

LEGEND

IN HIS

LUNCHTIME

One of the most unheralded stallions to stand in Australia in modern times continues to have a major influence in our quest for speed. JESSICA OWERS visited his grave at Widden Stud.

On an autumn afternoon at Widden Stud, sunlight falls over a row of headstones. In the right light, it's like a scene from a movie,

faded yellow tombstones tilting and graceful in the grass. In reality, they are memorials to some magnificent stallions. One of them belongs to Lunchtime, sire of Snippets.

"Lunchtime was an awesome horse to look at," recalls bloodstock commentator Brian Russell. "I saw him just after he arrived in Australia and I thought he looked more like a mature stallion of 10 years than the four-year-old he was at the time."

Imported into Widden Stud in 1974, during an era when the stud boasted Vain, Bletchingly and later Marscay, Lunchtime was a rich red English horse, an undefeated winner at two of the Group 1 Dewhurst Stakes, for two-year-olds, at Newmarket. He was by the US-bred stallion Silly Season (making him a grandson of US Horse of the Year Tom Fool) out of the Hornbeam mare Great Occasion. "He was long and stretchy," Les Carlyon said of him. "To me, he was the nicest stallion at Widden."

Antony Thompson, of today's Widden Stud, says it was almost impossible in Lunchtime's day



HANDSOME: this beautiful shot of Lunchtime was taken while he was standing at Widden Stud.

for Australian breeders to secure Group 1-winning English types. It was Thompson's father, Bim, who purchased Lunchtime in 1974.

"Before the shuttle was introduced it was very hard to get a Group 1-winning two-year-old from England," he says. "You just couldn't get a horse out with that sort of

form. But my father was looking for one, and because Lunchtime was unfashionably bred, the opportunity came up to purchase him."

Thompson adds that Lunchtime's sire, Silly Season, despite winning the 1965 Champion Stakes for owner Paul Mellon (of Mill Reef fame), had a very average stud record. "I think if you dig

up his produce records, you'll find that Lunchtime was probably it for him," he says.

After a slow start, Lunchtime found his feet at Widden and began to produce winners. In 1981, Bold Invader (ex Sweet Solo) became Lunchtime's first Stakes winner with two wins in Queensland. By the early 1980s there had been a flurry of black-type winners, although none at the elite level. When 1984 rolled around, that all changed.

"He had some very good winners in the mid-eighties," recalls Thompson. "Pre Catalan from memory, and Street Café."

Street Café, who was out of the Todman mare Tod Lass, won the Group 1 1984 Blue Diamond Stakes and Group 1 VRC Sires' Produce. Pre Catalan, who became one of Sydney's solid sprinters, won the 1985 Group 2 Silver Slipper and Listed Skyline Stakes, as well as the Group 3 AJC Breeders' Plate. Later on there was Chipolata, who won the Group 1 WATC Derby, and Brunchtime, who took out the Listed Doomben Classic. But even these paled in significance when Snippets came along.

Later one of Australia's leading sires, Snippets was the product of a one-time meeting between Lunchtime

and the Grand Chaudiere mare Easy Date. Between 1986 and 1988, Snippets won seven Stakes races—three of them at Group 1 level, including the 1988 The Galaxy and the Oakleigh Plate. When he entered stud, he eclipsed his own track performances with wild success in the covering shed. He sired Casual Pass, Hasna, Pins, Sky Cuddle, Snowland and Spartacus, not to mention Scandinavia, immortalised of late as the grand-dam of Black Caviar. If Lunchtime produced that once-in-a-lifetime animal, Snippets was it.

"Snippets was his outstanding horse that left a big legacy," says Thompson, but the Widden master doesn't believe that Lunchtime was a one-hit wonder. "There were plenty of others along the way that influenced too, other Group 1 horses, other winners. And as a broodmare sire, he was right there."

Lunchtime sired Great Selection in 1990, who foaled Choisir, along with the capable producer Jesmond Lass, who dropped no less than Canny Lad in 1987. Jesmond Lass is the third dam of the champion juvenile Sepoy, who retires to stand at Darley Kelvinside this spring.

Thompson says Lunchtime did not exceed Widden's expectations. "I don't think my father would have brought him all the way over here if he didn't think he would be a good horse," he says. "They always had a lot of faith in him, and always expected him to be a good stallion, and he was. But I suppose in the marketplace he was always in the shadows of Vain and Bletchingly. He just didn't get the same accolades that those horses did."

Where he did get the accolades, however, was in the show ring. Across Australia, Lunchtime became a successful producer of horses fit for the hacking scene, including Victorian Horse of the Year winner Banquet. "Any gelding by Lunchtime that made it into the auction ring often made it into the show ring," Thompson recalls. It was a good fit for the flashy Widden import.

By 1991, the dazzling red horse was 21. His progeny had earned him \$13.3 million, and as a broodmare sire the figure was similar. His death on October 1 that year, it was a loss for Australian breeding, but as his name still trickles through some of the great bloodlines—lines like Snippets and Redoute's Choice—it cannot be said that all that remains of Lunchtime is a lilted, graceful headstone. >



REMEMBERED: Lunchtime's tombstone in the famous stallions' graveyard at Widden Stud.

