

# DRIZA-BONE®

## AUSTRALIA

### THE MARKET

This is a story of a coat. The invention of a pioneering sailor who, some 100 years ago, fashioned waterproof coats out of torn windjammer sails. For 100 years the ever-practical Driza-Bone surfaces each year in the wet, worn by man and boy, woman and girl alike.

Driza-Bone is a brand leader in its core domestic market, with almost 70% market share. A significant proportion of the brand's sales are in the traditional oilskin garments, but as it has evolved from being solely a workcoat to one which is worn for both active and leisurely outdoor activities, Driza-Bone is increasingly encompassing hi-tech fabrics to reflect the lifestyles of its expanding user group.

It is ironic that Australia, one of the driest continents on earth, should give birth to what is widely regarded as one of the best raincoats on earth for use in prolonged and even torrential downpours. However, its most ardent supporters are those people who are not within easy reach of shelter from the weather, particularly in Australia where one can be many days' walk or ride from refuge.

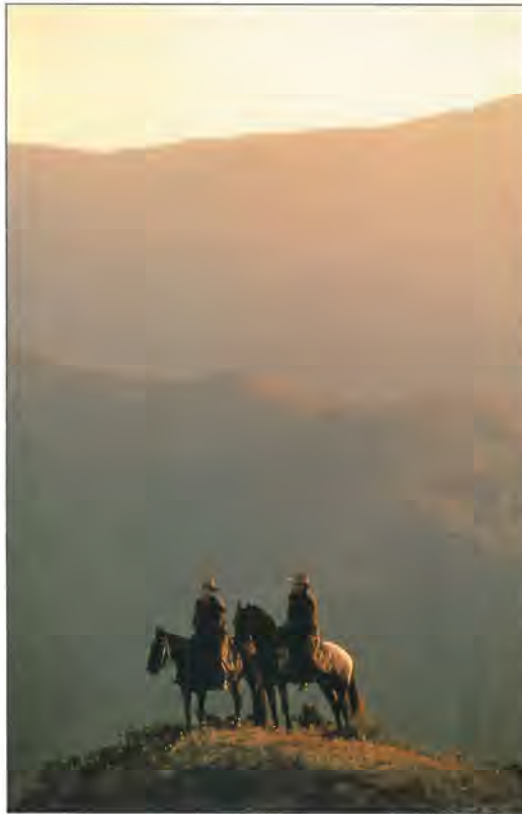
In overseas markets the brand operates in niche markets, appealing to people who also spend long periods of time outdoors in all weathers - equestrians, hunting and fishing aficionados, farmers, walkers and sports spectators.

The brand's popularity also encompasses ordinary urban dwellers who appreciate its country origins and value its durability.

One of the main challenges facing the brand's sales is the longevity of its core garments, with the average life cycle of a coat being around fifteen years. The Driza-Bone range has been able to expand to include a wardrobe of coats, jackets, hats, sweaters and leather accessories for different uses, different lifestyles, and various extremes of climates.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

From its humble beginnings in 1898, the Driza-Bone has been regarded as an



Australian icon. The celebration of its centenary in 1998 is a milestone, an important achievement for a company that is just as relevant today as it was one hundred years ago.

Over the years many myths and legends have sprung up and around this remarkable garment.



Driza-Bone is a name synonymous with wet weather gear and down-to-earth country values. The fame of Driza-Bone has spread around the world and the coats are worn by roustabout and royalty alike.

One million Driza-Bone Riding Coats have now been sold, the coat having gone from a work coat to one that is worn in the city as a symbol of hard-working country living, and is synonymous with Australia anywhere in the world. The

sales trend now leans towards the tourism/export market which together already account for more than half of all sales.

In 1988, fashion designer Prue Acton selected gold summer weight Driza-Bone coats as part of the uniform for the Australian Olympic team in Seoul. The widespread publicity and general acclaim for the uniforms led to the demand for an expanded range of coat colours. The company then went on to supply the uniforms for the Australian Winter Olympic Team which went to Lillehammer in 1994.

World Expo, also held in Brisbane in 1988, further heightened popularity and brand awareness. Our Australian pride in the Driza-Bone coat has made it a favoured gift to official visitors to Australia, including royalty and more recently Madonna, who acquired a coat for her baby, Lourdes.

In 1996, Driza-Bone was appointed an official licensee of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games for coats, jackets and wool sweaters. 1998 also saw the company unveiling its Sydney 2000 Olympic range of clothing, as well as providing the official uniform for the Australian Olympic team to Nagano.

### HISTORY

The Driza-Bone coat began life on board the sailing ships which plied their trade along the so-called Roaring Forties. The coats were fashioned from the torn sails of the large sailing ships by an enterprising young sailor called E. Le Roy. Le Roy discovered that the sails of his ship could be recycled into long coats, and by painting the fabric with a mixture of oils he could transform them into excellent wet weather gear.

When Le Roy decided on a life ashore, he settled in New Zealand and with a growing business, formed a partnership with his close friend, Thomas Edwin Pearson. Pearson sold the E. Le Roy coats (as they were known then) to the Australian pastoralists and farmers. He was amazed at how great a demand there was for the coats, selling his entire stock in less than a week. It was quickly decided that the coats should be manufactured locally in Australia, and soon a new and thriving enterprise mushroomed from a backyard shed in Manly, Sydney. The house where the business started still stands, as does the backyard shed which is not much bigger than five



by five metres!

