

The excitement has been reignited

Predominantly their love of the industry is a family affair having been engrained from infancy and so is the case with NSWROA member Donna Dunn who considers herself to have been very blessed to have grown up within the regional and country racing industry.

Coming from a family of owners, trainers and jockeys, Donna's fondest memory is as a child hanging over her aunt's fence, which was at the 1200-metre mark of Clifford Park Racecourse, Toowoomba, giving cheek to the jockeys, who were all family and friends, as they waited at the barriers.

She concedes that her family was far more active with the horses than she was.

Her father was an owner trainer, her older brother Steven was chief stablehand and her younger brother Laurie was an apprentice jockey.

Donna's role was to stand in the winner's circle with the horses and have her photo taken: "Looking at the photos on the wall can give a somewhat distorted view of my involvement much to the amusement of my brothers. So really, my role today hasn't really changed."

When it comes to racing knowledge, her father Larry Ryder and uncle Joe Saunders set the bar for the family and everyone refers to their wisdom and experience.

Donna is, however, very proud to say that the next generation of women in her family are now holding their own with training.

If she has a question on breeding, best buys at the sales or racing tactics, she gives her cousin Phyllis Kalinowski a call as she is her 'go to' person.

Sadly, the extended family experienced some tragic events with race falls which resulted in the whole family taking a step back from racing.

When her father retired from the

OUR INDUSTRY IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL FACETS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ALL REGIONAL AREAS, BUT IT WOULD BE FAIR TO SAY THAT WE ALL LOVE NOTHING BETTER THAN A 'GOOD LUCK' STORY FROM OUR COUNTRY BRETHREN

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industry, Donna lost the connection to racing and instead followed the extended families pursuits from a distance.

This situation changed a few years ago when Donna was invited to join two syndicates on offer with Bjorn

Baker Racing through a work colleague.

The first syndicate was for a Pentire filly that didn't make in to the track but the second syndicate was for a Written Tycoon colt who was subsequently named Music Magnate (NZ) who has reignited Donna's excitement in racing.

As readers would be aware Music Magnate is a Group 1 winner having saluted in the 2016 Doomben 10,000.

He also has a Group 2 success in the ATC Expressway Stakes, a Group 3 win in the ATC Hall Mark Stakes and two second placings in the Listed ATC Darby Munro Quality and the Listed ATC Luskin Star Stakes.

At the time of writing Music Magnate had faced the starter 16 times for 7 wins, 4 second placings and a third placing. He is nominated for the The Star Doncaster Mile and



Racehorse owner Donna Dunn: "You can't beat the feel and sound of thunder as the horses are coming down the straight"

Darley T J Smith Stakes during The Championships this month.

As a direct result of the success of Music Magnate, Donna's boys have caught the racing bug and a family syndicate, RDH Racing Syndicate, has been formed. The syndicate comprises not only Donna, her husband Martin and their sons, but Donna's mother and father as well.

The RDH Racing Syndicate has taken an interest in Smooth Tycoon, another Written Tycoon gelding with Bjorn Baker.

Smooth Tycoon has only faced the starter two times – running second at his first start at Wyong before winning second-up on the Beaumont Newcastle Track in February.

When asked what had been her most memorable moment on a racecourse, Donna commented: "As an owner you can't beat the feeling of having a horse that wins, be it the local picnic race cup or a Group 1 in the city and Music Magnate has certainly provided us with lots of excitement by winning the Group 1 Doomben 10,000.

"However, my greatest joy has been watching our sons catch the racing bug, the excitement on raceday and the connection they have now with their Grandfather as they sit with him to discuss Smooth Tycoon's progress, review trial videos and do the post-race what should have and could have beens.

"Being part of a larger syndicate with the Metropolitan trainers has certainly made it possible for ownership to be more accessible and diverse, but it is very much a hands-off raceday experience only.

"And if you are an interstate owner, an experience which will most likely be through the TV screen." And her advice to someone contemplating entering into the ownership ranks:



*Smooth Tycoon (Chad Lever) after winning at Newcastle.
Picture by Bradley Photographers*

"I would strongly suggest going to their local race club and meeting and talking with owners and trainers.

"Have the opportunity to be an active owner that has the opportunity to talk about the progress, next race day options and talk tactics with the jockeys, be involved, and learn the whys and wherefores of racing.

"You can't beat the feel and sound of thunder as the horses are coming down the straight, and cheering and celebrating (hopefully) at the winning

post with the fellow owners, family and friends."

To those of you who are not owners as yet, why not give it a go! To those owners who are not as yet members of the Association, why not join this winning team and become a member of the NSW Racehorse Owners Association (NSWROA).

For further information, simply visit our website www.nswroa.com.au or telephone the NSWROA office on (02) 9299 4299. **RNSW**