



BREEDERS' WEEKLY

DELIVERING THE GIFTS!

This week we catch up with the well-travelled Neil Bennett whose breeding success is starting to replicate that of his syndicates such as the pictured Cuddly Jess – (Seafield Trotting Syndicate).

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American Tart with her connections after winning easily on Day 1 at Blenheim last Friday

TART GETS THE CHOCOLATES AT BLENHEIM!

What a grand few weeks it's been for Rob Courtney.

The North Canterbury schoolteacher has struck a nice treble with a win by a wide margin at Blenheim, the sale of a yearling filly, and a foal born from a free service last season.

American Tart, an American Ideal filly he races with Pete and John McAllister of Kaiapoi, made an impressive debut on the first day of the Marlborough meeting and steps up at Invercargill on Saturday in a heat of the Southland Oaks.

That followed selling a Sir Lincoln filly from Mashta to Australian interests to be broken in by Craig Kennedy before she goes. And a bonus is the A Rocknroll Dance filly foal from Top Lot (Dream Away-Kliklite), a free service, after getting enough 'likes' in a photo competition sponsored by Alabar and Nevele R Stud.

"We had no intention of backing her up," said Courtney of American Tart.

"SHE'S A VERY NICE HORSE, BUT THE KEY IS NOT TO GET TOO EXCITED AT THIS STAGE. JOHN (DUNN) HAS TOLD ME THIS IS THE BEST HORSE I'VE EVER HAD," COURTNEY SAID.

That being the case, Courtney has been a great stayer, breeding a lot of handy horses since Freeman Holmes gave him the Noodlum mare Hilda Ogden more than 30 years ago.

"You can have that mare," he said, during a visit with some Australian visitors he'd taken out there.

"She was from a weak branch of the Sakantula family."

But Hilda did a job, leaving five winners including Pop Stanley, the biggest stakes earner left by Lord Module. Still with the family, Courtney is selling a grandson by Sportswriter at the Premier.

Next, Courtney saw a marketplace advert in the NZ Harness Racing Weekly offering for sale an In The Pocket weanling filly from Perfect Parcel, by Soky's Atom. He bought her sight unseen. Further back, her 6th dam is Suyin, dam of the grand racemare Seafield Countess.

"If it wasn't for the blood I don't know whether I would have bought her; she was the smallest thing. But there are quality horses in the family."

She was racey but didn't race, and left small foals like herself. One of them was Redheadedwildflower, by Falcon

Seelster, who won a race from 19 starts for Robert Dunn. She was also tried by Robbie Holmes and if Courtney hoped she would advance his career as an amateur driver he met disappointment.

Keen to avoid the legacy of small foals, Courtney recalled he'd read Western Ideal standing 16.3h and thought his son American Ideal might add the size the family lacked.

The foal was a perfect parcel.

"She had size and just kept getting bigger.

"I remember the day she qualified, she sat parked; nothing got past her and there were some nice ones behind her."

She had a setback last season when a floating bone chip was removed from a hock, and it's been steady and patient since then.

Courtney has Redheadedwildflower in foal to Somebeachsomewhere this season; Magic Marg (dam of Magic Oats, 5 wins) in foal to Mach Three and Lilac Franco in foal to Sir Lincoln.

And after 14 filly foals from his last 16, he thinks some colts are due.

Mike Grainger

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BREEDER'S PROFILE



NEIL BENNETT

NEIL BENNETT

This week's Breeder's Profile is brought to you by the man that gave me my first taste of ownership in Harness Racing, Neil Bennett. After spotting a post of his on 'Race Café', I quickly contacted Neil and have been on a journey in the Seafield syndicate. Also for Neil the Griffins Syndicates (amongst others) has recently enjoyed. Through the nature of his work with Fulton Hogan, Neil is able to attend almost as many race meetings as Mark McNamara! We caught up with him this week to pick his brain on the breeding game.

WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN HARNESS RACING?

My best friend at Primary school was Ricky May's cousin so I was adopted as part of the May family and the addiction started there. An unforgettable experience to be going to races in the back of the horse float and one of the best days was seeing Good Admiral win the Trotting Stakes at Addington – have

wanted to win a race there ever since and have crossed that wish off the list many times since.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN BREEDING STANDARDBREDS?

