

APRIL 2024 | NEWSLETTER



VICTORIAN SQUARE TROTTERS ASSOCIATION



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Haras des Trotteurs
BREEDING WORLD CLASS TROTTERS



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ANNE-MAREE CONROY - VSTA PRESIDENT

I hope everybody is enjoying their trotting and the exciting racing we have been having. There is plenty to look forward to with the Nutrien sale and race series coming up as well as the Colin Redwood Victorian Square Trotters Association heats and final.

Please put forward your member nominations for our major awards for 2023. These include the -

Bob Conroy Award for Excellence in Trotting;

Colin Redwood Award for continued persistence

Dick Lee Encouragement award for junior drivers.

We are hoping to hold the awards night at Ballarat in April so stay alert for when the night is advertised fully and book your tickets early.

Something that I have learnt recently is that if a horse hasn't raced or trialed for 12 months, it will be ineligible to race until it has trialed satisfactorily. I nominated a horse for a race and discovered it was ineligible for that reason. I'm not sure how long this has been a rule but just thought I would let others know in case someone else gets caught out by this.

Also, congratulations to HRV and Maryborough for their programming on their meeting on Wednesday April 3, with 9 trotting races, most with full fields, and small ratings range giving all horses a chance.

Here are some upcoming feature races to watch out for:

APRIL 6

\$20,000 Mildura Trotters Cup, 2600m, at Mildura

APRIL 10

\$10,000 Nutrien Equine 3yo Trot Classic colts/geldings heats, 2150m, at Bendigo

\$10,000 Nutrien Equine 3yo Trot Classic fillies heats, 2150m, at Bendigo

\$10,000 Nutrien Equine 2yo Trot Classic colts/geldings heats, 2150m, at Bendigo

\$10,000 Nutrien Equine 2yo Trot Classic fillies heats, 2150m, at Bendigo

APRIL 13

\$24,000 Melton Trotters Free-For-All, 2240m, at Melton

\$15,000 Melton Maiden Trot, 2240m, at Melton

APRIL 20

\$150,000 Nutrien Equine 3yo Trot Classic colts/geldings final, 2240m, at Melton

\$150,000 Nutrien Equine 3yo Trot Classic fillies final, 2240m, at Melton

\$75,000 Nutrien Equine 2yo Trot Classic colts/geldings final, 2240m, at Melton

\$75,000 Nutrien Equine 2yo Trot Classic fillies final, 2240m, at Melton

APRIL 21

\$20,000 Eddie Evison Memorial Warragul Trotters Cup, 2627m, at Warragul

APRIL 26

\$25,000 Bendigo Trotters Cup, 2650m, at Bendigo

APRIL 28

\$20,400 Haras des Trotteurs Goulburn Trotters Cup, 2240m, at Goulburn

JUNE 22

\$9240 Darrell Alexander Trotting Championship round 1 heats, 2647m, at Albion Park

JUNE 28

\$9240 Darrell Alexander Trotting Championship round 2 heats, 2647m, at Albion Park

JULY 6

\$54,080 \$9240 Darrell Alexander Trotting Championship final, 2647m, at Albion Park

\$26,578 The Stellar Square 3yo/4yo trotters, 2138m, at Albion Park

JULY 13

\$150,000 The Great Square 3yo/4yo trotters, 2138m, at Albion Park

July 20

\$31,160 Trotters' Sprint, 1660m, at Albion Park

JULY 27

\$100,000 Queensland Trotters Cup, 2138m, at Albion Park



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MEMBERSHIP RENEVAL

2024 MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE

Cost \$30 per individual or \$60 for a named syndicate – For partnerships of 2 or more owners, at least 2 listed owners or syndicates must be current members of the VSTA.

Membership forms are available on our website.

Payment options are:

Online payment

Step 1 - Deposit your money to Victorian Square Trotters Association Account

BSB - 633-000 - Account no - 11-019-9361. (Please put your name as a reference.)

