

THE GAUCH

by KRISTEN MANNING

The official biography of Darren Gauci, *The Gauch* tells the story of one of Australia's most famous, most liked and most accomplished jockeys.

From the first time he sat on a horse aged 12, Darren Gauci had what it took to be a high class rider. A natural athlete with an innate affinity with horses, he smashed records as an apprentice and has been in the headlines ever since.

Riding all around Australia and beyond for the best of trainers against the most talented of riders, Darren Gauci forged relationships with some great horses including the champions Super Impose and Lonhro.

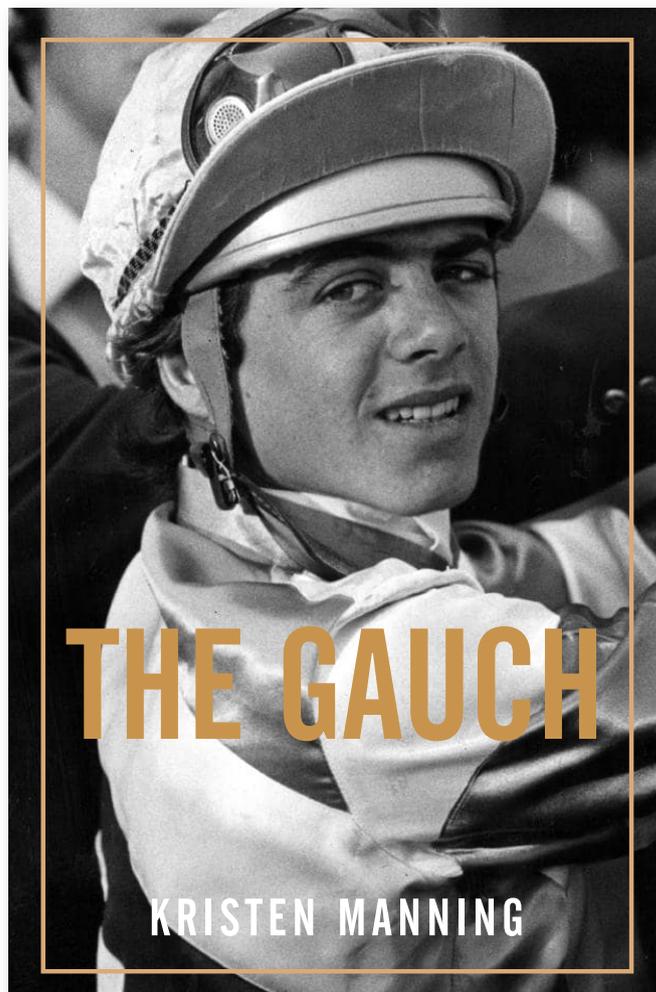
At the height of his popularity supported by a fan club with over 3000 members, Darren Gauci is respected by racing people everywhere and is well known beyond the sport; newspapers and magazines keenly following his fortunes both on and off the track including his much reported marriage to Young Talent Time darling Karen Dunkerton.

The Gauch is the culmination of considerable research into the four decade long riding career of Darren Gauci. It is the third book—and first biography—written by racing journalist Kristen Manning whose first two books *Fields Of Omagh* and *Prince Of Penzance* were also published by Melbourne Books.

... For three and a half decades Darren Gauci thrilled Australian racegoers with a riding style like no other. Beautifully balanced, adapting to suit the leading horses or coming from behind, timing his run to perfection. Slow horses went faster and out of form horses starting winning due to the style of D. Gauci.

Perhaps what made Darren Gauci a champion was his demeanour away from the racetrack. Unassuming, polite, respectful and gracious in defeat ...

From the Foreword by Bryan Martin



The Author

A journalist, specialising in thoroughbred racing and breeding, Kristen Manning has been involved in the world of horse racing since she was 15. She embarked on her racing career as a cadet journalist at Truth Newspaper and has subsequently written for a variety of publications including Winning Post, Turf Monthly, Racetrack, Thoroughbred Racing Commentary and Bluebloods. She also breeds and races her own horses.

RACING PEOPLE TALK ABOUT DARREN GAUCI

JOE AGRESTA re Bart Cummings: Bart didn't care how old a jockey was, where he had come from. He would just watch them and one day he just said we are putting this kid on.

STEPHEN BASTER, jockey: legend, champion, friend... and a bloody good jockey!

JAKE BAYLISS, jockey: Darren always takes his time to give you a word of advice even if you haven't asked him yet! Which has always been comforting.

LEON CORSTENS, trainer: Darren was a champion apprentice, an absolute champion - and a champion guy to boot.

SUSAN DUNCAN, sister: he really does deserve a book, he has done so much for racing.

DWAYNE DUNN, jockey: Darren is a true gentleman and it was an honour to compete against him. He taught us all so much with his great hands, beautiful balance and his love for the horse. The way he conducted himself was outstanding as was his integrity. He was every young jockey's idol and they aspired to be like him. The rockstar of the racing industry!