A lot of these stories have been success stories – well my first attempt wasn't so good. A workmate talked us in to buying an Assault filly in the late 70's. Malcolm Gillum tried her for us but he couldn't get the condition off her. We found the reason when she foaled. It turned out she had been served by a pony stallion as a 2yo. Not sure who put him up to it. We then thought we would try and breed a real foal so she was the second mare served by Plat du Jour (first one was Mimi dam of Wedgewood for Maurice Holmes). She missed and the very wise Sam Ballantyne gave us our money back and said to breed from better blood – well marriage and children meant it was many years before I tried again. I joined the Regency syndicates once I had some discretionary income and the first horses were Castleton's Mission and Evening Dash. Mission ticked that first big win at Addington bucket list item with the 2yo Trotting Sires Stakes win and was clear in the lead in the Sales Series race at Auckland when he had a gallop.

FIRST HORSE YOU BRED?

I got a few of the syndicate members together after one syndicate ended and we purchased the mare Love Hate Revenge, a Holdonmyheart daughter of Gee's Pride, that has been quite a disappointing family given both Gee's Pride and Gee du Jour were great mares. We sent her to Sundon and she foaled Sol Invictus that we leased to our new syndicate Griffins Syndicate.

FIRST RACE WINNER YOU BRED?

Sol Invictus won at Addington in July 2012 driven by Colin de Filippi and has had another six wins. It was a real thrill to win that race and share the win with a lot of good friends in the syndicate. His full sister is named Bet Pray Love and she won her first race at Manawatu this season providing Dexter Dunn with his first win on the track. The Griffins

syndicate borrowed the mare and have a yearling gelding by Majestic Son with Phil Williamson.

WHY DO YOU BREED STANDARDBREDS?

Numbers breeding have declined so much that if we want to have horses to race we have to do our little bit to help. It is not something that I can afford to do by myself but sharing the costs with other passionate people means we can produce our own stock to race in a cost effective manner.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HORSE (OR) THE BEST ONE YOU HAVE BRED (AND WHY)?

Castleton's Mission remains my favourite horse – he was bred by Ron Burrell who when he learned had been purchased by a syndicate he joined the syndicate. While running second, being beaten a nose, in the Interdominion Grand Final to Take A Moment was great, it was a real thrill to beat champion Lyell Creek after doing a Bonecrusher/Waverley Star from the 800 at Addington remains his best win – and I wasn't even on track as had taken the family to the UK and Europe on holiday.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE STALLION OF ALL TIME?

This question is easy – Sundon. A legend who changed the breed in New Zealand and will still influence the industry as a broodmare sire for years to come. I have a daughter in Bet Pray Love that I will need to find some friends to breed her with probably next season. If anyone interested contact Brad for my contact details.

HAVE YOU BRED ANYTHING THIS SEASON?

Here we do things a little different. By having a close relationship with Bevan and Keith Grice and leasing several racehorses including Monty Python, Sarah Palin and Father Christmas we have done a deal and negotiated having mares served by the stallion of our choice. Doing this we have a beautiful filly by Peak from Rugged Cross (see

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photo) who was the first winner for the Griffins Syndicate and from the very good Grice mare Janetta's Pride.

A few people who are still friends borrowed the second foal from Love Hate Revenge in Somebody to Love and have bred a Monkey Bones filly who has been named Love Monkey. And lastly we just inherited a colt by Angus Hall after a breeding arrangement fell over.

Hopefully in foal this year is Juliana who we sent to Quaker Jet as we were trying to replicate the success of the French blood over the Sundon mares that we have in our Jewels starter Father Christmas.

SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGE FOR BREEDERS?

I have been involved recently in trying to invigorate an owners association as the old model was based around part of the old Owners Trainers and Breeders Associations that used to run the trial meetings when my addiction started. The old model is dying and we need to find a way to promote ownership and the Breeders Associations have a similar need so I would hope to find a way that we can work together at race meetings to have somewhere where interested people can come and ask questions and we can follow up their interest.

It is a tremendous thrill breeding and owning a winner and when costs are shared it really is affordable. I am committed to trying to make this change and with the help of an incentive from Trevor Casey have over 1100 members on a Facebook group to have some way of communicating with owners that has not existed before. There are further improvements planned and we are keen to have an owners card as nothing annoys our owners more than having to pay to enter the summer race meetings when they are supplying the product. Some clubs are setting a high standard with an email invitation sent out stating the owners privileges so hopefully it is possible for them all to do it.



