



Success at the Sydney Royal Easter Show

Alpha Centauri Alpacas, which is owned and managed by Andrew and Bronwyn Munn, was awarded 'Most Successful Exhibitor Huacaya Fleece' and 'Most Successful Huacaya Exhibitor of Show' at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show for the third year in a row.

There were over 300 alpacas entered in the halter classes and around 260 fleeces entered into this year's show.

A number of local studs made the journey to Sydney for the show with the remaining studs coming from across Australia.

Bronwyn said, "Our main stud male, Elysion Jupiter, was awarded Champion Mature Male, while three of his progeny received ribbons in their halter classes and three other progeny ribboned in their fleece classes. A great result for this wonderful working male."

"Another of our stud males, Alpha Centauri Comanche, was awarded

Champion Huacaya Skirted Fleece 30-48 months and a second in his halter class. It is a great achievement and fantastic to see that our breeding program is heading in the right direction with the quality of fleece and breeding stock being produced and awarded in the show ring."

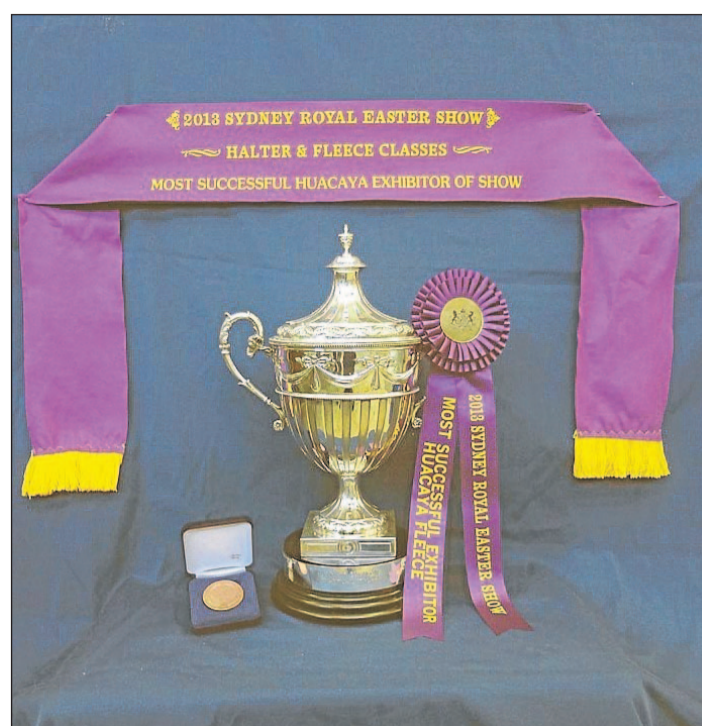
Alpha Centauri Alpacas, Elitealpaca and the Australian Alpaca Sales Centre are owned and managed by Andrew and Bronwyn Munn. They have over 200 alpacas on their farm located at Jerrawa, where the herd consists of breeding females, stud males, pets and wethers.

"It has been a very hectic few months with showing our alpacas at the local ag shows and a very busy month ahead with our second Australian Alpaca Sales Centre auction being held on Sunday May 19 on our farm at Jerrawa."

"There will be 75 lots available for sale including maiden and pregnant females some with cria at foot, certified stud males and a mating package."

"Three studs are featured in the auction - Lillyfield Alpacas from Yass, Sanguine Alpacas from Canberra and Alpha Centauri Alpacas from Jerrawa."

The auction catalogue or further information can be found online at www.austalpacasalescentre.com.au and www.acalpacos.com.



• Prizes collected by Alpha Centauri alpacas at this year's Royal Easter Show.

The accidental alpaca breeder

All Angela Smith wanted was a bottle feed goat. She went to buy one but somehow came home with two alpacas instead. It was not long after when the third one followed her home.

"I just thought they were the most interesting animal," Angela recalls. "And I knew then and there that I wanted more alpacas, I was just so fascinated by them."

Angela and her husband Matthew run a hobby farm just out of Murrumbateman and currently have around 40 alpacas.

Angela sells her alpacas predominantly as pets. "If handled correctly they make excellent pets. They will often come when called and eat out of your hands."

"If owners are gentle with them they are gentle in return."

She has sold some as herd guards to farmers as well. The alpaca, native to Peru, is well-known in Australia for its ability to prevent foxes from taking lambs and kids from herds.

"Alpacas bond with sheep or goats, when living with them, and will chase foxes away from their herd."

