

Scone horsewoman nurtured unique Perth G1 double

Julie Harris, operator of one of the Hunter Valley's most respected agistment farms, the Pages River bordered Hunter Valley Thoroughbreds between Scone and Gundy, has good reasons to be pleased with the freakish results of two one million dollar Group1 races held in Perth in recent weeks. Each was won by different performers nurtured on the farm for their breeder owners Bob and Sandra Peters (Peters Investments), doyens of Perth racing.

Held on Perth's Ascot racecourse in a space of two weeks, the races were the Railway Stakes (1600m, November 24) and Kingston Town Classic (1800m, December 8). Galaxy Star, a lightly raced 6-year-old mare ran well in both, claiming the Railway by 1.75 lens and then finishing third behind stablemate Arcadia Queen, a 3-year-old filly, in the Kingston Town.

These Perth stars were bred and raised until yearling age in Julie Harris's care on Holbrook for the Peters, one of the most successful leading non-stud owner breeder owners in Australia. They keep about thirty mares on Hollbrook and Julie walks them in for matings with top of the range sires, foals them down and rears them until they are sent to the west.

Julie is consistently reminded of her input into the Peters breeding program as rarely a week goes by in Western Australian stakes race meetings without black type being earned by performers produced in her care bred and raced by them and campaigned out of the stables of Grant and Alana Williams stables at Karnup, under an hours drive south of Perth.

Although the Peters have had a number of good performers, the Kingston Town winner Arcadia Queen is shaping up as a stand out. The only 3-year-old in the field and the winner by an awesome 4.5 lengths, Arcadia Queen has now won five of her six outings since she began her racing career on September 19. In order, the last three have been in the WA Champion Stakes-G3 (1.5 lens), WA Guineas-G2 (3 lens) and the Kingston Town.

Despite her age, Railway winner and Kingston Town third Galaxy Star has raced only 14 times, but they have resulted in ten wins, three seconds and a third. She has blossomed into a stakes star in the current campaign, one headed by the wins in the Group 3 Asian Beau Stakes (1400m, 2.5 lens) and Railway Stakes. She was ridden in the Railway by William Pike, but the latter was aboard Arcadia Queen in the Kingston Town.

Now million dollar earners following their Kingston Town efforts, both Arcadia Queen and Galaxy Star are good advertisements for the policy of the Peters of mating mares they bred and raced with the top line Hunter Valley sires. They are also both more signposts for the value of having Arrowfield's three times champion Australian sire Redoute's Choice (a son on Danehill) in pedigrees.

Arcadia Queen is by current record breaking Australian champion sire Pierro, a Golden Slipper winning son of Lonhro in the Coolmore stallion yards, and from Arcadia, a Redoute's Choice winner Perth and Melbourne. She is also dam of stakes winning fillies Arcadia Dream (Duport WA Derby winner) and Arcadia Rose (Kheylef (USA), Perth Listed winner) and is a sister to Peters Perth stakes winners Broadway Belle and Antique Belle and to stakes placed Antique Dream. Using Broadway Belle and Pierro, the Peters bred and raced WA Derby winner Action.

Besides herself, Arcadia and offspring Arcadia Dream, Arcadia Rose and Arcadia Delight (Domesday winner) are all in Julie Harris's care for Bob and Sandra Peters at Holbrook. Also in the paddocks are Antique, Broadway Belle, Antique Belle and Antique Dream and another sister in Antique Rose and an Anabaa (USA) half-sister in Fortune Smile.

Also in the Holbrook paddocks for the Peters are relations of Galaxy Star, herself one of only two foals from Galaxy Queen, a Peters bred daughter of Melbourne Cup winner Jeune who died at eight years. They have her still producing sister Star Encounter (won Pinjarra Cup, third WA Derby) and her stakes winning daughters Star Exhibit (by Statue of Liberty). Perfect Jewel (Redoute's Choice) and Royal Star (Redoute's Choice) and stakes placed Favourite Star (More Than Ready) and her Listed winning Testa Rossa daughter Enticing Star (second in Group1 WATC Winterbottom Stakes) in the broodmare band on Holbrook Thoroughbreds.

Julie Harris, the horsewoman who takes care of the Peters mares, is herself a thoroughbred with 150 years of horse care in her genes. She and her parents, Alan and Madge, established the agistment farm near Scone in 1998 after the sale of the Holbrook Stud at the far end of the Widden Valley, west Hunter Valley.

Holbrook had been settled by the Harris family in the mid 1800s and produced many good horses, including a Perth champion Easingworld. A son of Eaton Lad, an imported sire stood at the Holbrook stud early last century, Easingwold in WA won the Karrakatta Plate, December Stakes, Derby, St Leger, All Aged Stakes and Kalgoorlie Cup. Competing in Melbourne he won the St George Stakes and the Herbert Power - twice.

In addition Easingwold contested the first two runnings of the Cox Plate at Moonee Valley, 1922 and 1923. He finished second to the imported Violoncello in the first Cox Plate and then took the honours by 1 1/2 lens went sent out a 6 - 4 favourite 1923, an effort that followed second placing in the Caulfield Cup.

Article courtesy of Brian Russell Bloodstock Media Service

