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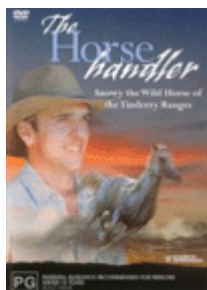
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ROADSHOW ENTERTAINMENT

Reviewer: Paul J

THE HORSE HANDLER

Released: Out now

Rating: PG

RRP: \$29.95

DISC FEATURES AND SPECS:

- * Featurette: Greg and Snowy - Live at Equitana. Nov 2002
- * Preparing to Start (break in) your 2 year-old - Part 1 of a 3 part series
- * English Subtitles
- * Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo
- * 1.78:1 widescreen 16:9 enhanced
- * Running Time: 46minutes

Directed By: Darren Powell & Garrett Smith

FROM THE BACK COVER:

Deep within the rugged mountain country of the Tinderry Ranges, the last few remaining horses have survived against all odds. Years of culling, sport shooting and loss of habitat have nearly wiped out the entire wild horse population.

But a few spirited brumbies still roam free in the Tinderry. This small threatened mob includes Snowy, a very special white mare who encapsulates all of the wild beauty of this majestic breed.

Here, where the brumby muster is part of Australian folklore and tradition, expert horse handler Greg Powell is on a mission to save Snowy and her companions - his plan is to round them up and relocate them to safety.

Greg Powell's life revolves around building partnerships with horses and understanding the secrets locked inside their minds. Every wild horse is a challenge to a horse-handler. But in taking on Snowy, Greg may have finally met his match.

Over eighteen months in the making and featuring stunning cinematography, this inspiring documentary takes you to the heart of Australia's untamed country - to tame the heart of its last wild beasts.

AUDIO / VISUAL:

Audio:

There wasn't a great deal that could have gone wrong here. It's a simple Dolby Digital 2.0 audio track, which is all that is really needed for documentaries. There was also a surround track encoded into it which surprised me, with a dull thundering of hooves, as well as birds chirping coming through on the rears. The narration by Greg Powell comes across clear throughout the whole film, and although it doesn't really stand out a lot of the time, there is a fair bit of directional sound and LFE with the horses galloping through the bush and open ranges. There is a lot of country influenced guitar and piano score present, composed and performed by Darren and Greg Powell, and it really helps to give a light and free flowing feel to the documentary.

There were no noticeable audio sync problems, and the subtitles were spot on, only shortened to keep up with the pace on two instances.

Video:

The video is what you would expect from a small budget documentary. There is quite a bit of aliasing present in the footage containing the fast paced riding of Greg and his mates in the bush and ranges, which detracts from an otherwise good transfer. There was no sign of grain or artefacts, and both the colours and shadow depth were good although sometimes a little dull due to the landscape.

The film is presented in 1.78:1 aspect ratio, and is widescreen enhanced and there is no layer change due to the DVD being presented on a single layer disc

EXTRA FEATURES:

Greg and Snowy - Live at Equitana. Nov 2002

This is footage shot at the 2002 Equitana horse show held at the Brisbane Convention centre. Running for 12mins 24 secs, Greg Powell puts on a show to the audience with the help of Snowy (one of the wild horses captured in the documentary), Sam (one of his arab endurance horses), and Bruce, his Kelpie cattle dog.

Presented in 1.85:1 widescreen with Dolby Digital 2.0 audio.

Training Video - Part 1

This is part one of a three part series. All three parts of the series is to be released at a later date as a set to make a complete guide to breaking in and care for a horse.

In part one Greg Powell shows us how to get a horse used to the presence and touch from humans, as well as getting the horse to be comfortable being tied up and eventually saddled.

Running for 34 mins 52 seconds and presented in 1.85:1 widescreen with Dolby Digital 2.0 audio.

A MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM THIS DVD:

Seeing the length Greg Powell goes to capture and introduce these horses to the touch of humans and then allow them to roam free on his protected property rather than let them die out or be culled is something that has to be respected.



OVERALL:

Not really being a horse person, I'd already preconceived that this would be a DVD that would help me sleep, but I was wrong. This really was an interesting and enjoyable documentary and one which took me by surprise. The 'Horse Handler', Greg Powell has a great deal of love, respect and knowledge of horses, and this really makes the film shine.

The main content for the documentary was to capture a small mob of wild horses in the ranges and re-release them into Powell's private station where they can run free without the threat of being shot by farmers or slaughtered for dog food. This is combined with footage of a ride out to the remains old mining town, making a round pen used to introduce the wild horses to human interaction and some footage of an endurance ride.

This all comes together along with the backdrop of the beautiful Australian bush to create a nice flowing and enjoyable documentary DVD which would entertain a selected audience, and definitely one for horse lovers.

The Horse Handler is now available to buy and has a RRP of \$29.95

- Paul J