

Moore Park

HE'S come a long way since his first ever horse event at Pinkett in northern NSW aboard his one-eyed horse Patches. Tom Williamson started off his career as a horseman like many other kids before him. A competitor turned breeder, here he talks about some of the people who have influenced his competitive career and business.

Tom and the late Barry Law accepting the Perry Law Memorial Shield on Gaytime.
Photo by: Glen Innes Examiner



Tom winning his first Walcha Golden Gate on Cinabar.
Photo by: Walcha News



Tom won his first draft when he was twelve years old. He grew up immersed in horses and competition and even though he had won a bunch of junior drafts before he was a teen, he didn't really know how he was doing it. All Tom knew was that he loved riding competitively and so he rode every horse that could possibly chase a cow. A boy very keen to compete, he soon inherited a willingness to learn, leading him to a John Weston school run by the Border Branch of the Stock Horse Society.

Tom recalls, 'John was the person who got me thinking that to keep winning I needed more than just timing to rely on; at this stage] I couldn't even back my horses up. When John commented on this, I confidently said to him, "You don't go anywhere going backwards." He replied, "You won't go much further if you can't" this got me thinking. John not only won, he won with style because his horses were very willing.'

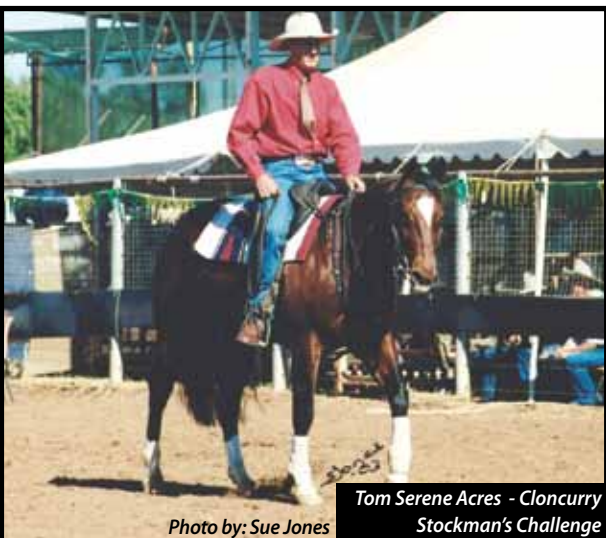
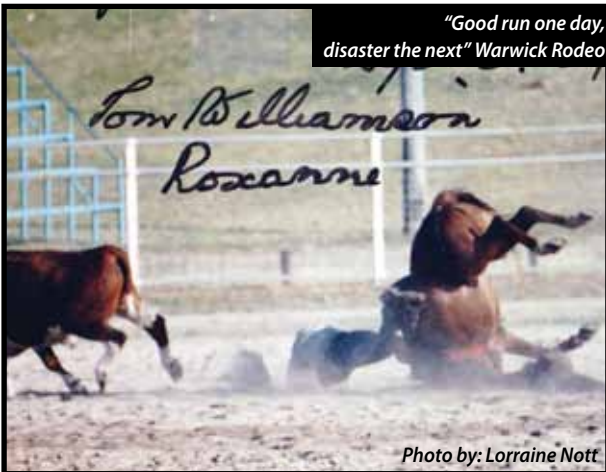
After Weston's school, Tom immediately experienced accelerated success in competitive circles. He had soon won the State Pony Club Campdraft aboard Gaytime and had seen successive wins aboard his mare Holly who at 3 years of age was winning in both junior and open campdrafts. 'This was definitely a turning point and John's school had a lot to do with it'.

Adding to Weston's influence, Tom was soon fortunate enough to be the target of advice from great horseman Graham Amos. He was in the cut-out yard riding his colt Buster at a clinic when after a few turns, Amos yelled out to him, 'stop'.

'I pulled up thinking he was going to tell me "that was great"', recalls Tom. 'Instead he said, "That horse knows more than you. He's trying his hardest to get in the right position and you're doing your best to pull him out of it."'

Tom Williamson

Always Moving Forward



Tom remembers the impact Amos' tuition had on him physically as a rider, but also how it affected him in terms of thought process in competition and training.

