

## Sharryn's compact dream

By Peter Foley

Born with a pure love of the horse and mentored by old-fashioned horsemen, Sharryn Livingstone is just getting started as a trainer but is already living out her dream.

Sharryn is a restricted trainer, meaning she is licenced to train a limited number of horses, but she chooses to keep her stable to five horses, so she can give each individual attention.

"I've only got a four-horse float; I travel into the track daily. The fifth horse gets worked across at the neighbours on their trotting track or I just go to the beach or whatever.

"I like to keep it small, so I can do the majority of the work myself. Because then no stone gets left unturned.

"I like to look them right over; we brush them twice a day, I don't miss anything because I'm always there."

She watches the bigger stables struggle with staffing issues and thinks that's why she doesn't want to get too big: she might lose that one-on-one touch.

"And my horses, they all love me, and I know they race good for me because of the attention they get from me, I reckon," she said.

"The horses I have aren't quality-bred, \$100,000 horses. Most of them are homebred or cheap buys at the Magic Millions sales."

Sharryn likes to say she was born on a horse. Starting with riding ponies, she progressed to pony club, eventually reaching national level at showjumping.

"I've always had the horse bug in me. I am that crazy horse girl, definitely," she laughed.

"It's just been my life and then dad was training, so that's how I became a trackwork rider."

In 2020, she broke her hand, and with nothing better to do, she decided to become a trainer. Sharryn had her first win in November 2020 with Heart Vandelay at Kilcoy. She now has 25 wins and 49 placings from 177 starts.

She caught public attention early in her training career with Thelwell, who she raced after he was bought for \$25,000 at the Magic Millions yearling sales.

Thelwell qualified for the 2022 Magic Millions Classic on the Gold Coast by running second in the BJ McLachlan Stakes at 100-1 and winning at the Sunshine Coast.

"Some trainers have gone their whole life wanting a Magic Millions runner, and I did it two years in," she said.

"That was pretty exciting. Even though we didn't win the race, it was great to be there."

Thelwell won hearts for his habit of sitting up like a dog in his stable. He still does it sometimes.

"He's my best mate; I'll keep him forever. I just love that horse to bits. He is very much a character," Sharryn said.

Despite her background in horses, she found thoroughbred racing was a different world.

"That old-age horseman is dying and they're not really getting replenished," she said.

"We were really lucky back in our day at pony club. We had really good mentors to teach us.



Sharryn Livingstone competes on Drenalin, who ran third in the 2011 Eye Liner Stakes before becoming a showjumper. Photo: Ozshots and Sharryn Livingstone.

"And give us the basics, which has helped me going into the racing industry because now I have a select few old people that I credit my knowledge to. It's got me where I am today.

"I've never been to a big stable, like Gai or Chris or Ciaran. Sometimes I think: Should I have done six months with those bigger stables? Would I be better if I did?"

"But I don't try and compete with other trainers. I look up to them and respect them.

"I just compete with myself on a daily basis, and I'm happier just to set my goals and hopefully I can prove what I'm doing, just for me and my horses and my owners."

At Ipswich racetrack last Wednesday, Sharryn went close to her first metropolitan double when Click Click Boom won and The Bear narrowly ran second.

"It was a good day. I'm pretty chuffed with that," she concluded.

Click Click Boom, by Spirit Of Boom, was bought for \$27,000 at the 2023 Magic Millions Gold Coast yearling sale.

"I definitely think he'll win us a nice race this prep somewhere. He's just getting better and better," Sharryn said.

"He's a pleasure to train and he's got a great bunch of owners."



Click Click Boom, with Justin Stanley aboard (blue cap), wins the Bundaberg Drop Bear Handicap (1200m) at Ipswich racetrack. (Trackside Photography)

An advertisement for Ipswich Turf Club. It features a green background with a white silhouette of a horse and jockey. The text reads: "Ipswichturfclub", "IPSWICH RACING POWERED BY", "IPSWICH TRIBUNE TODAY", and "ipswichturfclub.com.au". On the right side, there is a photograph of a brown horse being ridden by a jockey in green silks.