



MEDIA RELEASE
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Laurels Upset Winner

By Mick Floyd

Gunda Bale (\$29.70) caused one of the biggest upsets in the history of the Macro Meats Laurels when the rank outsider proved too good at Sandown Park Thursday night.

With first split record holder Purcell Bale missing the start from box 2, the field jostled for position in the run to the first turn. Many greyhounds found trouble however Gunda Bale stuck fast to the rails and found herself three lengths clear on entering the back straight.

The chasing pack set off in pursuit of the unexpected front runner, however they could do little to reign in the lamp lighter, Gunda Bale going on to defeat the gallant Oenjay Dancer (\$8.90) by one and a half lengths with favourite and kennel mate Langi Bale (\$4.50) a further one and a half lengths away third in 30.01 seconds.

Gunda Bale was one of four finalists for master trainer Graeme Bate and was the least fancied of the quartet. She was sent to the boxes rated a \$35 chance by TAB – the only greyhound in the race to start at a price greater than \$8.50.



Gunda Bale proves too good in Laurels final (All Pics Paul Munt)

“I threw her into the series thinking she might be an improver and she’s just got better with each start,” said Bate.

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“They didn’t run much time, but she’s won the Laurels.”

Gunda Bale has now won 11 of her 30 career starts and took her prize money to \$73,275.

Gunda Bale is Bate’s fifth Macro Meats Laurels winner following Moonabel Gem (1997), Hail A Harley (2001), Katella Bale (2002) and Up And Away (2010). Gunda Bale also provided owner Paul Wheeler his Australian Cup winning chaser Dyna Lachlan’s first Group race winner.

The Macro Meats Laurels was first run in 1963 and is one of the Club’s most prestigious events. Restricted to bitches up to 30 months of age, the Laurels brings together the nation’s best young females and many on the race’s honour roll have gone on to not only have an impact on the track, but also in the breeding barn.

Following the Macro Meats Laurels presentation, Graeme Bate received the Sandown Greyhound of the Year award for Irma Bale’s stunning 2012 performances at Sandown Park.



A Happy team post-race at Sandown Park

First run in 1964, the Macro Meats Laurels is Victoria’s premier race for young female greyhounds, and boasts icons of the sport including Australian Greyhound Racing Association Hall of Fame members Winifred Bale, Sandi’s Me Mum and Paua To Burn on its honour roll.

After the placed runners the field finished in the following order 4th Miss Mozoltov (\$6.20), 5th Born Ali (\$10.00), 6th Purcell Bale (\$3.30), 7th Cintiarna (\$10.20) and Xylia Allen (\$6.60).

Gunda Bale is raced by Paul Wheeler and trained by Graeme Bate at Lara in Victoria, she is a Black & White bitch whelped September 2010 by Dyna Lachlan from Spiral Bale (Spiral Nikita x Arivanda Bale. Gunda Bale has won 11 and been placed 10 times from her 30 starts and with the \$50,000 first prize for the Laurels it took her current stake earnings to \$73,275.

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Recognized Australia wide as the pinnacle age restricted bitches classic the Laurels was first conducted by the Sandown Club in 1964 when won by Tara Princess. It is a very much sought after Group 1 event with the winner usually acknowledged as a very valuable brood bitch as well as most carve out a successful race career. It has also been proven over the years that most of the finalists are bitches that produce when they go to stud and some have become house hold names after producing some of the superstars of the sport. The Classic has found some outstanding winners over the years none the least 1965 champ Cheltenham Lass who later in her career was runner up and won a Melbourne Cup as well as runner up in an Australian Cup. Odious who went on to win an Australian Cup in 1976, Carrington Jade won a Melbourne Cup in 1976. Cavalier Queen won the Adelaide Cup in 1977. Paua To Burn won the 2005 Easter Egg and 2004/ 2005 Group 1 Sapphire Crown. Plus two other winners are Hall of Fame superstars Winifred Bale and Sandi's Me Mum. The race will now continue to be staged in December after a revamp of the AGRA Group Race calendar commenced in July 2010 it considered a better age time for the young bitches and it will also coincide with the running of the Silver Chief for the same aged dog pups. Listed below is the Laurels Classic Honour roll highlighted by so many stars that enjoyed outstanding careers.

1964 **Tara Princess**, 1965 **Cheltenham Lass**, 1966 **Ever Present**, 1967 **Magic Fuel**, 1968 **Enapetic**, 1969 **Watch A Flash**, 1970 **La Rate**, 1971 **Lady Of Rome**, 1972 **Blackliner**, 1973 **Crete**, 1974 **Vibrant Lass**, 1975 **Odious**, 1976 **Carrington Jade**, 1977 **Cavalier Queen**, 1978 **Debbie's Wood**, 1979 **Jewel Of All**, 1980 **Sharonlee Girl**, 1981 **Sarah Kuda**, 1982 **Winifred Bale**, 1983 **Wee Rua**, 1984 **Select Girl**, 1985 **Little Nola**, 1986 **Autumn Leaf**, 1987 **Playgirl Bonnie**, 1988 **Dancing Vixen**, 1989 **Sandi's Me Mum**, 1990 **Witchery**, 1991 **Barb's Tune**, 1992 **To Perfection**, 1993 **Suzy Also**, 1994 **Victorious Road**, 1995 **Little Promise**, 1996 **Hanson Kelly**, 1997 **Moonambel Gem**, 1998 **Chersam Honcho**, 1999 **Labyrinth**, 2000 **Creative Whisky**, 2001 **Hail A Harley**, 2002 **Katella Bale**, 2003 **Dance Portrait**, 2004 **Paua To Burn**, 2005 **Maureen Shirly**, 2006 **Pure Burst**, 2007 **Miss Hot Gossip**, 2008 **Hybrid Theory**, 2009 **Boozeroo** and 2010 **C'est La Vie (June)** and **Up And Away (December)** and 2011 **Stetson Donna**.

*****Replay of the final can be viewed on the club's website at:

www.sandowngreyhounds.com.au

Thanks to Michael Floyd Sandown Racing Manager for story content.

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