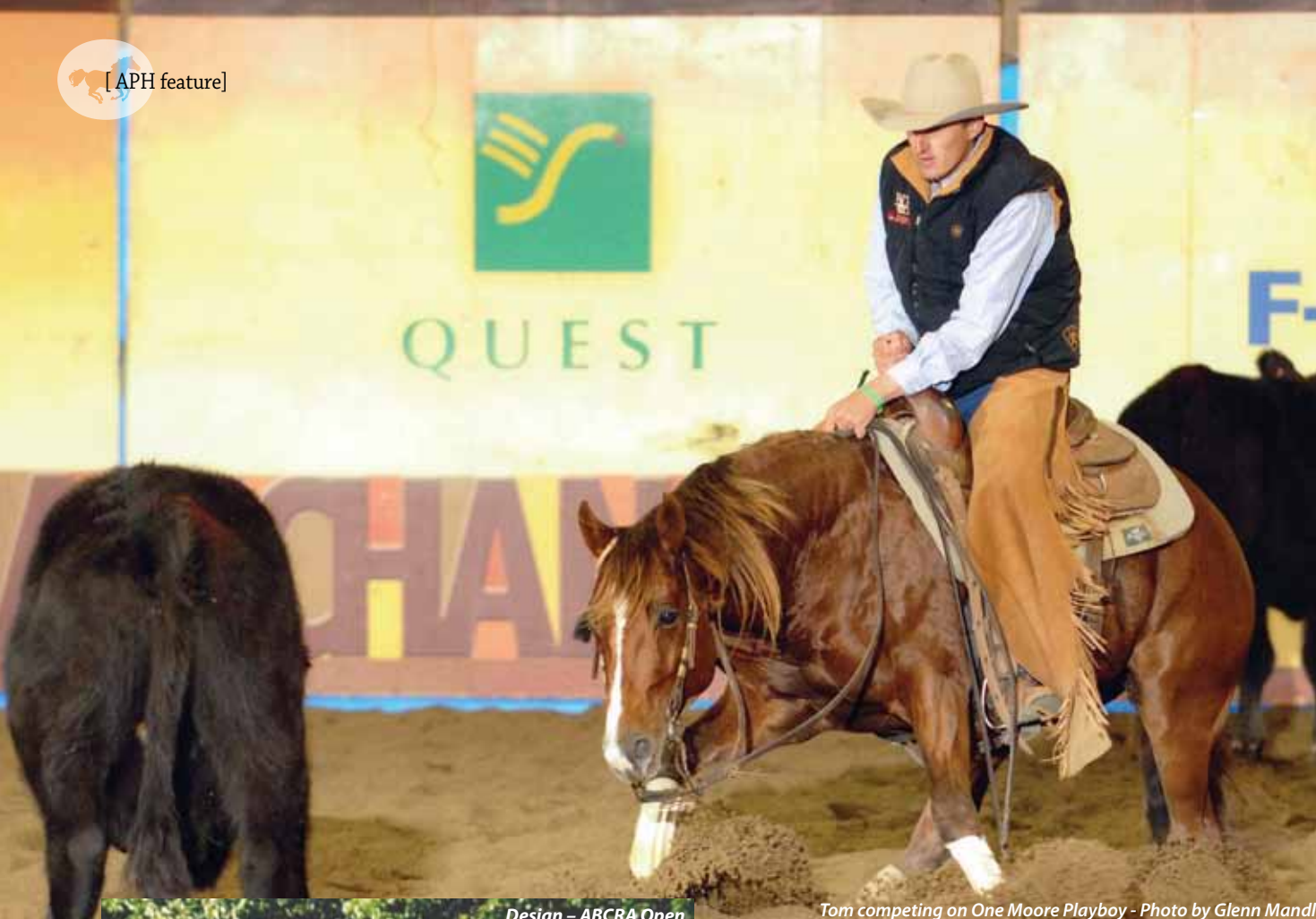
Graham got me focused on timing rather than just riding like a scalded cat. His attitude toward winning also stuck with me, as he said to me, "Everytime you win, ask yourself, did you win with style; did you ride like a winner or did you win because you got lucky?"

After Amos' school, at twenty one years of age Tom won a Walcha Golden Gate and a cutout at the Warwick Gold Cup. He began to look around and take notice of other people's horseflesh, finding the horses of Walcha's Bruce McNaughton and Kingaroy's Mark Buttsworth as standouts. He wanted his own horses to resemble theirs', so that was what he aimed for.

Tom persisted with learning from Amos, going to many more of his schools. A young man in his early twenties, he continued to climb to the top of the game, winning another Walcha Golden Gate, placing second at the Warwick Gold Cup, taking two Australian Championships, qualifying to compete at the Sydney Royal World Championships five times, winning a World Championship Campdraft cutout and being crowned 1996 ABCRA Open Rider of the Year at the age of 25.

'I never set out to win the open rider title, it sort of happened by accident. I was really trying to qualify to compete at the Sydney Royal Show World Championship Campdraft. I had been three times before when it used to be at the old showground and back then, a week in Sydney was the highlight of my year.'

Tom had realised that year that he was gaining a healthy lead in the ABCRA national standings. He rode at forty eight campdrafts, winning twenty four times and placing on thirty eight occasions. He had nine horses, seven of which were open horses, but could only fit five on the truck.



Tom competing on One Moore Playboy - Photo by Glenn Mandl



Design - ABCRA Open Championship winner

Photo by: Sue Jones



Expression top price horse Dalby Stock Horse Sale 2002

Photo by: Sue Jones

'Sometimes I went to two and even three drafts in the one weekend. I would have to ring dad and get him to get my other horses in if I needed to change. Sometimes he would meet me somewhere with the others or jump in and drive so that I could sleep on the way. Mum always had the Esky packed; it really was a team effort.' For Tom, Sydney Royal was the location for two very important conversations regarding his career. Whilst competing on Buster there one year, Bruce McNaughton came to him with some advice.

'You've won a lot of campdrafts this year', McNaughton said to Tom, 'You need to start selling the good ones. You don't want to end up winning everything and have nothing.' Tom believes this was some of the best advice he was ever given, so shortly after he began selling horses.

