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Clark's games dream closer

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Setting the pace: Wemdy Schaeffer on Koyuna Sun Set.

ONE of Australia's greatest horse breeders could be London-bound, writes FRAN CLELAND.

The success of Wendy Schaeffer's showjumping and eventing horses Koyuna Sun Set, Koyuna Sun Magic and Koyuna Sunshine in Europe has special significance for Echuca horse breeder Howard Clark.

Their great performances mean he is a step closer to buying his ticket to the [London Olympic Games](#) to watch them.

Clark, 74, has been breeding outstanding competition horses for 50 years, and his Koyuna stud prefix is known by every competitor in Australia.

On the [World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses](#) 2010 sire ranking for event horses, Koyuna stud has two sires in the top 50 - Brilliant Invader at No.22 and Koyuna Majestic Supreme at No.38.

It's remarkable recognition for one stud in a relatively small country.

Howard's long-time passion for breeding jumping horses began half a century ago when his father owned a handsome grey jumping bred colt named Souvenir.

Bred from a long line of jumping horses, via Desire, Gortland and Heroic on his sire side and through Carradale, Lanuis and St Simon on the dam side, this enormously prepotent stallion was to change the face of jumping competition in Australia, consistently producing horses that could showjump and event at the highest level.

Howard continued his family's tradition of breeding horses and started Koyuna as a going concern in 1963.

Souvenir is possibly the best-known name in the country in performance horse breeding and there are many performance studs in Australia based on Koyuna bloodlines.

By the end of the '80s, Howard was recognised as one of this country's most knowledgeable men in the breeding industry and was invited by the [Department of Trade](#) to tour Asia giving lectures on breeding.

The champion horses coming from the Koyuna stud include:

Autograph, fifth in alternate Olympics in Rotterdam as a five-year-old.

Tongala, one of Australia's top winners in the UK and domestically.

Mickey Mouse, 10th at the World Championships in Stockholm in 1990.

Silverneer, Australian showjumping champion, and sire of many jumping horses.

Koyuna, multi-Victorian showjumping champion.

Blazing Bridles, who competed well in Europe and Japan.

Eurella Jubilee, picked for Barcelona Olympics.

Beauvener, sold to Italy.

Image, Rock-a-bye, Chippendale, Pegasus and Burgundy, all jumping champions.

Souvenir's grandchildren include Peppermint Grove, gold medal winner at Barcelona and Atlanta Olympic Games; Kibah Sandstone, Olympic gold medallist; and Kirby Park Irish Jester, Megan Jones' Olympic partner.

Then Howard found Brilliant Invader, who had come back to Australia from New Zealand and was not being used much at stud, and bought him to cross with the Souvenir mares. The cross has produced Koyuna Ted, Koyuna Sun Dancer, Koyuna Sunshine and Koyuna Sun Set.

The stud continues today, using the Brilliant Invader cross Souvenir line mare stallion Koyuna Genesis and the double-cross Souvenir stallion Koyuna Quarterback over Souvenir line mares that have been sourced, and other mares with proven jumping bloodlines.

A fine crop of Koyuna three-year-olds just being broken in is likely to contribute to Australia's competition success for many years to come.

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