

'The dream' continues for Bob & Jan Bergstrom

ARE YOU SOMEONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN RACEHORSE OWNERSHIP BUT JUST HAVEN'T GOT AROUND TO DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

WORDS: SHARON HUNT (EXECUTIVE OFFICER – NSWROA) PICTURES: STEVE HART, STEVE WHITE

Let me tell you a tale about some racehorse owners that will surely send you straight to the next thoroughbred sale.

NSWROA members Bob and Jan Bergstrom are the very lucky owner/breeders of dual Black Type winner Extra Zero.

As readers would be aware at the time of writing, Extra Zero is the winner of the Group 2-MRC Autumn Classic and the Listed-VRC Anzac Day Handicap with prizemoney of \$568,250 from his 11 career starts and will next face the starter in the Gr1-VRC Australian Cup.

Extra Zero is the sixth foal of the Bergstrom's wonderful producing broodmare Extra Bubbly who has three Stakes-winners to her credit.

Extra Zero follows in the footsteps of his half-sisters Johan's Toy and Operetta Lass, having achieved success in the Black Type arena.

Extra Zero is but the latest instalment in the fairytale story of Bob and Jan Bergstrom's time within the thoroughbred industry.

So let's go back to where it all started, 1993, when Bob and Jan entered the industry as part of a syndicate with former trainer Mark Daniels.

Their first horse was Our Replica who recorded four wins for them including a success in the Listed-STC Eskimo Prince Stakes.

By this stage the seed had already been planted for Bob and Jan – the racing game was something they wanted to be in for good. Their next venture would, however, prove to be something extraordinary.

It was through Mark Daniels again that the Bergstroms privately purchased their first broodmare, Extra Bubbly (Bellotto (USA)-Toy Fountain), who is now the foundation mare of their very successful breeding and racing operations.

With their primary focus being to breed

to race, Bob and Jan then embarked upon a truly amazing journey.

To quote Bob: "Jan and I have had the most incredible and fantastic time since we entered the thoroughbred industry. We could never have imagined that our very first broodmare would produce a Black Type winner, let alone three Stakes winners. It's like living our dream."

In hindsight, it is little wonder that Extra Bubbly has done so well. Hailing from the Toyland family, it is the family of Toy Show who was a champion racemare.

The first foal out of Extra Bubbly to race for the Bergstroms was a filly by Johan Cruyff (GB) who would race under the name of Johan's Toy.

Johan's Toy, who was trained by Guy Walter for Bob and Jan, gave them quite literally the "thrill of their lives" in a race career spanning some 26 starts and \$820,700 in prizemoney.

Renowned for her incredible finishing bursts, Johan's Toy recorded 4 wins (including two at Black Type level – the Listed-AJC Reginald Allen Handicap and the Listed-WRC Mona Lisa Stakes), 3 second placings (all of which were Black Type and included the Gr 1-Doncaster Handicap and the Gr 1-Epsom Hcp) and 6 third placings (all except one were at Black Type level and

included the Gr 1-STC Coolmore Classic).

Bob recalled: "It is hard to describe what it was like when Johan's Toy won the Black Type races. It is something we will both never forget."

Little did Bob know that such a feeling was something both he and Jan would soon become very accustomed to in racing.

It would probably be fair to say that Johan's Toy will best be remembered as the horse who was runner-up in the two big Randwick Group 1 mile races.

She went under by 1.3 lengths in the 2005 AJC Epsom Handicap to the wonderful performer Desert War, and in the 2006 AJC Doncaster Handicap it was a half length defeat at the hands of the outstanding Racing To Win in a field that included the likes of Apache Cat, Bentley Biscuit, Desert War and Niconero – to name but a few.

Operetta Lass (by Singspiel (Ire)), who was also trained by Guy Walter, was the next foal to race and she was also a Black Type winner recording a Group 3 success in the AJC Adrian Knox Stakes.

Facing the starter some 22 times, she recorded 3 wins, a second placing and 4 third placings collecting \$154,280 in prizemoney.

From her next two matings Extra Bubbly then produced two colts both of whom did not meet the expectations of the Bergstroms and were moved on.

Extra Zero was the next to race and is described by the Bergstroms as "the best we have bred". Extra Zero (by Danzero) is trained by David Hayes.

Due to a change in circumstances, Bob and Jan were spending quite a bit of time in Victoria so it was decided to place Extra Zero with a Victorian trainer.

Speaking on the decision to place Extra Zero with David Hayes, Bob said: "How could we go anywhere else? David is a world class trainer and as luck would have

" We could never have imagined that our very first broodmare would produce a Black Type winner, let alone three Stakes winners. It's like living our dream."



ABOVE: Operetta Lass (Glen Boss) captures the Gr 3-Adrian Knox Stakes at Royal Randwick TOP: Johan's Toy (Glen Boss) cruises home for the Bergstroms in the LR-Mona Lisa Stakes at Wyong

it, Jan and I were attending a corporate function in Melbourne and met David – it was just meant to be.”

Soon Extra Zero will not be the only galloper carrying the Bergstrom's dark blue and cerise colours. The first foal of Johan's Toy – by Starcraft (NZ) – a two-year-old colt named Craft Show to be trained by David Hayes, will make his debut this season.

However, another waiting in the wings is the third foal of Johan's Toy; a colt by Bernardini (USA) who is said to be the “best on type” that the Bergstroms have produced. Only time will tell.

The Bergstroms are quick to point out

that they have had great assistance from various people within the industry over the years but would like to thank in particular Guy Walter who “brought their dream to fruition”, David Hayes who “has continued our dream” and Kerrie Tibbey of Goodwood Farm who raises the Bergstrom herd.

In closing, Bob remarked: “After the success we had with Johan's Toy we thought it couldn't get any better but it has.”

How's that for inspiration to enter the ownership ranks – it couldn't get any better, or could it?

Who can say to what heights Extra Zero will climb! Perhaps to the ultimate three-

year-old pinnacle – the Group 1-AJC Derby?

A lot of people are under the impression that racehorse ownership is only for the very wealthy. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The thrill of owning a racehorse is now readily available to all – so why not give it a go!

If you are interested in participating in the wonderful world of thoroughbred racing, why not become a member of the NSW Racehorse Owners Association.

Simply visit our website – www.nswroa.com.au - or telephone the NSWROA office on (02) 9299 4299. **RNSW**