In 1995, he sold Kerry for the second highest price at Dalby and returned to top the sale with Expression in 2002. To date, he has sold such horses as Baby Oak, Stryder, Actress, Acres Of Class, One Moore Dove, Quicksmart, Date With Destiny and recently Demi Moore to name a few.

Back at Sydney Royal one year, John Stanton introduced Tom to Todd Graham. He had with him Robert Woodward's champion mare Triple Spin and was compelled to ask, 'how do you get a horse to move like that?' Graham invited the young enthusiast to his place to find out and so Tom was exposed to horseflesh such as One Moore Spin, Gwyder Girl, Roanies Rosette and Docs Bon Jovi. 'This reiterated to me that the best training aid you can have is a well-bred horse', declares Tom, a belief in which he was beginning to make a career and business around.

Campdrafting was also where Tom met John Mitchell. 'I lent him my frying-pan and we've been friends ever since', says Tom. Tim McCarthy and I went to stay with him in the US and we saw Bet Yer



Moore Park - Glen Innes



Blue Boons and Meradas's Little Sue; I thought One Moore Spin was every bit as good as them.'

After getting to know Amos, Mitchell and Graham, Tom began to take a shine to cutting. His first ride at a show was aboard Richard Bull's Chelsea and after running her off at their first outing, he won a rookie class the following weekend and was hooked. After that, Tom purchased the weanling One Moore Playboy, by Playboy Roy from One Moore Spin, in a syndicate with Jason Birney and Tim McCarthy out of the NCHA Select Cutting Horse Sale.

Playboy stood for the public before he went to the futurity in 2004, a decision made by the syndicate for which they received much criticism. But in his own words, Tom can now soundly reply that 'financially, we had already won the futurity before he went there'. He has since sired a NCHA Futurity finalist every crop and has produced numerous campdraft winners while still only being a young sire.

Tom has trained and shown seven non pro futurity horses, making a final on each one. He won the NCHA Limited Non Pro Futurity aboard One Moore Playboy in 2004 and rode One Moore Duck, by One Moore Playboy out of Oaks Fancy Duckling, to the crown of NCHA Non Pro Futurity Reserve Champion in 2007. John Mitchell placed One Moore Duck in the Open that same year and at last year's NCHA Futurity, he took the dynamic mare One Moore Chime to the Open finals while Tom made the finals in the Non Pro.

When asked about his career as a competitor in both the campdraft arena and the cutting pen, Tom replies, 'I really enjoy it but do find it difficult, as I have so many other commitments with our property. I struggle to cut and campdraft at the same time as they are two completely different disciplines; what makes a good Rugby League player doesn't necessarily make a good Rugby player. I work constantly to not let one interfere with the other; it's a work in progress.'

"However competing in both has probably improved the calibre of horse that I compete on now and I know what will do both. I don't have time to wait 10 years before the horse I'm riding comes good when there are horses that are good at 3 and stay good. "Wants to do" will breed on "made to do" won't", says Tom, "A horse that withstood the training physically and mentally of say a futurity horse, will never have problems with pressure in competition if they've made it through that".

"Size is not a deciding factor for me. If a horse doesn't draft or cut, its not because it was too big or too small. Great horses are great horses because they are athletic, not because of their size"

After another trip to the US, he saw exciting Dual Rey progeny such as Rey Down Sally and Never Reylinquish on the biggest cutting stages in the world. Tom had heard whispers about the capability of the Dual Rey progeny on his first trip to The States and when we went back in 2008, it was emphatically confirmed. "Dual Rey's progeny were winning at the top level in everything from cutting, reined cow horse, reining and ranch horse competition." Tom said.

Tom got the chance to meet Linda Holmes, owner of Dual Rey and Holmes Cutting Horses, and did not hesitate to jump at a chance to take full brother Rey Dual back home to Australia with him to stand to the public, considering he had won more money than Dual Rey.

'Ken and Christina Tagg helped in so many ways and encouraged us to go back to the US again', says Tom. 'I suppose you could say they gave us the confidence and motivation to go ahead with the idea of setting up our own breeding farm.'

Today, Tom and Jane Williamson have a young son Tommy and enjoy a busy, but enjoyable lifestyle in an ever expanding equine industry. After meeting in 2002 on the finals weekend of the NCHA Futurity, Tom and then University of New England student Jane hit-it-off, only to marry two years later. Since 2007, they have focused less on competition and more on breeding quality horses for the outside public at their home east of Glen Innes in northern NSW.

In 2009, Tom and wife Jane set up Moore Park, an equine breeding operation where they stand Instant Dulce (Imp), One Moore Playboy and Rey Dual (Imp). Between the three stallions, Moore Park makes it its business to offer only what can be described as bloodlines of success. 'All the stallions we have here at Moore Park have proven pedigree and proven performance and that's what we strive to always have here.'

"The breeding industry we're involved in is highly competitive. Australians now have access to genetics from anywhere in the world, but we don't see this as a threat to our business. Australian mare owners spend a lot of time researching before they decide where they are heading with their mare. If you have confidence in the article that you are breeding, then competition is a positive thing".