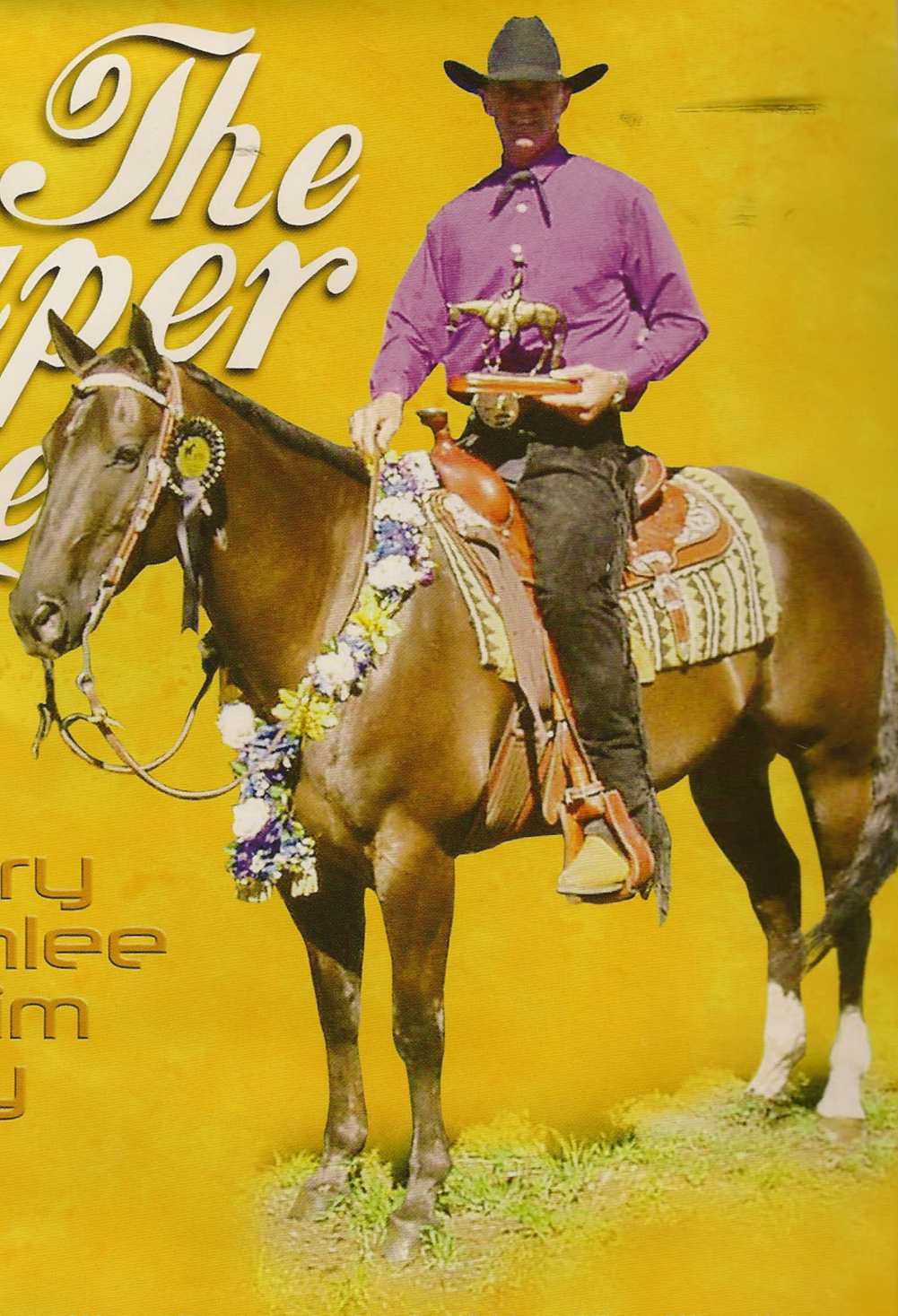


The Super Horse

David Norbury & Annlee He's Jim Dandy

By Janine Leichsenring



This year David Norbury certainly proved his versatility once again, by winning the Australian Halter Showcase (AHS) Super Horse event for the third time. His mount was Annlee He's Jim Dandy, a nine-year-old Quarter horse gelding by Isle O Lena that he campaigned extensively in the late nineties in Western Pleasure and won most of the major Western Pleasure events in the country. This was after a long and successful career as a Cutter. Not only did Jim Dandy win this year's Super Horse event, but he did it in record style, winning by an unprecedented 13 points from second place. His score was 46 out of 50 and his event performance was extremely good, placing 2nd in Halter, 3rd in Western Pleasure, 2nd in Reining, 1st in Hunter and 1st in the Trail.

