



MEDIA RELEASE

20th September 2020

Simon Told Helen wins the GCA 2019-2020 Australian Greyhound Of The Year Award



For the first time ever the GCA Australian Greyhound of the Year was presented as an online presentation due to Covid -19. On GCA's Facebook page via Youtube the extremely unique program was the brainchild of GCA EO David Simonette. Titled A Night at the Museum it was certainly a different way of announcing the Award winners for 2019-2020.



Usually held in a different state each year as part of the National Championships it is always a night of nights on the National scene with delegates and club members coming together from all over Australasia to celebrate the occasion.

However, 2020 has been a year like no other in history and innovation has come to the fore in many aspects of life with Greyhound Racing a lucky industry in many ways it has continued to operate in all states apart from a few minor hiccups here and there.

Victorian owned & trained sprint sensation Simon Told Helen won the Greyhound the Year.

The winner was selected by the GCA Racing committee in consultation with industry experts.

Continued Page 2...

The win broke a sequence of six wins in succession for the Wheeler family they had won in 2018-2019 with Orson Allen after winning it for the first time in 2011 with Dyna Tron, they have been successful with Xylia Allen in 2014, Fernando Bale in 2015, Dyna Double One took the title in 2015-2016, and then the mighty Fanta Bale won two awards in succession.

SIMON TOLD HELEN

Listed below are Simon Told Helen's remarkable achievements during 2019-2020.

Simon Told Helen is a Black Fawn dog by Barcia Bale from Who Told Lindy Lu whelped on the 26th January 2018, he had 35 race starts for 21 wins and nine seconds winning \$637,105.

Simon's win strike rate was 60%.

Raced by the Emma's Boys Syndicate he is trained by David Burnett at Little River in Victoria.

Simon Told Helen created a huge impression at his racetrack debut last September and from there never looked back, finishing the season with an astonishing six group race wins - three of those at Group 1 level. Australia's premier sprinter tasted group 1 glory in the Silver Chief, Perth Cup and Harrison Dawson, while claiming Group 2 success in the Queensland Derby and Group 3 wins in the Great Chase and Cup Night Sprint.

Simon Told Helen's ascension to the top of the Australian sprinting ranks has been nothing short of sensational, racing almost exclusively in group race company.

Simon Told Helen - a worthy winner of the 2019/20 GCA Greyhound Of The Year Award.

The previous winners of the AGRA - GCA Australian Greyhound of the Year are 2002 **Boomeroo**, 2003 **Bombastic Shiraz**, 2004 **Whisky Assassin**, 2005 **Pure Octane**, 2006 **Betty's Angel**, 2007 **Flashing Floods**, 2008 **El Galo**, 2009 **Cindeen Shelby**, 2010 **El Grand Senor**, 2011 **Dyna Tron**, 2012 **Miata**, 2012-2013 **Miata**, 2013-2014 **Xylia Allen**, 2014-2015 **Fernando Bale**, 2015-2016 **Dyna Double One**, 2016-2017 **Fanta Bale**, 2017-2018 **Fanta Bale** and 2018-2019 **Orson Allen**.

GCA announced the other award winners in the following categories.

2019-2020 Brood Bitch of the Year was Ready To Riot

When your progeny wins Victoria's two pinnacle events - the Melbourne and Australian Cup - there's a good chance you'll claim the coveted dam of the year award.

And that's exactly the case with the irrepressible Ready To Riot.

Boasting Melbourne Cup winner Whiskey Riot and Australian Cup hero Fernando's Riot among her progeny, Ready To Riot offspring raced 206 times during 2019/20 for 65 wins and \$1.3 in prizemoney.

And it wasn't just two-time Group 1 winner Whiskey Riot and Fernando's Riot that claimed group race glory for Ready To Riot, with Caishen landing the Group 2 Launceston Cup.

Ready To Riot's influence on the breeding scene continues to be profound and the deeds of her offspring during 2019/20 more than earned her Dam of The Year for the racing season.

2019-2020 Sire of the Year was Fernando Bale

It was yet another remarkable racing season for champion sire Fernando Bale as his offspring picked up a spate of big races right around the country.

With his progeny winning over 5,000 races and a record \$16.2 million in stake earnings, Fernando Bale laid claim to 12 Group 1 winners during the season, led by superstar sprinters Sennachie and Whiskey Riot, each now forging their own careers at stud.

