

Little Spike latest winner for Piercy's

By Bruce Stewart – 14 February 2024

Harness racing owners the late Ken Piercy and his wife Audrey go a long way back, having raced horses in the 1980s from the late Bryce Buchanan's stables at West Plains just outside Invercargill.

There have been many horses over the years for the couple, and the latest winner is the Arna Donnelly trained Little Spike (**Terror To Love**) which completed a hat trick of wins at Alexandra Park last Friday night.

Little Spike was given the perfect trip behind pacemaker Lou Baby by junior driver Zev Meredith in Race Eight and he won by one and a half lengths from a late finishing Jeremiah.

"He's just so tractable. He wears no head check and is an easy going little horse. He's got a high turn of speed which he never shows in his work. The other night the ones outside of him had really shooshed hard and he just picked them up in a stride. He's got a great attitude and a real will to win," Donnelly said.

Arna says she's been training for the Piercy's for about twelve years.

"I've always been good friends with Terry and Glenys Chmiel, and they had the Piercys as clients. Some of their horses were getting caught up in the big fields down south. They posted them up to me and we ended up having a lot of success together. We've always had one or two for Ken and Audrey."

Little Spike qualified at Cambridge in July before winning on the same track in December then repeating the dose in January.

"He's been a surprise package, and it couldn't have worked out better for the loveliest owners you could get."

Ken is no long with us and Little Spike races for the estate of Ken Piercy and Audrey Piercy.

"Audrey lives in Wellington in a retirement village. The horses keep her going and I think she's got a couple of horses down south with Andrew Stuart. It fills her weekends in with horses to watch whether it's north or south."

Donnelly says Ken Piercy was a lovely man with good values who understood that racing had highs and lows.

"He never complained. I remember one of his horses got driven badly and you're always worried about what they (owners) are going to say when they ring up. He just said it was a great drive, but it was just the wrong horse."

She says Little Spike is named after Ken.

"Apparently when he was a young fella they called him Little Spike and Audrey gets quite emotional when we talk about it. I just wish that Ken was here to watch him."

Terry Chmiel broke Little Spike in and thought the horse had potential.

"When Terry gave up training I was lucky enough to get him. We've had him fourteen or fifteen months now. He's taken a little bit of time to develop but he's done a great job. It's always tricky when you win three in a row because you just get thrown in the deep end quicker than you would like to. I don't want to hurt him racing against the older horses so we're just going to have to be picky as to where we go."

Donnelly is considering the Alabar Classic and the Northern Derby for the gelding.

"He'll then go to the paddock and look at racing as a late three year old. All going well we might head south and have a go at the New Zealand Derby if his form stacks up."

Donnelly said the most successful horse the stables had for the Piercys has been New York Minute (Art Major) which has won fifteen races and was good enough to run fourth in the G1 Four Year Old Emerald won by South Coast Arden.

They also raced No Way Else (**Elsu**) which won two races for the Chimel's and six for Donnelly.

Little Spike's pedigree goes back to Nice Gesture (**Gentry**) who left Mister Greatheart (**Pass With Care**) which won two races for Bryce Buchanan and a further two for Dick Prendergast.

Nice Gesture also left Bella Ragazzo (**Son Of Afella**) the dam of Giovanetto (18 wins), Holmes DG (32) and Hanover DG (4).

The Piercys also bred and raced Lover's Wish (**Son of Afella**) with Buchanan which won four races including the 1995 G3 Southland Oaks.

She was out of Sonny's Princess (**Sonny Silver**) a daughter of Queenship (**Lordship**) who left a host of winners including Lord Hillas (6), Queens Advocate (4), Carefree Princess (8), Noble Fella (9) and Horatius (4). All were bred by Ken's brother Bill.

One of the first horses Ken raced with his brother was Queens Advocate (**Alba Counsel**) which won three races from Buchanan's stable before he was sold. He won his first race at Ascot Park in January 1985 in the hands of junior driver John Murchison.

There's certainly plenty of history there and more good viewing for Audrey Piercy, especially the way Little Spike is going.