Step 2 - email vicsquaretrotters@hotmail.com with the number of memberships and list the full names for each membership accompanied with their email address and telephone no.

Alternatively, you can pay directly to any of the VSTA committee members.

If you need to contact the VSTA please call **Ian (0417 385 113)** or **Katrina (0438 255 232)**.



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FEATURE RACES

BIG FOUR NZ BOUND

All roads lead to New Zealand for a quartet of Australian star trotters.

Just Believe, Callmethebreze, Queen Elida and Arcee Phoenix are locked in to take part in the inaugural \$NZ575,000 TAB Trot slot race at Cambridge on April 12.

It is an exciting time for trotting in Australia and having a strong representation in the new NZ feature race will provide another chapter.

Australia's line-up in the eight-strong field:

JUST BELIEVE (Taylor St Racing Syndicate) Jess Tubbs.

CALLMETHEBREEZE (Haras des Trotteurs) trained by Anton Golino.

QUEEN ELIDA (TAB NZ) trained by Brent Lilley.

ARCEE PHOENIX (Aldebaran Park) trained by Chris Svanosio.

The four have dominated the season to date.

Just Believe has won the Group 1 Australian Grand Prix along with the Group 2 Knight Pistol, Group 2 Dullard Cup and Scotch Notch Memorial.

Callmethebreze has made a big impression in his first season in Australia, winning the Group 1 Great Southern Star and Group 1 Hammerhead (NSW).

Queen Elida has dominated mares company by taking out the Group 2 Breed For Speed final and listed La Coocaracha.

Arcee Phoenix won the first Group 1 of the season - the Maori Mile.

The
TAB
TROT



FEATURE RACES

AURORA AUSTRALIS TITLE TO JUST BELIEVE

Just Believe's epic Australian Trotting Grand Prix triumph capped a two-month domination of Victoria's squaregaiting features and secured him a second-straight Aurora Australis victory.

The Jess Tubbs-prepared star accumulated 37 points from his five appearances in the eight-race series to finish 14 clear of nearest rival Callmeth breeze.

Just Believe won the Grand Prix, Knight Pistol, V L Dullard Trotters Cup, a Great Southern Star heat and ran second in the GSS Final to defend his title from 2023.

Chris Svanosio-trained Arcee Phoenix finished overall third on 20 points.

"With the possibility of multiple trips in the year ahead, winning the Aurora Australis will be a welcome bonus for Harry's owners," Tubbs said.

"The interest in him from across the globe has been quite phenomenal to witness and travelling with him means even more people will be able to see him racing live."

Tubbs said the messages, phone calls and comments of support had been "overwhelming" and it was "pretty special" that people largely unfamiliar with trots were still able to recognise the way Just Believe goes about things.

"As an industry, that's something to celebrate and we count ourselves so lucky to be associated with such an incredible horse," she said.

Aurora Australis points were accumulated on an 8, 5, 3, 2, 1 basis for placings in the Maori Mile, Knight Pistol, V L Dullard Trotters Cup, Great Southern Star heats, Great Southern Star Final, Bruce Skeggs Cranbourne Trotters Cup and Australian Trotting Grand Prix through January and February.

As a result, Just Believe's owners secure a \$20,000 cash bonus.

Source: Harness Racing Victoria - Tim O'Connor



MONTHLY ROUND UP

AROUND THE TRACKS

FEATURE DOUBLE FOR LILLEY

Brent Lilley trained a feature double at Charlton on Sunday, March 17.

Kyvalley Hotspur NZ scored in the \$20,000 Charlton Trotters Cup and Kyvalley Heist NZ captured the \$15,000 Central Victorian Trotters Championship Final.

A 6yo by Muscle Hill, Kyvalley Hotspur now has three country cups to his name - following last year's Yarra Valley Cup and this year's Cobram Cup.

Kyvalley heist also won a championship heat at Boort.

Kyvalley Hotspur and Kyvalley Heist are each out of Love You Fra mares.

