

Inside the Black Horse

a novel by **Ray Berard**

Winner of the 2016 Ngaio Marsh Award
for Best First Novel

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Pio Morgan is waiting outside a pub on a cold winter night. There is a debt he must pay and no options left. What he does next drags a group of strangers into a web of confusion that over the course of a few days changes all their lives. The young Maori widow just trying to raise her children, the corporate executive hiding his mistake, the gang of criminals that will do whatever it takes to recover what they've lost - and the outsider sent to town to try and figure out who did what. Time is running out for all of them as events take an increasingly dark turn.

'Among the energetic new wave of New Zealand crime fiction - could New Zealand be the new Scandinavia? - Ray Berard's ***Inside the Black Horse*** about tragedy of small-time, small-town drug crime has been an astonishing success.

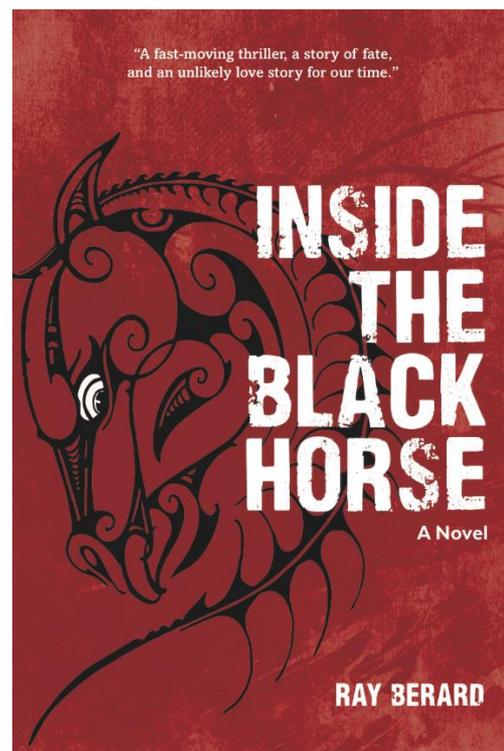
'Set in the same city and struggling culture as Alan Duff's ***Once Were Warriors***, it stands out for its gritty authenticity, its unsentimental view of the possibilities of middle-age romance and its dark humour. As Maori gang leader Kingi says, "This, folks, is the other Aotearoa. The one they don't put in the travel brochures.'" - **Stephen Stratford**, author, editor, blogger, Judge of Wattie, Montana and NZ Post Book Awards
www.quoteunquotenz.blogspot.co.nz

'A crime story and a romance. Violence and compassion. Ray Berard's ***Inside the Black Horse*** is both a compelling journey into the dark world of gangs, drugs and killing and an engaging look at the mending of broken souls.'

David Lomas -Award-winning crime/investigative journalist

A fine example of a character-driven crime novel: a fast-paced story told with wit and irony and a touch of romance in which the foibles of the characters combined with unforeseen circumstances build to a tense climax and a satisfying resolution. **Chris Else** - Author and Literary Agent

Ray Berard is a Canadian-born Kiwi writer based in Christchurch, New Zealand. A McGill University graduate and five-year member of the NZ Society of Authors, Berard has always had a passion for writing. ***Inside the Black Horse*** is his debut novel, based on a diary he kept during his years supervising betting outlets for the New Zealand Racing Board. Ray is currently working on his second novel, ***The Diary of a Dead Man***.



Trim: 153 x 230 mm
Extent: 272 pages
Wordcount: 92,000
Binding: Paperback
Cover: 4c + matt lamination
Text: 1c x 1c
Cover: 4c x 1c (4c, red inside cover)
Published October 2015
by Mary Egan Publishing

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