

Mag hails Greer for Irwin rant

A BLOKEY men's magazine has rewarded foul-mouthed feminist Germaine Greer for her crass attack on Steve Irwin the day after he died.

Greer, 68, has beaten former Miss Universe Jennifer Hawkins to be named woman of the year in FHM's Bloke Awards.

She took out the award for being "unafraid to speak the truth".

"Steve Irwin's death ironic comedy? It was! Princess Di little more than a media whore? She was! She's like a brilliantly grumpy pop culture truth rod," FHM said of Greer.

Greer was widely condemned for her column in Britain's *The Guardian* newspaper, in which she said Irwin displayed "the sort of self-delusion it takes to be a real Aussie larrikin".

"The animal world has taken revenge, but probably not before a generation of kids in shorts seven sizes too small has learned to shout in the ears of animals with hearing 10 times more acute than theirs, determined to become millionaire zoo owners," Greer wrote.

Body search beside river

POLICE late yesterday were searching for signs of a woman's body spotted on the banks of the Parramatta River.

Police were called to the scene about 5.15pm after a Sydney Ferries master called in the report.

Police went to Parramatta ferry wharf, near Macarthur St.

A police spokesman said there was no sign of a body, with suggestions instead it could have been an intoxicated woman.

Kiwi fan stalks Beckham

SOCCER superstar David Beckham has reportedly been stalked by an obsessed Kiwi fan.

Press reports in New Zealand yesterday said Beckham's personal bodyguards had been put on alert after a man approached other guards and tried to buy their security passes.

The man allegedly told them he was "destined" to meet Beckham.

Staff at Gibson Security, the company hired to protect Beckham during his four-day stay in New Zealand, said they were treating the man as a potential risk to the LA Galaxy and England midfielder's safety.

"We have identified the individual and we are keeping an eye on him," a Gibson Security spokesman said.

He said guards had been sent a description of the man.

One of the guards said the man approached him outside the team's hotel.

"He told me how he was destined to meet David Beckham, then asked if he could buy my security pass for \$100," the minder said.

Riding a wave of success in boardshorts



Ocean home . . . the design of the three-level home has even won the neighbours' approval.

Pictures: ADAM WARD and LYNDON MECHIELSON

From the Billabong's banks to surf mansion

By PETER GOSNELL

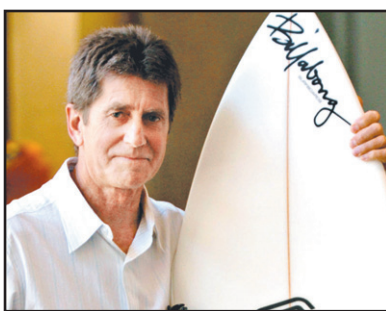
PALATIAL beachside holiday homes were once the exclusive preserve of investment bankers and property barons and certainly never owned by guys who make boardshorts.

Times have changed. As the photo shows, construction of Gordon Merchant's \$12 million ocean-side pile at Angourie on the Far North Coast is nearing completion.

If all goes to plan, the millionaire founder of the Billabong lifestyle fashion label is expected to move in within six months.

Spread across three blocks at the designated surfing reserve a few kilometres south of Yamba, the three-level home already has local tongues wagging about the interior.

Mr Merchant is believed to have ordered 11 plasma TVs. The plans also include an outdoor cinema.



Riding high . . . Gordon Merchant

Preliminary blueprints were lodged with Clarence Valley Council in 2002.

Locals say the low-profile millionaire consulted closely with his prospective neighbours and plenty seem OK with the design, which includes three cones topping a three-level home with a five-car garage.

A neighbour living opposite in Pacific St had nothing but praise for the project. "It's good exposure for the area and he's been around for years. He knows everyone and everyone knows him," she said.

From the commercial perspective, Mr Merchant's ambitions will do no harm to the valuations of his neighbours' properties.

But not all are happy about the publicity such a unique and expensive property will bring to their exquisite little slice of coast.

"All these big-name people are letting the secret out about Angourie," the neighbour, who did want to be identified, said.

The cost of the property has been estimated at up to \$12 million. Building has been slowed by the wave shape, meaning everything is curved.

And one of its main talking points is the roof, sheathed in copper for its

resistance to corrosion from the salt-laden ocean breezes.

Many who know Mr Merchant have also pointed out that the house is very different from his mansion on the hill behind Burleigh Heads, the world-class Gold Coast point-break where the Billabong story started.

There his home is hidden at the end of a long driveway. There are security fences and gates.

At Angourie he is nestled in the dunes with views of the ocean, neighbours either side and a totem pole with a frog on top in the backyard.

Perhaps the frog is for luck, not that Mr Merchant, whose wealth has been estimated at as much as \$560 million, needs it.

Daily Telegraph
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Now Beachley's gliding the crest of high fashion

By ERICA WATSON

SHE's known for blowing her competition out of the water in the surfing world but now Layne Beachley has come up against a new challenge: riding the fickle waves of fashion.

There's no denying celebrity sells when it comes to fashion. But Beachley insists her label Beachley Athletic isn't just another range with a celebrity name attached.

"I wanted to create a brand that stood for everything that I stood for and inspire other women to feel good

about themselves. I didn't want to be pigeonholed or stereotyped as just another celebrity putting their face to a brand," Beachley said.

Aligned with her charity, the Aim for the Stars Foundation, the collection is a mix of high performance sportswear with casual pieces including cargo pants, boardshorts and rash vests for women aged 25-45. It also includes accessories, footwear and fitness DVDs.

Stocking her gear exclusively through Kmart, Beachley isn't the first Aussie celeb to align themselves with a major retailer. Twin singing

sensations The Veronicas have done a "Mary-Kate and Ashley", recently launching their tween line of clothing through Target.

Neighbours alumni Kylie Minogue and Delta Goodrem have put their names to lingerie, following in the footsteps of Elle Macpherson.

And it hasn't just been the ladies keen to sew their names in the seams of the industry. Sydney Swans players Jude Bolton and Amon Buchanan have created cult mens label Jon Pumper. Their rock 'n' roll T-shirts with a trailer trash vibe have been a huge hit.



Own label . . . Layne Beachley (right)