LEE CUP TRIFECTA

Ecklin South trainer Paddy Lee achieved a rare feat in the Terang Trotters Cup on Saturday, February 17.

He produced the trifecta with Keayang Chucky winning from Keayang Ignite and Keayang Xena.

BREED FOR SPEED

When it comes to the Lyn McPherson Memorial Breed For Speed Gold Final, no one has driven more winners than the history-breaking Chris Alford.

He won the feature for the fourth time when Queen Elida saluted on February 24.

Alford also won on Spidergirl in 2014, I Am Pegasus in 2020 and Sleepee in 2021.

Queen Elida rated 1:55.5 for the 1720m, - second only to Red Hot Tooth (1:55.2 in 2017) since it was first run in 2010.

Queen Of Quebec won the silver final and Rockford Peach the bronze final.



YESTER-YEAR FEATURE

MARY BEVERLY REMEMBERED

Bob Conroy was a relative late starter in harness racing. The Daylesford horseman was 35 years of age when he took out a trainer-driver licence.

It would be a decision made two years later though to purchase a 1963 Ardri yearling filly (out of Noble Scott mare Rondolette) from the nearby Dixie Stud at Trentham in partnership with his wife Pat that would change the course of his life.

The filly would go onto race as Mary Beverley, named after Pat's sister - firstly as a pacer and then rising to greater heights as trotter.

Mary Beverley showed promise as a pacer. She finished fourth in the Victorian Oaks and enjoyed dual metropolitan successes.

The change in gait came after having a foal while off the racing scene injured.

It would lead to her greatest moment - victory in the 1973 VL Dullard Trotters Cup over 15 furlongs, 134 yards at The Royal Melbourne Showgrounds at only her fourth start as a trotter.

She led for the five laps of the Showgrounds to finish ahead of Ralph Ford's Christine Maree.

This success helped to launch Conroy's career as a full-time trainer with the prizemoney and the enhancement to his reputation being the launchpad for a long list of achievements, including 15 times as the leading trainer of trotters in Victoria.

Mary Beverley's success was greeted with much acclaim.

Pride of place in the Conroy family's scrapbook is a congratulatory letter from the Boort Trotting Club.

This letter provided the impetus for the running of the Mary Beverley Central Victorian Trotting Championship heat at Boort on March 3 this year.

It was a special moment for the Conroys, who were proud to play a part in re-igniting a special memory by sponsoring the race.

Kyvalley Heist won the heat and went on to win the final at Charlton on March 17.

HOOFNOTE

Mary Beverley went onto produce five winners as a broodmare - Caulfield Jack, Frank Kelly, After The Storm, Clare Mary and Final Look. Final Look was the only trotter among them

Mary Beverley continues to have an influence on the track today being the fifth dam of lightly raced 3yo trotting filly Dora Lee.





INTERNATIONAL FEATURE

GREETINGS FROM FINLAND

I am Katri Keranen from a cereal cropping and livestock farm, run an employment agency supplying labour for the dairy industry and harness racing enthusiast. Born into a harness racing family I have 2 uncles who train and drive trotters in Finland and a cousin in Sweden who also trains and drives

During 2015 I visited Australia, Victoria in particular where I went to a harness meeting at Shepparton and saw the trotter Kvintet Avenger (imported from Finland about 6 months earlier) who I was familiar with. He had earned about \$65,000 in 12 starts, so I thought I should have a trotter race in Australia. Everyone at home thought the idea was absolutely crazy.

It took a fair bit of organizing, but after 8 months my yearling filly was on a flight to Australia. She was put in the care of Lisa Miles and raced by the name Hiding My Heart, had tons of ability, but a bit "European" in temperament so her racing career was short. She made it to the final of the 3yo Breeders Crown although almost a year younger than her rivals, being born in July of a Northern Hemisphere summer.

