

THOROUGHBRED CHAMPIONS CELEBRATED AT THE HTBA 2017 ANNUAL AWARDS

10 May 2017

The 2017 thoroughbred champions were announced at the HTBA's 26th Annual Awards Night held at Australia's Horse Capital in Scone. Over 350 industry leaders, clients, sponsors, supplies and VIPs came together to commemorate the Hunter's champion equine athletes.

"The Hunter Valley is Australia's thoroughbred capital. It is the birthplace of 1 in every 2 thoroughbred race horses every year and is renowned the world over for breeding champion equine athletes. We are very proud of our people and our thoroughbred champions and tonight we recognise their exceptional achievements" Dr Cameron Collins said.

Every year every category is highly contested and this year proved no exception.

The **2017 HTBA Champion 2 year-old-filly** was awarded to **She Will Reign**, bred by Mr Gary Bachell. 2017 Golden Slipper winner **She Will Reign** was sired by Arrowfield's Manhattan Rain, out of Courgette. The 2-year-old filly award was sponsored by Scone Race Club and accepted by breeder Gary Bachell.

The **2017 HTBA Champion 2 year-old colt**, sponsored by International Animal Health Products was awarded to multiple Group 1 winner, **Invader** bred by Mr M A Pitt. Sired by Arrowfield's Snitzel, out of Flame of Sydney, Invader won the 2017 Inglis Sires Stakes. Mr Paul Messara accepted the award on behalf of Mr Pitt.

The **2017 HTBA Champion 3 year-old filly** was awarded to **Foxplay**. Sired by Foxwedge, out of Butters and bred by SF Bloodstock, **Foxplay** was the winner of the Group 1 2017 Coolmore Legacy Stakes. Sponsored by Pages Event Hire the award was accepted by Mr Henry Field.

The **2017 HTBA Champion 3 year-old colt** was awarded to Group 1 Golden Rose winner **Astern**. The son of Darley's Megalia D'Oro, out of Essaouira, Astern was bred by Godolphin. The HTBA Champion 3 year-old colt award was sponsored by Morgan and English Commercial Lawyers Solicitors and accepted by Mr Alistair Pulford.

For the second year in a row the **2017 HTBA Champion Racehorse** was awarded to the Hunter's golden girl and Australia's darling of the racecourse, multiple Group 1 winner, **Winx**. Sired by Darley stallion Street Cry out of Vegas Showgirl, **Winx** was bred by Fairway Thoroughbreds and raised and grazed at Coolmore stud. With 17 straight wins to her name, **Winx** has beaten the mighty Phar Lap's winning streak, was named Australian Racehorse of the year in 2015/16 and the world's best horse on turf at Longines World's Best Racehorse Awards in London in January 2017. The 2017 HTBA Champion Racehorse award was sponsored by Goldners, and accepted on behalf of Fairway Thoroughbreds by Mr Fergal Connelly.

The **2017 HTBA Champion Broodmare** was awarded, for the second year running, to **Vegas Showgirl** owned by Fairway Thoroughbreds and dam of champions Winx and El Divino. The 2017 HTBA Champion Broodmare award was sponsored by the Scone Equine Hospital and accepted by Mr Peter O'Brien on behalf of Fairway Thoroughbreds.

Australian two-year old Triple Crown winner and Australia's highest rated Australian juvenile since 1997, **Pierro** was awarded the **2017 HTBA Champion First Season Sire Award**. Son of Darley's champion stallion Lonhro, out of Miss Right Note, Pierro's first crop of 2 year-olds already include winners such as Tulip, Pierata and Pierone. The 2017 HTBA Champion first season sire award was sponsored by Kentucky Equine Research & Ridley Barastoc Partnership and accepted by Mr Sebastian Hutch.

The **2017 HTBA Champion Sire** was awarded to Arrowfield's champion stallion **Snitzel**. Son of Arrowfield's champion stallion Redoute's Choice, out of Snippets' Lass, and grandson of the legendary Danehill, multiple Group 1 winner **Snitzel** has sired 59 Stakes winners and 10 Group 1 winners including Invader, Russian Revolution, Snitzerland, Summer Passage and Heavenly Blue. The 2017 HTBA Champion Sire award was sponsored by William Inglis & Son and accepted by Mr Paul Messara.

The HTBA congratulates all 2017 award winners and thanks the sponsors for their support of these awards and the HTBA's activities to promote and protect the Hunter's premier thoroughbred breeding industry. The HTBA also thanks Ms Carolyn Searcy of Sky Racing and Mr Joel Ozborn for co-hosting the HTBA's 26th Annual Awards. Sky Racing will be telecasting highlights of the Awards night on their Bred to Win program.

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BACKGROUND: The Hunter Valley's Thoroughbred Breeding industry contributes over \$5 billion annually to the national economy and \$2.6 billion annually to the NSW economy. It supports over 230,000 jobs throughout Australia. It is one of three international centres of thoroughbred breeding excellence in the world – alongside Newmarket in the UK and Kentucky in the USA. It is Australia's largest producer and exporter of premium thoroughbreds. It is an iconic part of Australia's sporting history and an industry worth protection.

