



OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING and Management



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A Tale of Two Cities

While locked down in Melbourne this week, we could only look with envy at NSW's promotion of the Everest, a race that in its short four year history will attract far more attention and betting turnover than the time-honoured Caulfield Cup.

The media build up around the Everest, the barrier draw from Centrepont Tower and the Icebergs promotion are in stark contrast to the Caulfield Cup barrier announcement squeezed between the Caulfield races and the regular 'After the Last' program. While Covid can be blamed for much, it's not sufficient to explain the huge void in media exposure and public interest between the two races this year.

A few months ago, the Melbourne Racing Club made an unsuccessful pitch to change the date of the Caulfield Cup. One wonders if this perceived lack of publicity surrounding the race and the possible downturn in interest that will result, will help justify a future claim date change.

In the meantime, Sydney racing is basking in the fun and excitement generated by the Everest. The purists may claim that it is brash, however there's a vitality surrounding it that's bringing people, especially young people, back to racing. And boy, do we need that!

Australian Racing needs new races like the Everest as much it needs to protect the tradition and gravitas of the Caulfield Cup. Both can be achieved if those leading our industry acknowledge that there is no free ride to success. Astute promotion and publicity is the investment that must be made for success to flow.

OTI NEWS

The Spring Carnival season really steps up into gear this weekend.

Tomorrow at Caulfield

YOSEMITE lines up in R2 3YO Fillies Plate over 1400m for Robbie Griffiths and with William Pike in the saddle from barrier 1.

TRUE SELF the international challenger from Ireland lines up in the R9 G1 Caulfield Cup for Willie Mullins and Declan Bates from barrier 4. She has travelled over to Australia well, and we look forward to seeing her run.

SAN HUBERTO is at the time of print 1st Emergency in the GR1 Caulfield Cup for Matt Cumani and Fred Kersley. If he runs he will start from barrier 10.

BENITOITE is in R10 Tristarc Stakes G2 over 1400m for Clinton McDonald and with Billy Egan riding from barrier 10, though she may run in the Seymour Cup on Sunday.

Tomorrow at Randwick

ATTORNEY lines up in R9 St Leger Stakes for Matthew Smith and Jason Collett from barrier 1. A last start winner at Rosehill, he is in good form.

AZURO also races in the St Leger Stakes for Ciaran Maher and David Eustace with Regan Bayliss riding from barrier 10. He will relish the step up in trip, and we look forward to seeing him race.

Tomorrow at Hastings New Zealand

VEE CECE races in R2 BM74 over 2200m for Murray Baker and Andrew Forsman with Opie Bosson in the saddle. Stepping up in distance, she has worked very well this week, and we look forward to seeing her run.

Tomorrow in France at La Croise -Laroche

PARADIA races for new trainer Mario Baratti and jockey Guilain Bertrand over 1800m from barrier 8.

Tomorrow in Ireland at Leopardstown

CAMPHOR is declared to run in the 2400m 3YO + Handicap for Jessie Harrington and Shane Foley. She should be most competitive before stepping back into stakes grade.

On Sunday at Kilmore

SLEEPLESS races in R4 2000M BM64 for Archie Alexander and with Neil Farley on board from barrier 2. He continues to learn and develop and we expect to see another pleasing run.

ROMANCER will start in R8 Listed Seymour Cup over 1600m for Grahame Begg and with Jordan Childs riding from barrier 1. He is in very good condition, and we expect him to run well.

WINNERS

GREY LION



Listed Queensland Cup, Doomben
Trained by Matt Smith

FUTURE SCORE



Cranbourne Cup, Cranbourne
Trained by Matt Cumani

MONTABOT



Handicap, Le Pin au Haras
Trained by Pascal Bary

A CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM PIKE

On his childhood

I was in a little town called in Coolgardie WA, and was always surrounded by horses, and was riding ponies from about the age of eight.

On how he became a jockey

I was about 13 years old, and not doing very well at school. I didn't have much interest in it, and one day my uncle said that he wanted me to meet someone, and that someone was a trainer. I was far more passionate about horses than my education. I went to see what it was all about, and I loved it, and decided that I'd give it a go.

On his mentors

Jack Cockell has been a huge part of my life for a very long time, and even now I still call him for advice, and I continue to ride trackwork for his family. He has a unique way, but he is always teaching you something, even when you don't realise it.

On his early rides

My first winner was better than my first ride. In my first ride, I was three wide the whole way attacking the leaders. My first winner was at Norseman on horse called Carry Your Gun. I remember the day vividly, and what I can really remember was the sound of hooves on the fast dirt track.

