

HARNESS RACING



Brian Tuddenham and Sting Lika Bee
Picture: BRUCE MAGILTON

**Spirited
Quinlan
snares
top drive**

Adam Hamilton

BIG-race opportunist Jodi Quinlan has the drive on sit-sprinter Sequoiahs Spirit for Saturday night's \$350,000 Group 1 Victoria Cup (2575m) at Moonee Valley.

Quinlan has a habit of being successful after picking up late drives, and Sequoiahs Spirit is a serious winning chance at \$8.50 with TAB Sportsbet.

The biggest win of Quinlan's career came three years ago when she was called up just days before the Miracle Mile to replace the suspended Lance Justice on eventual winner Sokyola.

Quinlan took the reins on Sting Lika Bee last Saturday week to win the Cranbourne Cup when regular driver Daryl Douglas opted to drive Sequoiahs Spirit.

Douglas opted for Sting Lika Bee this time, leaving his brother Glenn to find new drivers for Sequoiahs Spirit and Lenny Bromac.

Glenn Douglas quickly snapped up Quinlan for Sequoiahs Spirit and John Caldwell, another proven big-race performer, for Lenny Bromac.

"They were the obvious choices. Jodi would've driven Sequoiahs Spirit at Cranbourne if Daryl didn't hop off Sting Lika Bee," Douglas said.

"And Caldwell's record with pick-up drives in big races is fantastic."

Quinlan is trying to become only the second woman to drive a Victoria Cup winner. Queensland's Natalie Rasmussen was the first when she led throughout on Blacks A Fake last year. Quinlan finished ninth on The Warp Drive.

"This is what it's all about, driving in races like the Victoria Cup," Quinlan said.

"Sequoiahs Spirit's a very different sort of drive to Sokyola in the Miracle Mile, where he was always going to lead, and Sting Lika Bee, who looked better than his rivals at Cranbourne.

"This horse can't afford to do much work. He'll need the right run, but he's good enough to win it if the luck goes our way."

THE next 24 hours are crucial to the health of champion pacer Flashing Red.

The 10-year-old, a winner of more than \$2 million, had emergency surgery on an infected front joint for the second time at the Ballarat Veterinary Clinic on Monday night.

"This time (veterinarian) Ian (Fulton) used an endoscope so he could see where the infection was," trainer Stuart Hunter said.

"He's a lot happier. We've been told to keep everything crossed no further infection appears by Thursday."

VICTORIA CUP

Moonee Valley, Saturday night

- \$2.30 STING LIKA BEE
- \$5 Penny Veejay
- \$6.50 Smoken Up
- \$8.50 Sequoiahs Spirit, Cincinnati Kid
- \$15 Ultimate Mark
- \$16 Smooth Crusa
- \$17 Robin Hood
- \$35 Manwarra Goforgold
- \$51 The Quiet Village
- \$71 Lenny Bromac, Flaming Roadstar

Odds: TAB Sportsbet

THE SAVIOUR

A colt who saved a broken heart



A FEW years ago experts discovered that a pet was the best elixir for a broken heart.

Widows in nursing homes were given cats. Labradors were plonked on rugs at the feet of sad old widowers. Budgie and goldfish sales rose.

Lives were extended, aching hearts soothed.

Brian Tuddenham has a pet, a nine-year-old horse called Sting Lika Bee.

In horse racing, timing is everything, and this special horse's timing was perfect.

About 10 years ago Tuddenham's wife Kath passed away. The Tuddenhams had 40 years together. They had no kids, just each other.

They were inseparable. They even learned how to train horses together, from scratch. When Kath died, Brian fell apart.

The retired wool classer had a few pacers in work up at Haddon, a hamlet west of Ballarat. He'd get up in the morning, feed and work them, but he performed the routine on memory alone.

By Tuddenham's own admission, he was going mad. Then one day, about two years after Kath died, he picked up a horse sale catalogue.

"I was wandering around half aimlessly and picked up this catalogue. Lemontree Stud was having a dispersal sale. This colt, just four months old, was up for sale," Tuddenham said.

"He was beautifully bred. His full brother (Hi Ho Silver-

heels) broke two world records in the States."

Tuddenham was still in limbo, but conjured the energy to attend the auction. He had \$40,000, with a thought of also buying the colt's mother.

He fell for the colt at first sight. He also liked his mum, but couldn't afford both.

"I loved his type and the way he walked. I can still picture him back then," he said.