Alpacas are an environmentally friendly livestock, as their soft pads do not cut into our soft topsoil. They are gentle on fences and are easy to contain. Fences that keep sheep in are suitable for alpacas.

Back then, Matthew and Angela lived on 2.5 acres but soon ran out of space and were looking to expand.

They moved to 'One Tree Hill' to kick-start their hobby farm. Soon after they got lucky. They were able to adopt a herd of alpacas that needed a good home. After inspecting the herd, they brought seven float-loads of alpacas to their property, making them the third biggest alpaca breeder in Murrumbateman overnight.

"Not many people are that fortunate, but the owner needed them re-homed and we were more than happy to give them a good home."

The couple has also taken to showing their alpacas. One female in particular, Autumn Rose, has performed particularly well at recent events, winning the couple three ribbons in three shows this year.

Matthew and Angela sell alpacas from the Murrumbateman Farmers Market, as well as handmade scarves, beanies, pet toys and pets filled with alpaca fleece - great for the colder months.

Angela says she loves their gentle nature and each day she learns something new about them. "They are so friendly, and inquisitive, and they have lots of little quirks as well. But my favourite thing about them is that every single one has its own personality. Each one is different."



MISSING????

You can buy herd guards from around \$300, pets start from \$400 and show quality alpacas can be purchased from around \$2000. Recently a female alpaca was purchased for \$69,000 at the National Auction, in South Australia.

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The fine fleece of alpaca

By Joe McDonough

Alpaca fibre has long been a sought-after commodity, with clothing manufacturers having marketed the fleece as a high-end and rare alternative to sheep wool since its successful reintroduction in 1988.

In recent times, however, there has been a huge boom in the farming of alpacas due to the new affordability of the South-American 'camelid' and this in turn has seen alpaca apparel flood into the market.

With only 150,000 alpacas Australia-wide, the industry is by no means competing with sheep wool but has carved out its own niche within the retail sector and this can be attributed to the quality of the material, according to Jim Styles, president of the Australian Alpaca Association (Southern NSW region).

"The big difference with alpaca fibre is that it doesn't have the prickle factor, it's very soft and doesn't cause irri-

tation," Mr Styles told the Tribune.

"As a hollow fibre it has the same effect as insulation in a roof. It has the same thermal benefit with less weight."

He went on to explain that, with the price of first-rate individual alpacas plummeting from the estimated figures of \$20,000 to \$30,000 to just \$2000 to \$3000, the industry has seen an increase in the number of breeders, thus promoting positive competition over the standard of fibre.

"The quality of the fleece in Australia can be seen in the market, with prices ranging from five to \$20 a kilogram and just recently a 150kg bale sold for \$70/kg."

In Southern NSW, 90 per cent of the alpaca population is the Huacaya breed with the remaining 10 per cent being the expensive and exquisite Suri. Ideally farmer's look to breed white alpacas (more commercially viable than the darker equivalent), that produce top quality fibre from their first to fourth fleeces.



Carolyn Austin & Geoff McGowan-Lay
69 Graces Flat Road • Bowning NSW 2582
02 6227 6224 • 0410 693 802
Lillyfield@bigpond.com • www.Lillyfield.com



• This photo and above: One Tree Hill alpacas photographed by Chi Chi Photography. See story on One Tree Hill opposite page.



• Chi Chi Photography.

A decade on for

Tim and Graham commenced farming alpacas in 2003, with the purchase of a small herd of animals after moving to a small property at Bowning.

They quickly became passionate about alpacas and the herd increased rapidly over the next couple of years to a number unsustainable on their current 25 acres. The decision had to be made to either sell some of their ever-growing herd or move to a bigger property.

With the decision made all the alpacas were transported to the new 110 acre property on Davis Lane at Yass.

Lualto sourced animals Australia wide in the early stages to gain top quality genetics within the industry to ensure that they had a strong genetic pool that was the best available to advance their breeding program. This decision has proven itself with the continued advancement of their alpacas. Lualto animals have been successful in the show ring and have taken out top awards at major shows.

Tim and Graham have seen many changes and have gained an extensive knowledge of the alpaca industry over the last 10 years and are always happy to share this gained knowledge to people thinking of farming alpacas. Farm visits can always be arranged where you can learn all aspects of alpacas.

The next 10 years will no doubt see further advancements and challenges and Tim and Graham are looking forward to facing those challenges.



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Ann & Barry Ranyard
Ph: 02 62262062
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315 Patemans Lane, Murrumbateman

Celebrating National Alpaca Week 2013

11am on both days - learn how to halter train alpacas.
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Australian Alpaca Association