



Thumbs up from TAB's Adam Rytenskild with part-owner Jack Van Duuren for Nature Strip

NSWROA's Racing's Night of Champions a Success

NSW RACEHORSE OWNERS ASSOCIATION DELAYED THE AWARDING OF THEIR 2019/20 NSW RACING INDUSTRY WINNERS THIS YEAR, IN THE HOPE THAT IT COULD BE HELD AS A 'LIVE' EVENT, RATHER THAN ONLINE WORDS: JANE HENNING (CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – NSWROA) PICTURES: NSWROA



James Cummings accepts the Champion 3YO award for Bivouac

Despite several hurdles along the way, the NSW Racehorse Owners Association succeeded in hosting a peopled event, held in the ballroom at Royal Randwick on Thursday 22 October.

The gala black-tie dinner saw owners, trainers, strappers and racing enthusiasts don their formal wear to enjoy the evening. Active jockeys were not permitted to attend, in line with COVID-related racing rules.

A two-stage system was employed this year, the finalists arrived at using a points system, with the shortlists then being put to a voting panel of industry experts for final selection.

The Champion Two-Year-Old Award (sponsored by Arrowfield Stud) was taken out by impressive Golden Slipper winner FARNAN, backed up by his wins in the Group 2 Todman and Silver Slipper.

Winner of the Group 1 Newmarket and Golden Rose, plus the Group 2 Run to the Rose, BIVOUAC took out the Champion Three-Year-Old Award (sponsored by Inglis).

FIERCE IMPACT (Jpn) took out NSW Miler of the Year, sponsored by Wild Oaks. His two Group 1 wins during the season were supported by multiple placings at the highest level.

English-trained raider ADDEYBB (Ire), who recently took out the Group 1 Champions Stakes in England, adding to the two Group 1 wins he enjoyed in Australia last season (Queen Elizabeth Stakes and the Ranvet Stakes), was crowned Champion Middle Distance Horse.

Sponsored by the NSW Trainers' Association, they dedicated the award to fellow trainer and NSWTA Board member, Rick Worthington, who passed away recently. The award was presented by Rick Worthington's partner, Rachel Gunst.

The Champion Stayer Award (sponsored by Highclere Australia) was VERRY ELLEEGANT (NZ) for her Group 1 wins in the Hill Stakes and The Tancred, supported by excellent runner-up performances in three other Group 1 races.

The Queen of the Autumn, sponsored by City Tattersalls Club, is judged by Australian Turf Club for the best performed horse across the Sydney Carnival in fillies and mares' races.

It was won by CON TE PARTIRO (USA), for her Group 1 wins in the Coolmore Classic and the Queen of the Turf.

Champion Country Horse, sponsored by Sky Thoroughbred Central, was taken out by VICTOREM, who not only finished second in the 2019 The Kosciuszko, but won the Group 2 Victory Stakes in May.

The Champion Provincial Horse, sponsored by TAB, was RAHEEN HOUSE (Ire). The three finalists were all Australian Bloodstock owned – Kris Lees trained, however, his triumphs in the Group 2 Chairman and third in the Group 1 Sydney Cup sealed his win.

The victor in three Group 1 races and a Group 2 over sprint distances last season, NATURE STRIP followed up being named NSW Champion Sprinter of the Year



Cecelia O'Gorman and sister Melissa Smith, wife of trainer Matthew Smith, with Fierce Impact's Champion Miler Award

(sponsored by the ATC) with claiming NSW Horse of the Year (sponsored by TAB) as the pinnacle of the evening.

Heavily decorated, Nature Strip was named Australian Horse of the Year at the recent online awards. His part-owner, Jack Van Duuren, was an enthusiastic and entertaining winner!

Co-Major Sponsor, Racing NSW also presented their annual awards on the night, with CHRIS WALLER once again taking out the coveted Bart Cummings Medal.

He also picked up the TJ Smith Award for Sydney's Premiership-winning trainer.

Other awards presented included the George Moore Award (JAMES McDONALD) and the Theo Green Award (ROBBIE DOLAN), with both jockeys having won their respective awards last season.

The Sydney Strapper of the Year was GRAEME WILSON from the Kris Lees yard. The BOBS Horse of the Year was a tie between the Listed Denise's Joy winner FITUESE and EDISON, the metro winner of his last two starts.

NSW Racing Writers' Personality of the Year, renamed the Caryl Williamson Racing Writers' Personality of the Year in honour of their much-admired colleague, was won by Warwick Farm trainer, GREG HICKMAN who was in the spotlight last year as trainer of Group 1 All Aged Stakes winner, Pierata.

NSWROA President, Tony Mitevski said: "I would like to thank everyone for helping us 'celebrate the best' of the NSW Thoroughbred Industry, despite the challenging circumstances.

"My thanks again to our wonderful sponsors, congratulations to all winners and I look forward to seeing you all again next year."

The event was filmed by Sky Thoroughbred Central and was shown multiple times on Ch 528 over the following days and evenings.

For more information on the NSW Racehorse Owners' Association, go to www.nswroa.com.au. **RNSW**