

Take a ride to the top

By Isobel Coleman

TRIPLE Olympian Alex Watson is going for gold in 2010, determined to make his business, Equathon, the most eco-friendly horse-riding experience in Australia.

A Queensland finalist in Adventure Tourism in the state tourism awards in 2009, Mr Watson has his sights set on the crown this year, spurred on by another successful Noosa business.

"The Discovery Group continues to scoop awards for their eco cruises, despite facing a lot of challenges with the state of Noosa River," he said.

"I take my hat off to them. I think they have set a great example for other local businesses to follow.

"My aim now is to become the premier tourism provider of horse-riding experiences in the country."

A recent study tour through Victoria has convinced Mr Watson that Noosa should bear this crown.

"I took an extensive look at horse-riding providers through that area and there's no doubting they have spectacular scenery down there," he said.

"But I think we can go one better. There is nothing I have seen that can match Noosa North Shore.

"We offer a far greater diversity of experiences, utilising beach and bush.

"But the key difference is the quality of our horses.

"Equathon offers riders beautifully trained and presented Australian stock horses - that's a real point of difference."



AIMING HIGH: Alex Watson with Mandy Caust (left), and John Marshall, Jacqui Wright and Rebecca Harr.

Mr Watson launched his 2010 program at The Plantation, Cooroy, on Friday with special guest and Melbourne Cup-winning jockey John Marshall, who rode Rogan Josh to victory in 1999.

Many guests took up an exclusive opportunity to experience the new program for themselves, at a special introductory price.

The package included luxury accommodation at The Plantation and a ride along the new trails of the Noosa Trail Network, which starts right outside The Plantation. "That's one of the changes we have made," Mr Watson said. "As

well as offering fantastic rides we have now included special events and accommodation packages.

"Our aim is to bring people and horses together in rewarding relationships, not just take them for a ride.

"Our experience spans nearly 30 years of equestrian involvement from Olympic Games to boutique holidays on horse-back."

During his career as a pentathlete Mr Watson was Australian national champion a record eight times and selected for four consecutive Olympic Games: 1980 in Moscow, 1984 in Los Angeles, 1988 in

Seoul and 1992 in Barcelona.

In late 2003 Mr Watson moved to Noosa to pursue new ventures in sport and tourism, including the development of Equathon Holdings. Last year he was appointed to the planning and management team for the new Queensland State Equestrian Centre to be built at Caboolture.

"Our clients come from all over and repeatedly tell us that this is the best horse-riding experience they have ever had," he said.

"There is no reason why we can't become the best in Australia in 2010."

TALKING FINANCE

with

Rob McGregor



Inflation erodes millions

Someone famous once said "a million ain't what it used to be" and that has never been more true than today.

So let's have a look at what a million means today.

If you had \$1million in 1960 and you adjusted it into today's values just using inflation, you would need to have \$12.5million today to have the same spending power as a million in 1960. So a millionaire back then had 12.5 times the buying power of a millionaire today.

Let's have a look now at what sort of lifestyle someone retiring with \$1million today can expect.

We will look at spending \$50,000 - and three different possible investment returns: 6 per cent, 8 per cent and 10 per cent.

Fred is retiring today. He has a million dollars invested and expects it to average a 6 per cent return.

Fred wants to spend \$50,000 each year and wants that to go up each year by 3 per cent to allow for inflation. Given these numbers, Fred will run out of capital in about 32 years.

If he received a return of 8 per cent, his capital would continue to grow and would be worth about \$2.5 million in 32 years. If he received a 10 per cent average return, his capital would also grow and he would be worth \$7.2million in 32 years.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this article is of a general nature only. You should seek specific advice from your accountant/financial planner who will assess your personal situation.

Rob McGregor is a partner of Holman McGregor Financial Services, a financial planner and authorised representative of Professional Investment Services Pty Ltd, ABN 11 074 608 558, Australian Financial Services Licence No. 234951.



HELPING HAND: Gary Trevithick, left, and Barry Maloney, right, present a cheque to Coast Guard Noosa's Tony Taylor.

Residents to the rescue as \$750 goes to coast guard

NOOSA Waters residents have come to the rescue of Coast Guard Noosa, handing over a \$750 cheque to the volunteer flotilla.

The money, raised from two functions organised through the Noosa Waters Residents Association, enabled the purchase of new tools and a high-pressure gurney for boat maintenance.

Association president Gary Trevithick said the association had donated \$300 for Coast Guard's escort of the traditional Christmas flotilla through Noosa Waters canals.

The association's Sports and Social Group raised the remaining \$450 at a function.

Sports and Social Group committee member Barry Maloney, who heads the active boating group, said: "The flotilla has been instrumental in making better boaties of us all with educational programs."

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NOOSA CINEMAS 5

The Men Who Stare at Goats

Release Date: 04 Mar 2010

A reporter, trying to lose himself in the romance of war after his marriage fails, gets more than he bargains for when he meets a special forces agent who reveals the existence of a secret, psychic military unit whose goal is to end war as we know it. The founder of the unit has gone missing and the trail leads to another psychic soldier who has distorted the mission to serve his own ends.

Main Cast: George Clooney, Ewan McGregor
Director: Grant Heslov
Running Time: 94 minutes

The Noosa Journal and Weekender in association with Noosa 5 Cinemas are giving away four double passes to a film of your choice. For your chance to win, follow the prompts at www.theweekender.com.au **Conditions of entry:** Competition opens 04/03/2010 and closes 11/03/2010 with last entries received at 10am. Winners are drawn on 11/03/2010 at noon at Suite 9, Plaza Central, 31-33 Plaza Parade, Maroochyodre. For full terms and conditions see www.theweekender.com.au.

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Favourite Places in Noosa: Noosa North Shore
Favourite Coffee: Mocha
Favourite Breakfast spot: At home by the pool with the family
Favourite Beach: Noosa North Shore or the Noosa Rivermouth
Favourite Place to spend time with the family: Anywhere camping
Favourite Dinner: Seafood or Stirfry

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