LA TABOU - THE QUIET ACHIEVER

First Vintage gets the job done for trainer/driver, Todd Mitchell

Ted Edwards is starting to sit up and concede that his 16-year-old Holdon-myheart broodmare - La Tabou - might be a little bit better than what he gave the 16-year-old credit for.

"After her first foal First Vintage won at Rotorua today (Sunday) I'm starting to sit up and take notice. When other people are cutting back on numbers I've lost the plot and got about eight mares on my property.

"My aim is to cross them with the best trotting and pacing blood in the world. At 74 it is still my ambition to breed and own the best trotter New Zealand has seen. I've got some real nice blood at home (Mangere)," Edwards.

He said La Tabou was 'bulldoggin' her way to top and was pushing former Northern Breeder's Stakes winner Royal Heights (by Game Pride) as the best broodmare on his Auckland 20-acre property.

Edwards and his son Gary bred and own First Ambition. They bought his dam for about \$10,000 off horseman Gary Thompson and then put her to Continentalman when she finished racing in 2000.

"She only had a handful of starts and placed three times and then we

decided to put her in the broodmare's paddock. She was out of an Arndon mare named Purrfect Arndon who won a couple," Edwards said.

First Vintage, who is a 6-year-old gelding, has now won two of his 17 starts and placed in four others after his impressive come from behind win on the Rotorua grass on Sunday.

Edwards said First Vintage's 5-year-old sister, Irish Oaks (by Great Success) was unraced and been trialling just "averagely" with Arna Donnelly at Cambridge.

"I really like her latest 2-year-old by The Pres. She is a lovely filly who is being broken in by Logan Hollis and Shane Robertson.

"I only saw her for the first time when she was picked up to be broken in. She's a lovely big loping filly. She reminds me a lot of Royal Heights when she was the same age," Edwards said.

The Auckland horseman said he had been trying to put La Tabou to Muscle Hill but so far he had had no luck.

"I WANT TO CROSS HER WITH THE BEST BECAUSE SHE IS PROVING TO BE A NICE BROODMARE AND TO BE HONEST I WASN'T SURE HOW HER FOALS WOULD TURN OUT."

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"That was a good win by First Vintage today. Todd (Mitchell – trainer/driver) had him last early and he did well to get around them and win.

"You give Todd a good horse and he will do the rest. He's a quality horseman," said Edwards who has been involved in harness racing since 1983.

Since then he has produced about 80 trotting and 50 pacing winners. The best of them?

"A son of Royal Heights named Muscle and Power (by Muscles Yankee). He won seven races and was a hot favour-

ite in the 2yo Jewels Final at Cambridge (2008) when he was disqualified. His career was cut short by laminitis. He could trot 27.2 quarters for fun.

"The Game Pride mare Royal Heights was pretty good. She won six races. Actually the first horse I got was also pretty good.

"His name was First Grade and I won 15 races with him after saving his life from the knackers yard at Bombay. I got him off Ray Norton and three months later he went eight second under the qualifying time.

He also said he had a lot of time for Gunners Coin – 3-year-old Muscle Hill

colt who had won and placed twice in five starts for West Melton trainer Michael House.

"He's out of an unraced Chiola Hanover mare named Galleons Dream. She's still breeding and her best so far has been her first foal – Galleon's Sunset (by Sundon) who won 14 races," Edwards said.

"I really want to breed that champion one day and I am not afraid to go to any good stallion, including those wonderful French sires," he added.

Duane Ranger

SECOND INSPECTION FOR EVERY YEARLING UNDERWAY

It's just got busier for Peter Lagan, the travelling man for PGG Wrightson's Standardbred division.

For last week, this week and next, Lagan and key retainer Kerry Shaw are on the road inspecting every yearling heading for sale at the Classic and the Premier.

It's a time for the final assessment, the careful check, and the note in the catalogue that will sum a horse up.

Lagan and Shaw have the inspection down to a fine art. Lagan has 38 years on the clock and Shaw a few more.

They know what to look for, the signs when conformation may let a young horse down, telling a vendor what needs to be done and hoping it will be.

Closer to the day, they look forward to hearing the issue has been attended to, and they can respond with a favourable note in the margin.

"There is a surgical file in the office and it's up to the purchaser to come and see it and read the report.

"In Auckland, say, we may have eight or nine that have to be checked out, and 90 per cent of them are generally ok," Lagan said.

Lagan says he has to be in a position to make an opinion on a horse, if he's asked.

