

Adelaide is serving up a new concept in golf.  
Combining four of Australia's finest courses with  
four of the world's best wines, it's a golfer-orientated  
experience that has been given the delicious label . . .

# *Four Reds*

BY ANDREW DADD





The opening hole at Glenelg Golf Club gives you a taste of what's to come – quality golf.

**T**HERE have been stacks of best reasons to visit Adelaide. It's the festival capital of Australia. With the Adelaide and Fringe and Womadelaide and Crush Festivals, they should call it Festelaide. From 1985 to 1995 there was the Formula 1 Grand Prix (before it was stolen, and don't think they've forgotten). Now there's the Clipsal 500. Adelaide even has the nation's premier bike bash – the Tour Down Under – a ferocious trundle through some of the hilliest bits of South Australia. There are beaches and sharks and stunning seafood. Adelaide has two maniacally supported AFL teams, one of the best cricket ovals in the world and houses of worship for everyone, as you'd expect in the City of Churches.

It's true, the South Australian cup runneth over with premier wine regions as well. Best of all, Adelaide has golf, the quality of

which may come as a surprise to everyone but the blessed people of Adelaide.

A little while ago, some people – who knew how good the golf was – decided it was time to spread the word. You see, great under-noticed golf courses are nothing like great undiscovered surf spots. No one wants to share their secret surf spots, but just about everyone wants to share their great golf course. There can be no greater source of pride than hearing someone at the bar of a wooden-panelled clubhouse waxing lyrical about your home course. The very mention of your home track would be enough to crane over just a little to hear what's being said. "How did they keep Glenelg a secret? It's as good as anywhere. It's like a Melbourne Sandbelt course without the Melburnians. It's fantastic."

Glenelg is fantastic, it's a course that should most definitely be on every Australian golfer's bucket list. As should Kooyonga, Royal Adelaide and The Grange. These four clubs, all

four absolutely world class, are the thumping heart to Adelaide's Sandbelt.

Adelaide's Sandbelt? Each of the four is not only built on sand, but also the unique red sand of the region, capturing the traditional outback spirit of Australia. So maybe if they called it the 'Red Sandbelt' it would find a place alongside the more famous Victorian cousin.

So the trick was to get the word to the masses. Whilst not quite creating a festival, the four Red Sandbelt courses got together with the gourmets and oenophiles and created the newest (and possibly best) reason for visiting Adelaide that didn't involve football. It's called Four Reds.

The Four Reds experience gives you the opportunity to reconsider the traditional take on the golf trip. It's, dare I say it, very Adelaide. It's also very simple – four great courses followed by four great South Australian wines at the 19th hole.

At the very least, if your golf was terrible, you've got a

genuinely good reason to get to the end of the round.

This is 'experiential destination golf holidaying' at its best because you'll be like an explorer, an adventurer. Is it overstating to say you're a pilgrim on the golf journey of a lifetime? Probably. But gee, there's a lot to recommend this new perspective on the very old concept of golf tourism.

Whilst not easy to gain access to any of these four private courses, the Four Reds initiative clears the way. **Royal Adelaide Golf Club** is consistently ranked in the top 10 courses in Australia and floats around the 50 mark in world course listings. It's a 'Royal' so you know it's good, but how good is a revelation that has to be experienced to be believed.

A nine-time host of the Australian Open, Royal Adelaide has the propensity to underwhelm on arrival. It's flat, it's open and there's a train line running through it: that's a working train line and it's in play. Once you get onto the course proper, the dunes, the fir trees,

COURSES: GARY LUSON PHOTOGRAPHY • WINERY: NEWS CORP

Rockford Wines founder Robert O'Callaghan has an impressive business, and an even better range of reds; [below] The Grange East is a must-play for any travelling golfer.

the conditioning and the superb red bunkers will blow your mind. It's tough, too. And from the pegs, it's a monster.

At the end of the round, it's into the clubhouse for a seasonal food platter and a bottle of **Clarendon Hills Bakers Gully Syrah**. This is a boutique McLaren Vale winery with a massive reputation. If you've got a nose for reds, you'll pick up the perfumed roast meats, the black current, the liquorice and a spicy overlay. If you're not sure what you're looking for, read the back of the bottle like I did and bluff your way through the experience. It's a big wine for a big day's golf.

