

QUIRKY SHOWCAUSE PREVAILS IN NEW CAREER

Quirky, princess, difficult, diva, the ginga, not easy, all words used by all the people that have been associated with the enigma that is Showcause.

Showcause added \$750 into his eventing career earnings today with a popular win in the Wairakei Resort CCN105 Eventing Championship trophy at Taupo , but that's a long way to go to match the \$526,000 he won as a racehorse. He's certainly used to being in the limelight, but as a racehorse and an eventer he couldn't be described as easy.

Current rider eventer Kelsey Leahy was candid when asked about his quirky nature, "I haven't fallen off a horse more times than I have this horse, it took me six months to get him to jump a log" she laughed. "His first three outings at dressage he bucked me off in the truck park each time, but boy he could move" she says. That movement and presence is what made Kelsey persevere, "I had no choice, he was a 8 year old chestnut gelding, but he had great knees and the good ones are all quirky" muses Leahy.

Roll back to his racing career and those same delinquent ways are described by his trainer Frank Ritchie. "He was a handful, he dumped track rider Jayne Ivil, so many times, he could whip around so fast, he couldn't step in a puddle, he was very precious" remembers Ritchie. Showcause liked putting on a show and the bigger the crowd the better. "His third start at Ellerslie, all the owners there, we thought he would bolt in, he whips around dumps Mickey Coleman and proceeds to gallop circuits of the Ellerslie hill" laughs Ritchie. He was late scratched.

But for all his idiosyncrasies he was a very good racehorse. Jockey Darryl Bradley picks up the story in the turning point of his career, a run in the Metropolitan Trophy at Riccarton, a race they had to run in the first three to make the field in the New Zealand Cup a week later. "It was my first ride on the horse, he hated the heavy track, but we just got up for third, and then the story begins" says Bradley.

A week later and Showcause and Bradley are wearing the garland after winning the 147th running of the New Zealand Cup. "He had a will to win, once he was in front he was incredibly hard to get past, whether at the 200m or 400m mark" remembers Darryl. From then the ride continued, with Showcause stepping up each time, adding the Group 2 City of Auckland Cup, Group 2 Avondale Cup, before Titch turned the tables on him in the Group 1 Auckland Cup, running a gallant second. "I was lucky, I got on at the right time and he suited my style of riding, he could fight like a tiger, he was a super horse, hard to ride, but so fun to ride, he was so determined, a special horse" says Darryl.

When contacted today both trainer Frank Ritchie and regular jockey Darryl Bradley were full of admiration for what Showcause has achieved in his new career. "Its so great seeing them out in another career, being spoilt, Thoroughbreds are so versatile" said Darryl with Frank adding "It has to add to their longevity, they enjoy having routine and working".

Leahy is also quick to add the admiration and following of his former owners. "They come to his events, they recently chipped in to help buy him a new saddle, its pretty cool they still follow him" she adds.

His racing background has certainly stood him in good stead for his new career. "After the seven and a half minute Cross Country he had a heart rate of 50, he has amazing staying ability" says Kelsey. He will have a couple of weeks off now, after a successful season. "He had seven pre-novice starts,

for seven double clears, all in the top six at the finish, to win today was a fab way to finish the season" explains Kelsey.

Showcause is used to a party, and you can bet there was champagne to celebrate those racing wins, today however Kelsey will have to wait to taste the champagne with her and husband Finbarr expecting their second child in November. "I will have to sniff it" laughs Kelsey.

Just like racing Leahy has plans mapped out for Showcause, "stepping to one star is in the immediate plans" says Kelsey. Showcause will have several weeks in the paddock after the arrival of the new Leahy, with Kelsey slightly nervous at the prospect. "Yep, I will have the neck strap out, I don't think he will ever grow out of it, a princess he may be, but I do love him" says Leahy, sensing her admiration for the horse that is sure to have further wins in his illustrious career.

Article: Kirsty Lawrence