

RIDING HIGH

THE OTHER HALF

by Jennifer Hansen

INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARTNERS OF SUCCESSFUL AUSTRALIANS



SLOANE BOSS, WIFE OF JOCKEY GLEN

THE 150th Melbourne Cup takes place on the first Tuesday this November, but it's unlikely celebrations will come close to capturing the euphoria created by Glen Boss, aboard the mighty Makybe Diva five years ago.

Australia's most successful jockey achieved the unthinkable, winning three consecutive Melbourne Cups and creating a racing legend to rival Phar Lap.

But he didn't do it on his own. Along the way, he's had the support and love of his wife and partner of more than 20 years, Sloane Boss.

J You've been with Glen for a long time. How old were you when you first met?

S I was 16 and he was 18, and we've been together ever since that day we first met.

J That's amazing. Was it love at first sight?

S I think it must have been. I remember seeing him on a horse, thinking, "I wonder who that is?". It was at the Gold Coast races, and it might have only been the week before meeting him.

J Where did you actually meet?

S The following week. After the last race, the jockeys usually get dressed and come in to the bar. Another jockey's wife introduced me to him. Oops, I was in a bar and I was only 16. He asked what we were doing that night and we said we were going to Jupiter's Casino in Broadbeach. And we met up there. He was with friends and we bumped into each other and that was it.

J What did you think of him then?

S Was he already successful or just starting out?

S He was only an apprentice, but he was already quite successful for an apprentice. And he'd not long moved down to the Gold Coast from the Sunshine Coast.

J So what attracted you to him?

S I can't pinpoint a particular thing. It was the whole racing thing. And someone being a little bit successful. You think, "Oh wow, this is quite interesting".

J Did he have ambition and drive back then?

S Absolutely, yeah. He was actually known back then to be quite cocky and sure of himself. (Laughs) Very confident.

J How long before you moved in together?

S When you're an apprentice, as Glen was, you've pretty much got to live at the stables. You have a master who looks after you. Well, Glen used to sneak out and come and stay at my parents' place and then get up very early and sneak back to the stables! But he got caught out. So we ended up moving out when I was 18. We had

absolutely nothing. We rented all our furniture and just lived in an apartment in Burleigh for quite a while.

J So you started off with a very simple life?

S Yes, very simple. Simple to the point of going through stages where we didn't even know if we could pay the rent. Because when Glen came out of his apprenticeship, his master hadn't looked after his tax properly. So when it ended, he had a huge tax bill and we had nothing. A lot of apprentices finish and can put a really good deposit on a house. You see, Glen had no idea about things like that. He was a real bush jockey and had left home at 15 and was a bit naive.

J Did you ever want Glen to give up on the racing industry and earn an income through other means?

S No, we were just really happy. We actually almost thought it was kind of funny at the time. You know, when you struggle like that, but you're so happy and in love? You don't really care.

J So how old were you when you married?

S We only got married five years ago. Actually, six years ago.

J Did you ever want to get married before that?

S Not at all. We already felt like we were married. We did everything together. I travelled everywhere with him. We lived in Hong Kong, Macau.

J How old are your children now?

S Tate (son) is 15 and Carter (daughter) is 10.

J Was it a conscious decision to have children?

S I think so. We'd moved to Sydney and lived there for a year and Glen had really started to pick up with his riding. He was riding for trainers such as Gai Waterhouse and I felt a bit more settled. I'd broken away from the Gold Coast and moved to Sydney and at first that was a big thing. I hated Sydney, but then after a year, I felt like, this is where we are going to be.

J And how long were you in Sydney?

S All up, maybe 15 years.



J And what brought you to Melbourne?
S Coming back from Hong Kong and Glen not getting any rides in Sydney.

J Why is that?
S I don't know. The Sydney racing industry is very funny. It's like, once you're off the scene, they find someone else, and when you come back they don't want you. We don't have a lot of close friends in racing. And as far as trainers go, they'll just drop you like that. It was really very hard. It was embarrassing for Glen because no one even wanted him for track work. It's like they were saying, "You decided to go to Hong Kong — well, we've moved on."

J That seems ridiculous, given how successful he is?

S There were a lot of promises made, but it got to the point where we couldn't pay the bills. We were starting to panic because there was just no money coming in, so there was only one option. And he was looking for something bigger and better, so I suggested Melbourne.

J And how long have you been in Melbourne now?

S We've been here now about 15 months.

J But you must have

spent a lot of time here over the years at

Easygoing (above) Sloane Boss with her husband, successful jockey Glen Boss.

Runaway train (above, far right) Sloane congratulates Glen after a race; (above right) Glen powers home to victory on Makybe Diva in the 2005 Melbourne Cup.

MAIN PICTURE REBECCA MICHAEL

Melbourne Cup carnivals? How many did Glen ride in before he won his first?

S Ah, possibly four or five.

J Do you ever get nervous watching him ride?

S I do if I can see they're very bunched together or it's very tight, or things are happening. Sometimes I've had an inkling something's not right and there can be a fall, which is sometimes a bit freaky. The only time I get really nervous is when it's a really big race and there's an expectation. Like it's a favourite or you're standing with the owners.

J Tell me about the first Melbourne Cup win in 2003.

S The first Cup win was very exciting. I was in the Lexus marquee and I had my friends and my Mum there. I didn't really know much about Makybe Diva but then I could see she was going to win and I kind of froze and I didn't really know what to do. I was excited but I held it in a bit. I was so shocked; I didn't know what to do. Our life wasn't the same after that. We just kept going, like it never stopped.

J Do you remember how you celebrated that night?

S Yes, it was a big night at Crown. I think they booked out one of the function rooms. But there were a lot of people there we didn't know. A lot of hangers-on. But I think the second and third wins were more exciting.

J Why was that?

S I think I was more