"It's my job. If I'm not honest, people won't come back to me. I've been doing it for a long time."

Once the second inspection is over – at the end of next week – Lagan is on the phone with reports to people wanting individual information.

"There is nothing negative in what I tell them. But if there's an issue I'll also tell them; after that, it's over to them."

The last week is the final update of information for the pedigree readers – himself and Matt Cross – and the four auctioneers, John McKone, Steve Davis, Cam Heggie and Jamie Quinlan, from Melbourne.

"Bruce (Barlass) does all the organizing of the venues. My job is to deal with clients and that takes up all my time."

The last week, says Lagan, is even more intense.

"We draw up a list and put down the rough value of each yearling. It's also a guide to the auctioneers who aren't really across harness racing 24/7 like we are. They don't really know for certain what each one is worth.

"We always keep saying to start lower than higher. Everyone can come in if the start price is low enough, but starting at \$20,000 say and not getting past \$25,000 is not the auction we want."

Lagan says for vendors there are two critical components of sale day. Unless they are happy to take what comes, they should present their reserve card so the auctioneers know where to head, and there should be a representative at the back of the box to make a decision if bidding is near the reserve or short of it.

"WE DON'T WANT TO SEE A HORSE IN THE RING AT \$39,000, THE RESERVE SITTING AT FORTY, AND NO-ONE AT THE BACK TO TALK TO."

Prospects at the Classic he thinks will create strong interest are Lot 42, a Bettor's Delight filly from Lady Cullen; Lot 60, a filly by Bettor's Delight from Legs And Lips; Lot 57, a colt by Somebeach-somewhere from O Baby, and Lot 83, a filly by Muscle Hill from Regal Volo.

Mike Grainger



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Trev's No Angel winning in the hands of Maurice McKendry

WEEKEND TO REMEMBER FOR ROTORUA BREEDER

Rotorua breeder/owner and school teacher Tony Armstrong recently had a weekend to remember, and unbeknown to this scribe, it was even better than first thought.

There aren't many breeders hailing from the sulphur capital of New Zealand with Tony being our only financial member from the region.

His breeding story started when he and

his brother purchased their first mare in their 20's.

"We got Added Lustre (1975 Gerry Mir – Local Lustre) off Royce Court who we leased to start with and then we bought her and she won her first few starts, after which I was hooked."

His passion for the breeding game also saw Armstrong ten years ago importing two mares from America in Ashley

Belle (2000 The Panderosa – Daylon Flyer) and Brookmaker (2000 Artiscape – Bruce's Other Lady) with the latter leaving numerous nice types. With that Armstrong's broodmare count stands at half a dozen.

"My mares stay up at Alabar and they're really good to me up there. Every year I'll breed a few and they breed from the rest," Said Armstrong.

To tell the tale of this breeder's incredible weekend, you need to go back 19 years to a purchase of a four win Caprock mare from Canterbury.

"I bought Likely Franco (1994 Caprock –Lalique) from Wayne Francis a while ago now. I raced her and she won four for us. Her first foal was Pukpuk Power (1999g Armbr Operative – Likely Franco) and he won a few before going to America and going 1:52.

The second foal was Pomis Arms (2000m Beach Towel – Likely Franco) and due to ulcers, the best was never seen of her.

"She looked like she was going to be a nice horse but due to the ulcers we decided just to put her in foal."

While she didn't have any luck on the track, she achieved better success as a broodmare leaving a Courage Under Fire filly in Beach Chic (2005) for Greg Broadie. The filly qualified half a length behind Chocolatto (2005g Cammibest – Royal Oil), a 12 race winner of just under \$100k stakes in Australia which is also where Beach Chic did her racing picking up 2 wins and a placing from just eight starts.

The next foal was Pomis Princess (2006m Courage Under Fire).

"She's been a bit unlucky with her foals but Pomis Princess had about six starts for nothing but was very fast. I think she had issues with her soft palette as she would get to the corner and be ready to go and then she would just break for no reason!"

Clearly the ability was there and as the old adage goes, you can't train speed.

The mare's first two foals gave the Rotorua teacher a weekend to remember

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with both achieving success on either side of the Tasman.

Pomis Princess' first foal was a nice type by Elsu who got the weekend started in style dismantling a tidy field of four year old pacers in the Hondo Grattan Stakes at Group Two level at Tabcorp Park in Menangle.