**Kooyonga Golf Club** has hosted five Australian Opens, the last won by Peter Thomson in 1972. More recently it staged the Jacobs Creek Open, which was co-sanctioned between the PGA Tour of Australasia and the Web.com Tour. The club says it's a wonderful example of a championship golf course in undulating sand hills just 15 minutes from the CBD of Adelaide.

I'm fairly confident you'll be saying a bit more than that. It is indeed wonderful, and those are undulating hills, but it's also a wonderful test of golf on a superbly presented golf course. It's like Metropolitan or The Australian where it's like playing on carpet. And for some ridiculous reason I still can't fathom, it reminded me of Turkey. I loved Turkey, and Kooyonga moved me.

The paired wine here is **Rockford's Basket Press Shiraz**. Now, I don't pretend to know too much about wine but I do know I really, really like this. It's so good I had to visit the winery to meet Mr Rockford himself, Robert O'Callaghan, a favoured playing partner of the legendary golf writer Tom Ramsey.

O'Callaghan not only makes superb wine, but does so like an



\*As voted by the Golf Trade.



Pictured: Blue – Magnetic Pro

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Hentley Farm cellar door restaurant, Seppeltsfield, offers a memorable dining experience.

And it's only an hour or so away – just enough time to bludgeon your buddies with memories of that drive up the first, or that holed putt on 14.

The East Course at **The Grange Golf Club** has undergone a redesign, thanks to Greg Norman. The Great White Shark won his first tournament here 38 years ago, so to come back and tinker must have been a joy. The bunkers are massive, really giving you a great taste of the red sand. Michael Clayton had his way with the West Course in the lead up to 2008 Eisenhower Trophy, and was slated to do the East as well, but the membership decided to have two distinct courses.

Like Royal and Kooyonga, The Grange is beautifully conditioned. When you couple the golf with a bottle of **Hentley Farm's The Beauty Shiraz**, it's all starting to feel a bit religious. I did notice the pain of the bad shots dissipate as The Beauty settled in.

Hentley Farm's worth the work, as well. Not just a terrific Barossa Valley winery in scenic Seppeltsfield, it's also home to The Restaurant, set in an old stable on the property. Could it be the best food in the state? In 2013, it was named South Australia's restaurant of the year. (In SA, they vote with their cutlery, not their

heads, so it's forks and Hentley Farm got four out of four.)

If there's a secret in all of this, it may well be **Glenelg Golf Club**. It's rated No.39 on AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST's Top 100 Courses but feels better than that. It's tough, it's scenic, and it's in great nick with these magnificent red bunkers all over the place – 93 of them, to be precise. And whilst the members at the other clubs are proud of their lot, I got the feeling the Glenelgians reckon they're onto a very good thing and the world needs to know.

This was the last stop. Sitting up there on the terrace tucking into what may have been the best regional platter of the Four Reds tour with a glass of **Henschke's Keyneton Euphonium Blend** for company, it was pretty clear this is one hell of a golfing destination.