On differing racing styles between states

Everyone is keen to be on the fence, and nobody ever wants to be three wide, but what I do find is that in Victoria that there is a drop in the tempo mid race, and it can really steady up. It is something I have struggled with a bit, and keeping my mount settled and in a good rhythm.

On the extended stay in Victoria

It is quite a humbling experience, as back home I'm used to riding lots of winners, and having the pick of the rides, but here I really cherish every winner I have. It is so competitive, and you have to be switched on. I miss my family, and wish I could have them with me. The kids never care if you've had a good or a bad day, and my partner is always there to support and talk things through.



On Bob Peters

I'm very lucky to be associated with such a successful owner and breeder. One thing that I see is Mr Peters continuing to learn, and he never does anything for the sake of doing it. He is always trying to do things properly, and learn from the results.

On Arcadia Queen

She is the best horse I have ever ridden, and to win two Group 1s on her is special. I really think she is a live chance going into the Cox Plate.

On his riding style

My riding style might be a bit rough and ready, but it gets the job done. I can't really get my head around riding with the toe in. A horse just had a step one way, and you slide off. I have no intention of changing my style.

On last Saturday's successes and celebrations

I certainly didn't envisage the day being so successful, but I did know I had a nice book of rides, but no way in the world did I think it would be so good. Luckily it just all went my way. After the races, I went home and answered all the kind messages, and had pizza for dinner to celebrate!

On social media

I don't like social media much, I've no interest in knowing about the mundane things people write about. I'm more interested in my immediate surroundings. Social media is also a double-edged sword. For all the pats on the back for the good rides you give, you also get hurled abuse for the things that don't go right. Neither help you get better!

MATT STEWART ON THE MYSTIQUE OF JACK DENHAM

Might and Power's breathtaking Caulfield Cup win in 1997 was a feat that mostly had to speak for itself. Jockey Jim Cassidy was never short of a word of praise for Might and Power, usually delivered in Jimmy's trademark ham-fisted street lingo. "You wanna take me and the big horse on? Good luck."

Owner Nick Moraitis was good for a quote. Moraitis was a deeply religious potato wholesaler from Sydney. The name "Might and Power" came to Moraitis during a church sermon. Old Nick loved talking about Might and Power.

The trainer, Jack Denham, was a different man all together. Mysterious urban myths and legends followed Jack, who detested the racing media and hardly ever spoke publicly. He did once, at an awards dinner at Crown casino where Might and Power was to be named the 1997-98 Australian Horse Of The Year. That night, Jack wore a penguin suit, probably for the first time in his life. But he turned up, all dapper, and made a brief speech to a room gobsmacked into silence. Few of us had ever heard Jack Denham speak. With tears in his eyes, Jack mumbled a few words about how grateful he was that a horse like this had come along so late in his life, a gift. Jack shuffled off stage and from memory even put himself through one more interview before leaving the function before dessert.

No one knew why Jack hated the media. There were stories. One was that a pressman had disrespected a member of Jack's family; overheard at a pub by someone who knew the Denham's. It was all a bit vague. Jack's silence made him a mystery, as did his sleep and work habits.



Jack Denham and Might and Power

Reporters at early morning trackwork never saw Jack or Might and Power because he worked the horse at 3am. I forced myself just once to Flemington for a Might and Power track gallop and remain grateful to that all-night taxi café in Victoria Street for providing coffee. The floodlights may have been on – I can't recall – but I remember it was dark. I could hear a horse breathing and galloping out there somewhere.

As for Jack, he was just a silhouette. Old reporters would play pranks on young ones who didn't know about Jack. They'd say "hey bozo, giver Jack Denham a ring and ask him about Filante." They'd watch as the kid would make repeated calls; repeated because there seemed to be something wrong with the phone line; every time the kid would say "Hi Mr Denham..." the phone would go dead. Jack was approached by one or two greenhorns in the dizzy aftermath of Might and Power's romp in the '97 Caulfield Cup. He scowled them off and the reporters' attention was then turned to the more accommodating owner and jockey.

I never really believed the urban myths about Jack and why he hated the press. I reckon he was an old man who'd known one thing his whole life and had no use for social skills and a vast vocabulary. He died at age 85 in 2009. Jack worked in the dark and didn't say much to anybody, let alone some kid holding a tape recorder or microphone. He was reputedly very generous and a strong family man. And he had a mighty horse whose actions spoke volumes.

