



Kelly Smith with Grass Cutter after the horse had won his second successive race at Warren

# BUSH TRAINER

## *'mowing' them down*



Grass Cutter and Rasit Yetimova cruise to the post at Warren

**O**wner/trainer Kelly Smith might be the closest thing to a bush version of a 'horse whisperer' – he simply loves getting hold of veteran gallopers and giving them a new lease of life.

His latest star is Grass Cutter, a rising ten-year-old that has run his rivals into the ground at his past two starts in Warren TAB events.

"The owners were talking about retiring him but instead they gave him to me for the picnics circuit," Smith revealed.

"They said 'see if you can do something with the old horse and maybe take him to picnic races on the dirt' – I've had him for nine starts and he still hasn't seen a dirt track!"

Grass Cutter – a 91-start veteran – had not won a race for 25 starts before Smith legged Rasit Yetimova aboard at Warren on 22 June.

"Rasit has ridden him twice for two wins and they get on well together. He knows the horse and they're a great team.

"Rasit doesn't seem to get many rides, but I wouldn't swap him for anyone."

Smith said he enjoys rejuvenating old horses with the Collarenebri landscape working wonders.

"My wife and I live out in the middle of nowhere on a property," Smith said.

"We're actually blessed where we are; we're only an hour or so from the Queensland border and close to the boundary of the Hunter Region.

"I was born in Mungindi and wanted to join the police force but was half an inch too short. I met my wife in Collie [Collarenebri] and have been here since.

"My wife said I'm not worth living with, if I don't have my horses. I love being with them.

"I was a shearer for 30 years,

## COLLARENEBRI TRAINER KELLY SMITH PREPARES HIS SMALL TEAM IN THE 'MIDDLE OF NOWHERE' BUT HIS HORSES WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY

WORDS: MARK BRASSEL  
PICTURES: JANIAN MCMILLIAN

did some rural fencing and played footie. I've had two knee replacements and I'm due for a shoulder replacement.

"They took one of my lungs out a while back and that's part of the reason I moved to the property as I was allergic to the chemicals in things like sheep dip, but we're away from it out here."

## Grass Cutter has had three different trainers and Smith said the horse was known for pulling and reefing on jockeys.

"He used to race with a Norton Bit – I am not a believer in them and removed it straight away.

"I've taught the horse a number of things such as walking on a treadmill. He's rising ten years old and had never swam before he came to me. He also does plenty of walking.

"In both wins he drew the outside barrier – the barrier draw doesn't mean anything to him as he punches forward to the lead.

"After his last win he came home and ate right up and the next day he was bucking and playing. He has to travel a fair way to the races but doesn't seem to mind.

"My horses are used to it, in fact quite often I take them for 50km drives and they love it.

"Most of the horses I train have

been given to me. I do something different with my horses each day so they're happy and are all blossoming."

Smith said he enjoys travelling to the races: "It's 'only' three and a half hours to Dubbo so I put on my audio book and listen to them. It's something I really enjoy, and it passes the time.

"I download them for free from our shire's library. I like the writer Bryce Courtenay; I reckon I've listened to every one of his books and anything on the outback."

Smith was even a jockey in his day: "I rode a winner at the Collie races in 1972.

"Unfortunately, the races were abandoned last year and most likely due to the coronavirus, they'll probably be called off again this September.

"It's a shame as the races are great for the town. A couple of local policemen and the butcher wanted to go in a horse so I'm getting one from Adelaide called Ballast.

"He's won eight races but has gone off the boil. The horse has had numerous gear changes so that's right up my alley.

"He might test me a bit, but I'll work him out once he gets here and we might have a bit of fun with him.

"Pretext's Dream hasn't raced for me yet but evidently had foot problems. He's going great now.

"Misty View is another and he's also coming along nicely for his first run for me.

"One of my best is Ayham who won three cups in a row last October – the Bundarra, the Baradine Cup at Coonabarabran and a cup race at Coonamble.

"And Yours Truthfully – they couldn't do anything with him and he's a big horse, over 17 hands high.

"Since we got him, we've given him plenty of TLC and he's come good; won his last start at Gunnedah." **RNSW**