



**Media Release
1st December 2020**

**GCA GREYHOUND OF THE MONTH AWARD
NOVEMBER 2020**

“HARD STYLE RICO”

The GCA Greyhound of the Month for November 2020 has been awarded to exciting Victorian chaser Hard Style Rico after his outstanding month of four starts for three wins. All three wins were in top class the Group 3 Silver Bullet at the Meadows and the heat and final of the Group 1 Melbourne Cup at Sandown.



Hard Style Rico winning the Melbourne Cup Pic Clint Anderson

It was a greyhound racing dream came true for Luckie Karabitsakos when his brilliant sprinter Hard Style Rico unforgettably smashed the Sandown Park 515m track record in the Group 1 TAB Melbourne Cup Final last Friday night.

It was a fifth appearance in a Group 1 event for Hard Style Rico, which Pearcedale-based Karabitsakos also bred and owns, with his best previous finish coming when runner-up to Simon Told Helen in the Maturity Classic.

While Karabitsakos had to bide his time in the quest for Group 1 glory, it was undoubtedly worth the wait.

Hard Style Rico overcame box five against an all-star field in a sensational all-the-way victory, clocking 28.909s, eclipsing Hooked On Scotch's previous course record of 28.939s, established in the 2019 Melbourne Cup heats.

"What an experience. I'm speechless," said an ecstatic Karabitsakos.

"This is the greatest race to be in and to have the dog win it and to win it in track record time speaks for itself. Hard Style Rico won his Cup heat in a blistering 29.17s, being shaded for qualifying honours by Tiggerlong Tonk's 29.16s performance.

Despite his awkward draw, Hard Style Rico was well-supported, starting on the third line of betting at \$5.70, behind \$2.40 favourite Simon Told Helen and Western Australian pin-up Tommy Shelby at \$5.20.

Karabitsakos was celebrating a long way from home after Hard Style Rico flew out to assume control, running 4.99s early.

He was never going to be beaten from that point, defeating a gallant Simon Told Helen by 5.5 lengths, with Tommy Shelby running third.

"What a great feeling," said Karabitsakos.

"Emotions did run wild. I felt like I was fighting Mike Tyson and I was winning!"

"As soon as he found the front – no disrespect to the other dogs in the field, they're all great dogs – but as soon as he found the front I know how good he is and they weren't catching him."

Hard Style Rico, a homebred son of Bella Infrared, has now won 21 of his 40 starts, having also claimed the Group 2 Shepparton Cup, while the massive \$435,000 winner's purse saw his earnings skyrocket to \$632,530.

It was the second time this month that Hard Style Rico has upstaged Simon Told Helen, having also claimed the Australian Greyhound of the Year's scalp in the Group 3 Silver Bullet at The Meadows, making a point after being left out of the Group 1 Topgun field.

The Karabitsakos family are becoming well-attuned to Group 1 success at Sandown, with Luckie's brother Anthony guiding Black Mumbo to victory in the 2017 Harrison-Dawson.

It's very much a family affair, with Hard Style Rico's mother, Bella Rico, being a litter sister to Black Mumbo.

He has been retired to stand at stud at a fee of \$2200.

As usual there were some great greyhounds competing in November on various tracks around Australia. However, given the fact Hard Style Rico won two group races, set a City track record and beat the best dogs in the land. He got the nod as the Greyhound of the Month.

Hard Style Rico is a Brindle Dog whelped January 2018 by Bella Infrared from Bella Rico (Stagger x My Path Princess). He is raced trained and bred by Luckie Karabitsakos at Pearcedale in Victoria. He has now won 21 races and been placed seven times from 40 starts. Hard Style Rico's overall prizemoney stands at \$627,030.

GCA congratulates owner – trainer- breeder Luckie Karabitsakos and Hard Style Rico on being awarded the GCA Greyhound of the Month for November 2020. He now joins last month's winner Dr. Tucker, Major Major, Flying Riccardo, Simon Told Helen the July, March and May winner. Plus Tiggerlong Tonk, Fernando's Riot and Zipping Veyron as the 2020 GCA Greyhound of the Month award winners.

Thanks for information supplied by Greyhound Recorder Website

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