Arms of an Angel (2011m) is her name and the former Jason and Megan Teaz runner has gone to another level since crossing the Tasman, scorching around Menangle in mile rates of 1:50.7, 1:50.3, 1:51.4, 1:53 and finally Saturday night's performance in 1:50.7!!

The mare is now being set for the prestigious Chariots of Fire which under current form, she would have to be a huge hope of winning.

"She had amazing gate speed and we knew she was a good horse, she just needed a bit of time we think. She was a real handful and to be honest could be pretty horrible but Jason and Megan did a wonderful job with her!"

Arm's of an Angel is unbeaten in six starts and is flying the flag for Elsu who is once again putting his hand up as a colonial sire worthy of his services.

So you've just bred a Group 2 winner in almost sub 1:50 on Saturday night, how on earth do you back that up?

By getting the chocolates in your own backyard at the first local meeting held in Rotorua since 2002 of course!

Pomis Princess delivered again with her second foal Trev's No Angel (2012c) scoring in the hands of Maurice McKendry to win the VC's Turf Bar Mobile Pace by half a length.

Armstrong describes the Grinfromeartoeat colt as a "nice horse" and the three year old looks far from finished in delivering on what looks to be a promising breed.

"I've got a nice filly from her (Pomis Princess) by Big Jim and shes got a lovely Sportswriter colt on her at the moment."

"I had another one I bred and race at Rotorua called Hezabluechipboy (2011g

Santanna Blue Chip – Sheza Gem) who went nice and just missed by a neck in race three which would have made for a great day."

Armstrong has recently given a small share to his son and his partner who are first time owners in standardbreds which should add to the enjoyment in the coming months.

Outside of the New Zealand Cup, Armstrong lists the Harness Jewels as a race he would most like to achieve success in.

"I'm a big breeding buff so I love looking at the times they run and I think that would be the pinnacle, I'm hoping Arms of an Angel will be invited back."

If she keeps on her winning ways, the Cornell/Tritton partnership may well get an invite, and Armstrong might just get his wish!

Brad Reid

WINNING START - AMERICAN SPIRIT

American Ideal 4yo gelding American Spirit (2011) began his race career in a similar vein to many before him from this family descending from maternal taproot thoroughbred mare Topsy (N7).

AMERICAN SPIRIT'S ONLY TRIAL'S APPEARANCE BEFORE HIS RACE DAY DEBUT HAD BEEN WHEN QUALIFYING AND FINISHING FIRST OF THREE BY A MARGIN OF 50 LENGTHS AT FORBURY PARK ON 12 DECEMBER 2015 (2200M, 2:09.3MR).

His maiden winning performance at Omakau (Central Otago TC) on Saturday 2 January 2016 in the hands

of world champion reinsman Dexter Dunn was no less impressive, winning by 1¼ lengths over 2600m stand (3:20.6/2:04.1MR). The Double D factor was inherent in his winning dividend of \$4.90.

Then he his won second start at Wyndham on Tuesday 19 January 2016, 2400m, 2:59.3/2:00.2MR - sweeping last to first run from the 900m. Now two from two.

Raced by Garry Clarke from the Mosgiel stable of Darren Simpson, he was bred by Clarke and Martin Denton from Spirit of Niatross, a New York Motoring mare from Steady Niatross, by Niatross/Steady Lady, by Transport Chip/Brown-gate Lady, by Lumber Dream/Shadow Wave, by Hal Tryax/Destiny Hall, by Dillon Hall/Rollicking Wave, by Waverley/Fair Lady, by Our Thorpe/Lady Rothsoon, by Harold Rothschild/Too Soon, by The Goosoon/ Topsy, a thoroughbred mare from Macleathean (thor).

Going back 11 generations, American Spirit's pedigree has a number of good Southland-bred mares and local stallions. Western Hanover sired American Ideal comes from the family of Miss Duvall (U7). American Ideal (1:47.4US, \$786,055) was the winner of Oliver Weddell Holmes, Confederation Cup and Tattersalls Pace at three. Among his siring credits are Hes Watching (Meadowlands Pace, world record for all age pacers 1:46.4US), American Jewel (world record 3f 1:48.2), Heston Blue Chip, Besotted, Bling It On, Democrat Party, Ideal Scott, My Hard Copy, The Orange Agent.

