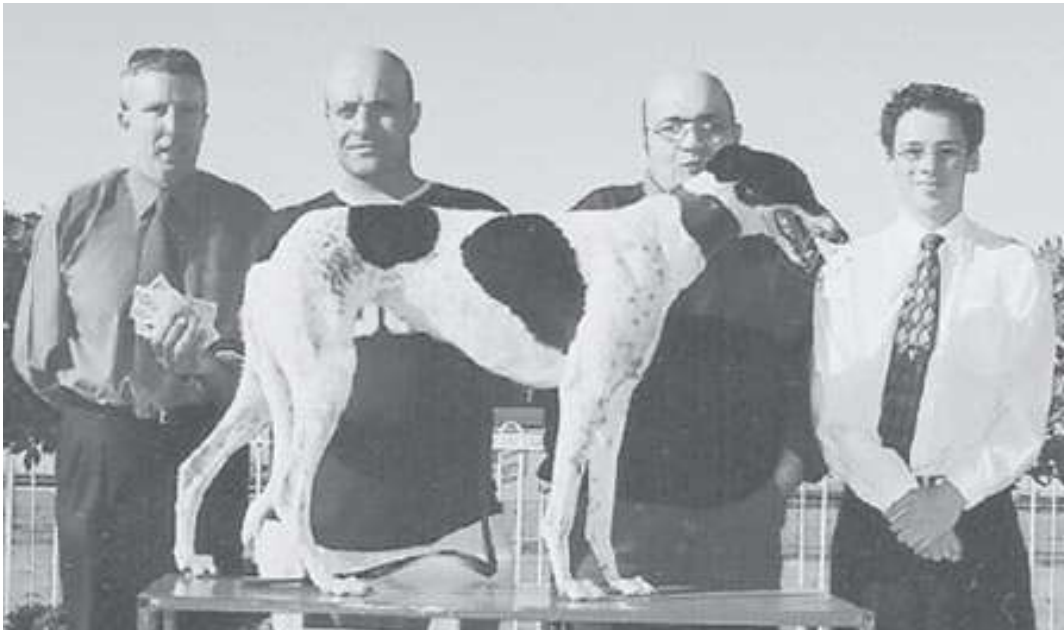




NSW News

Gary Clark



Proud owners ... Angelo Iacono (second from left) at a Wyong presentation after Takimbra had won a final there recently.

JUST when it seemed like time to give up on a young bitch which appeared little chance of making it as a racing proposition, fortune turned for owner Angelo Iacono.

A well bred bitch by Stately Bird- Arctic Affair, Takimbra was destined never to race, injuries haunted her and changing of kennels made little difference.

At the time of writing, Takimbra was unbeaten after five starts, all up the straight at Wyong including two finals the latest defeating another unbeaten dog at the time, Watch Me Thunder.

It was this win that justified Iacono's faith in the bitch.

Her times have got quicker and confidence is at a high. The win was a timely one for his

brother Joe who is fighting his own personal battle.

The past decade has tested both Angelo and Joe to stay involved in the sport of racing. Before greyhounds they owned a few racehorses and that experience was enough to lure them away from racing ownership.

At times they thought they may have had one good enough to celebrate but just when it was ready for the track, injuries haunted their expectations.

"I thought enough with the horses, the disappointment was too great and I got a mortgage instead," Angelo said.

"But as anyone in racing knows, it is very addictive, and once in the blood, it's hard to detach yourself."

So the time was right to buy his first dog a Bobniak-Arctic Affair youngster back in 1998.

As fortune had it there was no joy there until they purchased Takimbra, the next litter to Arctic Affair.

Their run of luck as owners looked like continuing when nothing appeared to be going right. "She continued to break down and broke her metacarpal," Angelo said. Her weight dropped and we gave her plenty of time. After nearly eight months, Takimbra was tried again and possibly for the final time.

The trend continued for Angelo and Joe and after a qually run at Richmond, Takimbra fractured her metacarpal again.

"I thought that was it and decided to keep her as a pet," Angelo said. At the time Takimbra weighed around 27k and looked very lean.

Angelo was recommended trainer Lola Burgess and one last chance beckoned.

Her weight rose to 31k, and she seemed to become interested in racing.

Kept up the straight with her trialling, she was responding well and the thought was to confine her career early away from the circle.

It was working, winning five from as many starts at Wyong and looking brilliant.

She has box speed and a love for racing. The time to fully test her is next with a post to post in town.

Angelo has now tried his ability at training and his first dog, Pure Politics, ran third at her first start at Lithgow.

Takimbra is the real story though and, for brother Joe, she has been the medicine that was needed.

Joe has faced a few hard months and although still not fully recovered, the continued success of his bitch has helped strengthen him in mind at least.

Never give up. One never knows what may be ahead. Angelo found that out, and Joe now believes "hope" is not just a word but reality.