

## Golf course design

# Golf Gerre Losone is a girl's best friend



In 2009, Golf Gerre Losone was voted favorite course on the tour by the LPGA players. And it made it into the top 100 courses in the world. The man who designed this beauty is Peter Harradine, son of golf course design legend Don Harradine, who established Harradine Golf in 1929 by designing his first course in Switzerland.

**How did you get started?** My step-grandfather and my father were golf course architects. I was more or less born with a golf ball in my mouth. I was brought up next to the golf course on "Via Golf" in Caslano, where my mother still lives today. I started playing on that course at the age of six and I absolutely love the game. My father used to make me work on his sites from the age of 12 during the summer school holidays. This gave me an early insight into golf course construction, which was completely different in those

days! I studied landscape architecture and it just seemed to be a natural choice for me to follow in my father's footsteps.

**What course was your first and when?** I co-designed Nîmes Campagne (France) with my father and Morandi in 1968.

**After more than 160 designed golf courses, which is your favorite and why?** Every member of any club quite rightly thinks that his own course is the best. I therefore avoid that question by saying that my two

favourite courses are the one I have just completed and the one I'm going to start.

**What is so special about Losone?** We had to squeeze an interesting course into only 44 ha. "Le Gerre" was a completely flat cornfield and all the hills, lakes and streams were created artificially. The barn which was converted into the clubhouse and the road crossing the site were fixed and could not be moved. I think that the boulders I used for the streams and lakes make the course quite unique.

**What strings did you pull when building this one?** We had to take into consideration local laws and the environmental impact, which made it quite challenging to build Losone. We talked to local authorities, and forest and water departments to make everyone happy. I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr Virgilio Conti who was our client and the president of the Patrizi and whose idea it was to build the course. He gave me a free hand within the restrictions imposed by the environmentalists.

interesting doglegs and hazards. I know, however, that the land surrounding the course is completely inaccessible due to the ecological restrictions imposed on those areas.

**Give us a couple of insights on your design philosophy and how it compares to your father's?** I was obviously influenced by my father and he was a traditionalist. I also consider myself a traditionalist but I have introduced a few "modern" features in my designs mainly to facilitate maintenance. I am not a great fan of bunkers in Europe mainly because of the lack of enough maintenance personnel on a course. There is nothing worse than a badly maintained bunker so I prefer to work with strategically placed trees.

**What is the most important aspect in golf course design?** To try and give the bad/medium/average, single-handicap and scratch player/pro a good game on the same course. This is becoming increasingly difficult due to the incredible disparity between the players. The gap between the normal pro and the touring pro is also considerable which means that all lengths, hazards, etc. have to be designed with great care.

**Are there any typical landmark sights in your work that signal "this is a Harradine course"? If so, which ones?** Everybody knows I love rocks. Rocks are my favourite accessory on golf courses and I try to use them as much as possible wherever and whenever I can. I do not design roller-coaster greens and prefer subtle breaks. I try to work with natural components, and I would never install railway sleepers in lakes.

**What would your dream course look like, if you were able to build one free from all limitations?** I have never received a great site by the sea. This is my ultimate dream. I could then recreate the style of course that was originally conceived when they first started playing golf.



#### **Life: Peter Harradine**

Peter was born in 1945 next to the old golf course in Gurten (Berne, Switzerland), and has to this date designed and co-designed over 160 golf courses in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The "Harradine" concept relies on the natural preservation and enhancement of the existing sites. "Harradine Golf" delivers sustainable and environmentally friendly courses, although they are strictly designed for golfers and are not unplayable monuments to ecology.

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