Four major family branches have evolved from Topsy:

- Too Soon - apart from the Rollicking Wave sub-branch detailed below, is responsible for horses such as Jason King, Paris Metro (National Trot), Panyan, Pembroke Benny (NZFFA)
- Win Soon - NZ Cup winners True Averil/Lunar Chance who also won NZFFA, Villagem (Chariots of Fire), unbeaten New Age Man, Innocent Eyes (AUS/MIC Oaks, VIC SS - 4m, Chariots of Fire), Restrepo (Ballarat Cup), Floreat (VIC Oaks), Jasmarilla (VIC SS - 2/3f), Messini (VIC SS - 3c/3h)



CONT.

- Rothschild mare - Bay Foyle (NZFFA, Miracle Mile), Hi Foyle, Prince Rashad
- Play Soon - Harold Thorpe, Freeway Don, Kenwood Don

Dam Spirit of Niatross (1995), raced from the Cran Dalgety barn, won her second start at Addington as a 2yo against older maiden fillies and mares. Retired to the broodmare paddock after her three year old career ended, she is the dam of seven live foals for six winners to race with American Spirit being her seventh and last foal to date (served 2012 - 2014 with no returns):

Bred by SG Williams -

- Chosen One, 1 win, 2:07.8 (In The Pocket gelding)

Bred by JM and Mrs PM Scanlan -

- Christian Spirit, 9 NZ wins all at Alexandra Park for Ray Green/Robert Mitchell, 1:57.0; 1 AUS win, 2:00.7 2008 Fremantle Cup (Christian Cullen gelding)
- James Burke, 2 wins, 2:03.9 (Artiscape gelding)

Bred by MJ Denton and GL Clarke -

- Cullens Spirit, 4 wins for Robert Dunn (later trained by Martin Denton), 2:01.3 (Christian Cullen gelding)
- Rory Mach, 3 NZ wins (trained by Martin Denton), 2:02.9 (Mach Three gelding), AUS (2 placed starts to date)
- American Spirit, 2 starts, 2 wins, 2:00..2, \$7,375 (American Ideal gelding)

Grand dam Steady Niatross (1986) was born in USA, the result of a match between her dam Steady Lady and Niatross. Brought to NZ by breeder's National Bloodstock Corporation (NBC), she was sold at 1988 NBC International Sale for \$100,000 to Indianapolis Breeding Partnership. Steady Niatross was the winner of six including a dead-heat and she time trialed in 1:59.5. From seven to race, her other winning progeny are Tyler Maguire, winner of six NZ (Stratford/Parawai Grass Cups), 4 Aus wins; Seelster Boy (Aus 4 wins); Breaking Waves (1 NZ win); Eddie Maguire 2 NZ wins/13 Aus wins as Pancho Maguire.

Third dam Steady Lady (Transport Chip) won 9 In NZ including Wairio Cup, Central Otago 3yo Stakes, Johnstone Memorial, 2nd Wellington Cup before



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her export to USA where she achieved a 1:55.4US (\$206,281) credit and won the Venus Series at Los Altamois in California in 1983. Steady Niatross was her only progeny of two foals to race.

Other good performers in American Spirit's immediate family include Browngate Mister (1:54.2US, Fireball/Budweiser Series), Speedy Girl (NZ Oaks, Ladyship Stakes; dam of Speedy Alba 1:54.2US, Great Western Series).

American Spirit has all the credentials required to contribute to further success for this family.

Peter Craig

MCLEARY TOO SCARY OFF HIS FRONT MARK

Vin Nally and his Dolomite Syndicate have seen many things in harness racing since they formed in 1975. Not many things surprise them.

In November 2007 that kinda changed when along came Elsu colt Scarrymcleary.

The former open class pacer, who won 13 times in that gait and paced a 1:52.3 mile in Australia, has now won four more races as a trotter – the best of them last Friday at Alexandra Park when he beat his multiple Group One winning stablemate Speeding Spur (50m) by a neck.

"He's the best the syndicate or I have bred or owned. He never stops surprising us. It hasn't been an easy transition for him especially the way he got used to tearing out of the gate when he raced at Menangle.

"They really flew and for him to have gone 1:52 as a pacer and then adjust to standing start trotting events is a huge ask for any horse.

"I'LL NEVER FORGET THE NIGHT HE PACED A MILE IN 1:52.3. IT WAS INTER-DOMINION GRAND FINAL DAY (2012) AT MENANGLE AND HE JUST LEFT THEM TO IT," INVERCARGILL-BASED NALLY SAID.