Tuddenham may have learned his trade late in life, but he had an instinct for what horse people call type.

His late father Bill drove a

This colt from Lemontree Stud looked a real workhorse. There was something about him: type, conformation, character. Something else, too, hard to describe. Kindness?

Tuddenham took a shine to the colt and the colt to him. Tuddenham bought him for \$30,000 and broke him in.

He would linger at the colt's stall, any excuse to stay close. For the first time in two years, Tuddenham was happy to roll out of bed.

"There's something about animals," Tuddenham said.

"My brain was pretty mixed

"He's such an intelligent horse. He wants you to like him," Tuddenham said. "He's a terrific good mate."

Good-looking horses aren't always good racers. Horses with great conformation, great types, are often beaten by runts with big hearts. Clydesdales have conformation by the ton, but they can't run a mile in under two minutes.

Regardless, there was a sense of destiny about Tuddenham's good-looking colt.

"Even in the paddock as a youngster you could see how good he was. He'd just run and

powerful he becomes. He's better at nine than he was at seven or five. His greatest triumphs — the Stawell, Bendigo, Shepparton, Ballarat, Hunter, Kilmore and Cranbourne Cups — have all come in the past 11 months.

The money doesn't mean much to Tuddenham, who says he was comfortable before the great horse came along. "He's earned so much, you could live off the interest," he said.

Tuddenham cannot rate one win above the others because there have been so many and all so good.

Sting Lika Bee is a hero in Haddon and Ballarat.

"Everyone wants to know how the horse is going," Tuddenham said.

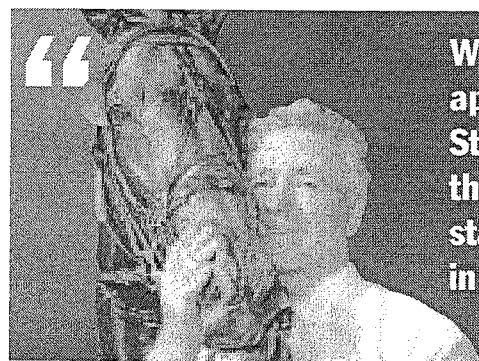
His brother Des, the Collingwood great, does not own a share in the horse but has enjoyed the ride, led the support crew and appreciated the fact Sting Lika Bee dragged his brother back to the land of the living.

Sting Lika Bee will attempt to add the Victoria Cup to this season's impressive tally on Saturday night.

He has drawn gate 12, on the second row. It will be his toughest test for some time, especially given he's coming off a shock loss at his most recent start.

Beyond the Victoria Cup, Tuddenham has five races in mind, including the Inter Dominion series in March. Then maybe that's it, the end of the road.

"I've been getting myself ready for some time for it," he said of Sting Lika Bee's inevitable retirement. "It will be hard. He has meant so much to me, but I would never race him if he was going to get beaten a lot. The day will come, I'm not looking forward to it, but in life things come to an end."



When Kath died, Brian fell apart ... (then along came Sting Lika Bee.) He'd linger at the colt's stall, any excuse to stay close. For the first time in two years, Tuddenham was happy to roll out of bed.

team of five Clydesdales into the forests around Ballarat to collect timber.

The giant horses would walk 50km a day, carting more than nine tons at a time.

Bill would buy them in the sale ring as youngsters, speculating the type of work horses they'd become. His family's livelihood depended on the accuracy of his eye.

"I guess it was in my blood," Brian said. "Clydesdales are hard-working animals and pacers aren't that much different. You need one that will stand up to it."

up at the time, my body probably was, too. But he relaxed me. Just being around him made me feel better."

The colt, too, seemed smitten. He'd do little things to entice Tuddenham to hang around, like tap on his water bucket or plonk his head on Tuddenham's shoulder.

Sometimes he'd pretend to kick his mate when his sulky was being removed, then stop, and look back as if to see if Tuddenham was startled. Often he'd yank Tuddenham's hat off his head with his teeth and wave it in the air.

run and run," he said. "He was perfect the moment the hobbles first went on. He worked half a lap of the track and I didn't need to see any more."

Tuddenham's eye was accurate, his instincts right. The colt who had changed his life, even before he'd been hobbled, was a superstar.

Now nine, Sting Lika Bee has won 37 races and almost \$1 million.

If he is not the best horse in Australasia, he is undoubtedly the toughest. When others wilt, Sting Lika Bee surges.

The longer they go, the more