

Elusive reward after 173 attempts

06:10 AM 22 May 2019 NZST

[Comment \(1\)](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)



Ken Browne and Chrisken Kiosk

American author Earl Nightingale once wrote: Never give up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway.

It's a well-used quote, but it still rings true - especially for harness racing's Ken Browne who was last week rewarded for his persistence in never giving up on a goal.

Browne, of Gruyere, 50 km north east of Melbourne, could well be the oldest driver to land his maiden victory after driving his first-ever winner just a few days short of his 67th birthday.

And after 173 attempts, the win carried a touch of polish that's for sure. After being locked away three back the pegs for most of the trip in the \$7000 Trotters Handicap at Cranbourne, Browne moved out quick as a flash when a runner on his outside went off-stride.

In a winning move, he slid up to the death seat with 600 metres to go with Chrisken Kiosk (Noopy Kiosk-Baby Button (Safely Kept USA) to join leader Just Anything (Gavin Lang) and got the upper hand, albeit narrowly, right on the wire.

"Now that I've got the monkey off my back, I reckon the next winner will come a lot sooner. I've finally done it, so it will be way easier," Browne joked.

Browne has harbored an ambition for over 20 years to get what he calls that "elusive quadrella" of breeding, owning, training and driving a winner.

"If I could do that, I always thought it would be a rather big achievement. Just something quite special," he said.

"I told my son Chris (his name combined with that of his father forms Chrisken) that when I finally got that long-awaited winner, I would give a salute with the whip going across the finish line.

"But I didn't do it because, to be honest, I wasn't certain that I'd won and I didn't want to make myself look silly.

"The race camera operator followed me around after the finish line which is usually a good indication that he thought I'd won, but it took ages for the numbers to go up.

"I honestly can't remember how I felt. I recall thinking wow I just beat the ice man (Gavin Lang)!"

Browne said he had a few drinks that night to celebrate after the reality sank in.

"I think I may have overdone the Bundaberg Red Rum because I didn't pull up all that well the next day," he laughed.

"I'd come close a few times with some second placings, and there's been quite a lot more thirds. My first-ever second was with Gordonsville, a pacer I purchased off Gordon Turner.

"We also had a good run with a pacer named High Tech Fury, but reinsman Michael Bellman did the majority of driving with him."

While Browne's needed persistence to notch up his first winner as a driver, he bobs up with a winner or two each season as a trainer, with Chrisken Kiosk his 16th career success.

Browne's entry into the sport goes back to 1994 when he attended a clearing sale held by respected industry breeder/owner Kevin Riseley, of Sheron Park.

"I paid \$2000 for a weanling out of the first crop sired by Safely Kept," he said.

"That horse was later to become Baby Button, who was dual-gaited. I raced her as a pacer because of her breeding, but I'm now wishing I'd given her a go as a trotter."

Baby Button has had four foals, two of which have got to the races, with the obvious star being Chrisken Kiosk with six wins and 27 placings for over \$60,000.

Browne said he was virtually forced into obtaining a B Grade driver's licence 10 years ago when he was finding it difficult to get drivers at the trials.

"The situation was that we'd have one trial of five horses and five drivers would turn up. There were no spares so a few times I ended up fast-working mine by themselves after the trials to get their fastwork done," he said.

Browne is hoping that his seven-year-old stable star Chrisken Kiosk has at least another two seasons left in him.

"He doesn't win out of turn, but he's so consistent. There's a bit of a trick to him and that's in his feet- he has to be shod a certain way or otherwise he's hopeless," Browne said.

"We try and pick out the most suitable races for him and if that means travelling to Terang, Ballarat or even further, then that's what we do.

"We are having a heap of fun and I have to thank Peter Goudie for allowing us to be stabled at his place. In addition to the trotter, we have a 2yo pacer by Metropolitan named Bundy Red, which I'm hoping is real good. He has to be with that name!"

Browne said while he had nearly worn out the video replay of his winning drive, he was now eagerly awaiting the race photograph which would take pride of place on the lounge room wall.

Terry Gange
NewsAlert PR Mildura