

# Acclaimed photographer releases calendar

Alissa Jenkins

FLITTERING throughout Australia with a camera flung around her shoulder like an extra appendage, Nicole Emanuel leads a hectic existence as an internationally acclaimed equine photographer.

While her schedule is packed as she prepares to publish her first large format photographic art calendar later this year, Nicole maintains a strong connection to her humble beginnings in Tumut that inspired her successful career.

"I think the fact that I grew up in such a beautiful area inspired my career in photography - I always had something visual to stir my creative juices," said Nicole.

Born in Tumut to Doug and Cathy Emanuel, Nicole recalled an active childhood in which she rode horses almost everyday.

"I honestly think we [Nicole and her brother Craig] had the best upbringing in Tumut," said Nicole.

"I have fond memories of barbecues at the Junction Bridge, floating down the river on a tractor tyre, going on snow trips to Mt Selwyn, camping along the Goobragandra, trout fishing - oh the list goes on!"

From an early age Nicole demonstrated a creative flair, which was stirred by her love of horses and recalls drawing detailed sketches of them before the age of five.

At school Nicole described herself as "always arty", when she attended St Bridget's Primary school and what is now known as McAuley Catholic Central School.

But it was the local scenery that Nicole attributes to her creative mind.

"I always found I had so much to look at and so much to be inspired by, I missed it terribly when I left," said Nicole.

"One of the visuals I remember most of Tumut is Elm Drive with the historic grandstands at the racecourse and the amazing colours that filled the park in Autumn," she added.

Nicole became a step closer to her career in photogra-



Nicole Emanuel, pictured working at the Randwick racetrack, is about to publish her first large-format calendar.

phy when in Year 10 she was given an assessment in which she was required to gain work experience in a field of interest and selected the *Tumut and Adelong Times*.

"I began the 'press photography journey' back in 1987 when I did my Year 10 school work experience at the *Tumut and Adelong Times*, I pretty much knew there and then that I had to be a photographer!"

Nicole went on to complete Year 11 and 12 at a boarding school in Wagga Wagga before beginning a Bachelor of Graphic Design at the local Charles Sturt University campus.

She left the course after 18 months to undertake a full-

time position as a photographer for the *Wagga Daily Advertiser* and later moved to the *Border Mail* in Albury.

With itchy feet to further her career, Nicole left in 1995 to take on a full-time position as a photographer with *News Limited* and during that time travelled throughout 11 countries in Africa and the United States of America to photograph for a tour company.

After years of photographing horses and horse events for her personal portfolio, Nicole's collective works resulted in a large pictorial feature in *Australian Geographic Magazine*.

In 2000 she moved to Victoria to pursue her lifelong dream as a freelance

photographer, specialising in equine photography, and has since worked for *the Weekly Times, the Australian and the Age*.

Her greatest professional achievement was her photographic book, *High on Horses*, which was launched in 2003 and became an Australian bestseller.

Well-renowned European photographer and filmmaker, Yann Arthus-Bertrand, personally requested a signed copy.

Other highlights of Nicole's career have included taking one of the most widely published images of Gordon Wood during the Caroline Byrne murder trial.

"*The Daily Telegraph* sent me out to photograph a man

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- Nicole Emanuel

whose girlfriend was murdered the day before. I took a cab to the Gap with him that night and photographed him at the site where Caroline Byrnes' body was pushed over the edge of a cliff," recalled Nicole.

"Little did I know at the time, but I sat alongside the killer and the photo I took of him is now one of the most widely published images of him," she added.

At red carpet events Nicole has also photographed A-list celebrities such as Mel Gibson, Liz Hurley, Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, Jack Nicholson, Princess Diana, Hugh Jackman and John Travolta, although she admits she never enjoyed crowds and the paparazzi scene.

"I preferred 'one-on-ones', the precious ten minutes you get alone with someone famous in their hotel room," said Nicole.

She recalled the time she took a portrait of Denzel Washington before he politely allowed his manager to photograph them together, despite his manager's warnings that he did not have enough time.

Since then Nicole has returned to her rural roots and now lives on a beef cattle property in Gippsland, Victoria, with her partner Aaron Thege and children Rhys 8 and Matilda 4.

The family run an Arabian and Australian Stockhorse stud and when her camera is not in hand, Nicole and her family compete in campdrafts, shows and endurance events.

To add to her list of accomplishments, Nicole has recently been invited to exhibit at the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach next year, which will showcase the last 20 years of her horse photogra-

phy. Before the exhibition takes place, Nicole will release her new calendar filled with black and white horse photography.

The large format calendar measures 48cm by 38cm and will be launched at Equitana in Melbourne from November 18 to 21.

"My calendar is something I have wanted to do for a while and I wanted to make something people would keep afterwards and frame," said Nicole.

"I have selected my favourite horse photos and except for three that feature in *High on Horses*, everything else is new.

"I chose black and white because I think it will always have its place in art, it helps people to 'see' shape, texture, line and other elements with much more clarity."

The calendar can be purchased from Horseland, Saddleworld and leading bookstores and will retail for about \$35.

For aspiring photographers, Nicole encourages those interested to develop their skills, keep up with technology and respect photography as an art form.

"You should have an 'eye' [for photography] to begin with and if you do, it must be nurtured and developed. In order to be a great photographer you have to strive for the absolute best, be groundbreaking, and keep up with technology or you'll be left behind," advised Nicole.

"But never forget photography is first and foremost an art and should be treated with that respect, and in turn evoke an emotion or response in people, just like a work of art."

For further information on Nicole's photography, visit: [www.nicolemanuel.com](http://www.nicolemanuel.com)



Nicole has photographed many A-list celebrities, including Denzel Washington.



One of Nicole's photos of a mountain cattleman.