

SWIMMING to success

From competitive swimming at an international level to building a successful global brand around fitness, Jade Winter knows all about achieving goals and motivating others to do the same. Patricia Moore meets the man himself

{ Jade Winter grew up in Kingaroy – ‘the peanut capital of Australia’ – in rural Queensland.

“It was a great place to grow up in. You could ride your bike from one side of the town to the other in less than half an hour,” he says.

Then, at just 13 years old, when it became apparent that he had considerable potential as a swimmer, Jade left home and moved to Brisbane.

“I lived with coaches, school teachers, boarded with families of whichever swim club I was with at the time. I was swimming for six hours a day, getting myself to school, doing my own washing and ironing, and often doing my own grocery shopping and cooking.”

While it sounds a bleak existence for a young teen, loneliness was never really a big factor, with family just a phone call away. It was, however, a physically – and sometimes emotionally – challenging time.

“But when you make a decision to pursue a goal, no matter what your age, that is your all-consuming focus and you don’t rest until you achieve it. It doesn’t matter what that goal is, as long as it’s definable and you have it clear in your mind how you’re going to get there.”

Jade’s efforts paid off when he made the Australian swimming team for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. The Olympic experience made a huge impact on him.

“It taught me to dream big, and to have discipline, dedication, persistence and patience. It taught me also to make the most of any opportunities that come your way.”

However, by 2002, the fire for competitive swimming just wasn’t there any more, says Jade.

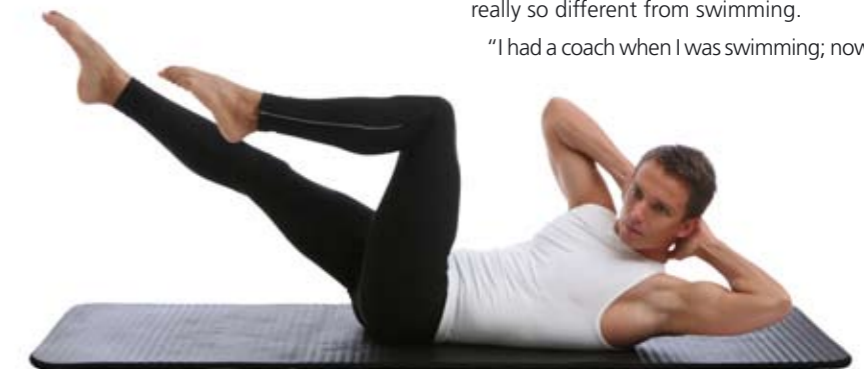
“It was time to close one chapter of

pool helped build the company profile?

“I think it shows people that I walk the walk and talk the talk, which is important if you want people to trust you and try your product or service. And it’s great to have a new focus; one where I can inspire people to work out, get healthy and enjoy the physical benefits that exercise brings. It’s also great to share so much of what I have collected on my life journey so far: aims, goal-setting, discipline and purpose.”

While being in business has involved a steep learning curve, Jade says it’s not really so different from swimming.