GAVIN EADES, retired jockey: Darren is one of my most trusted friends and I don't trust many these days. We have a lot in common as our favourite race is the Doncaster; I shed a tear when he won on Over and I backed him too! I just wish he had won a Melbourne Cup. I couldn't live with myself running second in three of them but he can and that is the kind of special person he is... I love him!

ERNIE EWERT (Jnr), trainer: my father Ernie Snr is no longer with us but he would have loved the opportunity to sing the praises of Darren Gauci. He was a fabulous jockey and great to deal with - he handled himself so well with everyone. He was respectful to all with a keen sense of humour, everyone liked him and that has never changed throughout his amazing career. When you drove to the races with Darren as your rider you felt like you had a clear advantage, he was so consistent and his assessments were usually spot on. My father and I enjoyed nothing but good times with DG the Gauch and we loved every minute of his company. Thanks Gauch, you're a champ.

JADE GAUCI, daughter: Dad always had that special bond with horses, he loved them and that shone out whenever he was riding. He had a great respect for the horse and when he could he would like to really get to know them.

MICHAEL GAUCI, brother and retired jockey: Darren is a far better bloke than he was a jockey... and he was a champion jockey. For generations to come every promising apprentice will be compared to him and being used as a yardstick speaks for itself. A bit like each champion is compared to Phar Lap, each brilliant runner to Usain Bolt... it is a great achievement.

RODNEY GRIFFITHS, retired jockey: there have been none better than Darren Gauci, he just had that desire to be good and when he came out as an apprentice he had this new style which impressed everyone. I never saw him in a bad mood, nothing upset him and he has been the same since he was 15.

MICHAEL HIBBS, trainer: Darren has always had a great manner about him and it has been evident throughout his career that he is a great horseman. He is just a natural, horses run for him. Like all champions he had the temperament, the ability, the constitution, the will and that extra 10% that people can't see.

MATTHEW HYLAND, retired jockey, current Victorian Jockeys Association CEO: I was a couple of years behind Darren and every apprentice at the time wanted to ride like Darren, they all modelled themselves on him. He was a complete natural, he had beautiful hands, beautiful balance and had the perfect physique to be a jockey. If you had to create the perfect jockey, he'd be the model!

PETER MEILAK, manager: Darren won 12 premierships as an apprentice. That doesn't look too bad on a resume! And his record of 506 winners as an apprentice was achieved when we raced only five days a week. There will never be another Darren Gauci - he was my boss and my idol. And apart from the heaps of charity work he has done over the years when there has been media coverage, I've known him to visit sick or gravely ill fans in their homes or hospitals or at the request of family members or friends without giving it a second thought.

DANIEL MOOR, jockey: three Victorian Premierships as an apprentice is just freakish, you won't see that again... and in an era that was far more cut-throat than today.

the late GEOFF MURPHY, TRAINER: (when asked the secret to Gauci's success replied) people ask me that all the time and the simple answer is that horses just run for him.

LUKE NOLEN, jockey: I have always respected Darren because of the person he is. He always had time for me or anyone else and the fact that he was an elite jockey was a bonus when picking his brain.

ZAC PURTON, jockey: he burst on the scene as one of the best apprentices we've seen and went on to become a fantastic senior jockey. He had great balance, a cool head and a perfectly timed clock in his head. Everything you needed to make it into the top echelon of riders.

BRAD RAWILLER, jockey: he was my idol then my rival but he stayed the same person - he is a role model of what jockeys should be on and off the track, he is a legend.

CAROLYN RAWILLER, Brad's wife: Brad was suspended and we both went to that last day he rode at Caulfield - it was very emotional to see how well respected he was, I will never forget it. It's the first time in 14 years of being with Brad that I have seen or been there for a proper send off, usually jockeys retire through weight or injury or just give up.

BRENT THOMSON, retired jockey: Darren was born to sit in a saddle, he would always fit perfectly on a horse, big or small. He had great balance, lovely hands and the instinctive nature to make him a high class jockey. He was well liked and admired everywhere he went, I am proud to call myself a friend.

SHANE TRONERUD, retired jockey: I have known The Gauch for 35 years. He was the one we all looked up to and wanted to be in the 80's. He has always been a humble, lovely bloke; he has never changed and I have never heard a bad word about Darren... he is just a nice human being.

CRAIG WILLIAMS, jockey: Darren changed the landscape with the way he rode and he is one of the few who have done so here in Australia. He was always very competitive but always a great guy and whenever he had success everyone was happy for him.



The Darren Gauci Medal awarded to the Racing Media Association's apprentice jockey of the year.



To

DARREN WILLIAM GAUCI

Greeting

*WHEREAS Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second,
Queen of Australia, has instituted an Australian medal
to commemorate, in the year 2000, Australian sporting achievement;
I DO by this warrant award you the Australian Sports Medal.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Deane'.

Governor-General of the
Commonwealth of Australia

By His Excellency's Command

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Howard'.

Prime Minister