



Messene spreadeagles the Wagga Gold Cup field in front of a massive crowd

Family gets a 'kick' from Cup win

WAGGA HAS BEEN A BIG PART OF THE CLOROS FAMILY'S LIFE FOR MANY YEARS SO THE WIN BY MESSENE IN THE WAGGA GOLD CUP PROVIDED A MASSIVE THRILL FOR THE BOOT-MAKING CLAN

WORDS: GRAEME WHITE PICTURES: STEVE WHITE

With the 2016 Wagga Gold Cup firmly in his keeping, George Cloros finally achieved a long held desire to win his hometown cup with Messene last month.

The 75-year-old is a successful businessman following his father into their widely known famous boot-making company, Redback.

Messene races under the Redback banner with Cloros's sons Matthew and Mark also in the ownership and running the family business in Sydney.

"We bred Messene and own him and I call Wagga home so it was a big thrill," he said.

"A few other times I thought we had the right horse to target for the race, but they (trainers) took a different path.

"Messene hadn't won for two years but he had been racing in the best of company. It meant a lot to me to see him

win the Wagga Cup."

Jockey Blake Shinn shot Messene to the front as he ran out a comfortable winner in front of a huge crowd of more than 10,000 on a perfect autumn day.

The win continued the incredible winning streak of Team Hawkes coming within five days of their famous victory with champion sprinter Chautauqua in Hong Kong.

There was no prouder man than Cloros who made it to the track for a couple of hours to watch his current star despite breathing difficulties.

"If I can't go and watch the horses race I won't have them," Cloros said. "I plan to go to Brisbane and watch Messene race up there during the winter carnival."

Messene's victory pushed his earnings close to \$1 million and while the money is nice, Cloros said it was more the thrill of having bred and owned a Wagga Cup winner.

"Wagga has been part of my life since 1967," he said. "My family has had farms since the 1960s – the first was at Tumbalong near Gundagai.

"My father then started Redback Boots in Sydney and it's still in the family making more than 17,000 pair of boots a week."

While he has stepped back from the everyday running of the business, Cloros is very hands-on with his horses currently racing four and having more than 10 broodmares based in the Hunter Valley at Arrowfield Stud.

"We have been very lucky. My family bred Blazing Saddles and also Messene," he added.

"We were tossing up whether to start Messene in the Wagga Cup or Lord Mayors Cup in Sydney and made the right choice."

Shinn was able to win his first Wagga Cup, while for John Hawkes it was his second after Antwerp's victory in 1993.



ABOVE: Blake Shinn coaxes favourite Messene home in the Wagga Cup
BELOW: (L-R): Co-trainer Michael Hawkes, Blake Shinn and George Cloros proudly show off their Wagga trophies



The champion jockey has ensured he is in Wagga each year for the carnival.

"To do it for Mr Cloros; I'm very grateful for the opportunity," he said. "It's a great, great carnival."

It was a family affair in the Cup and also the Town Plate with Just A Blur producing a brilliant finish for mother and son Barbara Joseph and Paul Jones.

Just A Blur reeled off a sizzling finish to provide jockey Mathew Cahill with his third win in the feature race.

Joseph won the Plate in 1991 with Merimbula Bay and is a cup regular training an endless stream of winners.

Winning the Plate with her son was a dream come true: "To do it with Paul means a lot," she said.

Trainer Paul Murray was able to keep the family name to the fore claiming the Inglis 2yo with the talented Flash Fibian.

The youngster was selected by his late father Bede and bred by Koorngal Stud who retains a share in the ownership.

The carnival was one of the best on record with high attendances on Town Plate Day and for the Cup, while bookmakers reported strong betting turnover.

"It's one of the best carnivals we have held and the perfect weather certainly made it a great day," Murrumbidgee Turf Club's chief executive, Scott Sanbrook, said. **RNSW**

BELOW: Competing jockeys in the Wagga Gold Cup pose prior to the race