GET TO KNOW YOUR FELLOW OTI OWNERS - JOHN SPENCE OAM

Where did you grow up? I was born in a little place called Dreeite, 17 miles north of Colac. Dad was a shearer and traveled around from farm to farm with a 2 stand plant. Due to WW2, wool was a required product for the soldiers uniforms. While Dad was shearing through the day Mum would set traps to catch rabbits for extra income, as well as milk the cows, which supplied the family's milk cream and butter. There was no electricity so we had to make do with a mantle light that ran on pressure and spirits. Dad and Mum purchased a dairy farm nearby at South Dreeite in 1951 which became our family home. We milked 40 to 50 cows twice a day. Electricity was connected to our farm in 1955, and then came a refrigerator and an electric stove. What more could you want?!



John and Joan Spence (centre) with Sue and Terry Henderson at Royal Ascot

When did you first get interested in racing? Mum and Dad followed the races all their life. My mum was a very good horsewoman and competed against the men. The Warrnambool May Carnival was one of their favourites as well as Terang on New Year's Day. In those days there were only on course bookmakers, we could bet on the local races as well as the Flemington meeting on New Year's Day. The Standish and Baggot were the main features. Jack Purcell, Bill Williamson and Ron Hutchinson were the most successful jockeys in those days.

Who was your first winner and where? My first winner as an owner was a trotter called Catherine's Idol. He had ability but he was unreliable and broke down regularly.

Most successful horses you've owned? Aloisia and Harbour Views have been my most successful horses, however I have a soft spot for our old favourites Grey Lion and Gallic Chieftain.

Race you would most like to win? The Melbourne Cup.

When you win that special race, how will you celebrate? Joan, my wife and I like to celebrate quietly with other owners if possible.

Favourite provincial track? Terang race track has been a favourite for many years.

What racetrack/meeting/carnival do you enjoy attending? Warrnambool, May Carnival is a must each year.

Black Caviar, Winx or Makybe Diva? This is very hard. I lean to Winx due to her ability to win from impossible positions, but lining her up against Makybe Diva who won three Cups under handicap conditions is very difficult

What International races have you attended and particularly enjoyed? We ticked off Royal Ascot two years ago. A year later we joined Hermione at the Curragh for a beautifully organised day with our whole family, and then last year we joined the OTI team at Sha Tin to see True Self run. I would recommend all of these courses for pure racing enjoyment.

International race meeting you'd most like to visit? The Kentucky Derby.

Who introduced you to OTI/how did you get involved with OTI? I was at the Geelong Racetrack one day and noticed an OTI horse racing. It just got beat but there seemed to be happy people around it in the mounting yard after the race. Shayne Driscoll was my first contact which was the start of a very enjoyable time involved with OTI.

What do you enjoy about racehorse ownership?

Joan and I enjoy our involvement in racing mainly due to OTI. The communication is world class, all personal and very professional. Nothing is too hard for them to make sure we enjoy our experience.

Favourite jockey

Damien Oliver due to his longevity. But over the course of my life it was Harry White.

Horse you are most looking forward to seeing over Spring Carnival?

Future Score had a nice win in the Cranbourne Cup, and I think he will rise to another level along with Attorney, and my best young one is Yosemite.

OTI FUN & GAMES

QUIZ

1. Who contested a match race at Caulfield in October 1992?
2. Who rode last year's Caulfield Cup winner?
3. What year was the first running of The Everest?

NAME THE RACEHORSE



- Ballarat Cup Winner
- Trained by Mick Kent
- By I Conquer out of La Reine D'or

EAGLES CRAG TO AUSTRALIA



Four year old **EAGLES CRAG** who has spent his formative education with Ed Walker in Lambourn, England, has recently arrived in Australia. Always highly thought of by Ed Walker, this son of Fastnet Rock out of Danehill mare La Salina, he has had one educational run early in his 3yo season.

Archie Alexander, who has had plenty of success with OTI imports, will train this colt from his Ballarat training stable, with the intention of seeing **EAGLES CRAG** on the racecourse in the autumn of 2021.

In recent years, OTI has had success with maiden colts who started their training in Europe, before travelling to Australia. HARBOUR VIEWS is a recent example who has thrived under the Australian conditions.

For more information: oti@oti.com.au

QUIZ RESULTS

QUIZ RESULT

1. Let's Elope and Super Impose
2. Damian Lane
3. 2017

NAME THE RACEHORSE

My Bentley

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