

Out of town

The Gold Coast remains Australian golf's favourite holiday playground, but for those who have been absent friends of the Coast for a few years, it is also worth venturing a little further north.

Two new layouts at opposite ends of Brisbane – Brookwater in the south-west and North Lakes to the north – made immediate waves on the South-East Queensland golf scene when they opened two years ago.

Brookwater, at Springfield, is arguably the best new course to open in Queensland in the past decade. The Greg Norman creation winds through undulating terrain characterised by thick woodlands. First-time visitors will be mesmerised by the ubiquitous stands of tall trees, but the course is sympathetic as most holes funnel balls towards the centre of the fairway.

North Lakes, at Mango Hill, has received rave reviews since opening in late 2002. This Graham Marsh design has pioneered the use of TifEagle grass on its greens, a surface that provides a much smoother roll than the Bermuda greens usually associated with Queensland courses. More than that, however, North Lakes is an enticing layout that rewards solid ballstriking.

So here are two more reasons to extend that Gold Coast golf trip by a couple of days – like you needed extra incentive to stay . . .

– Steve Keipert



Brookwater

Helensvale, 15 minutes drive from the heart of Surfers, a round of golf will set you back \$34.50, and only \$20 after 1pm. It's a pretty relaxed, casual affair, too, with a few holes worthy of mention, namely the par-3 12th and 17th.

Southport

Southport is one of the oldest, most traditional courses on the Gold Coast, and is located within walking distance of the centre of Surfers Paradise. Short and tight, it provides a relaxing parkland-style course that suits the bulk of its retired membership. Its feature holes are the 15th and 17th.

Helensvale

Helensvale is another short, tight golf course that's more in the budget category. Once a par 66, it has now been lengthened to a par 70 and provides a fun alternative to the overt demands of the typical resort course.

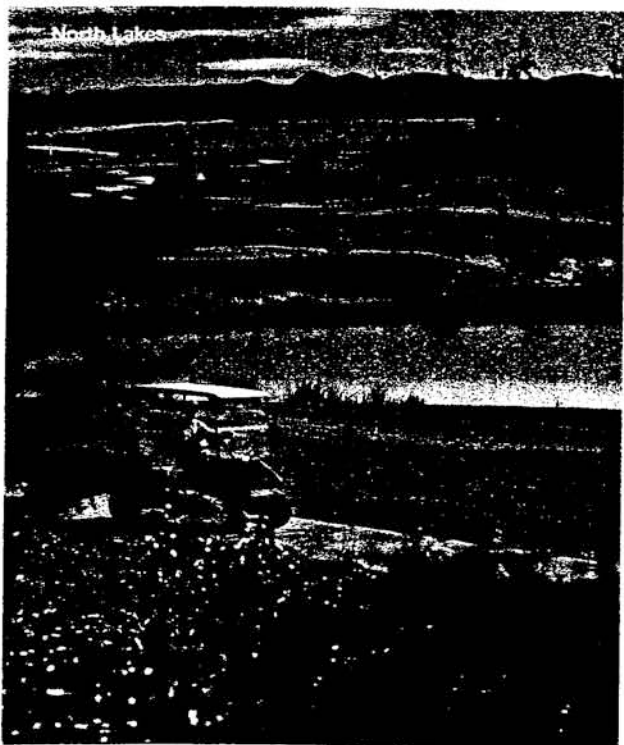
Arundel Hills

This is a private, members-only course, so there are no green-fee players allowed. Arundel Hills is another course that runs through a housing estate, and has a lot of holes with severe doglegs. You will need to play with a member to work out where to hit it, as that is not always apparent standing on the tee. A challenging layout.

Gold Coast-Burleigh

A tight, slightly undulating design with a central location, 10 minutes drive south of Surfers Paradise. This is another course with a large membership base, so booking ahead is essential. A fun layout to play.

There are enough options here to placate even the most insatiable golf fanatic. On top of these, there are plenty of short par-3 courses for the occasional player to have a bit of a hit and giggle. If you are sick of golf and want something entirely different, take the drive up Tambourine Mountain.



North Lakes