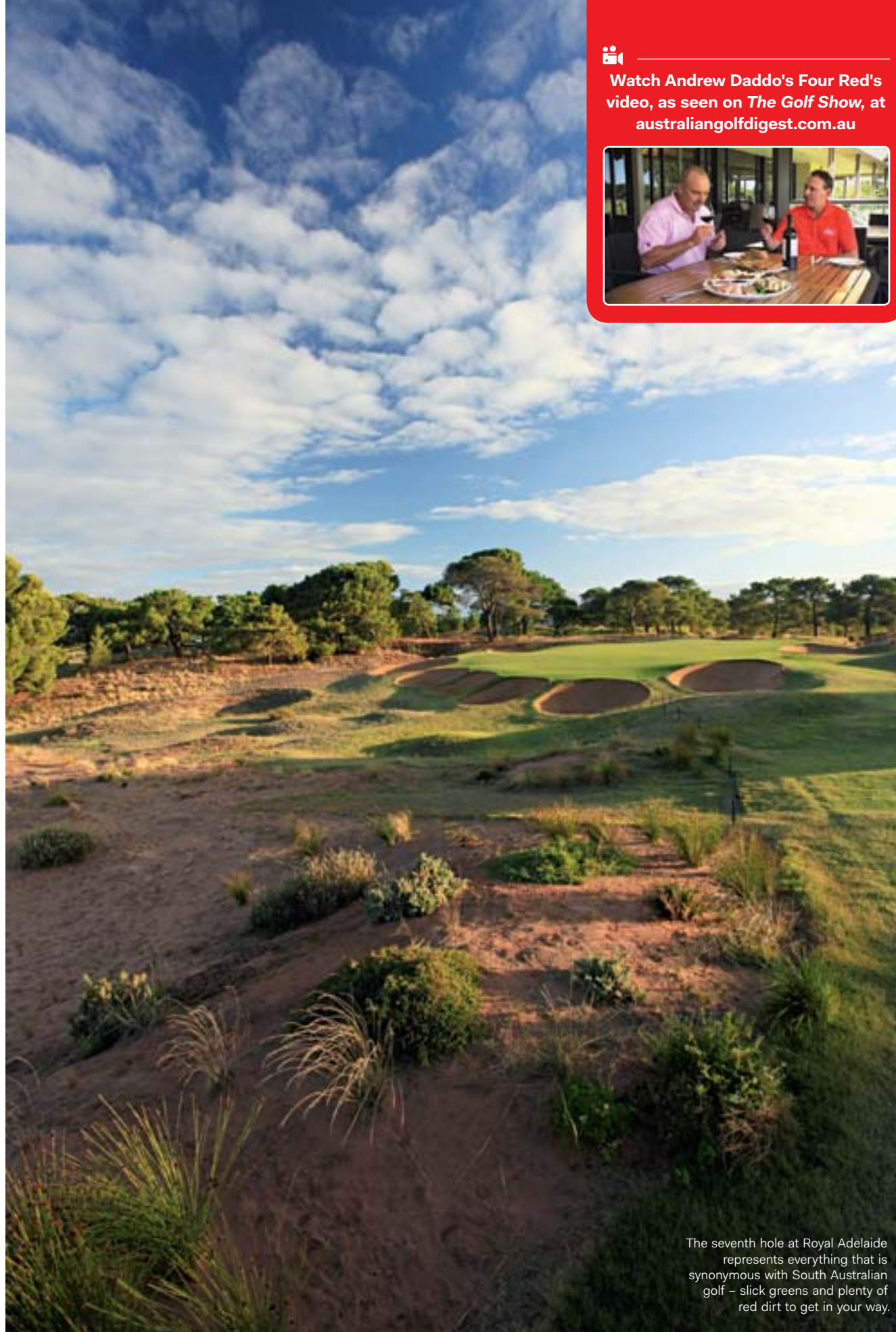
South Australia is good at lots of things, but it's great at looking after visitors. There's an old school charm that resonates in Australia's biggest country town . . . and that's intended as a compliment, not a sledge.

Four Reds paves the way into the heartland of Adelaide's very best golf, and then teases you with a taste of what's waiting once you strike out for other parts of South Australia.

No one wants to share their secret surf spots, but just about everyone wants to share their great golf course.'

For more information about holiday packages, visit [fourreds.com.au](http://fourreds.com.au)

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Watch Andrew Daddo's Four Red's video, as seen on *The Golf Show*, at [australiangolfdigest.com.au](http://australiangolfdigest.com.au)



\*As voted by the Golf Trade.



Pictured: Navy/White/Red – Royal County Down

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The seventh hole at Royal Adelaide represents everything that is synonymous with South Australian golf – slick greens and plenty of red dirt to get in your way.



# How the Four Reds got me hooked on Adelaide

BY BRAD CLIFTON

**I**f we had to rank Australia's most convenient golf city, Adelaide would surely get the nod. It's rare that you find some of this country's most prestigious golf clubs situated just minutes from a major airport. I couldn't even finish the complimentary bottle of water handed to me by my Four Reds chauffeur before arriving at the first port of call. "We're not here already, are we?" I asked moments after being picked up at the airport. "We sure are. Welcome to Adelaide," he replied.