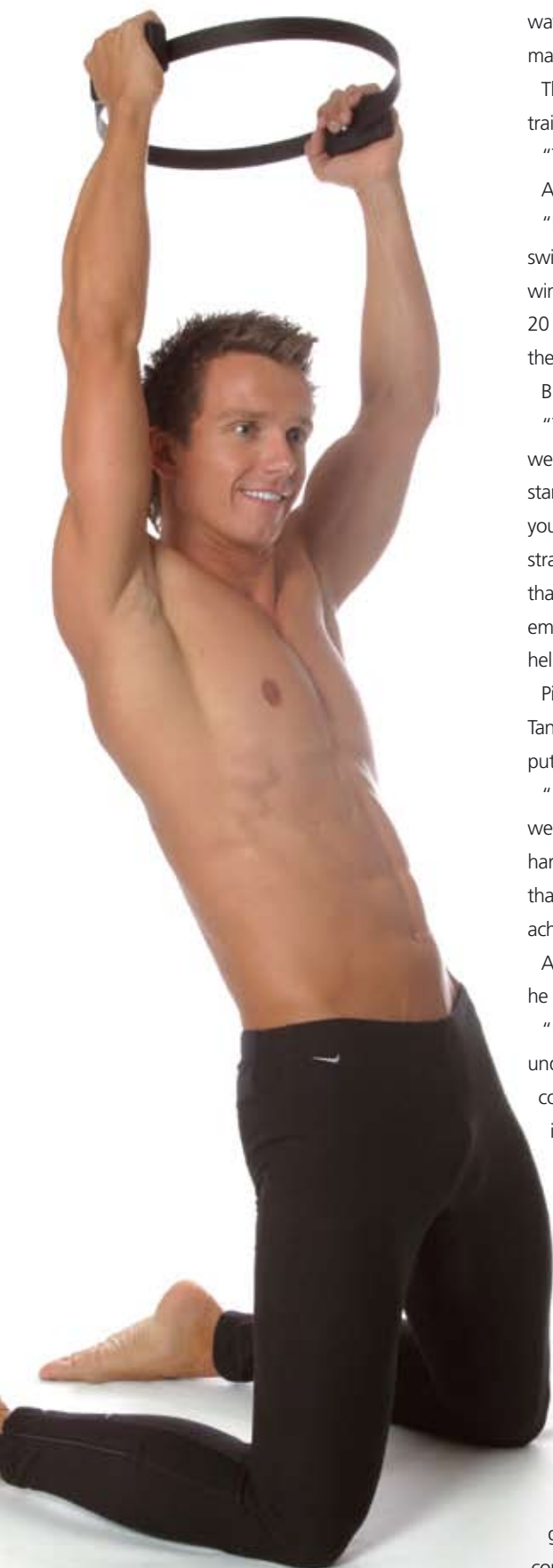
“I had a coach when I was swimming; now



my life and open another.”

That next chapter has seen Jade and his wife and business partner, Tanya Winter, establish Studio Pilates International. Building a brand from scratch is a challenge in any industry. So, has Jade’s success in the

I have coaches and mentors to enhance my performance and fast-track success in my business. Like sport, business is about control, regimen, repetition and growth. It’s about always looking to enhance your skills or strength at any opportunity, and



watching for the mistakes your competitors make, so you can get in front of them.”

The big lesson he learned in sport was to train smart, as well as hard, says Jade.

“This can be applied to business as well.”

And persistence.

“It often takes literally 10 to 15 years of swimming 60 to 100km a week, before you win one big race. That may actually last only 20 or 30 seconds, but it finally puts you on the medal dais.”

Business is no different, he says.

“You do what you do and you do it well, again and again. You build strength, stamina, fitness and a winning team around you, and then you do a deal, make a strategic decision, or create something new that ensures the livelihoods of hundreds of employees, creates thousands of jobs and helps millions of people.”

Pilates is not a new discipline, but he and Tanya – a qualified physiotherapist – are putting their own slant on it.

“Essentially, we have eliminated what we deem to be ineffective or potentially harmful exercises, leaving a large number that work and deliver results, and that are achievable for the majority of people.”

And they know they’re on the right track, he says.

“Between myself and Tanya, we have undertaken in excess of 50,000 client consultations in our Hawthorne studio, in Brisbane. Combine this with the knowledge of a physio – plus two people who love to work out, stay fit and toned, and feel exercises working in their own bodies – and we have a fair idea of what most people can achieve.”

Currently, they’re refining the studio business model, systems and platform, before replicating or franchising the studios. They’re also looking outside the studio to promote the brand and get their fitness message across. The company has a global web presence at

www.studiopilates.com and markets a range of related exercise products.

“Our DVDs and add-ons are really born of the desire to help people continue to work out at home or on the go.”

Getting the fitness message out there is a concern at every level of society in both New Zealand and Australia, and Jade has firm ideas on what could be done.

“I would love to see a ‘fat tax’ on food. Any food prepared in an unhealthy way, or with high levels of fat or refined sugar, should attract a levy. The health system and the taxpayer pay the price for people’s poor lifestyle choices. Like smoking, it should be user eats, user pays. I’m not sure that will ever become a reality, though.”

And it’s time parents took responsibility to combat obesity in children, he says.

“Our behaviour is shaped by our parents, but I see parents feeding their kids poor food and promoting inactivity through their own actions, and it makes me sad. Kids don’t really have a choice about what’s on the dinner table and are trapped in the cycle of obesity at birth. Don’t believe me? Follow an obese family around the supermarket and watch what mum puts in the trolley. Try not to get busted snooping, though!”

Seeing people succeed motivates him, Jade says. And he motivates others by sharing his vision, helping people set goals, and encouraging them to succeed and strive for greatness.

“I find people just need someone to listen to them and believe in them.”

So, did Jade Winter ever imagine a work and lifestyle that didn’t embrace fitness?

“I don’t think there was any choice really. You enjoy your career and are successful when you have a passion for what you do. My passion is to inspire and empower one million people to do Studio Pilates International workouts on a regular basis. I don’t think I’ll rest until I surpass that goal and my vision for my business. We’re a way off yet, but we’re getting there!” ◀