

\$32,000 top but buyers' smiling at Banquet

The smiles on buyers' faces as they left the Branson family's Banquet Angus bull sale at Mortlake said it all. This year's sale was one of extreme value and those who chose to stay away this year in expectation of averages in the order of the past three years chose the wrong year to do so.

There were others who have been impacted by fires and drought who had no real choice, but with a drop in average price, this sale was certainly one very much in the buyers' favour.

101 highest quality and wonderfully presented grass fed bulls sold at an average of \$5243, with 33 bulls selling at the \$3000 base price (32%). All bulls offered were tested free of known genetic defects as the Branson family has refused to offer any bulls that are untested and carriers of known genetic defects.

There is always a top end at sales and the highlights at this Banquet sale were certainly still there. The sale topped at \$32,000, the highest since 2011 when the Kimpton family, Toora West, Glenthompson paid the same amount to top that sale. The first ten bulls averaged \$12,750 including five over \$10,000. However from there, such was the evenness of quality that only a few very special lots received enough competition to take them into the \$7000 plus price bracket.

Due to pre-sale interest, lot 5, Banquet Harman H261 (AI) (ET) was brought forward to be offered first. After a somewhat cautious opening, two phone bidders exchanged rapid fire bids to take him up to the sale's top price of \$32,000, the winning bid placed by repeat clients Blyth Brothers, Fernleigh Angus, Ellinbank, Vic. They had inspected the bulls the week before at the Banquet's inspection day and made the selection of H261 as the bull to take their herd to the next level. This 23 month old, 925kg and frame score 7 bull had sire power written all over him, plus balanced figures to match, topping at +112 for 600 day weight.

Banquet was keen to retain an interest in the bull because of his breeding strength. He was by Banquet Xplanation X060 and out of the outstanding Vermont Irene W47. X060 had come up as a DD carrier and with this son clean he was of big value to the Banquet program. They retained semen, but also had an offer to repurchase a half share back in the bull for shared physical use if convenient with the eventual purchasers. Blyth Brothers have taken up that option, much to Steve and Noleen Branson's delight.

For every top price there is an important under bidder and this year that was Stephen Handbury, Anvil Angus and operating through Elders Yea. Stephen has regularly purchased top Banquet bulls for his Anvil stud, including Banquet Time Frame Y135 in 2005 for a record \$50,000.

While H261 was the standout top individual priced bull, there was also a standout individual buying account. Long term Banquet clients, David and Gail Geddes, Warranboo Partnership, Holbrook, NSW had really serious buying impact this year.

Banquet Hazelnut H265 (AI) (ET), by B Beleaf A387 and at 955kg was tipped by several pundits to be the possible sale topper. While he didn't achieve that, he was the first of the Geddes' four purchases and the sale's second top price at \$22,000. Buying through their Elders Holbrook agent Tim Wright,

they were back in the buyers' circle again at lot 7 for a Banquet Collective C251 son, Banquet Healy H077 for \$15,000.

Banquet Humphrie H467, an absolutely stunning and deep hind-quartered spring drop bull at lot 72 was their next purchase for \$13,000. With figures topping at +110 for 600 day weight, +3.8 for EMA combined with positive IMF, plus also being a tested free son of Xplanation X060, this 17 month old youngster would have been very highly sought after in any past Banquet sale. As it was, he was the only bull to make more than \$10,000 after lot 7. Warranboo rounded out their buying with another high quality and average breaking spring dropper by Collective C351 for just \$5000. Their four outstanding purchases averaged \$13,750 and will give further genetic boost to their already high quality 200 cow commercial herd.

"Too many buyers just look at the young cattle they are turning off in determining the price they bid for bulls and forget about the quality of the replacement females they are breeding," David Geddes said.

"We are constantly working on improving the quality of our breeding females. They are the strength behind the quality of young cattle we turn off and the improved prices we receive. It was good to be able to purchase the best bulls to suit our program at this sale within our budget," he added.

The other two bulls to top \$10,000 went to buyers on opposite ends of Banquet's client longevity scale. The James family, trading as A7 Farms and buying through Elders Casterton are probably Banquet's longest serving clients. This year they paid \$12,000 to purchase the aptly named and powerful lot 3 bull, Banquet Horsepower H262 (AI) (ET), a full ET brother to the \$22,000 bull purchased by Warranboo the lot before.

The other was one lot later, the extremely well-muscled Banquet Harry H314, going for \$11,000 to first time Banquet buyers, Pardoo Cattle Co, buying through Michael Kerr, Kerr & Co, Hamilton. They later added two more bulls at \$5000 and \$5500 to be prominent on the buyers' list.

Often the importance of volume buyers in sale summaries gets overlooked in comparison with higher priced bull purchasers. It is not only the bulls they buy, but also the number of others they bid on that makes volume buyers so valuable, especially in a sale like this one. Three volume buyers stood out in this sale.

