

# Anna from heaven



That's some ride: Peter Robl steers Graceful Anna to a fairytale victory on the Gold Coast yesterday

Picture: Peter Bull

## Victory dedicated to a special little girl

### Magic Millions Trophy

By BRENT ZERAFA

"GOD bless my Anna".

With four words, owner Darren Pelham dedicated Graceful Anna's win in the \$1 million Magic Millions trophy at the Gold Coast yesterday to his stillborn baby daughter.

A little filly passed in three times at auction was the central character in this fairytale. Pelham's quiet tribute to his baby was just one of many heartwarming moments.

It was the first feature win for 29-year-old David Pfeiffer. A man

who left school at 14 to work under the late Tony Wildman has only been a trainer for two years.

"I am still pinching myself," Pfeiffer said. "She is taking us on one hell of a ride. The plan was Wyong, she won that, then we sat down and thought where is the next option.

"This was the only option and we have come here and won.

"I am sure Tony [Wildman] is looking down. I owe a lot to him, he taught me everything."

Then there are the two jockeys, with Peter Robl calling Blake Shinn the hero after knocking back the opportunity to ride Graceful Anna.

Shinn watched from the jockeys room as Robl rode a brilliant race.

Shinn stood in for Robl when Graceful Anna won her previous start at Doomben and was told by connections he could ride her in this race.

But Shinn put friendship first by telling Pfeiffer to put Robl back on.

"We've been great mates for years ... I got Blake the ride on her in Brisbane and he repaid the friendship and the faith," Robl said.

Shinn's gesture cost him around \$25,000, but there were no regrets.

"Yeah, I could've ridden her. The owner told me if I won on her I could ride her today," Shinn said. "We

[Robl and Shinn] have a great friendship and he got me the ride last time, so it was only fair I give it back."

But the real star was Graceful Anna, who has won her past five starts and has collected \$807,900 in earnings.

Graceful Anna (\$6) shot to the lead rounding the turn and showed great fight to hold off Tallow (\$18) by a long neck, with Love Conquers All (\$3.30 favourite) a nose away third.

"As soon as the other horses raced up to her she kicked again," Robl said.

"I felt her surge, it was amazing. She has a will to win."

Maybe baby Anna is the wind beneath her wings.