



At 77, Player's passion keeps him in full swing

THEKISO ANTHONY LEFIFI

GARY Player, the world-renowned golfer, refuses to retire. "Rest is rust," says the 77-year-old, who turns 78 on Friday.

Player is much busier now than he was in the prime of his career.

"My passions for life are what keeps me going," he said.

He is the first sportsman to feature in the 21 Icons South Africa project conceived by photographer Adrian Steirn.

He has always tried to be an ambassador for South Africa, "and I hope I have made an impact, but, again, to be included with so many people I admire is delightful".

He completed the Grand Slam at the age of 29, becoming only the third player to do so and still the only non-American to have achieved the feat.

Player is a horse-racing enthusiast and wakes up before sunrise to work on the Gary Player Stud Farm

in Colesberg, where he breeds thoroughbreds.

"I am as busy as ever because I see that there is still so much to do in life," he said.

He established the Player Foundation in 1983 to provide quality education, nutrition, medical care and extracurricular activities to underprivileged children in rural areas. The foundation has raised more than \$50-

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million and is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Just before Steirn tapped him on his shoulder to do the portrait for the 21 Icons project, Player stripped naked for ESPN magazine — something he calls a "once-in-a-lifetime experience".

He shook his head when asked whether he would do it again and said: "No more nude shots in the future."

Player calls himself a "great giggler" off the golf course, but he is serious when playing.

For his 21 Icons portrait, he wore old-fashioned golf attire.

It was shot at his stud farm in the Northern Cape, where he built a golf course that uses virtually no water.

It shows Player standing in front of a sign promoting the "Colesberg Open", which refers to his beloved home town.

The autographed portrait will be auctioned to raise funds for the Player Foundation.

SABC3 will flight a short film of the photo shoot tonight at 6.57pm. In it, Player reveals how he almost did not take up golf — "the sport for sissies".

He discusses his rivalry with his fellow golfers and how he wishes he had been able to spend more time with his family.

Whale of a Time



Children sit on a dead whale shark after it was trapped in a fisherman's net, at Kenjeran beach in Surabaya, East Java province this week
Picture: REUTERS