

Trot man loves move to dogs



Tony and My Missy.

By **DAVID BRASCH**

ALMOST 30 years in the harness racing industry has given Tony Camilleri the grounding for a successful stint at training ... training greyhounds. The Malta-born, now Proserpine based Camilleri trained pacers in Victoria originally, before coming north with a small, but successful team basing at Deception Bay.

He has retired to Proserpine and now has a five-dog kennel ... and is loving it.

“About 30 years ago I decided to give harness horses a go, so I went to work with George Gath to get some experience,” Tony told The Journal.

“I was there for a few months jogging some of the greats horses George trained. He was the top trainer in Victoria and his sons Neville and Brian have been great trainers since.”

Camilleri picked up a mare from Gath called Blue Grotto and cut his teeth training her. “She didn’t win a race,” said Tony.

It wasn’t long before Tony had a new horse. “I was living at Castlemaine at the time and had a small dairy farm.

“I paid a breeder in Victoria \$100 for a yearling. I was to give him \$100 from the horse’s first win.”

It was the best \$200 Tony had spent.

Racing as Grampion Boy, the horse won 24 races. He was brilliant from the standing start.

“Grampion Boy was a young horse when I decided



Bev brings My Missy back after a gallop in the cane field

to move to Queensland,” said Tony.

The horse won all over the south-east corner but did not adapt to the mobile racing at Albion Park. Smiling Song and New Hope came next for Tony and provided more wins. At the time Tony was working for then premier Queensland trainer Sam Zammit ... the father

of top dog men Tony, George and Michael.

“We were both from Malta, and we got along fine,” said Tony.

		Walkabout Sid
	Head Honcho	Fitzroy Lass
Cry Havoc		Chariot Supreme
	Wee Sal	I'm Blessed
MY MISSY		Chariot Supreme
	Pure Talent	Shining Light
Hooded Talent		Spread Eagled
	Hooded Vale	Lyndvale Miss

It wasn't long after this that Tony tried his hand at greyhound racing.

"A friend called Mick Robic had jumped into a creek for a swim and broke his neck," said Tony. "Mick bet the boys at our local pub he would walk again, bet them \$1000 and he did. He and a mate called Marshall Brown bought a couple of greyhounds with the money."

Racing as Bay Of Saigon and Real Treatment, both dogs won. Tony even took over their training and won races at Capalaba and Lawnton with the pair. It was enough to get him interested in greyhounds for good.

Pacers went by the wayside soon after when Tony

and his wife Bev headed to the idyllic life on South Molle Island and stayed for 11 years. "Then I went to Daydream Island for three years," said Tony.

With retirement to Proserpine came greyhound racing.

"I needed something to do and greyhounds became it," he said.

He bought two pups from Horsham in Victoria, named them Horsham and All Rise and to time of writing has won seven and six races respectively with them.

He got Perkel Magic from Mackay and has won 11 races with it, and then bought two more pups from Victoria, littermates by Cry Havoc-Hooded Talent now racing as My Missy and My Buddy, the former a highly promising youngster.

Tony Camilleri educated himself in greyhound training from two books given to him by the GRA when he first applied for his trainer's license.

"One was a pocket book about training, the other a vet book," he said. "I just kept reading those and taught myself."

He and Bev, who is a great help to her husband with the dogs, live on a quarter acre at Proserpine.

"I gallop my dogs in the next property, a cane field. There is a 350 metre straight between the cane fields which is perfect for the dogs," he said.

How times have changed for Tony Camilleri.