Scarrymcleary is the third of seven

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foals out the now deceased Badlands Hanover mare, Ballymenna.

"She never raced. We gave her three preparations and she could run like the wind but when she hit top speed she would veer in all of a sudden.

"Her offside back hip wasn't right and vets advised us to think of breeding from her rather than racing her," said Nally who with his wife Jan runs the six-strong Dolomite Syndicate.

Nally said he was travelling around his beloved Southland back in the early 1990s and a very striking Talking About Class mare took his eye.

Her name was Highview Jane, the dam of Ballymenna.

"Highview Jane won a race for Alan Beck but she wasn't an easy mare to handle and never made it as a race horse. She could run alright but she was a dirty mare.

"She left 11 foals and Ballymenna was her third," said Nally a semi-retired Southland beef and sheep farmer said.

Highview Jane's best would have been the Tony Barron trained (Falcon Seelster) gelding Paddy O'Brien, who won nine races," he added.

He said Ballymenna had to be humanely destroyed in late 2014 after complications with her seventh and last a Changeover foal.

"The vets did a wonderful job keeping the mare and foal alive for several weeks after she ruptured herself giving birth six weeks early.

"The Changeover filly is a real wee sewing machine, but she's a bit small to race or breed from.

"A couple of Scarrymcleary's siblings have done all right. Her first foal by Julius Caesar (Marcus Aurelius) won two and her second foal by Elsu (Al Capone) won three," said Nally who has owned or bred a racehorse every year since he was 18.

Foal number foal McLeary (4yo gelding by Elsu) has already qualified for Tony Barron, as has Ballymenna's sixth foal - 3yo Real Desire filly, Real Scarry, who

went 6.8 seconds under the qualifying time for Barron at Ascot Park last month.

Ballymenna has also left a 2-year-old Elsu colt named Complete Package. All of her foals are bred and owned by the Dolomite Syndicate which comprises the Nally's and their very good long-time friends - Peter & Anne-Marie Robbie, and Ken & Barry McLeod.

"I was part of what I think was the oldest New Zealand racing syndicate at the time (early 1970s). It was called the Setarip ('Pirates' spelt backwards) and then after that we formed the Dolomite Syndicate.

"The six of us have had a lot of fun since. We actually named it after a painting we were sitting under when we were thinking of a Syndicate name. It was of the Dolomite Mountains in Italy - and the name has stuck since.

CONT. P10

Scarrymcleary holds out its champion stable mate to win the feature trot at Alexandra Park last Friday night.



CONT.

"We'd been going 40 years last year. We are all great friends and Scarrymcleary has given us a lot of happy times.

"He's the best we have had and it's a no brainer to keep him in Auckland when the stakes are so good. Tony won five races with him here as a pacer, but he always told us from day one he would make it as a trotter.

"But he was bred to pace and that's why we persevered with his gait for so long. It was a God-send bringing him back to the Dickies (John & Josh). They have done a huge job with him," said Nally.

He said the father-son training and driver combination had really brought the best out of him.

"Right from the day we sent him to Australia David Thorn was continually telling us, hey mate you've sent me a squaregaiter, so both he and the Dickies have done a wonderful job with his respective gaits," Nally said.

He said his Syndicate had total faith in the Dickies and as he put it were enjoying 'the scary ride.'

"His manners should keep improving now and hopefully he might win a few races and maybe even make the open class trotting ranks one day.

"Now that would be some achievement, but I don't want to get too far ahead of myself. All I know he is a wonderful animal and is giving us a great time. Josh tells us that he is one of the nicest looking horses in their barn.

"He might be an 8-year-old gelding but I think he's still got a couple of seasons left in him yet. Josh said he was still fresh as a daisy," Nally said.

Scarrymcleary has now won 17 of his 97 starts, placed in 19 others and netted \$199,641 in stakes.

Duane Ranger

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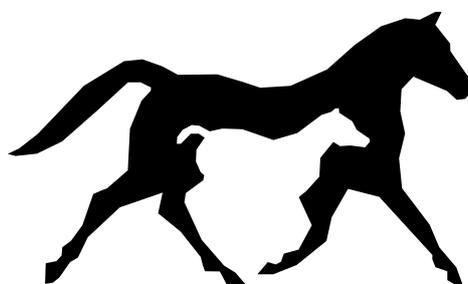
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