They take their footy seriously in Adelaide. For the entire week I couldn't stop hearing from my playing partners how The Garden State now boasts the best live footy venue in Australia thanks to the revamped Adelaide Oval. One of those partners happened to be Australian pastoralist and Royal Adelaide club captain Angus McLachlan. Gus is the father of new AFL chief executive officer Gillon McLachlan and a man with considerable influence in his own right, particularly around the glorious railway-lined fairways of his home club. Another playing companion, Rod Phillips, is a current board member of the South Australian



Cricket Association who took great delight in sharing the news of not just Adelaide Oval's facelift, but how he had, and will continue to, play golf every single day post-retirement. It took little convincing from both men to add RA to my 'favourite courses' list. Everything about the place reeks of Alister Mackenzie's genius. Afterwards, general manager Andrew Gay opened a bottle of Clarendon Hills Bakers Gully Syrah and served an antipasto platter that was, poetically, topped off with a friendly toot from a passing train [above].

I'd heard a great deal about Kooyonga Golf Club but one thing I couldn't prepare for was

getting an 18-hole lesson (make that a shellacking) from a young lady who used a bright pink golf ball off the men's tees. Susie Mathews handles numerous roles at Kooyonga, from memberships to junior coaching. Yet nobody bothered to mention before we teed off she was also an accomplished golfer.

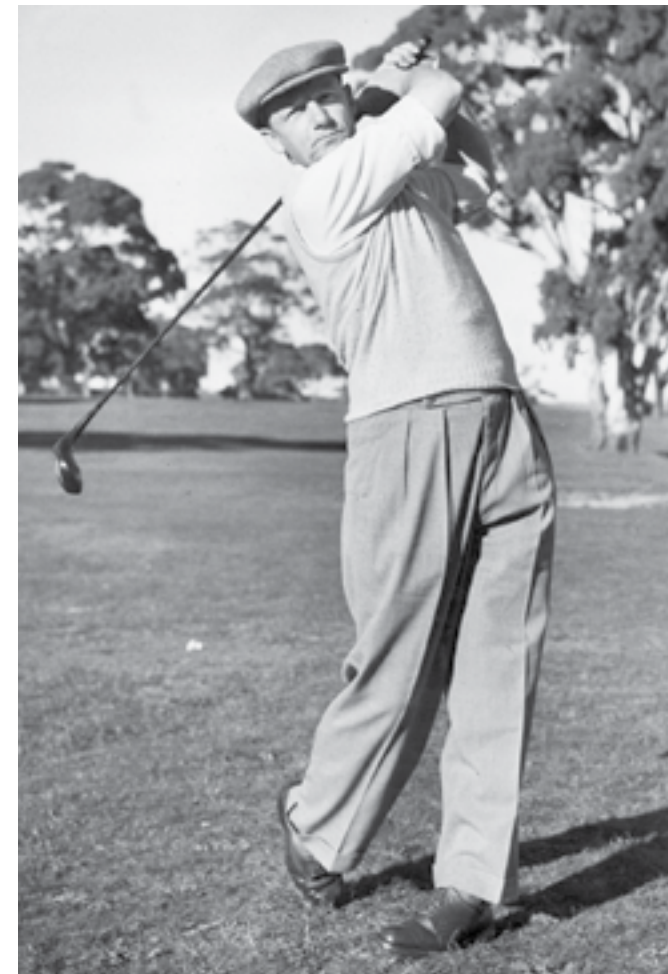
Remnants of her days of playing college golf in America were still there, starting birdie-birdie to leave me waving the white flag and calling for an early start on the red wine and food platter. More antipasto selections with some fresh seafood hit the spot as I learnt how the great Sir Donald Bradman once called

this place home. The club even kept his old locker, which will be specially showcased once renovations to the new change rooms are complete.

