

Aussie bitch flies flag in South Africa



South Africa's superstar greyhound is Rossmead Katie ... and all-Australian bred bitch.

AN Australian-bred bitch called Rossmead Katie is the superstar of South African greyhound racing ... that's right, South Africa!

Katie, by Cry Havoc- High Accent, is raced by Andre and Magda Maritz of Brentwood Greyhounds and was bred by Chris Rossoux.

And Katie has been a star since she first started racing back in September, 2001 when she won the Eastern Transvaal Club 200m final for greyhounds "Under 12 months old".

The 26kg bitch was whelped in South Africa on September 3, 2000.

Since then she has become 2003 Bitch of the Year, 2003

Greyhound of the Year, and 2003 Overall South African Champion.

She was also 2002 Middle Distance South African Champion and 2003 350m Bitches SA Champion and 2003 Middle Distance SA Champion. Katie does most of her racing at

the Saaru Stadium, at Bloemfontein, and at the Eastern Transvaal and North-West Clubs.

She regular races twice a day in heats and finals and reels off track records easily. She is one of few dogs to break two records on the same day.

Of her 60 starts to December 2003, Katie had won 31 races and been unplaced only twice, both times finishing fourth. She won the 400m South African Championships (Bitches) final at Saaru on December 6 to be crowned South African Champion Bitch. Her littermates include Rossmead Brumby, Rossmead Wallaby, Rossmead Honcho, Rossmead Breeze, Rossmead Nancy, and Rossmead Tammy. When Katie first started racing in May 2001, she regularly filled placings behind littermates Breeze and Wallaby.

She has come to the fore since late in 2002 being virtually unbeatable.

Her owner Andre Maritz takes up the story:

"Chris Rossoux did not sell any of this litter until they were proven racers.

In South Africa greyhounds race from as early as nine months of age over 200m on a straight track only," said Andre.

"Even in the early days it was clear this litter was going to light up the dog racing scene in South Africa, with the exception of Katie.

"When Chris started selling the litter the South Africans clamoured to get one of the litter and prices were high for South Africa. There wasn't much interest in the "runt" of the litter, Katie.

"Two main reasons for this. She didn't really run well at the time, compared to her littermates, and she's a blue! The "blues don't run or breed" tale is still incredibly strong over here.

"I was looking at buying Katie for a few reasons. First, I liked her. She was the prettiest

greyhound I had ever seen and although this is a silly reason for buying a racer, I was brand new to the sport.

"Second, I was too far back in the line for any of her littermates when trying to buy, nor could I really afford any of them. Third, I was thinking bloodline and breeding purposes.

"In August 2001, I started making inquiries on the Internet and soon received a reply from Gavin Fitzpatrick and his reply convinced me to buy Katie. She cost me roughly \$A600.

"It was during 2003 that Katie really came alive and almost invincible. She regularly broke track records and won race after race after race."

Her litter brother Rossmead Wallaby won the 2003 New Year's Challenge at the North-West Club, and also beat littermates Nancy and Tammy to win the SA Amateur Racing Union National at Saaru in May 2001.

Amazingly Wallaby has already sired a litter to get to the races.

His daughter Noekie (Wallaby-Cindy by a Farloe Melody stud dog called The Other Farloe) ran a track record when winning a heat of the New Year's Challenge at Kromdraai Tokkelos stadium on January 3, 2004.

Wallaby was three years and four months old when Noekie won this heat in January.

High Accent also has a litter by Hot Shot, not the Aussie version of Hotshot, but a South African version by Mr Slippy-She's A Toss all Irish blood.

Two of this litter, Imax and Matrix, have just reached Open Classes.

Her dam Strike High was bred by Highly Blessed's owner Lorraine Ferremi.

She started only seven times for wins in a maiden and fifth grade over 400m at Wangaratta back in 1995.

Lorraine's husband Doug sent High Accent to South Africa.

"Strike High was an outstanding bitch who trialled the track record at Wangaratta as a pup,

but she was hit in the catching pen in one of her races and we had trouble with her after that," he said.

"High Accent was from her litter to Reifenhauer which also included Snake Strike.

"I broke High Accent in but she wasn't much good.

"I was approached by Gavin and Rubina Fitzpatrick about sending a bitch to South Africa.

"Chris Rossoux came to Australia to get some information about racing to take back to his country.

"I was told he had 300 greyhounds back home. I gave him High Accent and before she left for South Africa he got her in pup to Cry Havoc. I'm told they are not allowed to bet over there and racing is for trophies." Ferremi knows all about the career of Katie and her fabulous South African exploits.

It is yet another example of the famous damline he has developed in the past decades.