Philip and Michelle Henwood 'Panorama Park', Coleambally were second time Banquet purchasers and were the biggest volume buyers with nine bulls, paying from \$3000 to \$4000 and averaging \$3389.

Biggest volume buyer for the previous three sales has been Gippsland Water, Sale, Vic, buying through Chris Stanley Livestock. This year they didn't need as many and settled their buying out at seven bulls. By paying from \$4000 to \$5500 and averaging \$5000, they went home with bulls from the top 25% of the catalogue.

Also purchasing seven bulls was second time Banquet purchaser, Ashely Jarred, Woodlana Station, Kangaroo Island, SA and buying through Wardle & Co, Maitland. He operated on budget prices from \$3000 to \$4500 and averaged \$3511, but still went home with very good quality bulls.

South Australia provided the highest number of interstate buyers with four. TDC Penola's Peter DeGaris had two buying accounts. Barry and Damien Pitt, Sumatanga Park, Coonawarra operated very early and paid \$9000 for lot 1, the biggest and heaviest bull in the sale at 995kg for their heavy steer production program. Peter then purchased two bulls at \$5000 and \$4000 for the Parker family, Naracoorte.

Displaying patience, P & L Livestock's Mt Gambier clients, EC, AM & AJ Pettingill, Millicent were able to pick up two good quality bulls at just \$3000 each.

Queensland buyers have been very strong supporters of this sale in the past decade, with six purchasing eight bulls to \$14,000 last year. However the drought effects in that state restricted numbers this year to just one, the inaugural Queensland supporter at Banquet, Brad Saunders, Pheasant Creek Brangus, 'Thendara', Wowan.

An advocate of how well these unique Banquet type cattle adapt to their environment, and cross over Bos Indicus cattle, he purchased three excellent bulls to use in his Brangus program, paying \$7000, \$5000 and \$5500.

Also purchasing three bulls each were repeat clients MP & JL Page, Peshurst through Rodwells Warrnambool (\$9000, \$3000, \$5000); Preswon Pty Ltd, through Rodwells Benalla (\$7500, \$7500, \$4500); Strathbrae Equity, Inverleigh and through Alex Scott (three at \$3000 each); and new clients Dunneworthy Pastoral, through Elders Mortlake (\$5000, \$3000 and \$3000).

Other significant buyers included Keith and Merryll Diprose, Chartwell Farms, Romsey and buying through Rodwells Kilmore (the superb lot 15 bull for \$9000); Charles and Cass Kimpton, 'Toora West', Glenthompson, through Kerr & Co Hamilton (lot 21 for \$9000); Dunkeld Pastoral Co through LMB Linke Hamilton (lot 61 also at \$9000 and lot 59 at \$7000); Manzeri Farms, Kilcunda through Everett & Seeley, Dandenong (the charity 'Help Sheddie' bull for \$7500); and Norma Belcher, Woodside through Elders Yarram (lot 16 at \$7000 and another at \$4000).

Sale Summary

Offered	119
Sold	101
Top	\$32,000
Average	\$5234

Agents: Landmark and Elders

Auctioneers: Kevin Norris (Landmark) and Ross Milne (Elders)

Photos from the Sale Day



The \$32,000 top priced bull at the Branson Family's Banquet sale was purchased over the phone by Blyth Brothers, Fernleigh Angus, Ellinbank, Vic. The bull is pictured with Dianna, Hamish and Gordon Branson, Banquet, Mortlake after the sale.



This bull sold for the Banquet sale's second top price of \$22,000 to David & Gail Geddes, Warranboo Partnership, Holbrook, NSW, one of 4 bulls they purchased at a \$13,750 average to be the dominant buyer in the sale. Pictured with the bull are Banquet principal Stephen Branson, Mortlake, Elders Holbrook agent Tim Wright, David and Gail Geddes.



This super impressive spring drop bull was purchased by David & Gail Geddes, Warranboo Partnership, Holbrook, NSW for \$13,000, one of 4 bulls they purchased at a \$13,750 average. Pictured with the bull are Banquet's Gordon Branson, Mortlake, Gail and David Geddes, and their Elders Holbrook agent Tim Wright.



Barry and Damien Pitt, Sumatanga Park, Coonawarra, SA picked up this 995kg bull at lot 1 for \$9000. Also pictured is Banquet principal, Stephen Branson.



Banquet principal, Stephen Branson is pictured with the biggest volume buyers at this year's Banquet sale, Philip & Michelle Henwood, 'Panorama Park', Coleambally, Vic. They purchased 9 bulls at a \$3389 average.



One of the prominent volume buyers at the Banquet sale was Ashley Jarred (right), Woodlana Station, Kangaroo Island, SA. He purchased 7 bulls at a \$3511 average and is pictured with Dianna and Stephen Branson.



Brad Saunders, Pheasant Creek Brangus, Wowan, Queensland was the sole buyer from that state at this year's Banquet sale. He is picture discussing the merits of select bulls with Banquet principal prior to the sale. He purchased 3 bulls at a great value \$5833 average.