



# OTI GAZETTE

*The official newsletter of OTI RACING and Management*



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### Bring It On...

The Cox Plate has rightly earned its reputation as the championship of Australian Racing. Ironically it's one of our few races that's open to all-comers irrespective of age, sex, nationality or sales origin. The final field comprises the best horses available for the race.

With this year being the 100th renewal, it encourages one to look back at past champions, capable to running 1600m or more, to see if there's one who didn't win it. They're hard to find. Phar Lap, Ajax, through to Kingston Town, Might and Power, Saintly or Sunline; they're all there. How fitting that possibly the greatest of them all, Winx, has won the race the most.

The Moonee Valley Racing Club should rightly be proud of the tradition this race carries. In what looked like a race being devoid of international representatives only three months ago, the race field this year contains four horses whose last race was in the Northern Hemisphere.

The interesting statistic however, and one that our breeding industry will not be publishing, is that only 3 of the 14 runners are Australian bred. In fact four were bred in Ireland, three in New Zealand and one each from Japan, France and Germany. It's a fascinating discussion on why this is so!

Other than crowds (and an OTI runner), there's nothing lacking in quality or representation from this year's milestone event. With no competition from major races from other jurisdictions or football, the race has 'clean air' to show the best of Australian Racing to as many as possible. It is an exciting opportunity for the sport.

It will be a great race. Maybe Northerly will lose his unique claim of being the only winner from the West, should the Queen of the West claim the gold plate.

# OTI NEWS

## Today at Benalla

**ATYPICAL** races in R2 1206m 4yo+ Maiden for Clinton McDonald and with Daniel Stackhouse riding from barrier 10. Running first up this prep, he will improve for the start.

## Today at Canberra

**LA RECONQUISTA** races in R3 1400m Maiden for John O'Shea and Robbie Dolan from barrier 9. She should show improvement from her first run, and with the step up in distance.

## Today at The Valley

**INVERLOCH** races in R1 2040m Open Handicap for Trent Busuttin and Natalie Young from barrier 2 for jockey Michael Dee. With rain forecast, the conditions could play into his favour.

## Tomorrow at The Valley

**BENITOITE** races in R5 1600m G3 Tesio Stakes for Clinton McDonald and Jordan Childs from barrier 8. This is a good opportunity for the mare, and we hope she puts in a stronger performance.

**GALLIC CHIEFTAIN** races in R8 2500m G2 Moonee Valley Gold Cup for Archie Alexander and Damian Lane from barrier 13. Whilst an unfortunate draw, if the rain materialises the conditions should suit.

**SELINO** may also start in the same race for Chris Waller and Willie Pike in the saddle in barrier 9. If he doesn't race this weekend, he will line up in the Lexus next weekend at Flemington.

## Tomorrow at Randwick

**GREY LION** starts in the Listed City Tattersalls Club Cup over 2400m for Matt Smith and Kathy O'Hara from barrier 6. A last start winner in the Listed Queensland Cup, we hope the popular grey can put in another battling performance.

## Tomorrow at St Cloud, France

**AUYANTEPUI** races in the 2100m G3 Prix de Flore for Mario Baratti. She has been progressing well, and we look forward seeing her start.

## On Sunday at Sale

**ROMANCER** races in the Listed Sale Cup over 1600m for Grahame Begg and Jordan Childs from barrier 11. Having pulled up well from his start last weekend in the Seymour Cup where the race wasn't run to suit, he is backing up quickly.

## WINNER SLEEPLESS



BM64 2000m, Kilmore  
*Trained by Archie Alexander*

## Letters To The Editor

Is there anything you would like to read about in future editions?

Let me know  
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# A CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS COMETTI AM

## On his childhood

I was born in Geraldton, 300km north of Perth. My father worked for the department of civil aviation, and we were stationed at the airport there, and then we moved to another airport place called Forrest, which is in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain. When I was five we moved to the city so I could start my education.

## On his first memory at the races, and what he loves about the sport

It was sometime in the 60s and one of our neighbours was the chauffeur for one of the prominent WA owners of the time. On an odd day when he wouldn't go, my father and I would sometimes join the chauffeur and go to Belmont. I still enjoy a day out at Belmont especially for a midweek meeting with my wife and friends. I love the spectacle and the colour of the races. There is nothing like it especially on sunny winters day.

