

Swift dog for The Man



Brian and a yearling ready for sale.

WHEN Brian Swift walked into the Gold Coast greyhound track last month with his first starter for 20 years the boys were waiting for him.

“They didn’t miss me one bit,” said Brian, 70, of his welcome back from the army of old friends he had made in his “previous life” as a greyhound trainer, educator and trial track operator.

Back in the 70s Brian was BIG in greyhound racing with some of the star gallopers of the time, landing betting coups regularly, and establishing and running Galaxy Lodge breaking-in and trial track for years.

Names like Lauries Joe, Daring Fawn, Punters Revenge, Joyful Raider, Pleasant Risk, Glad King, Tanawa Boy etc were all proof of the ability of Brian Swift to train ...

and organize a good old fashioned plunge.

Now he’s back. The first dog he produced, Just Rambo (Just The Best-Toast To This), won a maiden final at the Gold Coast at his second start in a race.

“I’ve never been one to miss an opportunity to have a go at the boys, so they didn’t miss me

when I turned up at the Gold Coast with this dog,” said “Swifty”.

So what has Swiftie been up to for the past 20 years?

“My son Glenn has a good business pinhooking,” he said. “That’s buying weanling thoroughbreds, preparing them for yearling sales and selling them. There’s good money to be made.”

Glenn has been turning over between 10 and 12 yearlings a year for the past 20 years with his dad’s help.

So why is Swiftie back?

“About four or five years ago I had a heart bypass and the doctors told me to get some exercise,” he said. “I started walking around the block with a wireless in my pocket but soon got bored of that.

“I realized if I needed that exercise I might as well get a greyhound to walk.”

Swiftie was never one to waste time on a dog that did not have ability. In only a few months he has tried and got rid of 24 dogs that did not measure up to the standards he has always set himself.

And what standards they were.



Brian Swift and Just Rambo.

While he will be known to most as the trainer of Lauries Joy, Swifty rates Daring Fawn the best he has prepared.

“He won 48 races including the last heats and finals at Rocklea and Brassall,” said Swifty.

“Most of the races in those days were over 300m but he had to run heats and final in the one day.

“Ernie Martin owned him and at the end he was off a two yard handicap. We sold him to Sydney. Any dog that can win 48 races is pretty good.”

But Lauries Joy was something special as well. The son of Pied Rebel-Plumed Right was bought by Laurie O’Keefe on Sqwifty’s advice for \$800 from breeder Patty Rynne.

“I loved red dogs and pick him out when he was a baby as a beautiful pup,” said Swifty. “Patty rang me to say he was travelling a bit light and I talked Laurie into buying him at three months old.”

Lauries Joy raced only eight times but broke two track records, ran a class record at the Gabba and won at Harold Park. At 12 months of age he was beating Swifty’s Gabba dogs up his straight.

“The day he won his maiden he was 16 months old and we got \$5000 on him at Lawnton,” said Swifty. “He broke the track record. That race was the best betting race I have ever seen.”

Retired to stud, Lauries Joy served about 700 bitches according to Swifty.

Glad King was another star who won 14 races straight for the kennel and beat the great Gay Saibot in the last handicap race run at Lawnton.

“And when Punter’s Revenge won a maiden final at the Gabba one night we backed it from 15-1 to 7-4. Eventually Punter’s Revenge won 25 races.”

Galaxy Lodge, named after a show horse ridden by Swifty’s daughter Deb, was a huge success.

“At one time we were trialling 400 dogs on Sunday mornings and 200 on Tuesday and Thursday nights,” he said.

“I was also doing 50 to 80 break-ins a month. At the time there was only Springwood, Waterford and Galaxy Lodge operating.”

At one time Swifty had 150 dogs on the property and not one was his own. He even had 35 dogs in training for Ham Hillier.

But 20 years ago Swifty and wife Beris decided they’d had enough. Merv and Lana Thompson

moved from Darwin and bought the property. That’s when the moved into pinhooking came about.

The Swift family has all been champion riders. Son Glenn and daughter Deb have been champion show riders several times. Deb’s daughters Rachael and Courtney have followed with Courtney, 21, five times champion rider at the Brisbane Ekka and champion rider at both the Sydney and Melbourne Royal Shows.

Glenn even had a stint at training thoroughbreds winning “about 15-20 races” but Swifty says it’s a tough game for trainers.

“You wait three years to find out if a thoroughbred is no good, you wait three months with a greyhound.”

Pinhooking has been good to Glenn and his father. “We buy weanlings on type and feed them up like show horses. One of their buys finished third in a Golden Nugget at the Gold Coast.

Swifty has already added to his kennel.

He has Just Rambo firing and pups by Lohman and Southern Champ* and has high hopes for the youngsters. He admits to “thoroughly enjoying being back in dogs”. “All my life the boys in the game have put s..t on me and they didn’t miss again when I turned up at the Gold Coast with just Rambo. I love it.”



Brian's grandson Jacob