The Grange could lay claim to being the most impressive golf facility in the state given its 36 outstanding holes. Now highlighted by Greg Norman's new-look East course – which can be described as an ocean of bunkers with tight fairways and tricked-up greens – this course was almost as memorable as some of the stories I heard about its members. For instance, AFL great Malcolm Blight, who apparently was awarded an ambassador membership in return for some expert TV commentary. Whenever he was calling an AFL game next door at Football Park, 'Blighty' used to refer to the 'Southern End' as 'The Grange End'. True story!

Then there was Glenelg Golf Club where I was locked in to play with local course visionary Neil Crafter, course superintendent Daryl Sellar and club captain Gavan Fox, who incidentally was a cracking lookalike for US PGA Tour star Brandt Snedeker.

I'm not sure what I enjoyed most – the course, the company or simply watching former SA amateur champion Crafter split



## DID YOU KNOW?

Sir Donald Bradman was a scratch golfer and star pennant player for Kooyonga Golf Club during the 1950s. The Don joined Kooyonga not long after leading the 'Invincibles' on their unbeaten cricket tour of England in 1948. He spearheaded the club to several Simpson Cup titles and continued to play golf well into his 80s.

every fairway like the good old days. After 18 holes we retired for what was arguably the best food platter of the entire Four Reds experience, with a mixture of hot and cold antipasto selections capped off with Snedeker's hot tip – the hero of the club's new in-house pizza range, aptly titled 'The Adam Scott'. Like

its namesake, it oozed class and called for a second bottle of Henschke's finest. A quick detour to a local watering hole with Snedeker and my time in Adelaide was drawing to a close. He asked whether I would come back and do it all again. My answer was simple. "It's not a matter of if, but *when*." 🍷



TRAIN: GARY LISDON PHOTOGRAPHY • DON BRADMAN & ADELAIDE OVAL: NEWS CORP



The new-look Adelaide Oval is worth a visit during your Four Reds holiday – especially on game day during the AFL season.



\*As voted by the Golf Trade.



Pictured: Orange – Augusta

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# A winning formula

Choosing the right wine doesn't need to be as nerve-racking as standing on the first tee with a full gallery watching from the 19th hole. These **five tips** will help you make the right call when selecting your next tipple. BY **STUART BLACKWELL**

## 1. FIND YOUR BRANDS

Wineries have a house style, so if you find a wine you like, chances are that others in the range will also appeal to you. We are lucky in Australia with so much great wine to choose from, so it's not a case of good or bad, it's about finding a style of winemaking that suits your taste buds.

## 2. DON'T STRESS ABOUT VINTAGE

Good wineries don't release poor wines. If you are buying a wine to drink within a year, stick to a brand you trust and don't be concerned with the vintage.

On the other hand, if you are looking to cellar a particular vintage, I would suggest doing your research.

## 3. KNOW YOUR REGIONS

Wine regions specialise in certain varieties because the climate and soils are suited to that particular grape. Look to the cooler places such as Tasmania, Yarra Valley, Mornington Peninsula or Adelaide Hills for varieties like Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay or Sparkling white. Warmer areas like Barossa and McLaren Vale are great for full-bodied Shiraz and Grenache. Coonawarra and Margaret River specialise in Cabernet Sauvignon and you are safe with either

Eden Valley or Clare Valley for Riesling. Each region is capable of producing really good wines from other varieties as well, but as a general rule this will serve you well.

## 4. TAKE ALL OPPORTUNITIES TO TASTE

Join a wine club, look out for a tasting at your local bottle shop or spend a weekend in a wine region. Cellar door tastings are a great place to increase your comfort with wine, improve your palate and an opportunity to work out what appeals to you before you fork out your hard earned cash. Speak to the staff in cellar door, they have a huge amount of knowledge and will help you

find something you like. No one expects you to be an expert. I have been making wine for over 40 years and I am still learning, so ask a lot of questions.

## 5. ASK FOR ADVICE

A good sommelier or bottle shop attendant will point you in the right direction for the style and price point you are after. Chances are they have tasted most wines in the store and will be able to find something that suits your preference and budget. **📌**

**STUART BLACKWELL** [pictured] is a Senior Winemaker at St Hallett in Barossa and has been making wine for over 40 years. He's also an avid golfer & member at Tanunda Pines.