Brenda Renison of the Greenhill Stud in Whittlesea Victoria purchased Jim Dandy last May, because he was trained for Pleasure, Hunter, Trail and Halter. David has trained the horse at different intervals since he was a two year old and he likes the fact that you couldn't get 'Jim' confused by asking different things of him. After Brenda purchased him David

began training Jim in Reining and Western Riding, with the vision of entering him in the Super Horse event, which at that point was about six months away. This certainly paid off!

During the AHS David was also successful on three of his other horses, winning the Junior Horse Trail, the 2-Year-Old Western Pleasure, third in the Junior Horse Reining, as well as placing high in the Western Riding, Hunter Under Saddle and various other Western Pleasure events.

David has been married to his wife Karyn for twenty years. They have two girls, Stacey aged 13 who loves to ride motorbikes, and Courtney aged 13 who loves to show the horses with David. Karyn showed competitively prior to having a family and at the first NRHA show in 1990 she won the Open Non Pro and the following year won the Ladies Reining. In 1985 she won AQHA High Point Trail Horse of the Year on a horse named Tom Hancock.

Their property is at Kinglake West, which is situated in the hills one hour north of Melbourne. It consists of five acres, with a stable complex that houses eight outside horses, day yards and

a 180' x 80' indoor arena. David is a full time trainer and has been for the last 16 years. He trains for all western events except cattle events and limits himself to eight outside horses, giving him plenty of time to give quality training to the horses. His clientele varies from the person who just likes to see their horse go around the arena to the Amateur who likes to show alongside him.

Since his full time training career began David has had many major achievements, including winning the 2-Year-Old National Pleasure Horse Ass Futurity three times, and backing it up once the following year, with a win on the same horse in the 3-Year-Old-Futurity. He has won the VRHA Derby twice and the Futurity once, been Reserve Champion at the NRHA Futurity once and third three times. David has won at the highest level in all the events he trains for, and as a consequence is asked to do clinics throughout Australia and has also had the opportunity to teach in NZ.

David commenced riding at a very young age and doesn't really know what led him to the horse game, as he was brought up in the suburbs and his parents had no dealings with horses, other than the milkman who delivered his milk with a horse.

Over the years David has had many people who have influenced his career. He has learnt so much from various people, as to the right way to go about training, which has helped him develop his own style. The fact that he trains for a number of events has helped him stay fresh when training – no boredom here. Each event David trains for is difficult, and in competition when very little goes wrong the feeling is just great. To this day he still gets a real thrill winning at a major show and he hopes he never loses that feeling. This is what drives any competitor - the thrill of winning.

In travelling to around 30 shows a year, David's favourites are the small club shows where he can take Courtney along with him. There's no pressure at these shows and it really does allow him to just enjoy the day and the people around him.

He has observed many industry changes over the years. There are so many different horses to breed to now and this has had an impact on the standard of horses being shown from the Pleasure to the Reining Horse. Unfortunately however the industry has lost the versatile Quarter Horse, as we now have more specialised horses for one or two events. Many different breeds of horses have passed through David's hands over the years and he has found the western-bred horse is generally quieter and more mature mentally and this makes for a more trainable animal.

He visited the USA 25 years ago, but feels he's due to go again and would like to see the standard of Pleasure and Reining horses there. He would also like to spend some time with a couple of the more successful trainers, as the last time he was there he was to learn and didn't get the opportunity to compete.

As a winner of various Futurities and other major events, David would like to win them all again in the future, just to experience that rush you get when you do well. He also looks forward to his daughter enjoying her showing and just having her at the shows with him. The one major event that still eludes him, however, is the NRHA 3-Year-Old Futurity and it would certainly be one of his career highlights to be able to notch this one up.

Some learned advice David has for any newcomer to the industry is to attend as many shows prior to purchasing your horse and take note of how you want your horse to travel and compete. Once you have an indication of this, then you have a measuring stick to gauge what sort of horse you want. He also suggests attending many different clinics and having lessons from a variety of people to source out what style of training you prefer. ■