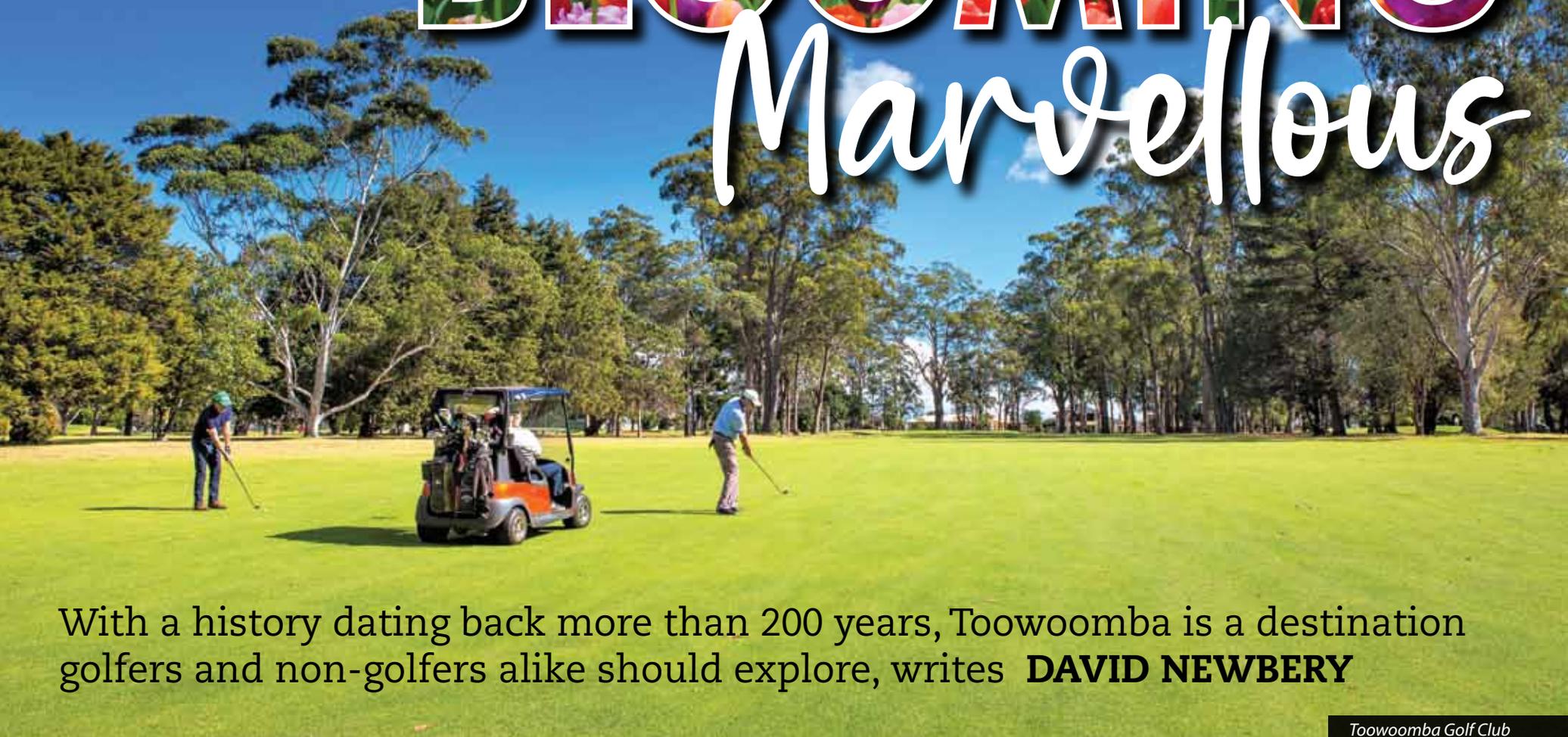


TOOWOOMBA

BLOOMING

Marvellous



With a history dating back more than 200 years, Toowoomba is a destination golfers and non-golfers alike should explore, writes **DAVID NEWBERY**

Toowoomba Golf Club

WHILE Toowoomba is well-known for its Carnival of Flowers, the city located on the Darling Downs has long been a golfing destination for professionals and amateurs alike.

Located 120km from Brisbane (a scenic 90-minute drive) and 20 minutes from Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport, Toowoomba, 700 metres above sea level, offers two championship golf courses – Toowoomba Golf Club (Middle Ridge) and City Golf Club.

