

Warrenbri Stock Horses go to the USA

There is a lot in store for Warrenbri Stock Horse Stud over the next few months as they fly Warrenbri stallions WARRENBRI WARREGO and WARRENBRI COOPER and select mares to the USA to begin a breeding programme.

The first step to take the horses over there was made six years ago by Bridget Knight and it has been a lifelong voyage for Simon Knight, led by his father the late Peter Knight, to take the Warrenbri horses to an international level.

A partnership with Guy McLean began about two years ago and together Simon and Guy visited the States in November 2007 to see what opportunities were available to promote the Australian Stock Horse and Guy McLean's horsemanship in the 30 million horse owner proximity.

The response was extremely encouraging and with that came a lot of long hard work to make everything eventuate. The process of setting up the stud here in Australia to be able to take at least two of the best stallions and two or three mares is something the Knights have been working on for the past five years and they are confident the stud here has a strong and valuable amount of horse flesh without leaving a gap in the home and heart of the Warrenbri Stock Horse Stud.

"The venture is a huge risk on our part I suppose and it's a bit worrying at times, but if you don't have a go, you don't know. All I can say is that we are giving it our best shot. I have faith in the horses we've got and I do believe the American public will receive them well" says Simon.

It has been a big year for the stud in many different ways. WARRENBRI HOPE, a colt donated to Brett Welsh on behalf of Outback Spectacular on Queensland's Gold Coast, was auctioned at January's Conrad Jupiters Magic Millions 2009 Yearling Sale, raising \$48,000 for the Cancer Research Foundation. When approached with the idea by Brett Welsh, Simon and Bridget had no hesitation when making the decision to donate WARRENBRI HOPE in memory and respect of Simon's father, the late Peter Knight. WARRENBRI HOPE was named accordingly, 'belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances in one's life'. He since has been excelling in his classes around Sydney, sashing Champion Stock Horse Exhibit at Castle Hill (21st - 22nd March), Luddenham and Champion Ridden Exhibit at Minto in his first few shows and has really impressed his new owner Nick Moraitis and his show exhibition team led by Jodie Peever.

Several other Warrenbri bred horses are achieving great results for their new owners including WARRENBRI ELLIE who, in her eighth ever campdraft, took out the Restricted Open in Injune this year with a score of 90. Congratulations go to Madonna Campbell in her second year of competition with WARRENBRI ELLIE, also taking out the Maiden Campdraft in Mitchell with 272 starters.



A huge honour for Simon, Bridget and family is loaning the bronze statue of WARRENBRI ROMEO - IS, sculpted by the late Eddie Hackman, to display in the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame while the family travel through North America. On 1st August 2009, the horse's birthday, the official handover will be made to Ben Maguire, on behalf of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre. Warrenbri encourages all Australian Stock Horse lovers and breeders to support the centre by visiting on their way through Longreach next to see the tribute to this magnificent sire.

"The facility [Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame] is a wonderful setup, telling the stories of our bush heroes and being a great representation of Outback Australia - something we are all proud to be a part of. The new Cattleman Bar and Grill facilities are magnificent. It has created a relaxed and comfortable setting for functions and a great spot to enjoy a meal with your family."

We hope that by having the statue of WARRENBRI ROMEO - IS and a brief account of his history and achievements, will create interest in the Australian Stock Horse there at the Outback Heritage Centre and open the door for other breeders and owners of great Stock Horses to display their history too. It would be great to see a section dedicated to the Australian Stock Horse.

So what does it involve to take horses to America?

Well, getting them on the plane and through quarantine is the easy part from this end - the Thoroughbred racing industry has that happening regularly and efficiently. They depart from Melbourne and land in Los Angeles, then after a few days, Simon, Guy and the horses travel by truck to Fort Worth, Dallas, Texas.

Organising all the entertainment shows, visas, business arrangements and everything here in Australia has been a big part of the process, not to mention Simon and Bridget managing more than 70 horses at the stud on Mitchell Downs, Mitchell. The wonderful help of Geraldine Doumany of Austrade Brisbane and Randall Tosh, Austrade Kansas City has enabled the Warrenbri team to follow down all the professional avenues about exporting an Australian breed and their support has been fantastic.

Friends and family of both Bridget and Simon have been enormous support and have helped tremendously with the best interest in mind for the stud and the breed.

"It's the kind of story we want to tell to the American public, of our Australian mateship and how it symbolises how we have bred our horses. We will do anything for them and they will do anything for us to get the job done. For all of us here at home, we are living this story every day, but there is something really unique about it for the rest of the world and we will do our best to portray that story to the Americans, our values, our spirit and what we have become from our Australian ancestry".

The Light Horsemen will be a significant part of telling that story. The Boer and First World War - a war that Simon's Great Uncle Thomas Carl Knight was a part of in the 12th Light Horse Regiment, one of the two regiments that totalled 800 men that courageously charged 4,000 troops into Beersheeba.

"Reading over the letters written by Tom and hearing the stories of what effect that had on the men after the war happened, is why I'm most passionate about our men and our horses. Their incredible courage and tenacity is the driving force behind all of this and instead of letting that powerful part of history slip away, I feel very strongly about passing that on, it is an integral part of our horse's bloodline and genetic makeup" says Simon.

Of course, our own sport of Campdrafting will be another part of the story and the Australian Stock Horses. "Although we don't envisage a huge following first up, we will need to build on getting the attributes of the Australian Stock Horse out there in the public's eye and educate the American horse lover to the benefits of crossing their good mares to our Stock Horse bloodlines.

And how does Guy McLean fit into all of the picture?

"Guy McLean has many wonderful talents. His imagination and dedication to his horsemanship, his creativity and expression through his bush poetry and by having the incredible showmanship skills to be able to deliver it all, I just see a fantastic future ahead of him and with the common ground we have between us, we can go over to America together as a partnership and really make a go of it".

Guy and Simon will display and market the horses towards the huge pleasure horse industry over there, showing the different

disciplines the Australian Stock Horse can compete at and show in, showing their versatility, endurance and cool-minded temperament. The idea of work, work, work all week long and then they go out and be truly competitive in Polocrosse Tournaments, Stockman's Challenges and run several runs in a Campdraft on the weekend are the things that will show how versatile and tough they are.

The journey to this point has been unimaginable in itself to say the least. "We have met some amazingly talented and switched on individuals. It encourages us to know we are on the right track when we have been given these opportunities. Bernard Uechtriz of Horse TV in America is an integral part of our future in America, we value his support and guidance and are looking forward to working closely with him."

"The secret ingredient to making this all come together is believing in our horses and the talents of our people, staying focused on our goals - it's what keeps our team and family strong, we trust we are going in the right direction."

Key contributors to the progressive nature of Warrenbri Stock Horse Stud is all about thinking outside the box, to always keep improving, making our good better and our better best. "We know there is a long hard road ahead for us but we are all looking forward to the upcoming challenges and the experiences it presents."

Simon and Bridget would like to thank The Australian Stock Horse Society, the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre, Horse TV, Austrade Australia, Barastoc and all their fellow family and friends, ASH breeders and lovers for all their wonderful support.

To keep updated along the way, please visit the www.warrenbristud.com.au website for more information. 🌐

Anti-clockwise from Opposite page Top:
- Simon Knight on WARRENBRI WARREGO
- WARRENBRI ELLIE and Madonna Campbell
- WARRENBRI HOPE, Conrad Jupiters Magic Millions 2009 Yearling Sale, ridden by Brett Welsh
- WARRENBRI COOPER
- L to R: Bridget, Jack, Georgia and Simon Knight

