

Jean's come a long way from Darwin days



Jean Hose and Little Looker

CYCLONE Tracey had devastating effects on the people of Darwin back in 1972 and in a roundabout way pushed Jean Hose into a career of greyhound racing.

Darwin and Jean Hose haven't looked back since.

Jean and husband Ian and their young children Stephen and Sharyn were living in a caravan in Melbourne and as Ian admits "struggling at times".

Ian was a plumber and saw the opportunity for plenty of work during the rebuilding of Darwin after the cyclone ripped it to shreds.

"We got there three months after the cyclone had hit," said Ian who had to get a special

permit just to get into what was left of the city.

Ian eventually started his own business which employed 12 plumbers and times were good. "We bought some acreage and eventually built a home on it," said Jean. "It was a good life up there."

The good life for Ian included a session at a local pub a few years later with a Darwin greyhound trainer called Frank Ferns.

Frank talked him into buying a greyhound for \$1500 called Street Dancer.

"Frank trained the dog for a year or two for us and it won races, but Street Dancer came down with heartworm," said Jean.

"I was breeding and showing shepherds with success at the time so when Street Dancer needed treatment and three months rest with the heartworm problem, I took him home with us."

Jean wasn't to know at the time but she was about to be hooked on greyhound racing ... and has been ever since.

"I decided to train Street Dancer myself when he had recovered," said Jean. "Frank gave me the basics of training." It was in the mid-80s that Jean took the step into training. Street Dancer fired for her, shared Darwin greyhound of the year honours in 1984-85 and

won more than 30 races.



Jean Hose with Unbelievable.

"He was a very wide runner and we loved it during the wet season in Darwin," said Jean.

"Street Dancer would run on the best part of the track, but all the others would plough around in the mud near the rails."

Street Dancer won his final race at seven and a half years old.

He became a house pet at the Hose home. But he had also started something big.

"We built our team up from one, to two, to five, to 21 at the end, with 15 in training all the time," said Jean.

Jean Hose became a household name herself in Darwin. She won the trainer's premiership five years in a row, and produced six Darwin greyhounds of the year, Street Dancer, Black Creek, Parlance (twice), Unbelievable and Sungold Flyer.

Parlance represented the Northern Territory in the National Sprint at Cannington in 1989 when fifth behind champion Sandi's Me Mum after being run off the track at

the first turn.

“She won the Northern Territory final and because there was an airline strike on at the time, I got home from the races, packed up the car and drove 10 hours to Kununurra where I caught a light plane to Perth,” said Jean. The trials and tribulations of greyhound training.

While Jean Hose was taking all before with her large kennel in Darwin, club officials virtually forced her out of the industry with a reduction in prize money about 12 years ago.

“When the prizemoney was almost halved, we decided to look elsewhere to train greyhounds,” said Jean. “We were also getting older and finding the heat in Darwin hard to cope with.”

So Ian and Jean, their kids by this time having gone their own way, decided on Brisbane as their new home. “Mike Bryant, son of the great Melbourne trainer Ned Bryant, had been sending us dogs for years,” said Jean. “And he found a block of land, five acres, a street away from his property at Chamber’s Flat.”

Ian sold his business and Jean loaded up her best four greyhounds and came south ... that was a shock.

“We were green in those days,” she admits. “The four dogs we brought with us didn’t last long down here. In fact, we sold them straight back to Darwin.”

Parlance stayed to become a broodbitch, while Unbelievable, a litter brother to the great New Tears, and the winner of 35

races in Darwin went to Geoff Parnaby for a stud career, said Jean.

“He was pretty ordinary though, although we did get a few nice dogs by him out of Parlance, dogs like Undisputable, Unreachable etc,” said Jean.

Parlance had a pedigree to match her ability, being by Hardell-Nifty Monaro. Nifty Monaro had won a National Track Championship at Capalaba and was a daughter of Australian Cup winner Kim’s Monaro, from Bob Doak’s legendary Secretly line.

“When the Darwin dogs didn’t stand up down here, we decided to breed some litters ourselves from Parlance,” said Jean.

Among those was the prolific winner Par Flyer (by Bogenfel) who won 35 races and was greyhound of the year at Beenleigh and Ipswich in the same year in the mid-90s.

“He was a great money earner for us and at one stage won nine in a row at Beenleigh,” said Jean. “He was fast out but couldn’t get 520m.”

A couple of litters which Jean and Ian kept taught them a lesson in greyhound management.

“We found it financially difficult, so we decided to get back to training for owners,” said Jean. And that’s what she has concentrated on since. Kev Galloway gave her Billy Burns and Bomber Burns, both Albion Park winners.

“I’ve always kept the bug to train,” said Jean. “But I keep the kennel small because I like to lavish some TLC and personal attention to all my dogs.”

A recent advertisement in The Journal for dogs to train has provided her with a promising young bitch called Little Looker. The daughter of Rapid Journey-Lovely Looker had not won a race when Wayne McKenna sent her and litter sister McKenna’s Rose to Jean to train.

Now Little Looker has become a highly promising stayer with a number of Albion Park wins and the future bright when she steps up to 710m.

“I’ve got a few other racing dogs and a couple of nice Southern Champ pups,” she said.

“Little Looker is improving every time she races but she won’t peak for another five months.”

Ian and Jean admit they are not getting any younger and have probably another 10 years in greyhound racing. “It’s the only hobby I know that you can get paid to do,” said Ian.

In the meantime Jean is happy to go about her greyhound training business with the professionalism she has always shown, happy to achieve the success she does with the small team she has.

“I like to give all my dogs personal attention ... I talk to them all,” she said.

It’s worked for a long time now.