



## **Kerry's secret weapon.....**

Owner and operator of Brisbane Whale Watching, Kerry Lopez is renowned as the only female Captain of a whale watching venture in the South Pacific.

Kerry has earned every bit of her success starting as a hostess on one of the spectator boats in the 1985 America's Cup fleet, later working as a deckhand and then undertaking maritime college education to qualify as a master.

Following a stint in Cairns and Brisbane where Kerry captained charter boats, it wasn't until she noticed the whales playing in the waters of Moreton Bay during charters to St Helena Island that her life changed forever.

Having seen how successful whale watching in Hervey Bay had become, Kerry set about to build a business and save the whales at the same time.

Convincing the State government to grant her a permit was difficult but a twenty minute pitch in 1996 to the premier Rob Borbidge proved to be the difference.

With just six weeks of the whale watching season remaining and a twenty thousand dollar loan from her father, Kerry leased a boat and started building a Redcliffe based Ecotourism Empire.

"It's taken me a long time to gain respect in the industry," the Brisbane Whale Watching owner says "A lot of times I was told I'm not going to do this and if I had listened, this success wouldn't have happened."

Committed to the highest standards and proving she is a professional operator has helped Kerry to erode differences and earn admiration and respect from her peers. "I've been accepted." Kerry says. Despite this, some guests will still ask her male staff 'Where is the Captain?'

Quiet determination and hard work are the driving forces behind Kerry's success. For six months of every year she lives and breaths whales, regularly putting in thirteen hour days.

Brisbane Whale Watching operates daily tours from Redcliffe Jetty between the months of June through to November. Tour includes morning & afternoon teas, gourmet buffet luncheon, as well as expert commentary on whale behaviour. MV Eye-Spy is a purpose built luxury high speed catamaran offering six viewing platforms, air-conditioned comfort with floor to ceiling windows to enhance your viewing experience. Boarding commences at 9.30am and returns at 3pm.

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