## On the horses he has owned

We started racing horses in the 90's with Terry. El Nino was probably the best. He had a few city wins. He was a very smart sprinter, and I was always sorry he didn't make it to Perth to race. We got an invite to the Railway Stakes, but it didn't work out.

## On commentating on horse racing and this years difficulties for hosts without crowds

I've hosted a few racing telecast meetings, but never called a race. I think you need to have a real understanding of the sport to be able to do it justice. Calling any major sport including a Melbourne Cup without a crowd is a test. But fake crowd noise has quickly become a sporting staple in Covid times. And in some respects regulating the sound under a Melbourne Cup call may be easier than in most other sports. I say that because a horse race like the Cup builds to a natural crescendo at the start and again later rounding the turn and down the straight. Most other sports are far more ad hoc. With the right sound man alongside I think Melbourne Cup callers are so good they will believe there's a crowd the moment the barriers fly open. It's in their DNA!



## On what he admires about jockeys

They have courage. There is little doubt of that. To see them so cool, going through needle eye openings at speed. It is quite remarkable. It is such a confined space, and I certainly wouldn't like to be in their shoes. When I think of jockeys, I think of small men and women with lots of courage, and that is not being disrespectful!

## On the horses he has seen cheered for

Kingston Town was very good. Winx of course was very good, and captivated the entire country. I have a soft spot for Meliador, who won a very good Perth Cup in 1979. He was owned and trained by a mate of mine Fred Castledine who was a great footballer, and a great trainer too.

## On the future of racing's popularity for the younger generations

I actually don't see a problem for racing, because what I see is a lot of young men attracted to the sport all dressed up, and ladies too. I see they are attracted to the sport, particularly on the big days. I think if they go once or twice they will understand the thrill of the sport too. It is a brave man who says that about any sport these days, but in the short term I see no worries about who is going to go to the track and be excited by the product.

## On the AFL Grand Final and Cox Plate weekend

It has been a remarkable time due to the pandemic, and everything is a bit different. It is going to make for a huge weekend in Australian sport that is for sure. I don't think one will detract from the other. I think it will be Richmond in the Grand Final, and have long followed Arcadia Queen so they will be my tips for the weekend.



# MATT STEWART ON THE GAI AND SINGO SAGA

The first time Gai Waterhouse met John Singleton, she was a model and future London stage actress. Her old man, the legendary T J Smith, was mates with ad-man Singo and wanted Singo to convince young Gai to abandon dreams of becoming a TV actress.

It's unclear what T J imagined Gai might do with her life but seventies soap stars were not held in high esteem, at least not by old T J.

Anyway, Gai turned up to Singo's mansion in Sydney and found herself out the back, where Singo was sound asleep in a deck chair by the pool. Gai was as pretty as a picture but she was no wallflower. Miffed that Singo hadn't bothered to stay awake to greet her, Gai started splashing him with pool water. Singo sprung awake, smirked at the cheek of this young stage actress, and one of racing's great rollercoaster rides was underway.

I was reminded of this semi-playful first meeting on Tuesday, during the Cox Plate barrier draw.

The barrier draw process is the same now as it was back in 2012 when Gai drew a bizarre gate and Singo got mad at her, and not for the first or last time.

To add some wow to the Cox Plate draw, connections are drawn at random and then select their preferred barrier. Rule of thumb is it's better to draw closer in than out, especially with that devilish first turn out of the straight that tends to shanghai wide-drawn horses into the hedge garden.

More Joyous raced best on-pace and it was expected Gai would select an inside or inside/middle gate if the opportunity arose. There was plenty of vacant space to the inside but Gai plonked More Joyous in barrier 11 of 14.

Singo went ape, saying he'd given Gai clear instructions to do the opposite. He said barrier 11 was "madness" and that if it was a normal race, "the horse would be scratched and the trainer sacked."



Gai defended herself, saying she wanted More Joyous to be able to work across and not get cluttered up.

That's what she SAID but there was a rumble that Gai was dog-tired at the barrier breakfast and had fallen asleep at her table before being jolted awake when her name was called out.

Gai also had Proisir and Pierro in the race. The mail was that Gai was not only tired but a bit confused when she woke about who should or would draw where.