Greg Norman played Toowoomba Golf Club at Middle Ridge on many occasions

during his early golfing career and more than enjoyed the experience.

“The golf course was a testing and formidable challenge for golfers of all levels,” Norman said.

And Craig “Popeye” Parry was “pleasantly surprised” when he turned up to play in the Queensland PGA Championship at City Golf Club a few years ago.

“It was amazing,” said Parry during his visit to the Garden City. “I think it’s fantastic to play golf in places we don’t normally get to play.”

Still, there is much more to this popular, tourist-friendly inland city.

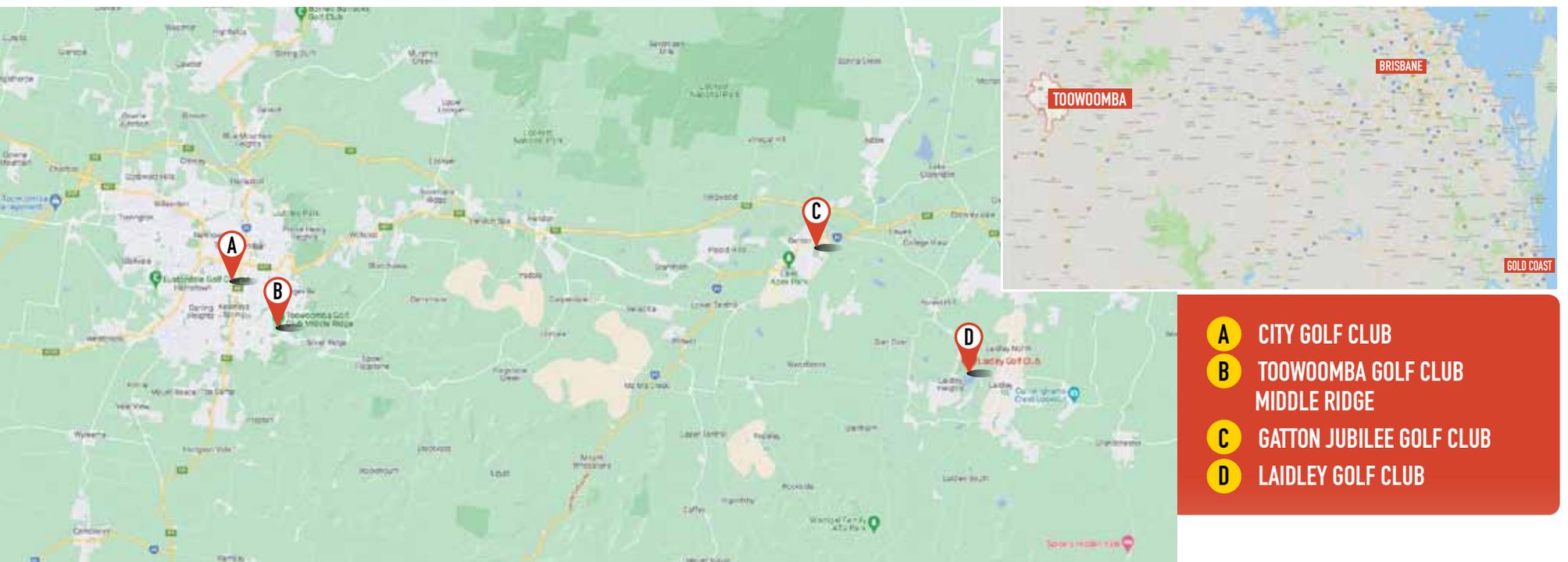
Did you know there are more than 140 public parks and gardens in Toowoomba?

The university and cathedral city hosts the Australian Carnival of Flowers each September as well as many other festivals and activities.

Golfers love taking their non-playing golfing (wives, husbands, partners) to Toowoomba because there’s so much for them to see and do while they playing golf.

In a city ornamented with two challenging golf courses and loads of well-known cultural experiences, it’s easy to map an itinerary with the help of the friendly tourist information people.

Of course, *Inside Golf* zeroed in on Toowoomba Golf Club (Middle Ridge), City Golf Club and nearby Gatton Jubilee and Laidley golf clubs, but there are many other “hidden gems” scattered throughout the Darling Downs – all within an easy 40-60 minutes’ drive.



