

'You gotta love the horse'

By Peter Foley

She loves horses, of course. But Renita Beaton realised early in her equine journey that success in the racing game must be earned through long hours, resilience and relentless hard work.

From pony rides in New Zealand to trackwork in Brisbane and Hong Kong, and now to her own barn at the Sunshine Coast, Renita has created her place in racing.

At 18, Renita left home after emailing Rob Heathcote and securing a job in his Eagle Farm stable where the trainer was preparing Group 1 stars including Buffering, Woorim and Solzhenitsyn.

"I wasn't bred into racing," said Renita, who grew up in the lower north island of New Zealand.

"I started riding on ponies and I ended up going to the local track and riding a bit of track work and learning that way.

"I met some people that had racehorses and they gave me the opportunity to have a go, and I had a go, and I was quite natural at riding.

"They taught me a lot and then I progressed and emailed Rob and said: 'Have you got a job for me?'"

"Buffering was a two-year-old then. He'd just won his first race start. I think my first day I got to ride Buffering. So that was cool."

The future \$7 million earner won his first two starts, then a \$150,000 race at the Labour Day meeting in Ipswich in 2010.

Renita spent six years with Rob, then Brisbane's premier trainer, before landing a job riding trackwork in Hong Kong in 2016.

After returning in 2022, she took out her Queensland trainer's licence and prepared her first winner, Surcote, at Lismore that November.

Her small stable has since produced 60 winners, backed by vital support from fiancé Troy Schmetzer, apprentice Amelia Heinrich and track rider Megan Davies.

A recent move from Fenwick Farm, 70km south-east of Ipswich, to the Sunshine Coast has given Renita the training barn she has long wanted.

"I definitely worked very hard. Extremely hard, actually, and I've had a lot of knocks.

"I've had a few big knocks," she said.

"I've just recently got this opportunity to have my own barn at the Sunshine Coast Turf Club. We've been there just over three weeks now.

"I've always wanted this barn and they've given me that opportunity, so it's very exciting, and hopefully the results start to follow and we can capitalise and get some better horses."

Renita says one of her challenges as a trainer is balancing hands-on work with horses and liaising with owners.

"Because I'm very hands-on, I'm probably not as good at the people side of things exactly. But I obviously have to do it; that's part of the job," she said.

"I do ride my own track work; I do work around the clock. So it is very hard to sort of get the timing of that right.

"I love the horse. I wouldn't do it otherwise. You've got to love the horse."



I Stole It is joined in the Ipswich racetrack winners' stall by (from left) trainer Renita Beaton, strapper Megan Davies and Jake Bayliss.

"The horses come first, then the people."

Encouraged to articulate her love of horses, Renita's face beams.

"All their personalities; their traits. They're just so loyal. If you have a happy horse, they'll do anything for you," she said.

"They're like a man's best friend, I guess. They're a girl's best friend. I just love the animal.

"They're stunning and they're athletes, and, yeah, they're amazing."

At Ipswich last Friday, Renita was beaming again after I Stole It won first-up with Ipswich's Jake Bayliss aboard from the inside barrier.

The six-year-old gelding by Super One out of the Lonrho mare Fraud was bought for \$20,000 by Gall Bloodstock at the 2020 Inglis weanling sale.

Ray and Brett Gall gave Renita her first horses to train so she was keen to give them a celebratory call. She said I Stole It deserved the win.

"Last preparation, he had a lot of luckless runs. He was knocked down, bad barriers, running into metropolitan horses," she said.

"He jumped well for him; he can be a bit awkward away. Once Jake got him out of the gates really well and efficiently, that was the plan.

"We got the luck today; they rolled off the fence and the heavens opened up for us."



Ipswich jockey Jake Bayliss rides I Stole It to a two-length win in the Ipswich Party Hire Handicap (1100m). (Trackside Photography)

Ipswichturfclub

IPSWICH
RACING POWERED BY

IPSWICH TRIBUNE TODAY

ipswichturfclub.com.au

