

Barry's still making waves

By **DAVID BRASCH**

BARRY Russell would pardon the pun, but he's been sailing along since he took up greyhound racing 20 years ago.

Russell, 68, his wife Maureen and sons Darren and Andrew, have achieved more than their fair share of success with gallopers like Tears For Jupiter, Tough Hombre, Huge Day Hughie etc. But Barry has been sailing along all his life ... literally.

A born and bred Balmain boy, Barry boasts a sailing career which took him to the ultimate of ocean racing, the 12 metre America's Cup challenge, and took him there twice.

Barry was part of the Sir Frank Packerbacked challenge by Gretel in 1962 and Gretel II in 1970, challenges which eventually paved the way for Allan Bond's Australia II to win the thing in 1983.

But Barry was bred to be a sailor. His father Tony was world 18ft champion in 1949.

"I started sailing when I was about nine or 10, back in 1945-46," said Barry.

"Eventually I progressed to the 18 footers racing on Sydney Harbour. There was more money bet on those races than at Royal Randwick in those days.

"There was eight or nine ferries following the races all day with bookies on board taking bets, illegally."

Sailing "The Fox", Barry won the Australian 18ft championship on Sydney Harbour and headed to Brisbane for the world championships.



"We got flogged by a boat called Venom, designed and sailed by Bob Miller who later changed his name to Ben Lexcen. Lexcen would go on to be a great 12-metre designer," said Barry. Even though the world title opposition in Brisbane was too tough for Russell, he caught the eye. "I got a phone call just after that from Frank McKnoulty, a great 18ft sailor, to try out for the 12 metres."

Packer was putting together Australia's first America's Cup challenge. He made the crew and for months sailed a US boat called Vim which Packer had leased to train his team.

Barry went to Newport on Rhode Island just north of New York to take on the invincible Yanks.

"I was a reserve for the final crew," said Barry. "We won a race but lost the Cup to Weatherly." Packer would not give up, and Barry Russell was along for the ride.

"I was a truck driver at the time so you can see I was a fish out of water with all these guys. But I stayed loyal to Packer even though Dame Pattie challenged for the Cup after Gretel's failed bid." He remembers vividly preparing off Sydney Heads in 30-knot winds and getting washed overboard. "We were seven miles out to sea, I got swept over but was lucky to be able to get back onto the boat," he said. "No one even knew I was gone."

By the time Gretel II was ready to take on the Cup, a challenger series had been started. Gretel

II beat the French challenge for the right to take on the Yanks in 1970.

Jim (later Sir James) Hardy was the skipper and Barry was No 2 on the bow.

“We all got a Rolex watch for beating the French and I still wear it today,” said Barry.

Gretel II was beaten by Intrepid and Barry Russell, by then with a young family, decided his time chasing America’s Cup glory was over.

“I sailed for 10 years out of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, but gave it away in the 1980s,” he said.

By this time he was hankering to give greyhound racing a try. He put up three kennels at the back of his house in Balmain and got the bug.

Ten years ago he and his family moved to Beadesert and the winners have been flowing since.

Tears Of Jupiter has won \$139,000 in stakes for the family and is their pride and joy. The bitch is likely to come home for one last try at the Albion Park Gold Cup and then retirement.

“We’ve had some smart dogs,” said Barry.

“Huge Day Hughie was flying but broke a hock. He’s back but we don’t think he will be as good.

“We sold Tough Hombre as a young dog because he was never going to run a strong 500 metres. He’s now at stud in Sweden.”

The family has 27 dogs on the property now, including a litter of eight by Primo Uno-Glenlogan Girl the dam of Huge Day Hughie.

Barry might not be tripping about the world chasing glory on 12 metre yachts these days, but he’s still causing a few waves among the greyhound industry.