



Kerry is still very much a beauty queen with a genuinely kind heart.

# A questing life for Kerry

By Fai CHIVELL

Life has taken some exciting turns for Kerry Wishart who entered the Miss Australia Quest as a young woman and found her future vocation.

Kerry was born in Whyalla, a city she loves and that has given her wonderful opportunities and support throughout her formative years.

Her grandfather, Ken 'Tanky' Thomas was well-known in trotting circles as a trainer/driver.

It was through him that Kerry developed a love for horses.

"As a young girl I spent most of my out of school hours with horses, riding in gymkana's and training trotters," she said.

"It's mainly young women and girls who acquire a passion for horses and I was no exception, especially as my Grandfather was so keen about them."

Her parents Valerie and Barry Thomas both moved to Whyalla with their respective families as young children.

They later took their marriage vows at the Peter's Street Church and were both well-known and popular citizens of the city. Unfortunately, Barry passed away 14 years ago on his birthday.

"It was a very sad day for the family," Kerry said.

At 22 years of age Kerry packed her bags and travelled

around Europe for three months taking in as many countries as she could in that time.

"It was wonderfully exciting and I met some very interesting people," Kerry said.

"I loved my time in Europe and one day would like to go back."

After returning home at the end of 1989 she was encouraged to enter the Miss Australia Quest and in 1990 became the 1991 title holder of Miss West Coast Spencer Gulf and also won Miss West Coast Spencer Gulf Fundraiser.

With the support of her mother, Valerie and friends, who worked on her committee, Kerry raised \$25,000, which went towards what was then known as the Spastic Centres of Australia.

"It was through the generosity of the Whyalla community we were able to raise that amount of money, which was quite an achievement at the time," Kerry said.

The efforts of the 25 of the major fundraisers in the quest were rewarded with a Fairstar cruise.

"We had a marvellous time and I really enjoyed getting to know the other finalists and experiencing the excitement of cruising on a huge ship," Kerry laughed.

Along with the other top 10 finalists in both of these categories, Kerry travelled to

Adelaide for the 1991 Miss Australia Quest and although she didn't win she had a terrific time.

"Getting involved in the quest certainly boosted my confidence and I gained a lot from the experience," Kerry said.

Over a period of 20 years Kerry worked on and off for Monarch Pharmacy and many people will remember her as 'Kerry from the chemist'.

"My interest in makeup and beauty began in 1988 when I started working at the pharmacy and this led me to complete a beauty course at TAFE," Kerry said.

Kerry continued to undertake courses to further her knowledge.

She studied makeup artistry and skin care with Max Factor and Revlon, and over the years continued to develop her skills in this field.

"I have earned a diploma as a makeup artist and am now finishing advanced modules in beauty therapy to acquire a full Diploma for Beauty Therapy because in the future I'd like to teach," Kerry said.

Her son Brent was born in 1992 but her marriage ended in divorce in 1996.

She married John Wishart in 2002 and opened her own beauty salon in Broadbent Terrace called Skin Secrets, which is beautifully fitted out in a fashion Kerry describes as

'French provincial/shabby chic'.

"I love my work and really get a kick out of pampering my clients," Kerry said.

"I particularly enjoy applying makeup for bridal parties.

"I like to see the girls look beautiful for their special day."

Kerry has a genuine desire to give back to the community that has given her so much in the past.

"One day in 2009 I was complaining about the amount of litter on the streets when my friend, Jane Owens and I were on our regular walk and she encouraged me to join the Rotary Club of Whyalla," Kerry said.

"Being a Rotarian has given me great scope for my community interests.

"Through the club I've rekindle my love of horses and now, as a Rotarian, I volunteer at Riding for the Disabled.

"There are so many other ways, which I was previously unaware of, where I can serve the community," she said.

"I think its very auspicious that Rotary turns 105 on February 23, which is also my birthday, but I'm not 105," Kerry said with a laugh.

Kerry is a beautiful woman and her sunny personality and genuine kindness is more than skin deep.

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