



On January 4th, 2022 my father Maurice Brian France died as a result of a stroke. It was very sudden. He was 95 years old. I had spent some time in Sydney only weeks before when his wife of 45 years, Barbara France, was ill in hospital. My father had been an accountant and still up to the day before his stroke he would have read the Sydney Morning Herald shares page and discussed world affairs. My father and Barbara had a good life and a beautiful home looking over Pittwater with the yachts and the Australian birds. Now Barbara will have time to reflect on all the beautiful countries they visited in the world and the special memories. In 1960 my father helped build Caloola Ski Lodge at Smiggins Hole, Kosciuszko. He taught us all to ski and still today I am a member of the Caloola Lodge. RIP Dad.

On January 28th, 2022 Ruby (Rubenesque) passed away. He was retired in the Mornington Peninsula after a short time with Stella Barton (Grade 1 Para rider). I bought Rudy when he was 8 months old after a call from Emma Mason. I called into Lochinvar to see him on my way back from a competition. I had to see him move, but he couldn't really even lead properly, so I told Emma I would come back in a week to see if he would then run on a lead, so that I could see if he moved straight.

Well, one week later, he ran up and down the outdoor arena and was soon loaded on the truck. Rudy was never going to represent Australia, but he was going to let me train him to Grand Prix and compete at State and National Championships, and CDIs at Sydney, Boneo and Queensland. I am entirely grateful for the experiences I have had and I truly loved this horse. I hope one day I can ride his last freestyle test on another Grand Prix horse. The test is hard, the music I love, and I hope the opportunity may come again. RIP Rudy.

On a brighter note, I competed Roseman at the local HVDA T-shirt day. I prepared him to cope with the heat, with quick warm ups. Well, it worked. 81.389% in the 4A and 67.93% in the 4B. He truly embraced the 4A test and it was wonderful. A great start to the year, coming home with two firsts.



My father skiing in Austria



Shaun at Smiggins



Rubenesque (Rudy)

Also competing at the HVDA T-shirt day from HVEC was Orla on Rocky Hill Tudor (Teddy) at Teddy's first ever dressage competition, and also with Rouge D Armour (Red), Enda on Beau & Arrows (Beau) and Sally on Florencia. We all had a good day and went home with lots of homework. It was great to be out and about learning, competing and catching up with friends. Roseman was really happy because Teddy travelled on the truck with him, and Teddy was happy having Roseman to keep him company at his first competition.

In January we were "flooded with maintenance". This involved mowing, whipper snipping, fence repairs, house repairs, weeding, gardening, a new truck seatbelt, new car tyres and so on. Some owners have left because they purchased new properties. Good luck! The work involved in maintaining these properties is unbelievable.

The Airbnb room has been a great success in the holidays. The reviews have been great and the people are really friendly. The campsite has seen two huge caravans and a small camper van, and it is still yet to take off entirely. It is so private and truly unique, so I'm sure people will want to see horses instead of the ocean soon.

Farewell to Claudette with Ilky and Chewy, Fiona and Blaze and Amoretti and Louse. Welcome back to Lisa with Destiny, Smarty and pony Dolly.

Good luck to everyone with their adventures and competitions in 2022, particularly the Hunter Valley Vaulting Team who will represent Australia in Herning, Denmark in August 2022 at the World Championships.

Ballroom dancing has started again, and it's time to scrub up, supple up, put on a dress and nice shoes and start practicing again. It's very good for your dressage.

Goodbye for now,

Shaun



Orla and Teddy



Sally and Florencia



*Tracey at Ballroom
Dancing*