



HEADLINE: Moving up with a bullet

Sanctuary Lakes has shot up the rankings of Australian golf courses, according to an authoritative national golf magazine.

The March edition of Golf Digest, published by News Magazines, rated the spectacular par-72 layout in Melbourne's western suburbs as the 69th best in the country.

That was an improvement of 18 spots from two years ago when the Greg Norman designed course made its debut in the rankings at number 87.

Such a quick climb up the ladder is remarkable given the course only opened for play in 1999.

Sanctuary Lakes, the host venue of the nab Victorian PGA Championship, is fast gaining a reputation as one of the most enjoyable for golfers of all ability levels.

"People have been saying for a while now that the course keeps getting better," said Wayne Sutherland, General Manager (Golf Operations) of PGA Links Management.

"So it's nice to get some official recognition to back up what the members, guests and Tour players keep telling us."

Sanctuary Lakes has been the host of the prestigious Victorian PGA Championship for the past four years and recently hosted another successful tournament won by big hitting Marc Leishman.

Golf Digest asks its ranking panel to score each golf course on four criteria:

- shot values (how difficult yet fair is the course?)
- design variety (how varied are holes in length, terrain, hazard placement and green contours?)
- memorability (how well does hole individuality add to the enjoyment?)
- conditioning (in what shape were the tees, fairways and greens?)

Each criteria is rated out of 10, ranging from absolutely perfect to unacceptable.

At Sanctuary Lakes, Norman – the PGA Golfer of the Century - did a superb job fitting golf holes in among the natural landforms.

The dual British Open champion used the site's natural features to determine a routing of holes that are rich in strategic merit.

At every opportunity Norman incorporated water features, native vegetation and contouring into his creative design.

"I know you are not supposed to play favourites, but ... there are some projects that I absolutely loved doing," Norman explained recently on his website.

"As the members play the course at Sanctuary Lakes, they are treated to a dramatic change in the environment.

"When I go back there now, it is still just unbelievable to see."

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