After retirement she was off to stud duties and now has two fillies, a 3yo Hard Rock Angel (Father Patrick) and a 2yo un-named by Andover Hall in the care of Kate Hargreaves. Hard Rock Angel is now raced by a syndicate of 14 owners from

Finland and 2 Australians. Most of them having raced horses before but a couple of first timers also. Unfortunately Hiding My Heart missed to Bold Eagle.

The racing in Australia is very different to Finland as is the training and shoeing. Australian rules, racing conditions and driving tactics are all very unfamiliar to us. So every time our horse races we learn something new. When Hard Rock Angel misbehaved behind the starting gate and got the ODM marking, we had to Google the meaning.

Funnily, the Covid pandemic was the one thing the showcased Australian harness racing to us Europeans the most. As all racing was banned in Finland we had broadcasts from Sweden and Australia and we still have one meeting a day, but cannot view Trot Vision.

I must mention Just Believe and the whole team Australia behind him at the Elitloppet and Aldebaran Zeus in USA. Now the whole world knows where the world's best trotters come from.



VIC COUNTRY CUP SERIES

COUNTRY TROTTERS CUPS ROUND UP

Mercenary and Kyvalley Hotspur have made impressive starts to the Victorian country trotters cups circuit.

Each has saluted in two to date this season.

Mercenary, trained by Kelvin Barker at Mitchell Park on the outskirts of Ballarat, has won the Ararat and Horsham features.

Kyvalley Hotspur, from the Bolinda stable of Brent Lilley, has the Cobram and Charlton cups to his name, as well as finishing third at Cranbourne.

While yet to win one, the Paddy Lee-trained Keayang Xena has been ultra-consistent.

She has finished third at Terang, and second at Ararat, Horsham and Charlton.

Although she had to cross the South Australian border, Keayang Xena did get an elusive win in the Mt Gambier Trotters Cup the night before stepping out at Charlton.

COBRAM TROTTERS CUP

- Kyvalley Hotspur (David Moran) 1
- Aldebaran Keepa (Chris Alford) 2
- Blue Colman (Ryan Sanderson) 3
- Winner trained by Brent Lilley

CRANBOURNE TROTTERS CUP

- Mufaso Metro (John Justice) 1
- Im Ready Jet (Nathan Jack) 2
- Kyvalley Hotspur (Chris Alford) 3
- Winner trained by John Justice

TERANG TROTTERS CUP

- Keayang Chucky (Glen Craven) 1
- Keayang Ignite (Jason Lee) 2
- Keayang Xena (Lachie Cook) 3
- Winner trained by Paddy Lee

GUNBOWER CENTENARY TROTTERS CUP

Baxter (Tristan Larsen) 1

Tripod (Austin Mifsud) 2

Quake Proof (Anne-Marie Conroy) 3

Winner trained by Brent Lilley

ARARAT TROTTERS CUP

Mercenary (James Herbertson) 1

Keayang Xena (Lochie Cook) 2

Blue Coman (Kerryn Manning) 3

Winner trained by Kelvin Barker

BOORT TROTTERS CUP

Wish Upona Dream (Michael Bellman) 1

Berriesandcherries (Donna Castles) 2

Tripod (Austin Mifsud) 3

Winner trained by Rebecca Morrissey

WANGARATTA TROTTERS CUP

Berriesandcherries (Donna Castles) 1

Daiquiri (Austin Mifsud) 2

Blue Woman (Shannon O'Sullivan) 3

Winner trained by Donna Castles

BIRCHIP TROTTERS CUP

Sonny Brooke (Luke Dunne) 1

Show Me Moolah (Ewa Justice) 2

Alluring Tyron (Jack Laugher) 3

Winner trained by Tori Hutchins

HORSHAM TROTTERS CUP

Mercenary (James Herbertson) 1

Keayang Xena (Lochie Cook) 2

Wish Upona Dream (Michael Bellman) 3

Winner trained by Kelvin Barker

CHARLTON TROTTERS CUP

Kyvalley Hotspur (Chris Alford) 1

Keayang Xena (Lochie Cook) 2

One Over All NZ (Greg Sugars) 3

Winner trained by Brent Lilley





FEATURE RACE

JUSTICE'S RULE IN REDWOOD MEMORIAL

Father and daughter John and Ewa Justice have combined to capture the 34 edition of the Colin Redwood Memorial VSTA Handicap Final.