Anyway, Singo read it dead right. More Joyous pushed forward from her bad gate and was stuck three and four wide for most of the race. She started at \$8.50 and ran a fading 11th. Gai would later describe the saga as a "lover's tiff" but neither she or Singo would as easily move on from the tiff of the autumn of 2013.

In a nutshell, Singo heard a rumour that Gai's son Tom had told some punter mates that More Joyous was off her game and could not win the All Aged Stakes. He confronted Gai pre-race and then got very cranky when More Joyous blew in the betting and ran down the track.

It ended up in court, where Gai was fined for not revealing More Joyous' training setbacks and Singo was fined for going off his rocker and bringing racing into disrepute.

That particular lover's tiff lasted a fair bit longer than the barrier draw brawl from Moonee Valley but Gai and Singo are mates again. In 2015, Gai started training a colt named Kiss And Make Up, owned by none other than John Singleton.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR FELLOW OTI OWNERS - LUKE ATTRILL

Luke Attrill (pictured with Lucy, his wife) grew up in Warrnambool, Victoria. He developed an interest in racing around the period of Northerly and Sunline's great rivalry.



**Who was your first winner and where?** Ticket to Toorak trained by Matthew Williams, won a 2yo maiden at Ballarat.

**Most successful horses you've owned?** Very proud to have 2 Group 1 winner's in Palentino and Begood Toya Mother. I have also had great success with Gallic Chieftain who has come very close to being a Group 1 winner and very lucky to be there when he won my home town Cup at the May race carnival.

**Race you would most like to win?** Melbourne Cup

**When you win that special race, how will you celebrate?** A few bottles of red at Terry's house!

**Favourite racetrack?** Flemington. I proposed to my wife and got married there!

**What racetrack/meeting/carnival do you enjoy attending?** Flemington Spring Carnival and Warrnambool's May Race Carnival

**Black Caviar, Winx or Makybe Diva?** Winx. Was lucky enough to watch her win her Cox Plate's and her last race at Randwick.

**What International races have you attended and particularly enjoyed?** Haven't managed to get to an international carnival, but Royal Ascot is certainly something to tick off on my bucket list.

**Who introduced you to OTI/how did you get involved with OTI?** We have had a great experience with OTI so far and after developing relationships with Terry and Shayne through Gallic Chieftain on the track, I've have gone on to purchase a few more.

**What do you enjoy about racehorse ownership?** When you enjoy racing, there's nothing better than watching your own horse race live. It is also great to meet fellow owners and enjoy a social day out

**Favourite jockey?** Mark Zahra

**Favourite horse of all time?** Palentino - second horse I ever owned. I knew how lucky I was to a part of it, only being my second horse. He's set a lofty bar now for the rest of my horses.

**Horse you own with OTI you are most looking forward to racing?** My Swashbuckler and Mirann

## OTI FUN & GAMES

### QUIZ

1. How many kilos did Greg Carpenter rise Verry Elleegant for her Caulfield Cup win?
2. Who is the only horse to have won the Melbourne Cup, Caulfield Cup and Cox Plate in one season?
3. Who came 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the 2020 Everest?

### NAME THE RACECOURSE



Hint - The inaugural fixture was in March 1840, and you can still arrive to the track via boat.

# ANDRÉ FABRE TO TRAIN CIABATTA

## High quality, Well Bred, Precocious Rising 2yo Filly



OTI are to race **CIABATTA**, a daughter of leading first season sire Shalaa, and out of Dealbata who is herself a daughter of champion sire Dubawi.

This attractive filly described by John Hammond as being "*athletic and with a great set of quarters on her, with plenty of push coming from behind*," is expected to race as a 2yo. She will be trained by Andre Fabré, regarded as one of the world's top trainers and one who OTI have worked with for a decade and enjoyed consistent success.

Prizemoney in France will be further increased in 2021, along with the lucrative French owners premiums for two year olds that will add an additional 70% to the prize funds for eligible horses, of which this filly is.

For further information: [oti@oti.com.au](mailto:oti@oti.com.au)

## QUIZ RESULTS

### QUIZ RESULT

- 1.0.5kg
2. Rising Fast
3. Classique Legend, Bivouac, Gytrash

### NAME THE RACECOURSE

Flemington,  
The first meeting was staged with a total of 12 races. Allegedly the winning post was a clothes prop and bets were made with bottles of rum.

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