

Hall of Fame Inductee

Ringwould Jaguar A1-4528

Ringwould is a very small stud in Western Australia, started in 1980 with the purchase of a three year old Quarter Horse colt called Jensen's Man Q-5774 from a farmer near Bruce Rock. Jensen was by Trudy's Man Q-1117, out of Balmoral Tudor Flight R2-257 by Pronto Mio Q-4 out of a Mescal mare, Royal Line R1-134. Jensen was such a joy to work with, so easy to start under saddle that Jim Saunders got on him for the first time out in the middle of a 400 acre paddock, simply because he had forgotten the lunging whip & had to do something new as the bush fire radio aerial didn't command much respect. Jensen's education progressed, & he was taken to the Quarter Horse Championships in Perth, nearly 500 km away, for classification; what a relief that was!! He knew jolly well what the consequences of failure were.

"If it's a hobby it'll have to wait until we have some spare time," and since we never had any spare time, horse breeding had to be part of the business. The limit was supposed to be two foals a year, and we started with a station type mare that Augusta had bought before she had the children. She produced four foals before getting caught up in a fence when Darracq was two & a half months old, he grew to over 16 hh & went on as Ardito to win the National FEI Dressage Championship in 1998 with Victoria Hamilton.

Jensen's Man was a very versatile horse, competing in Dressage, Western events, Stock Horse events & Campdrafting. He even had a run in a one day event when his daughter was lame at the last minute. At the Autumn Horse Show I rode in the Western Riding with breeches & boots under my chaps and a white shirt & stock under my Western shirt so that I could do a quick change to go in the Ridden Stallion after it. He was a perfect gentleman in company, & was ridden by Jenny & Annie Daley at campdrafts, and by our son John in dressage and campdrafting. At home he was more relaxed, & could be quite fun to ride. His success in Australian Stock Horse events and campdrafting led to him being accepted as an Australian Stock Horse and since all the Quarter Horse events were in Perth it made sense to change our breeding focus to Stock Horses.

In 1989 we were given a Thoroughbred mare called Nations of Lili FM-12152, by Carnations for me out of Lili Lorraine, by Wateringbury. Both strongly bred for distance racing, and I had been advised to look out for Wateringbury blood as they could jump. Her first foal was a filly, Ringwould Impala A1-4340, who unfortunately injured her tendon on the truck ramp just as she was getting useful, the second was Ringwould Jaguar, and sadly Lili got an infection in her leg & died when he was only 3 months old. Jaguar hadn't been handled & spent three days in the paddock with his dead mother before we could persuade him to follow us home. Like Darracq before him, he grew bigger than his sibling with the extra attention.

Jensen's Man had an accident & died before Jaguar was born, so that was the end of the car names. The future was in aeroplanes, as we kept Jet Away as our next sire, but that is another story.

Jensen's progeny were successful in a wide range of activities, some did station work, others played polocrosse and ours went campdrafting, but I maintained an interest in dressage, competing on various horses, as well as being an official judge for a few years. Our son John started Jaguar's education as I was busy with Jet Away, so he was given a lot of intense dressage work. When John went away I found that Jaguar was too tense & highly strung for most people to ride, so I spent 18

months trying to get him to relax; and by the end of 2000 I took him to the local shows for hacking and dressage. He refused to stand still in the line-up for the judge to put a ribbon on him, & I realised that the average “hacking & dressage” rider would never stay on him.

After Christmas 2000 we took him to Sonja Johnson, a local eventing rider whom we had watched over the years and asked her to see if she could teach him to jump. I thought that would open up a market with more athletic riders. She rang us after 3 days and said he’s a natural, after a fortnight, we had to take him home as she was going away, so I was given instruction to practise the “big trot” up & down hills. The only hill near home was in a rough new country paddock where I could work big circles, but it was covered in little white rocks; Jaguar was careful not to trip on the rocks, & as soon as he got unbalanced, he would put in a little buck to get his legs reorganised. He still watches the ground carefully when he’s doing extended trot, & will avoid treading on a painted line in the dressage arena.

Jaguar went back to Sonja on a new financial basis, as we couldn’t afford to go on paying her to train him, & he started his competition career at Pre-Novice level, winning his first two outings. By June 2001 they went to Melbourne for the CCI* as Sonja’s other horse Foreign Liaison was competing in the CCI**. Jaguar went clear cross-country to vastly improve on his dressage placing, but Sonja had a fall with Foreign Liaison and dislocated her shoulder. Hours later she was riding Jaguar in the show jumping, indoors for the first time, only able to use one hand properly, and he jumped clear and came up to third place. Imagine my delight when he stood like a rock to have the rosette attached to his browband, and lifted his head as they played the triumphal music.

There have been so many triumphal moments since then, it would take ages to tell them all, the little black horse has taken us (or at least given us a reason to go) to Pau in France for the Eventing World Cup final in 2004, where he came 5th, to Aachen in Germany for the World Equestrian Games in 2006, where the team won bronze but Sonja had two falls. In 2005 they were in the winning team for the Trans-Tasman at Adelaide CCI****, & individually second and in 2007 they were in the Trans-Tasman team again for competition at Taupo in New Zealand where the team lost but they won individually. 2008 was the Olympics, which were held in Hong Kong, an experience in itself, and I shall never forget the roar of the crowd when Sonja and Jaguar jumped clear, one of very few riders to do so. The silver medal was hard fought and only by the narrowest of margins. 2009 the Trans-Tasman was again at Adelaide and again the Aussies won, with Jaguar in the team and tenth individually, Sonja had thought he might want to retire, but he’s as naughty as ever, looking great, & fit and well to go to Kentucky. God Willing! I don’t know of any other horses that have represented Australia six times, let’s hope he can make it a seventh.

Augusta Saunders.