Other Group 1 winners during the season for Fernando Bale included Tornado Tears, Blue Moon Rising, Oh Mickey, Fernando's Riot, Here's Tears, Bronksi Beat and Rockstar Patriot.

It was another truly amazing year by the Hall of Fame chaser as a sire, continuing to have a profound influence over the Australasian breeding landscape.

2019-2020 Run of the Year went to Hooked On Scotch

To win a group 1 race is no easy feat.

To do it “coming from nowhere” to defeat two bonafide Group 1 stars takes it a degree of difficulty further. And that’s exactly what Hooked On Scotch did when gunning down Sennachie and Whiskey Riot to win the 2019 Adelaide Cup - a performance that safely sealed the megastar galloper 'Run of The Year'.

In a performance that sent shivers up the spine of racegoers right around the country, the Jason Thompson-trained powerhouse was at the top his game heading into the Adelaide feature with a sublime 29.19 heat win.

After giving away a decent start to greyhounds the calibre of Sennachie and Whiskey Riot in the final, even his most ardent supporters would have considered his chances forlorn.

But doing only as Hooked On Scotch can, the freakish talent dropped from the clouds to produce one of the more stunning Group 1 wins you’ll see, and in turn delivering connections the Run Of The Year gong.

The Run Of the Year was determined from the 12 runs of the month, then by a vast panel of judges from each state. This year some 35 people cast their opinion in the nationwide poll deciding a quite conclusively that the performance of Hooked On Scotch given the importance of the event probable got him the nod, while special mention given to the effort of Good Juan at Wentworth Park.

2019-2020 Trainer of the Year was Anthony Azzopardi

124 wins from 388 starters at a strike-rate of 32% for a whopping \$1.68 million in prize money.

They’re the lofty numbers that earned Anthony Azzopardi the 2019/20 Trainer of The Year Award.

The Victorian mentor enjoyed another stellar year with the collar and lead which was led of course by Whiskey Riot’s watershed victory in the Group 1 Melbourne Cup.

Not to be done there either, Azzopardi also scooped the Group 1 Australian Cup a few months later at The Meadows with Fernando’s Riot, causing an upset victory over Whiskey Riot in the time-honoured feature.

As well as wins in the Melbourne and Australian Cups, Azzopardi also guided Whiskey Riot to victory in the Group 1 Temlee the same night Just Terms tasted Group 1 glory in the Zoom Top Stayers.

Enjoying success right around the country with his formidable kennel, Azzopardi also claimed the Group 2 Launceston Cup with Caishen.

Anthony Azzopardi - a worthy victor of the 2019/20 Trainer Of The Year.

The Trainer of the Year is determined after nominations are put forward to the GCA Racing Committee who cast votes at a meeting held in July.

The panel takes into account a number of different aspects of the training side of things, it includes. Group wins, and finalists, State city wins, number of runners and dogs in work, percentage per runners ect. Plus, the important aspect of the manner in which the trainer is an ambassador for our code.

Denise Fysh Award Frank and Tracey Hurst

In April 2019, the Australian greyhound industry lost a true icon with the passing of Denise Fysh after succumbing to cancer. Her passion and selfless devotion to the Hobart Club and to her home state Tasmania had a profound influence that will benefit generations to come.

Last year, in Perth, the inaugural Denise Fysh Award was presented to a young WA participant who had displayed enormous courage and resilience to overcome injuries the result of a serious traffic accident.

This will to battle the odds, no matter how insurmountable, probably best epitomizes Denise’s memory.

The 2019/20 winner of this special award had a truly rollercoaster year. From the highs of success in the Million Dollar Chase with Good Odds Harada to emergency removal of a life-threatening brain tumour – it’s pretty fair to say Frank Hurst has experienced the full spectrum of emotions.

In greyhound racing, and as we know in life, no one can do it alone and for Frank it was the unwavering support of wife Tracey that was by his side every step of the journey.

Now back at the track and training winners – the Denise Fysh Award goes to Frank and Tracey Hurst in recognition of their determination to overcome anything that dares get in the way.

The GCA Hall of Fame Inductees

It was determined by the GCA Committee that any considerations for the Hall of Fame be held over until 2020-2021. This would give the incoming inductees the sort of presentation that has been afforded those that have come before them. We look forward to the Awards night being back to normal next year when the National Championships are held in Melbourne along with the GCA Greyhound of the Year, Annual meeting and Conference is hosted by the MGRA.

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