



David Hayes

by Kylie Hammond

A note from Kylie.

My love affair with horse racing started in the early 80's when I was a regular visitor to family friend and cousin Tony Elwood's property located in Gidgegannup in Western Australia. As young children we would head up to the farm to see the many race horses training on-site using Tony's private race track on the weekends. Even by today's standards, the investment at the property was significant with two trainers living at the property full-time, substantial horse stables and facilities, a purpose-built race track that came to life in the early hours of the morning as the horses would be put through their paces and of course one of the most amazing homesteads on the property, that still to this day I can remember in exquisite detail. It was the 80's and in the West, business was booming and horse racing was at the epicenter of social and business networks.



My father had a few horses in partnership with Tony and there were several Group 1 winners. We also had a fair share of horses that didn't win, but that never detracted from the excitement and the amazing people that we met through the

racing industry over the years. Many years later when the opportunity to own a racehorse presented itself,



I couldn't resist and we welcomed Speed Hero into the family with open arms. Speed Hero is having good success on the regional tracks around NSW and there are good prospects for some major wins in the next racing season. He is such an exciting horse to watch as he usually runs last for most of the race, surging to take the lead in the last 600 metres. There have been several heart-stopping moments and I suspect a few more to come!

My second racehorse Graceful Star is owned by an all-female racing syndicate and is training at Lindsay Park with the legendary trainer David Hayes.

I had the great privilege to speak with David and I wanted to share with you his insights on winning, building a world class horse racing facility and his views on horse ownership.

David you've had so many successes; how do you rate them and what keeps you motivated to keep achieving and doing more and more?

I get a thrill out of a horse that you might have recommended to clients and when they succeed. I get the biggest thrill out of doing the best for people, pleasing people and then there's the obvious big races which are thrilling to win. You get a huge thrill when you don't expect to win a big race sometimes. Like with Boom Time who won the Caulfield Cup, which is a horse I owned myself. So that probably was my biggest thrill because of the financial gain. I was thinking he'd run well, but I didn't think he could probably win.



I believe you picked that horse up on the back of unfortunate circumstances?

I bought him from the liquidators, the horse had trouble with past leg problems, but was fundamentally a very good horse, so I got him for a song and it was a very big win.

Obviously Lindsay Park is just such a phenomenal establishment and you've got family members all working in the business. You started in the industry at a pretty young age with your dad. Was there ever a point in your life when you thought you might go in a different direction?

No, not really. I love my sport, but when dad got ill I went straight in to it and had the opportunity that some people might not have got, and so I grabbed it with both hands.

Obviously you've had thousands and thousands of wins, but it hasn't all been a walk in the park. You've also had your share of difficulties and adversities. When you came back from Hong Kong it wasn't straight forward to get back into things and you put such a big investment into Lindsay Park.

Initially when we got back from Hong Kong we had a really good run. Traveling got the better of me. I actually found the commute from Adelaide to Melbourne every week and being away from my family too much, all a bit tedious. But, then I made the decision to downsize slowly Lindsay Park (in Angaston S.A.) and set up Lindsay Park Euroa (Vic). In the next couple of years, while we couldn't sell Lindsay Park, and we were spending all the money on Euroa it was pretty tough. We were probably putting more energy into getting the property completed than training horses. This led people to think that it might be the end of a dynasty, but I was always very confident once we got Euroa up and operating, we could bounce back and do well. For the last three or four years, we're a very powerful stable again, which is terrific. Euroa continues to develop, you never really finish when you own a property. My wife Prue and I actually just drove around the property and we think that we've done 90 percent of what we wanted to do on the property so far.



That's a good place to be. Do many horse owners go out and visit their horses at Euroa?

That's the major attraction of having the horses and the property based in Victoria. We would occasionally have owners come out to Lindsay Park in the Barossa, but at the new stables we have regular visitors and horse owners coming through almost daily because we have a large client base in Victoria.

Do you have any advice for people looking to get into maybe their first syndicate or into horse ownership? We've seen increasing interest in horse racing ownership, I'm personally seeing a lot more women getting involved with the sport, which I think is fantastic.

Gerry Harvey and Katie Page of Magic Millions have been very good for the industry encouraging increasing participation in the sport, particularly their 'Racing Women' incentive. My recommendation is no matter how wealthy you are, go in small to start with and if you enjoy the sport, get a little bit bigger and grow gradually. Don't be in too much of a hurry until you really know it's for you. And then of course there's a lot of people that get hooked by the horse racing bug.

I'm one of those people who is hooked by the bug! So, I've got a horse with you at the moment, Graceful Star.

Hopefully the long wait is over and a win is very close.

She's due for at least a good solid place, but maybe even a win, which would be quite exciting.

I think she going to go pretty close and her trackwork has been great. I hope it's the stepping stone to better things.

What was the background on finding her? Do you select the horses and put the syndicates together?

We've got a team that manages that process, we are always looking for good horses at all price points. We buy horses and syndicate them to our clients and partners and Graceful Star was one of those which is an all-female ownership syndicate so she will qualify for the Magic Millions and be eligible to participate in January. Her final track work has been excellent, so there is very good potential there.

