

Tragic start, but Steve and Leonie are now on fire

By

DAVID BRASCH

SEVEN years ago Bundaberg pair Steve and Leonie Driver decided to give greyhound racing a try.

They picked up a giveaway called Vitality Prince and won first up with him at Capalaba before tragedy struck.

“He was savaged by a rottweiler and died,” Steve told *The Journal*.

It wasn't the sort of start they had been hoping for despite the first-up victory.

But not to be denied, they went to the top to get their next dog.

“I rang John Stephens in Victoria and he got in touch with Doug Ferremi who had raced the champion Highly Blessed,” said Steve.

Ferremi rang Steve and it wasn't long before Downtown Mover was in the Driver kennels.

The dog's third dam was the legendary I'm Blessed, dam of Highly Blessed.

It was enough to get Steve and Leonie hooked.

Steve had been at Bundaberg Sugar for 20 years, but he and Leonie had always been dog lovers.

Not long after Downtown Mover arrived, they bought a bitch called Black Topsy (Light Of Fire-Hot Socks) and she won four of 11 starts for them.

Black Topsy's dam Hot Socks had been a prolific producer. Her son Rotkara Tommy (by Prince Of Tigers) finished third in the South Australian final of the National Sprint to Bahloo Star in 2002.

“She was from a good litter and we started breeding with her,” said Steve which is hardly the norm for those in greyhound centres like Bundaberg.

But to assist with the rearing of Black Topsy's pups, Steve and Leonie decided to buy acreage on the outskirts of Bundaberg and establish a Dog Motel cum greyhound property.

“Leonie is the one behind the property,” admits Steve. “She's got an eye for dogs and is an important carer of people's dogs up here.”

So Four Way Kennels was established.

Black Topsy had eight pups to Just The Best and all of them have won.



Steve and Leonie Driver.

Her second litter was to Prince Of Tigers and from that has come the Driver's star Four Way Fire a recent runner-up to Jock's Girl in the Q.L.D. Group Statewide Series at Albion Park. The bitch is trained by Tony Brett. “Tony says there is plenty of improvement left in her yet,” said Steve.

“We don't train the pups ourselves anymore because this business is full on and we don't have the time.”

Black Topsy has whelped a litter to Brett Lee and Steve and Leonie had no trouble selling them. “We keep some and sell the rest, but only rear for ourselves or anyone who buys our pups,” he said.

The Drivers also have a bitch called Fourway Star (JTB_Marry Me Mary) a litter sister to handy Albion Park performer Spooner Oldham and the top northern gallopers Thistlede Fred and Thistlede Dingy.



ABOVE and TOP RIGHT: The lavish kennel block at Four Way Kennels in Bundaberg.

Marry Me Mary, an Ipswich Auction winner, has been a prolific winner producer and the drivers have five pups by Token prince just broken in. “We have 60 all breeds on our property,” said Steve. “Holidays we are booked out, but run at least at 50% the rest of the time. “Four Way Fire is our pride and joy and is a broodbitch potential already.”



Brett Lee-Black Topsy pups go for a gallop.

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| | Malawi |
| Malawi's Prince | Duchess Marina |
| Prince Of Tigers | Brother Fox |
| Amazing Osti | Osti's Magic |
| FOUR WAY FIRE | New Tears |
| Light Of Fire | Centrefire |
| Black Topsy | Bogenfel |
| Hot Socks | Quick Impact |