- A** CITY GOLF CLUB
- B** TOOWOOMBA GOLF CLUB MIDDLE RIDGE
- C** GATTON JUBILEE GOLF CLUB
- D** LAIDLEY GOLF CLUB

TOOWOOMBA Golf Club at Middle Ridge is Queensland's second oldest golf club.

It celebrated its 125th year anniversary in late August this year. Throughout this time, many golfing greats have graced the fairways including Greg Norman, Gary Player, Norman von Nida, Bobby Locke, Bruce Crampton, "Babe" Didrikson, Gene Sarazen, Ian Baker-Finch, Peter Senior and many more.

Over the years, the layout has hosted numerous major championships and international golfing visitors.

Rolling tree-lined kikuyu fairways and superbly manicured Pennncross Bent greens provide the ultimate in course presentation.

The club's general manager David Marr says course superintendent Mick Kelly and his team have the course in superb condition.

"By creating the best possible playing conditions, we are in a position to be able to offer our members and guests the finest golfing experience in the Darling Downs," he said.

"With substantial increases in social play and membership over the last 18 months, Toowoomba Golf Club is well-positioned to cater for all golfers, as well as social and corporate functions.

"Our clubhouse offers a warm and friendly environment and our deck area overlooks the 18th hole providing a great atmosphere in which to enjoy a drink after your round."

The Ridge Restaurant and Function Centre provides quality dining seven days a week and, with a purpose-built Clear Marquee available under the stars and under the famous Camphor Laurel tree, the Ridge is proving to be a popular destination for weddings and celebration functions.

House manager Jason Leicht is only too happy to discuss the function options and packages.



Toowoomba Golf Club

Toowoomba Golf Club also offers a well-stocked pro shop. Club professional Brenton Fowler, along with his friendly staff, stock a range of clothing, clubs and equipment at reasonable prices.

The pro shop offer excellent service in club-fitting, repairs and lessons.

Green fees and cart hire are competitively priced and the club also offers a twilight green fee rate.

Toowoomba Golf Club offer a large range of membership offerings, tailored to suit your needs. Membership enquires are always welcomed.

For more information, visit the club's website www.toowoombagolfclub.com.au or telephone (07) 4635 1219.

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CITY Golf Club is located just five minutes from the city centre.

The club is well-known for hosting the Queensland PGA Championship, a PGA Tour of Australasia event, from 2009 to 2020.

Boasting an impressive championship 18-hole course, City Golf Club has magnificent clubhouse facilities incorporating multiple bars, restaurant, cafes, lounge, gaming room, function rooms, pro shop, administration area and locker rooms.

Weary golfers and visitors can rest in absolute clubhouse comfort and watch from behind ceiling-to-floor windows or the newly built deck overlooking the practise putting green and watch as golfers negotiate the challenging 406m (index 1) par-4 18th.

Fairway bunkers come into play off the tee and if the wind is in your face, your approach to the green is anything from an 8-iron to a hybrid. It's a great finishing hole and one where many championships have been won and lost.

Still, that's a long way from the first hole, which has recently changed to a 345m par-4 (358m par-5 for women).

Giving the player a welcoming start, the hole is quite open off the tee, with a slight dog-leg to the right. Although the fairway opens up, players are faced with a very undulating four quadrant green.

Oftentimes, you'll see short hitters lay up to play their third shot from just short of West Creek, which runs right in front of the green, whilst the longer hitters have a comfortable wedge into the green.

The back nine holes provide more driving relief because it opens up a bit.

After the relatively flat opening nine you drive skyward to the back nine where there are holes with big elevation changes.



City Golf Club

The Richard Chamberlain-newly re-designed par-5 10th hole is a great back nine starter, more open off the tee than previous but now a green that is twice the size of the previous green and much more elevated with three level changes.

The quirky swales don't adhere to the expected patterns and the subtle breaks are not always obvious. Three good shots will give you a chance at birdie.

Although most of the greens can be negotiated without too much fuss, the third, 11th and 14th need close attention. And the greens can get a little on the quick side, but they do roll extremely well.

Mind you, the greens are quite undulating and almost take on a Royal Melbourne-type feel in terms of the undulations. When they get quicker, placement is critical because if you are behind the pin you can putt the ball off the green.