LUNCHTIME (GB)
Ch h 1970, Silly Season
- Great Occasion,
by Hornbeam

Breeder/owner

Lt Col Dick Poole

Trainer

Peter Walwyn

Race record

6 starts: 3 wins, 1 place
Undeclared 2YO (3 starts).

Prizemoney

£16,963

Stud record

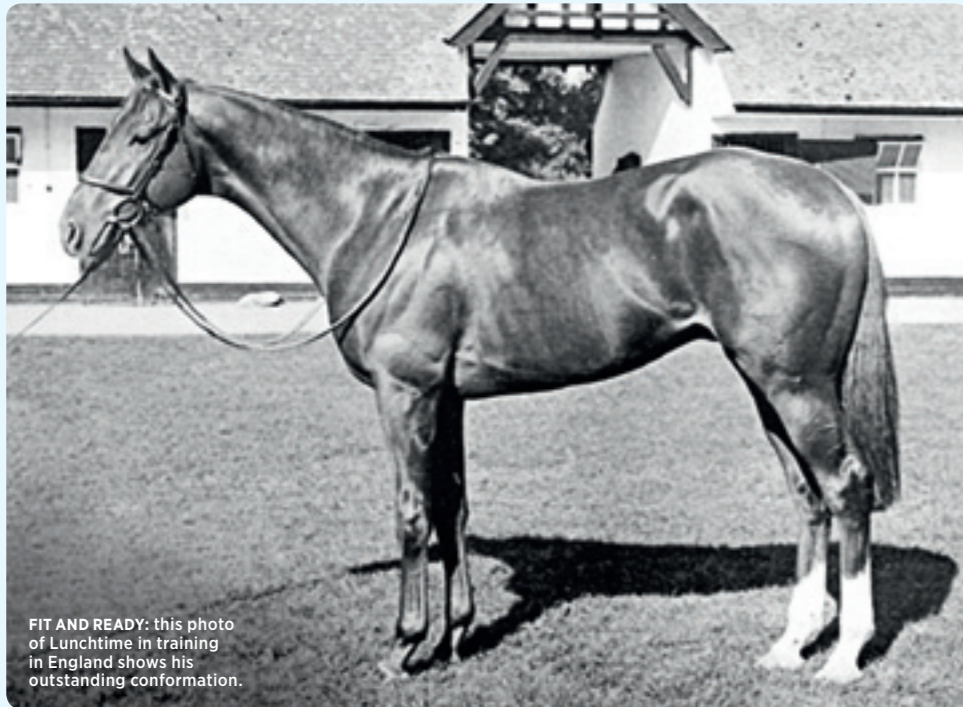
Commenced duties in 1974 at Widden Stud, Widden, NSW.
Third on Australian Sire List in 1986-87

18 foal crops

649 foals, 519 runners,
380 winners
32 Stakes winners
(16 Group level)

Progeny earnings worldwide

\$13,358,497



FIT AND READY: this photo of Lunchtime in training in England shows his outstanding conformation.

Lunchtime was a fine looking colt, who won his three races as a 2YO, but at three he became “colty” and disappointed in the 2000 Guineas, so we sold him to Australia. 🐾

PETER WALWYN, LUNCHTIME'S TRAINER

At stud in 1974

Widden Stud, Widden Valley, NSW.

