

Phil shouts the bar

LONGSTANDING NSWROA MEMBER AND RACEHORSE OWNER, PHIL DUGGAN HAS SEEN BOTH THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF THE RACING BUSINESS WORDS: SHARON HUNT (EXECUTIVE OFFICER – NSWROA)

I spoke to Phil Duggan recently and was reminded of the positive demeanour a racehorse owner requires.

We were chatting following the latest success of Leebaz (NZ) (a horse he co-owns with several others) in the Group 2 Hollindale Stakes at the Gold Coast on April 25.

Leebaz had scored a gutsy win following on from his second placing in the Group 3 JRA Plate at Royal Randwick the previous week.

A regular race attendee, it would be rare indeed for Phil to miss the opportunity to watch one of his charges compete but as fate would have it, he did miss this wonderful win.

As Leebaz was first emergency for the race and with seemingly little to no indication that anyone would withdraw, Phil kept a longstanding appointment on the day in the Southern Highlands.

When Leebaz gained the run it was decided that Phil, friends and family, should travel to the local pub in Marulan to watch the race.

To say the locals were pleased with the arrival of the Duggan mob would be an understatement.

Phil said: "We were quiet on arrival but once the race commenced things changed completely. We were screaming at the top of our lungs by the time Leebaz entered the straight and we kept on yelling long after he went past the post in first place."

Of course, it goes without saying that in compensation to the locals he had to shout the bar.

Leebaz has been the best horse Phil has owned in more than 30 years in the industry.

He has faced the starter 18 times for seven wins (including a Gr 2 and Gr 3), four second placings (including a Gr 1



Passionate racehorse owner, Phil Duggan

and twice at Gr 3) and a third placing (at Gr 3 level) for \$712,900 in stakes to date.

At the time of writing Phil had 11 horses on the books, the majority of which are with Team Hawkes who he regards as very professional.

He said: "In all my time in racing I have never been kept as well informed regarding my horses as I have with Team Hawkes. They are hard but they are very fair and they always have a planner map for every horse in the stable."

So what, or should I say who, brought Phil into the wonderful world of thoroughbred racing?

Many years ago Phil was working for Winchcombe Carson, Stock Agents (who would later merge with Dalgety) when he met renowned thoroughbred guru and NSWROA life member, Les Young.

Les encouraged Phil to lease some

horses which he had bred with several others.

Leasing was a good option for Phil who at the time had a young family and not a lot of disposable income.

While he only had a small interest in each horse, he nevertheless was hooked from the start but mindful that he couldn't afford to buy a horse himself.

Since that time Phil has raced approximately 38 horses with small groups both via leasing and eventually buying some.

The best of his earliest purchases was Coconut Shy, trained by Brian Mayfield-Smith and co-raced with Bob Lapointe.

Once the time comes for the horses to retire they are all found a suitable home where they will be looked after.

Phil is firmly of the view that this is just a small way to say thank you to something that has given so much pleasure to all involved.

When asked who had influenced him the most in the racing industry he answered quickly and without hesitation.

"Without doubt Les Young when I was starting out, and then John Hawkes. I cannot effectively put into words just how much knowledge Les has of this wonderful industry of ours.

"For someone starting out, to have Les by your side is an invaluable advantage.

"John Hawkes is another of the same calibre. The thought he puts into every part of a preparation for a horse is amazing and now that skill is being passed onto Michael and Wayne making Team Hawkes truly a force to be reckoned with.

"Both Les and John have a fantastic quality about them and are true gentlemen. I am very lucky indeed to

have crossed paths with both of them.”

As to his most memorable moment on a racecourse, Phil said it would have to be the first black-type success of Leebaz in the Group 3 HRC Hawkesbury Cup in May 2014.

He went onto say: “To win a black-type race is an absolutely incredible experience but having said that every day at the races, if you have a runner, is a good day.”

His advice to someone contemplating entering into the ownership ranks is simple: “It is so easy now to participate via a small percentage to either buy or lease.

“I suggest trying leasing in the first instance, with say three or four others. For no capital outlay you can experience all at a minimal cost. Then once you are ‘hooked’ there is the natural progression to buying a horse.

“The social side of racing is also amazing. I have made great friendships via racehorse ownership – so much so that we now regularly embark on trips together, not only to see our horses race, but also to other meetings both in Australia and overseas.”

Racehorse ownership – there is nothing quite like it. Are you interested in racing horses?

If so, why not become a member of NSW Racehorse Owners Association (NSWROA) and join like-minded people in this fantastic industry.

NSWROA membership runs for a calendar year and is now open. Simply visit our website www.nswroa.com.au or telephone the NSWROA office on (02) 9299 4299 for further information.

RNSW

VALE MR BOB RIDGE OAM

Country racing in NSW lost a passionate racing man with the passing of Bob Ridge OAM last month.

Bob, 87, was heavily involved in community life and spent decades volunteering with numerous local organisations.

Born in Bourke in October 1927, Bob grew up on ‘Tuncoona’ the family property on the Warrego about halfway between Bourke and Enngonia. He was one of the Bourke district’s most prominent citizens and also served on an incredibly long list of race clubs including:-

- Enngonia Race Club: Committee from 1950 to 2015; President in 1963; Vice-President 1964-75; Secretary 1976-77, 1979-97; Treasurer 1976 & 1978;
- Darling River Picnic Race Club: Committee 1956-70; Vice-President 1967-70;
- North Bourke Amateur Turf Club: Committee 1963-66;
- Bourke Jockey Club: Committee 1967-89; Vice-President 1975-79;
- Bourke Diggers Turf Club: Committee 1982-89;
- Bourke District Ambulance Race Club: Committee 1966;
- Bourke District Race Club: Committee 1989-2009; and
- Ford’s Bridge Amateur Race Club: Committee 1962-66.

Bob served on both the Western Racing Association and Country Racing Councils, and also raced horses with some of his winners Dying Ember, Silver Dollar, Palbi, Tall Sheila, Read My Palm, Waller Street, Accost and Box Seat.

True Verdict, managed by Bob Ridge, was raced by Bob’s wife Diana, her cousins Jill Robertson & Jacqueline Thompson, and Margaret and Mrs John Ridge. Some of the other horses Bobs raced included Eldima, Oallen, Sharoona, Maroo, Tetracaste, Tell the Future, Boomery and many others.

VALE NELLY COADY

Warwick Farm’s Nelly Coady and Gai Waterhouse had one point in common, a love of racing and the thoroughbred.

Nelly was born at The Rocks and graduated to Warwick Farm, then more an outpost for desperadoes than socialites.

Nelly died recently in her 90s and was unfettered by a couple of spinal and other injuries from wayward yearlings she educated with the patience of a kindergarten teacher.

Like Waterhouse and Betty Lane, who blazed a trail for her gender against a Randwick bastion of male domination, Nelly faced considerable opposition to ply her trade, first coming before the Australian Jockey Club in 1948 when refused permission to ride Warwick Farm track gallops. The club relented on this score in 1955.

Later she married bush horseman Wal Coady. Granted a licence to train in 1982, Nelly felt she would give racing away when her husband died but the attraction was too strong.

“I tell everybody that I’m 79,” she replied when asked her birthday.

– excerpt from a Max Presnell tribute

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