Sometimes it's better to leave your ball short of the green and chip up the hill rather than being on the green putting back down the hill.



In recent months the club's greens staff have reworked and reshaped a number of bunkers and re-levelled tee boxes.

City Golf Club has a friendly atmosphere, and camaraderie among the members is second to none.

Golf operations manager Andrew Webb says the club welcomes visitors and play and stay guests all the time.

Social players are welcome with the best days to play Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, but if you are keen to play in the comp and have an official handicap then Wednesdays and Sundays are open.

Social green fees are \$30 for nine holes and \$40 for 18 and golf cart hire is \$25 and \$40 for nine and 18 holes respectively.

City GC opened its impressive practice range and mini golf facility five years ago. More than 35,000 mini golf rounds are played there each year and the facility is a popular venue for beginners, children and hosting functions and parties in a fun-filled environment.

For more information, call the pro shop on (07) 46369070 or for group and play and stay enquiries email golfassistant@citygolf.com.au More information is also on the website www.citygolf.com.au



The Gattong Jubilee Golf Club situated in the Lockyer Valley 1 hour from Brisbane is set amongst the ironbark trees, with meandering holes through the top 11 of the 18 holes. The bottom 7 holes are gentle gradients before the challenging long Par-3 18th hole takes you back to the clubhouse.

Plenty of parking for caravans, and mobile homes is a plus for the touring golfing couples with great views from the clubhouse.

Social players can play 18 holes including cart for \$70 Monday to Friday.

If it's afternoon sunset golf, then \$18 for unlimited golf in Winter is perfect from Sunday to Friday after 2pm.

Standard Green Fees are \$30 for 18 holes, \$18 for 9 holes and cart hire \$34 for 18 holes. Membership is affordable at only \$12 per week.

Set Gattong Jubilee Golf Club as a destination on your golfing calendar with discounted rates for more than 12 players with great packages available.



Gattong Jubilee Golf Club
Woodlands Road, GATTONG QLD 4343
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Gatton Jubilee Golf Club



Laidley Golf Course

THE **Gatton Jubilee Golf Club** is the Lockyer Valleys favourite leisure venue.

With breathtaking views from the clubhouse and a full bar and bistro facilities (with modern gaming machines), it is a destination to be added to the golf trip.

Gatton's 18-hole golf course is the perfect social group golf layout featuring some unique and challenging holes, however it's a golf course that won't break your spirit.

The course provides interesting dogleg holes, elevations throughout, tree-lined fairways and beautifully manicured greens.

The club offers competitions five days a week, which allows visitors the chance to work on their handicap and enjoy the country golf course.

And there is easy parking for vans and motorhomes for touring golfing couples.

Gatton offers special deals for golfing groups of 12 players or more seven days a week.

The club specialises in corporate and charity days with shotgun starts with a flat rate of \$1500.

For those golfers who want to stay-and-play, there are packages available from \$190 twin share at Porters Hotel, Plainlands. The cost for two players includes a golf cart for 18 holes.

For more information, call (07) 5462 1420 or visit the club's website www.gattongolf.com.au or email manager@gattongolf.com.au

LAIDLEY Golf Course is situated on the banks of Lake Dyer in the picturesque Lockyer Valley.

It is approximately 40 minutes from Toowoomba and 40 minutes from Ipswich. The 12-hole layout has 18 tee blocks making each nine holes different. It's an easy walking course, however carts are available for hire.

The golf course is open every day except for Tuesdays. Bookings are required to make sure the club can make your visit as enjoyable as possible.

The golf club has meals available on Friday nights from 6pm.

Golfers and visitors alike can enjoy lunch on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon with Coll's catering providing a varied and affordable menu.

As a special offer, the club is offering 18 holes of golf in a motorised golf cart for two people – \$70.

Gree fees: \$18 for 18 holes of golf; motorised buggy hire, \$30 for 18 holes. Note; Inside Golf Magazine special pricing.

Laidley GC recommends the Porters Plainland Hotel for overnight stays.

The nearby hotel offers award-winning accommodation in simply luxury. The motel offers 7 x King rooms, 7 x Twin rooms, 1 x Family Suite, 1 x Mobility suite and a two-bedroom apartment. All just a short 10-minute drive from Laidley Golf Club.

For more information, call (07) 5465 1518, email admin@laidleygolfclub.com.au or visit www.laidley-golfclub.com

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