The classic coat that we know today gradually evolved under the label of E.Le Roy and was adapted for life on the land both in styling details and in the oil used to keep the garments waterproof. The coats were undyed and retained their worn canvas look, officially described as 'dark field grey'. The earth brown colour by which Driza-Bone coats are widely known today is a later introduction.

With modifications to suit land conditions (including the increased length to shield the stockman's boots from rain and to cover the knees and lower legs of the horse back rider) the Aussie Icon was born and the established product now needed a name. Reverend Bob Pickup, a nephew of Pearson, produced a large, and very sun-dried Hereford cattle bone in the factory one day and declared, "You can call it 'Dry as a bone!'"

In 1933, the name 'Driza-Bone' was at last registered along with the traditional bone shaped label design.

The last member of the Pearson family retired from the company in 1974, and it was bought by Frank Fisher, the proprietor of the Armour safety clothing company.

The company moved from its Guilford premises in New South Wales to Eagleby in Queensland in 1987. In 1988 it changed hands once more when it was bought by the UK based James Halstead Group.

Driza-Bone is currently under the management of Ms Catharine Retter, whose close contact with Driza-Bone and the country over the years, has led her to publish the book, "Legends Lore and Lies", a story about Australians and their Driza-Bones.

**THE PRODUCT**

Driza-Bone has a uniquely Australian appeal, associated with the bush and hard working rural life. Driza-



Bone is unmistakably a universal part of a country person's wardrobe, as is the fur felt hat, the moleskin trousers and the riding boots.

A new range of coats has been designed to maintain the integrity of Driza-Bone, whilst catering to city dwellers seeking practical and stylish coats.

There are eight major product categories in the range including traditional riding coats; children's riding coats; leisure jackets; hats, caps and sou'westers; sweaters; leathergoods; garment dressing; and parka, vest, chaps, ponchos, trousers (in oilskin fabric).

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

A new range of stylish but practical coats and jackets is being developed with a wide appeal to people

participating in all sorts of activities, from bushwalking and gardening to golfing and fishing.

Driza-Bone will continue to pursue market segmentation, developing products and markets to counter seasonal vulnerability and periodic downturns in the apparel market. It will also ensure that all products will remain true to the 100 year-old legend of the Driza-Bone.

The company aims to become an identifiably Australian global brand. Building on a recognised history within Australia, Driza-Bone seeks comparable recognition for quality and individuality throughout the world.

**PROMOTION**

It wasn't until 1988 that Driza-Bone was actively marketed outside the Australian bush, propelled by the 1988 Olympic team sponsorship and inspired by the Man From Snowy River movie.

By aligning itself with other Australian icons, Driza-Bone has gained significant exposure. Company sponsorships have included the Man from Snowy River Centenary; the Stockman's Hall of Fame; the 5000 km Bicentennial National Trail; Australian Rugby Union; World University Games; and the Bark Endeavour Replica.

Driza-Bone is one of only 50 official licensees of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. It has also been an official supplier to the Australian Kangaroo teams (Rugby League);

Australian International Equestrian teams; Australian Commonwealth Games teams; Australian Olympic and Paralympic teams; and the England, Wales and the Springboks South African Rugby Football Union.

To celebrate its 100th Birthday in 1998, Driza-Bone launched a national campaign to search for the oldest known Driza-Bones still in active use, as well as an advertising campaign which featured the effects of the life, adventures and mishaps of the ten, twenty, thirty or

more years that some of these well-loved coats had been in service.

**BRAND VALUES**

Driza-Bone benefits from a very strong brand identity and product perception, particularly in its domestic market. It is the original, authentic Australian oilskin apparel synonymous with Australia and its vast outdoors.

The distinctiveness and integrity of the brand aligns itself with the Australian outdoor lifestyle and the practical qualities of durability, reliability and ruggedness.

Strict quality control policies are a reflection of the importance that Driza-Bone's customers place on attention to product detail and quality.

**THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT DRIZA-BONE**

- The Driza-Bone traditional weatherproofing is based on the natural-science theory that oil and water don't mix. Since its origins aboard the 19th century windjammers, the Driza-Bone riding coat has been made from natural cotton fabrics that allow the body to breathe, preventing dampening chills and loss of body heat.
- The traditional Driza-Bone Riding Coat has elbow patches on the inside of the elbow, to act as a double layer of protection against the pools of water which form there when horseriding in the rain.
- The famous cape styling was not designed because it looked good, but to prevent the 'cold shoulder' effect where rain tends to hit the body most.
- The leg straps were originally added to keep the coat in place when horse riding, but today also keep the coat firmly anchored in high winds.
- The Driza-Bone museum, located at the Queensland factory in Eagleby, features some of the oldest coats in Australia - each with its own unique story.
- A true 'bushy' (a rural Australian) can tell whether a Driza-Bone wearer is from the town or the country and whether the saddle flap has ever seen a horse's back.
- Driza-Bone's reputation for keeping the wearer 'dry as a bone' is unsurpassed even over long periods in heavy rain, with the company taking its name as its guarantee.
- A Driza-Bone has saved a man from being burnt in a bush fire and later saved his clothes from a dunking in floodwaters.
- More tall tales have been told about owners and their Driza-Bones around campfires than about any other garment in Australia.

www.drizabone.com.au