

A Toss-up who is the best



By **DAVID BRASCH**

ABOUT 20 years ago Peter Giles decided he'd had enough of travelling around Victoria chasing a winner or two with his team of greyhounds. So he gave up the game for five years to go into a car yard.

"It was a disaster," he admits today. "The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence and that's how I felt at that time.

"I even sold insurance for a while."

It was enough to convince Giles greyhound racing was where he was meant to be.

"A newsagent friend of mine called and said why didn't we get a team of dogs together again," he said.

That was 15 years ago.

Within a short time Giles had City Blitz in his kennel and had won a Melbourne Cup and a swag of other races.

Giles was already convinced he was in the right game.



Since then he has become a household name in the industry, specially with stayers and it was his prowess with that type of greyhound that came to the fore again when Toss O'Reilly won the recent Group 1 Albion Park Gold Cup.

As is often the case, Giles produced the third placegetter Endless Pit as well.

"I'm always on the lookout for dogs, specially

stayers, and a friend had spotted Toss O'Reilly," said Giles. "I rang Marty Hallinan and tried to buy the dog but he wasn't for sale.

"A month or so later Marty rang and asked me to train him."

The rest is history ... but only part of Giles' own greyhound racing history that has seen him become one of the greats.

It was 40 years ago when Peter Giles broke a leg which forced him out of football for a while. To give him something to do while the leg healed, Giles hobbled off to Warragul dogs.

"I ended up getting a giveaway bitch called Wingette," he said.

"She died a maiden, but for 11 or 12 runs in a row she was placed in maiden distance races at Sandown and Olympic Park and got me interested in training.

"At the time I was working on a 1500 acre sheep property and earning 10 quid a week. The bitch was brining in the same money each week.

"I bought a few pups, the sheep property was subdivided and I was out of work, so I took up a clerk's license for a bookie."

Amazingly, Giles would eventually buy one of those acreage properties where he worked as a young man and still lives today.

From the clerk job, he became a bookie himself with the dogs being trained by his wife Jeannine.

They won plenty of races, but took the opportunity for a break and a stint at selling cars and insurance.

Since he has returned to the industry the list of good dogs to go through the kennel has been staggering.

"I suppose you would say City Blitz is the best dog I've had because he won the Melbourne Cup and a lot of other races and how can you ignore that," said Giles.

Bonjour Cecie was great to Giles on the track and of course off it by producing Floodgate, a great

galloper herself and dam of such stars as Jack Junior, Pete's Boss, Ashlee Jeannine etc.

"And Floodfawn who was an outstanding bitch and now has a litter 12 months old to Brett Lee."

While Giles has had more than his share of top grade sprinters, it is the stayers he will always be remembered for.

"I always have 30 dogs in training, although 10 of those are usually on the way up or injured," he said.

"And we don't train them any differently."

Giles has a number of 100 metre gallops in which he puts three or four of his racing dogs in each day to gallop with each other.

He also has a 10 acre paddock and once a week takes each racing dog, in pairs, to have a free gallop accompanied by Giles himself.

"You get to know the dogs who want to work, and the ones who don't and match them up."

He says he always gets potential owners ringing for him to find a potential stayer. It's a reputation he's happy with.

"I've always got an eye out for a good stayer, it's how we came to chase Toss O'Reilly," he said.

While he has been at the top of his game for years, Giles still has plenty of aims in life.

"I've never won an Australian Cup, or a Silver Chief," he said.

"They are races I want to win. But I can go to Sale on a Saturday afternoon and win a race worth \$700 and still get as excited as ever.

"Of course Group 1s are what we all chase, but winning any race is a big thrill."

He says Brett Lee is one of the best dogs he has ever seen race, but considers himself fortunate to have seen the legendary Temlee.

"I don't think you can compare times of yesteryear and today. Temlee is the best I've seen."

Of today's dogs, he has no doubt Surf Lorian would be welcome into his kennel ahead of any other dog in the country.

Group 1 Gold Cup (710m)

Albion Park

1 **TOSS O'REILLY** \$4.60

(Faithful Hawk-Gold Serenade)

Owner: Martin Hallinan

Trainer: Peter Giles

2 **IRINKA BARBIE** \$1.60

(History Lesson-Jackie Rooster)

3 **ENDLESS PIT** \$10

(Dalalla-No Way Gloria)

Others:

4 Greek Grinner \$9

5 Fool's Fiasco \$8

6 Springvale Jinx \$5

7 Tiger Strong \$8

8 Texan Beauty \$26.

Time: 41.76.



Greats to have had the Peter Giles polish include:

Puzzle Prize

Barrio Boy

Tip Top Tears

Our Barney

Regal Bazz

Georgia Brown

Waiting List

Why Complain

Regal Bart

Tears Of Jupiter

Westend Prince

Hotshow Lil

Regal Tiger

Naughty Nita

Bronze Token

Floodfawn

Long Shadow

Jeanies Queen

Gate Way

Mr Boswell

Reckless Abandon

Amazing Dancer

Bring The Bacon

Jessica Can

Acacia Dee

Kobble Creek

Jack Junior

Flood Law

Pete's Boss

Ashlee Jeannine

Nowhere To Go

Crystal Light

Bravest Tears

Tearaway Tears

The list goes on and on.