

Cup winner was enough for Sam Zammit



Sam Zammit and his boys David, Joel and Aden.

SAM Zammit has to chip Tony, George and Michael at their monthly family gettogether when they won't stop talking about greyhounds.

No, it's not their father Sam the former premier harness horse trainer/driver, but Tony, George and Michael's brother Sam jnr ... "the black sheep" of the family who has little or nothing to do with the greyhound industry.

Sam, 42, lives at Cashmere in Brisbane's northern outskirts with wife Joanne and sons David 12, Joel 10, and Aden 7. The family breeds beagles and does it with success.

But Sam has been touched by greyhound racing. When the Zammit family ran its successful education and trialling business at Deception Bay in the late 70s, early 80s, Sam drove the lure on the straight track.

"I was almost finished school and everyone did a little bit to help out," said Sam.

"But when the deception bay property was sold, and I had left school, I decided to get a trade."

Sam went into the electrical trade in the lift industry, but it wasn't long after that he quit work and studied electrical engineering for two years.

His one and only interest in greyhound ownership came not long after, in the mid- 80s.

"Tony had bred a litter and Michael picked out a bitch for me to buy," said Sam.

"I wanted to keep in touch with Angel Cabrera, a mate from school, and thought it would be a good way if we had a share in a dog."

The bitch was Pseudo Frost who went on to win the 1986

Lord Mayor's Cup at the Gabba and ran a track record at Ipswich until champion New Tears came along to break it. Sam and his mate bred with the bitch, sold all of the pups from her litters except one.

"It was no good and that was the end of my career as an owner," he said.

But the family connection certainly kept Sam going.

"I took a year off work and decided to travel around Australia," he said. "I went to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Alice Springs, up to Darwin and eventually back home.

"All the time I was in touch with Tony. He was having a great run with his team of dogs and I half supported myself betting on his dogs. I was making wages every week."

But that soon stopped when Sam arrived home and he admits he doesn't punt at all now that he is married with a family and a kennel of beagles.

"They are a beautiful dog and Joanne has been breeding them for eight years," he said.

"I thought when I left deception Bay I would only ever live on a house block, but here we are with acreage and animals everywhere ... cats, dogs, birds, fish."

Tony and Michael have been particularly helpful to Joanne in the breeding of the beagles. Any problems she has, she goes straight to her brothers-in-law. "They have so much experience in the treatment of animals," said Sam.

But Sam is the first to complain at the family get-together.

"All they talk about is greyhounds," he said.

You'd think Sam would try to fit in!