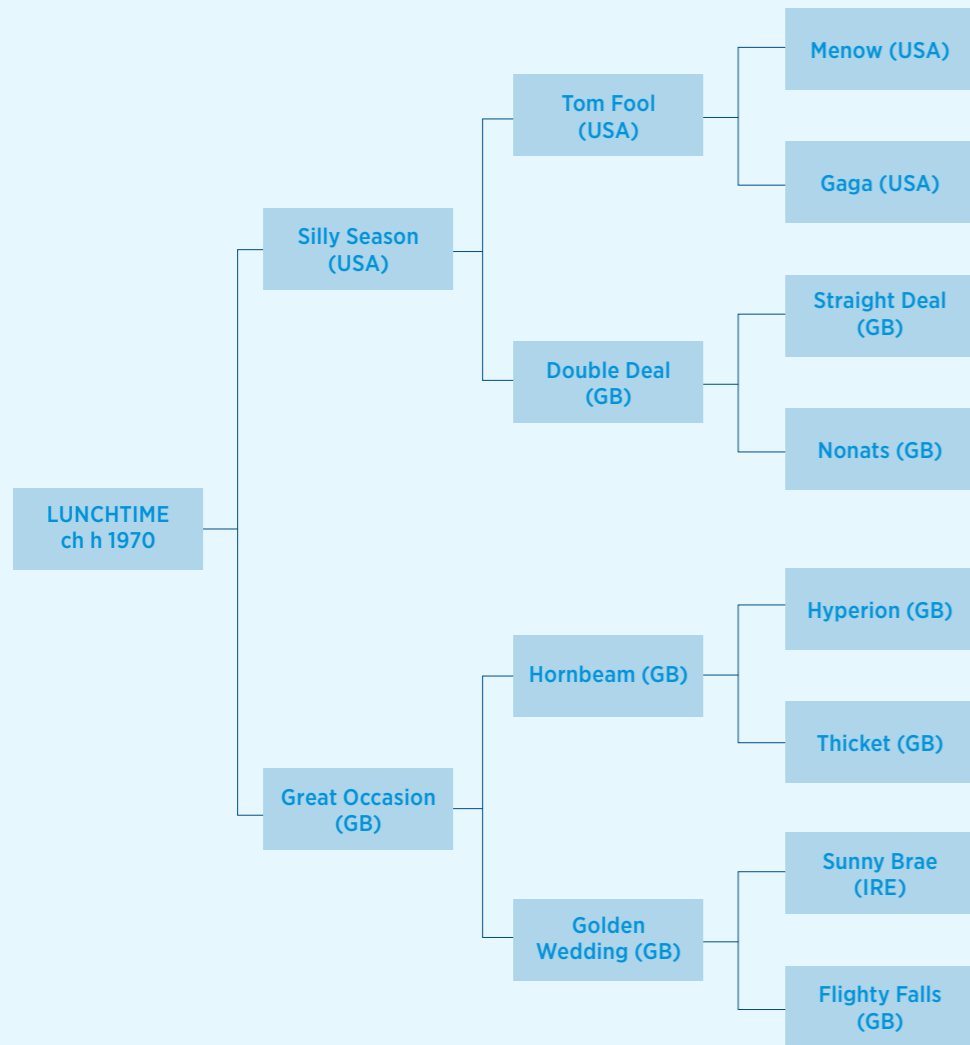
Sire of 32 Stakes winners, including Snippets (champion 2YO and champion sire of 55 Stakes winners), Street Cafe (G1 Blue Diamond Stakes), Chipolata (G1 WA Derby), Integra (G3 winner and sire of multiple G1 winner Intergaze), Food For Love (G3 winner and dam of G1 winner Lady Jakeo), Breakfast Creek (G3 winner and handy sire), Royal Snack (G2 Sandown Cup), Pre Catalan (G2 Silver Slipper and capable sire), Matsui (Listed winner and handy Tasmanian sire), Fickle Hostess (G2 Magic Night Stakes) and Miss Kariba (G3 Canterbury Stakes).

The Lunchtime legacy

As a broodmare sire, Lunchtime is the sire of the dam of 34 Stakes winners, including 10 Group 1 winners. His sire line continues through sons of his best son, Snippets, particularly the outstanding Pins, based at Waikato Stud in New Zealand, who is turn is the sire the Group 1 Caulfield Guineas winner, Econsul, who is at stud at Woodside Park in Victoria. Another of Snippets' sons, Snippetson, is a promising young sire at Widden Stud, where he walks by the grave of his grandsire, Lunchtime, on his way to the breeding barn. In Western Australia, Snippets' son Akhenaten is a good sire of winners.

Lunchtime appears in the pedigree of some of our modern-day greats, including Black Caviar, Redoute's Choice, Canny Lad, Canny Lass, Choisir, Sepoy, Starspangledbanner, Manhattan Rain, Wanted, Snitzel, Intergaze, Pins, Econsul, Legs, Stratum, Crystal Lily, Preserve, Bel Mer and Shellscape.

LUNCHTIME'S PEDIGREE



CROWNE PLAZA
COOGEE BEACH
SYDNEY
THE PLACE TO MEET.

seaside breaks:

(noun) | The perfect getaway at Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach. Escape to this peaceful seaside suburb with all of Sydney's attractions only minutes away including Royal Randwick Racecourse and Inglis Thoroughbred Sales Auction Newmarket Complex.

Experience Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach for yourself.
Book via the Crowne Plaza app, call 138 388 or visit www.crowneplazacoogee.com.au

PriorityClubRewards | IHG

SYDNEY MELBOURNE PERTH AUCKLAND LONDON
NEW YORK HONG KONG OVER 400 LOCATIONS WORLDWIDE



The North East of Victoria

WORLD CHAMPION BLACK CAVIAR WAS BORN IN NAGAMBIE WHICH IS PART OF THIS SHIRE

Is home to some of Australia's finest thoroughbred properties and has been home to some of this countries finest thoroughbred stock. The region has produced Melbourne Cup winners, Champion Stallions, Leading Breeders and is renowned for raising, preparing and selling some of Australia's best racehorses.

The region is one of the fastest developing areas in regional Victoria, with continued substantial capital investment in the thoroughbred industry alone in the last 5-7 years. Being the "Horse Capital of Victoria" the Shire is situated in picturesque North East Victoria, an easy 90-minute drive North East from Melbourne. Strathbogie Shire Council provides a one stop shop for the Thoroughbred Industry, so don't run around trying to obtain information about locating or relocating to our shire, let us do it for you.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr Steve Crawcour
p 03 5795 0000
e steve.crawcour@strathbogie.vic.gov.au
w www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au

