

Q & A with: Ross Perrett

ROSS Perrett is widely regarded as a leader in the field of golf course design.

Working with his business partner five-time Open champion Peter Thomson, he's created some of the most admired and at times controversial courses in the world.

Perrett is arguably one of the most qualified and educated in the profession.

He holds a bachelor of architecture from Melbourne University and a master in landscape architecture where he completed his thesis on golf course architecture.

Perrett also studied turf management before getting his start working alongside Robert Trent Jones at The National Golf Club where he's still involved today.

He joined Thomson and Wolveridge in 1997 and subsequently became a partner in the business.

Five years ago, Michael Wolveridge retired and Thomson Perrett was born.

In his 22 years in golf course design, Perrett has accumulated an impressive resume which includes more than 60 new golf courses and hundreds of modifications.

Based in Melbourne, he spends considerable time overseas, seeking out new projects across the globe.

Perrett took time out from his busy schedule to speak with **Inside Golf's** Rob Vanderzalm.

Inside Golf: How did you get into golf course design?

Ross Perrett: It was while doing my masters thesis in landscape architecture. One thing that inspired me was Robert Trent Jones' comment that golf courses are the largest canvas known to man. My father was involved in the Leongatha Golf Club where he looked after the club's plans. Those things really inspired me.

IG: What do you find the most interesting part of your job?

RP: The different countries we work in and the different land we work with. I've worked in 25 different countries and it's been great to see the world.

IG: What makes a great golf course?

RP: The land is fundamental to it. Royal Melbourne is arguably the best course. It's got the best land and a very responsible design on it. You have to respect the land and the culture.

IG: What's the best designed golf course in Australia not done by yourself and why?

RP: Royal Melbourne. It has a wonderful sequence of holes on the west course. There are a lot of great holes and they really capitalized on the land.

IG: What golf course designer do you most admire?

RP: I've had the pleasure of playing a few courses designed by Harry Colt. He achieves a lot of things with simple techniques. Of



Ross Perrett (right) with business partner Peter Thomson on the site for their new Giza course

the modern architects, I like Robert Trent Jones. He is very sensitive with the land he works on.

IG: Where is the future growth for your business?

RP: China and India eventually. I'll be going to South America soon. That's a bit under the radar. But now they've got the Olympics in Brazil that might trigger some interest in the sport.

IG: How do Australian golf courses rate on the world stage from a design perspective?

RP: With 50 top golf course architects in Melbourne recently, it's widely recognised as one of the best. They were really impressed with the quality of the courses and the condition. The way Kingston Heath was

presented for the Australian Masters was just incredible.

It got to the point where plenty of them want to come out and live here. They appreciate that Australians understand golf.

IG: What do you most want to achieve before you retire?

RP: My dream is to have my office on a golf course. That would be heaven on a stick. I'd also like to see golf become more accessible for everyone. It's a wonderful game. Anyone can play it and have a great time.

Starting with the January 2010 issue, Ross Perrett will write a regular column for Inside Golf. He'll take us into the world of golf course design, working with the land, the effects of technology and other unique perspectives from inside the ropes.



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