The took Aldebaran Boyd to victory at Melton on Saturday, March 30.

The five-year-old son of Aldebaran Eagle US found the back of leader Girls Gotflair and then used the sprint lane to salute.

The Girls Gotflair held on for second, with Illawong Larajay getting third.

HEAT WINNERS:

Heat 1 at Ballarat: Maestro (trained by Bent Lilley).

Heat 2 at Cranbourne: Illawong Larajay (trained by Jess Tubbs).

Heat 3 at Maryborough: Luvski (trained by Gary Donaldson).



Photo: Stuart McCormick

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF WINNERS

FIRST TIME WINNERS

FEBRUARY - MARCH

CREATABLE (Creatine US-Springhasprung) 4yo gelding - bred and raced by VM El-Kishin; trained and driven by Laura Wilson. Winner at third start at Echuca on February 1. Unraced Springhasprung is dam of 3 winners.

THAT OTHER THING (Aldebaran Eagle US-Aldebaran Deegan NZ) 4yo gelding - bred by Aldebaran Lodge; raced by RJ Cross, M and R Hughes; trained by Mark Hayes; driven by Michael Bellman. Win at 31st start at Charlton on February 5.

VICI BLOOM (Orlando Vici Fra-KD Muscles NZ) 4yo mare - bred by Yabby dam Farms; raced by RJ Jones, RJ Clarke, DH Watt. Trained by Michael Watt; driven by Tayla French. Her breakthrough came at her 30th start at Bendigo on February 8.

LADY VICI (Orlando Vici Fra-Im Lady Angus NZ) 4yo mare - bred by Yabby Dam Farms; raced by J and S Vassallo; trained by Joe Vassallo; driven by Greg Sugars. Her first win came at her second start at Melton on February 16. First foal out of Im Lady Angus.

TRIAGE (Majestic Son Ca-Waiting Room US) 4yo gelding: bred and raced by LK and HR cattle; trained by Hugh Cathels; driven by Glenn Hunter. Winner at his second start at Warragul on February 19.

GRACIAS NZ (Royal Aspirations NZ-Kiitos NZ) 4yo gelding - bred by KS Edmonds; raced by MW and MT Butterworth, Decron Horse Care; trained by Chris Svanosio; driven by Kerryn Manning. The NZ import broke through at this 10th outing at Melton on February 24.

DEREK JET (Volstead US-Cyclone Jeter NZ) 3yo gelding - bred by Yabby Dam Farms; raced by RM O'Kane, G Montgomery; D Jack; trained and driven by Nathan Jack. Saluted on debut in the Lunar Lass 3yo Classic at Melton on February 24.

SUZYS DREAM (Dreamcatcher Swe-Mememe) 4yo mare; bred and raced by MJ and DA Grace, trained by Donna Castles; driven by Doc Wilson. She became the fourth winner by Dreamcatcher at Boort on March 3.

WORTH WAITING (Volstead US-Sunshine Annie) 3yo filly: bred by MJ and DA Grace; raced by JK Nalder, J Hearn, MJ Grace; trained and driven by Rebecca Bartley. The win came at her second win. Third winner out of the Sundon mare.

McGEE (Centurion ATM US-Pepperell Magic) 4yo gelding: bred by Trump Bloodstock; raced by SG Carter, MP Alush, DH Burns; trained by Phil Chircop, driven by Greg Sugars. A win at Ballarat on March 8 after six starts. Half-brother to four winners, including Havana Magic (11) and NZ-based multiple group 1-placed All Cashed Up (10 wins).

