

Even Gerry was surprised with Angel's Darwin Cup victory

CHURCHABLE trainer Gerry Crisci had just about had enough. He knew Wotan Angel could gallop because she had broken in so well. But three wins, at Ipswich, Lismore and the Gold Coast, in 30 starts had just about tried his patience. She had run only five placings. "I think she was too much my friend," said Gerry. "She followed me everywhere." Gerry got to know Ron Phillips when the former Darwin trainer came south to give greyhound racing in Brisbane a try. Ron only stayed a few months before heading back to the Territory. Gerry promised to send him a greyhound. Wotan Angel was that dog. Four days after she arrived, the Reggemite-Minnie's Angel bitch paid \$86 on the TAB when running just .01 outside the track record in winning a heat of the Darwin Cup. "Ron said he would toss her into the heats just to give her a run on the track," Crisci told The Journal.

Five days later, Wotan Angel broke the track record herself when winning the \$15,000 first prize in the Group 3 Darwin Cup. Gerry couldn't believe it. He and Ron shared the stakes and Wotan Angel will stay in Darwin. "She had been trialling very well just before she left to go to Darwin," said Gerry. "She won't come back now. She obviously just loves that track." And the victory was obviously no fluke. Among then beaten brigade were Full Schooner the winner of the Potential Stakes at Wentworth Park and a finalist in the National Derby and Excessive Heat a finalist in the 2003 National Distance Championship and 2004 Adelaide Cup. Top grade Albion Park middle distance galloper Slapsy Maxie was unplaced in the final.