Australian pub were both enjoyable and very relaxing. Much can be said and admired for the Tasmanian relaxed and laid back, easygoing style of life and attitude. An early morning venture to a fast food drive thru for a cup of coffee was interesting in that the drive-thru would not be open till 9 am.

Definitely laid back and not rushed was the cornerstone for the day.

Golf courses on Tasmania range from very quaint, simple, low maintenance to world-renowned golf courses. One course we happened across during our travels had greens fees based on the honor system. You simply place your money in a box at the first tee, take a scorecard, and tee it up. At the other end of the spectrum was



*Tasmanian Devil*

Barnbougle Dunes, a Tom Doak links creation that has achieved the ranking of the seventh best Public Course in the world. Monday saw the beginning of the conference with an AGCSA golf tournament at the Royal Hobart Golf Club. The day of golf was followed with the Welcome Reception Monday evening at the Wrest Point Hotel and Conference Center which served as the site for the four-day

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*Sheep in Tasmania*

Melbourne to the island of Tasmania and the city of Hobart followed a western style breakfast in Perth. The British founded Hobart, with a population of 200,000, in 1803 as a penal colony. This quiet, laid back, beautiful city is situated at the base of Mt. Wellington and boasts a beautiful, picturesque harbor. With a couple of days



*Headquarters Hotel in Tasmania*

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conference.

The AGCSA Turf Conference is similar to the GIS in that the conference has a different city venue each year. Educational sessions are similar to those that are put for at the GIS with a central theme being used for each session throughout the day. Sessions were held with the emphasis on either golf course turf management or sports field management. Day two focused on the superintendents' management skills and practices, dealing with personal stress, and other related health issues. Morning Tea and lunch were provided on a daily basis as part of the registration package. I believe we all recognize that stress is a daily partner in our pro-



Greens fees on the honor system.

fession. Learning to cope with stress and related issues so that one's personal health is critical for success and longevity in our chosen profession. We must also not lose sight of the fact that stress and how the superintendent deals with the job and job-related issues affects not only the superintendent but the individuals' family members also.

Information gleaned from the first day was both beneficial and thought-provoking.

Day three was centered on turf management matters dealing with using plant growth regulators, soil amendments, thatch management, and field trials results. Lunch and the trade show took up the center of the day, educational sessions in the afternoon followed by the Trade Show and Happy Hour in the late afternoon. The AGCSA Annual Meeting completed the day. Day four was a day devoted to both health issues and turf management topics as they related to course construction projects. Once again lunch and the trade show spanned mid-day with the afternoon session devoted to budgets and budgeting, and making do with less. As in the United States, budgetary concerns are of a primary concern with the Australian superintendents. The final event of the conference was the traditional President Dinner on Thursday evening.

Evening hours were useful for meeting vendors, suppliers and colleagues at company-sponsored events at some of the wonderful restaurant and refreshment establishments in Hobart. We found some wonderful dining establishments in Hobart with first-class food, service and course refreshments. July is part of the off-season, so service was top rate and crowds were minimal. Winter temperatures during our stay were comfortable with daytime highs in the lower 60s and nighttime lows in the 40s. This was definitely a welcome change coming from the warm, humid weather of a Hong Kong summer.

Friday afforded one last opportunity to travel around Hobart and the surrounding countryside on a perfect clear, sunny day. Saturday afforded normal superintendents early morning with a plane flight out of Hobart at 6 a.m. bound for Melbourne. A quick change of planes in Melbourne to catch a flight for Sydney. A quick breakfast in Sydney, then a flight out of Sydney back home to the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong. The anticipation of traveling to Tasmania was fully rewarded with another great Adventure in Life.

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