MISTER BLINDSIDE (Muscle Mass US-Betty Hall) 3yo colt: bred by CA and HL Lang; raced by H. Plumb, SD Randall; trained and given by Geoff Webster. Saluted at his fourth start at Ballarat on March 8. First foal out of Angus Hall mare Betty Hall (4 wins).

MEGA SPUR (Pegasus Spur Ca-El Scorcho) 3yo filly: bred by Illinlea; raced by S Figliola, J Glavas; trained and driven by Geoff Webster. Fourth winner out of El Scorcho, which has also left in-form NSW-based Constantinople. This win came at Maryborough on March 8.

CLAUDYS SECRET (Centurion ATM US-All Finese) 4yo mare: bred by GJ Underwood; raced by MK Eastman, SJ Sharp, SA Gall, RJ McKenzie; trained by Kent Harpley; driven by Ash Manton. She opened her account at Birchip on March 10. All Finese now has four winners, including group 1 winner Claudys Princess (22 wins) and Claudys Prince (14 wins).

RILEYS PEGASUS (Pegasus Spur Ca-Goodgirltruscott) 4yo entire: bred by B Angove, raced by TH McGuigan, RP Duffy; trained by Ryan Duffy; driven by Darby McGuigan.

A second-start victory at Geelong on March 14.

KEYANG GYPSY (Father Patrick US-Gypsy Flair) 3yo filly: bred by DJ and SB Poole; raced and trained by Marg Lee; driven by Jason Lee. She won at her second start at Maryborough on March 18. Half-sister to Banglez (5 wins) and Just A Bit Touchy (9). Gypsy Flair is a sibling of 8 winners, including Mighty Maori (40 wins), A Touch Of Flair (34), Son Of Flair (27) and Down Under Muscles (17).

KEYANG TWEETYBIRD (Father Patrick US-Illawong Helios) 3yo filly: bred by Alabar Bloodstock; raced and trained by Marg Lee; driven by Jason Lee. Raced away by 33.6m at second start at Terang on March 20.

ATABOY CHARLIE (What The Hill US-Graciella Pinevale) 4yo gelding: bred and raced by RS and MF Thompson; trained by Chris Svanosio; driven by Taylor Youl. It was lucky seventh starts at Ballarat on March 22.

ATM ACCOUNT (Centurion ATM US-My Account) 3yo filly: bred and raced by KM Beer; trained by Anthony Butt and Sonya Smith; driven by Anthony Butt. This came at his second start at Ballarat on March 28.



SHES SKY HIGH (Skyvalley NZ-Peggyhall) 2yo filly: bred by C Abela; raced by Evolution Lodge; trained by Tyrone Abela; driven by Chris Alford. Scored on debut at Maryborough on March 25.

MISTA WALKER (Majestic Son Ca-Stonesadelle) 5yo gelding: bred and raced by WM TJ MA Smith; trained by Geoff Walker; driven by Jodi Quinlan. The win came at his 26th career start at Ballarat on March 28.

HOORAH PHILTRA (Betterthancheddar US-Phirey Piltra) 3yo gelding: bred by PE, TA, PH Wade; raced by PE, TA, PH Wade, JR Souter, T, CA Henger; trained by Michael Blackmore; driven by James Herbertson. Winner at Echuca on March 31.

SPONSOR THANK YOU

We appreciate our Member Recognition Award Sponsors – Ranvet, Maryborough Harness Racing Club & Function Complex, Ballarat & District Trotting Club Inc, Bendigo Harness Racing Club, Black Horse Naturals, Claire Weston Photography, Mick Barby Racing Stables, Harness Racing Victoria, World's Best Hoof Oil, Dynavyte, Katrina Knight and the Knight Family.



The VSTA has a bi monthly member recognition award. We are constantly looking for nominations of a member you think fits our criteria. Note that the nominee must be a member for 2023 which you can see the membership list on our website. Please forward any nomination to the VSTA email.

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