

The first lady of horse racing

By Sally Alden

There's something warm about her laughter, refreshing about her attitude and deliciously distinctive about her presence; and her unofficial title as 'The First Lady of Horse Racing' makes Gai Waterhouse

single. However, it's a title well earned as proven by her race wins over the last 15 consecutive Saturdays, including her most recent win with 'Upon This Rock' who took home the \$200,000 Dark Jewel Classic at Scone on the weekend.

"I only sleep around four hours per night; it became obvious pretty early on if I was to be successful in my horse training career I had to have more hours in the day and I achieve this by sleeping less," Gai enthused.

Something that is rarely discussed about the iconic racing legend is the obvious affection and close friendship between her and husband Robbie Waterhouse.

"I married Gai when



Robbie and Gai Waterhouse were spotted sharing a meal and a glass of wine with their staff at the Willow Tree Inn on the Friday evening before their big race win at Scone.

she was an actress working on stage and television in London. In those days she was relaxed and didn't get up until midday, however that soon changed when Gai became serious about racing. As a bookmaker I get up early, so it suited the both of us to make more

time in the day," Robbie said.

Robbie and Gai were spotted sharing a meal and a glass of wine with their staff at the Willow Tree Inn on the Friday evening before their big race win.

"We took the 45 minute drive past the Scone raccourse to stay at the celebrated Willow Tree Inn. I came for a visit a few weeks ago and was so impressed that I decided to share the experience with my husband and staff," Gai said.

The only child of the world's most accomplished racehorse trainer TJ Smith (TJ trained a world record 279 Group winners) and socialite Valerie Smith, Gai chose to stay at the Inn for the privacy and hospitality it offers.

"The country atmosphere here is more relaxed, people have more time to talk and we have been so warmly welcomed. Not to mention the wonderful meals and privacy of the cabins that make it a special place to stay," Gai continued.

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Gai believes there is too much pressure on women these days to excel at everything.

"I am proud to be considered a role model to women, there aren't many women in the horse training world but there are more coming into the industry every year which is positive. Women these days are expected to be wife, mother, businesswoman and supermodel, the pressure is extreme."

Gai credits her time as

an actor both in Australia and London with giving her skills to assist in the racing world.

"I had to learn to lower and deepen my voice to speak to men, racing is predominately a man's world and I learnt through my acting how to talk in a language that men understood and respected."

Horse racing is unique in Australian society in that it gives us an opportunity to really dress up and for Gai dressing to express is a creative outlet

that she embraces with relish.

"I love color and I love fashion and to dress well for the races is so much fun."

As a wife, mother and trainer Gai's days are extremely busy, but her passion for horses is what drives her.

"I guess I'm like a very experienced school teacher who can tell very early on which students are going to excel in their class. I can tell early on which horses have the talent to go far. Years of understanding

breeding and bloodlines and the industry have given me the tools to spot a future champion like Pterro, who's a star."

Gai says she is proud of her children Kate and Tom for their "independence and talent," she is also proud of her entire team at her racing stables Talloch Lodge.

"I don't just manage horses I also manage people and it's important to surround yourself with like minded positive people like my team at Talloch."



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