



**BRUCE YOUNG**  
Former Leading Caddy,  
Course Design Marketer and now  
Leading Australian Golf Analyst

# Pegasus employs *a woman's*

Although only now beginning to gain recognition for her work in the field of golf course design, Christchurch based Kristine Kerr has a background in the industry which belies the profile she has.

**T**he 40-year-old Kerr has been responsible for most of the design work at the recently opened Pegasus Golf Course, a facility that will become the centrepiece of the innovative Pegasus Town development 25 kms north of Christchurch.

The course, opened in December, will host the Pegasus New Zealand Women's Open – a co-sanction tournament with the Australian Ladies Professional Golf and the Ladies European Tour. Kerr is excited at the prospect of one of her creations providing the venue for the first LET event in New Zealand.

"I'm happy with the golf course but impor-

tantly those who have played it seem to be happy with it," said Kerr. "In my mind it fits the brief I was given to create a high end residential and community golfing facility. It is very rewarding after four and a half years or so to go out there and see the usage and acceptance it is already getting. I have no reservations either about its capacity to stage an event as important as the New Zealand Women's Open."

Kerr was born in Whangarei before moving to Auckland. At the age of 10 she moved with her family to Queensland where her father was involved in the early development of the Palm Meadows golf course on the Gold Coast before

selling out his involvement prior to that project's completion. "I think growing up surrounded by all the developments on the Gold Coast led me to having an interest in resort communities and sport and the outdoor lifestyle," said Kerr.

She gained a Bachelor of Applied Science in Landscape Architecture and Town Planning at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, although golf was the furthest thing from her mind at that time. In fact it would be fair to say she had an unusual start to her working life.

"I went to Cairns and worked in Town Planning there before I headed for the UK where



# touch

for 14 months I worked as a Nanny," said Kerr almost apologetically.

"By then my parents were living in Singapore and so I headed there to look for work. I got a job with Peter Scott, an Australian landscape architect and golf course designer who was working on several projects in Malaysia. I enjoyed the golf side of things more and more and soon after was offered a role with another Singapore based company, Nelson Wright Haworth (NH&W), as their junior golf course designer. They were incredibly busy so it provided a great opportunity for me."

It just so happened that NW&H were at the


forefront of the rapidly expanding Asian golf boom, securing numerous projects throughout the region and more especially in China. They were reputable also and the timing of her appointment and the experience it offered could not have been better. For the next two years Kerr played a key role for NW&H in their involvement in projects in Malaysia and China, engrossing herself in every aspect of master planning, golf course layouts and their relationship with real estate, detailed designs, construction, grassing and landscape design on at least five completed projects.

"I think my role on those projects gave me a

great awareness of the importance of detail in design in order that they could be interpreted accurately on site."

Romance took Kerr back to the UK in 1996 but a large American Master Planning and Landscape organisation EDAW sought out her services and before long she was taken on by Gary Player's golf course design organisation.

"I had worked on one of his projects in the north of Italy when with EDAW," said Kerr.

After two years with Player as a design assistant, working on courses around the world, Kerr moved away from golf course design and into town planning. 

# Pegasus employs *a woman's touch*



Left: Kristine Kerr with the great Gary Player during an inspection in China. Right: Kristine checks out the development in the early stages at Pegasus.



Plc: Alistair Marshall, Boffa Miskell

◀ “I felt I wanted a break from it and as my partner then was also in golf design our life was all golf.”

Before long however Kerr yearned to return to golf design, and eyed the burgeoning market in China. With her relationship ended, one of her previous bosses Neil Harworth helped her get a role with another American planning company EDSA in Beijing.

Again a link the Gary Player organisation developed and she was soon appointed to the design-construction supervision role of their project in Nanjing three hours west of Shanghai.

“Most designers are not keen to be based on site fulltime but I thought it was great fun and helped round out my involvement in the total process. It was an experience, that’s for sure, as getting a project out of the ground there is no mean feat.”

At the completion of that project she visited her family on the Gold Coast, and looked at opportunities in this part of the world. She became aware that Boffa Miskell, the New Zealand planning and landscape company, were seeking the services of a golf course architect to work with them on what would become Pegasus.

“The project was still very much in the planning stage when I arrived. The corridors for the golf course were already created so to a large extent I inherited the golf course layout.

“Others had been involved early including Frances Whittaker who was a friend of the

developer Bob Robertson and Greg Turner had also been asked to look at the more detailed design I had done but essentially the design is my own.”

Eighteen months ago Kerr set up her own golf course design company Kura Design and began pursuing work in her own right. Her involvement at Pegasus has already led to another significant project in Christchurch, which is the proposed golf course and institute near Clearwater on the outskirts of Christchurch for an organisation with Korean connections.

“I’d done some work on the Master planning of that project while at Boffa Miskell and we seemed to get along well. I don’t doubt my involvement at Pegasus also played a role in getting that job.”

Kerr recently became the first woman to be accepted into the Australian Society of Golf Course Architects.

“It (the membership) provides a level of professional recognition and recently a study tour of courses in Melbourne and Sydney was co-ordinated by the Society which was attended by a lot of international architects five of whom were women so it was a great week for networking and discussing common interests.”

So what of Pegasus? How would Kerr feel if the design of one or two holes were the subject of controversy during the Women’s Open?

“I would be open to criticism as essentially it is all about the game. I have my own views but it is not all about me but rather the people I am creating the course for.”

It may to a large extent have been a male domain but Kristine Kerr is one of several females now entering and offering a point of difference in the discipline of golf course design. **NZ GM**