

Swinging sisters in demand

By ROSE GLASSER

WHAT do four pigtails, two whips, a whole lotta dancing, an outdoor dunny and one lively homestead make? The CrackUp Sisters of course.

They are one heck of a duo, swirling the dust all over Australia as they take their show across the country – including to this year's Royal Queensland Show.

Originally from the Darling Downs, these two sisters are born and bred, true country Queenslanders.

Although sketchy on their real identities, the oldest, known as S.T.Ruth, or 'Struth' and B-Ute, formally known as 'Betty Angela Ursula Trudy Elvis Doug Ruth', are highly talented whip-cracking, boot scootin' loveable larrikins taking the show circuit by storm.

To be specific, the sisters say B-Ute and S.T.Ruth hail from "the southern, most eastern tip of central, north-western tablelands high plains country, just 200km straight down the road from the middle of nowhere".

Did you get that? But one thing's for sure, they have an enormous love of the Australian bush and relish in the art of being true Aussie scrubber-larrikins. The Ruth girls grew up on the land and learnt the tricks of the trade from their dad, practising by standing on 44-gallon drums all day long.

Cracking whips, flying jumps and balancing acts were not uncommon. "We got sick of standing around in the paddock doing our tricks, so we just decided to make a live show."

Generally, S.T.Ruth runs the show by bossing B-Ute around, and together they have a million laughs on stage, playing pranks on each other.

Watching them perform – as they dance, flip and flap through their shows – it's hard not to contain an infectious giggle, which slowly develops into a cackle, until you are absolutely heaving from side-splitting laughter with tears rolling down your cheeks.

Their trademark bright yellow homestead backdrop is the basis of their interactive show, which incorporates a full swag of unique pranks, death-defying stunts, outrageous aerial circus antics, acrobats, dancing, singing and even a dunny that blows up. And they are passionate about the art of the Australian stockwhip.

For audiences across Australia, The CrackUp



The CrackUp Sisters (above and left), all hyped up for a scintillating performance at Ekka 2012. Originally from the Darling Downs, these two sisters are born and bred true country Queenslanders.

Sisters are the highlight in main arenas at a vast number of agricultural shows, events and festivals. Consequently, country shows across Australia have taken the sisters in, purely for their good old-fashioned entertainment and ability to draw a crowd together.

They are guaranteed to make even the most rigid of show stalwarts crack a smile. The

Sisters burst on to the show scene just three years ago and their popularity has skyrocketed.

Their first gig was performing at the Beaudesert Horse and Carriage Festival in 2009 and from there, the duo headed straight for Canada to feature at the Calgary Stampede in the same year.

Returning on a high, show societies sat up and noticed the sisters, and they were flooded with booking requests. They return to the Ekka this year for the second time, after their first appearance in 2009. "We're really happy to have our show back here again," they said.

"All we're about is getting quality entertainment out to regional and remote Australia, and bringing our show to the people and children of the city," S.T.Ruth said. "Because they really have no idea about the bush, some of them."

The sisters will be holding beginners whip-cracking lessons during the Ekka, but have promised to teach the bush kids some "tricky stuff". The CrackUp Sisters are now known all across the country, from as far west as Birdsville, north to Darwin, all over Queensland, Katherine in the NT, and right down to Pinaroo in South Australia.

Their CV boasts gigs at ag shows, rodeos, the Deniliquin Ute Muster, Perth Royal Show, Coober Pedy Opal Festival, and Beef Week in Rockhampton to name a few. They tour the country in a little van, reaching even the most isolated of towns.

"We just wanted to bring some theatre into a show, and bring the show to the people," S.T.Ruth said. The sisters hold a huge amount of respect for country shows and the characters they run into at them.

"We meet a lot of people, but that's the best thing, going to their towns and getting to meet all these wonderful people. And everyone has a story. At the local show, everyone is having a great day and you catch them full of pride. We love sharing in that joy with them."

The CrackUp Sisters' show is highly energetic, hilarious slapstick comedy with playful jokes – sometimes worth a cringe – but always just a bit of harmless fun.

"It's all just a bit of colour and fun, we're passionate entertainers who just want to give everyone some quality entertainment, and a bit of a laugh too."

● The CrackUp Sisters will perform 30-minute shows three times a day at the Heritage Bank Community Stage and nightly during the evening entertainment program.

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**CrackUp Sister
S.T.Ruth**