



# OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING



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## THE JOY OF WINNING GROUP 1 RACES

Our trainers, owners and our jockey Jye McNeil were thunderstruck by the performance of their four-year-old gelding in the Group 1 Toorak Handicap. With the benefit of overhead vision, racing pundits got to see firsthand the competitiveness and bravery of horses and riders as they strive for success. Fortunately for those of us connected with the horse, I'm Thunderstruck prevailed and the initial euphoria of success was quickly followed by the celebrations.

Group 1's rightly are the hardest races to win. They are the benchmark of a horse's quality. While Australia is one of the very few countries that have Group 1 handicaps, it's still very rare that a Group 1 winner in Australia, be it in set weight or handicap races, is not a top level horse.

Success at Group 1 level demands Group 1 celebrations. Fortunately OTI's other Group 1 winner during Covid (Selino in the Sydney Cup) fell between lockdowns, so we were able to celebrate conventionally. I'm Thunderstruck's celebrations however, were restricted to sharing champagne over zoom chats, text messaging and phone calls. Indeed, while connections may have shared a hug or two with loved ones, it's likely that a hand would have been shaken!

I'm Thunderstruck now heads to Sydney for the Golden Eagle. It's not a Group 1, however it is a very valuable race. Indeed for owners, it's probably the most valuable race in New South Wales as they do not have to share winning with a slot holder (as in the Everest). Indeed first prize is only \$150,000 below a Melbourne Cup win.

It's the impact of Covid that Jye McNeil, I'm Thunderstruck's brave jockey in the Toorak, will lose the ride to Hugh Bowman in the Golden Eagle. Mick Price and Michael Kent Jnr, the talented pair that have honed the horse's talent, will be forced to hand over to another trainer for 72 hours and watch the race on TV. Owners will do as they have done through Covid. Such is racing during these unusual times.

# OTI NEWS

A hugely exciting weekend for OTI Racing with a Group 1 runner and other bright prospects.

## Tonight in France

**APOLLO** runs in the Prix de Mesnil over 1600m for Christophe Ferland and Maxim Guyon from barrier 5. After an excellent first up run, he should be very competitive in this 2yo contest.

## Tomorrow at Caulfield

**EAGLES CRAG** runs in R1 1700m BM80 for Archie Alexander and Jordan Childs from barrier 6. An impressive last start winner at Benalla, he has worked well of late and we will hope for luck in running.

**CHAILLOT** runs in R7 Group 2 Tristarc Stakes over 1400m for Archie Alexander and Declan Bates from barrier 9. A very talented filly, we will have to assess the track conditions as she will not run on anything heavier than a 7.

**SELINO** lines up R9 GR1 Caulfield Cup over 2400m for Chris Waller and Fred Kersley from barrier 17. We are hopeful of a strong finish to the line in preparation for his tilt at the Melbourne Cup on November 2.

## Tomorrow at Randwick

**YOUNG RASCAL** runs in R9 St Leger Stakes over 2600m for Richard & Michael Freedman with Sam Clipperton riding from barrier 7. Returning to form in excellent fashion when 2nd at Randwick in his last start. We really look forward to seeing him run.

## Tomorrow at Eagle Farm

**SOUTHERN ROCK** runs in R3 2200m BM78 for Matt Dunn from barrier 10 with Michael Cahill aboard. After finding some form second-up, he is expected to be competitive despite the unfortunate barrier.

**TAAFFEITE** is running for Matt Dunn in the same race from barrier 1 with Ron Stewart in the saddle. In excellent form, we hope to see another very good run before she enjoys a well deserved break.

## Tomorrow at Newcastle

**SEVEN TWENTY** runs for Matthew Smith and Dylan Gibbons from barrier 2 in R7 1250m Class 1. The talented filly returns after a short break and will be very competitive, but is sure to improve for the run.

## Tomorrow at Leopardstown

**ZAYNUDIN** will run in R6 2000m Maiden for Joseph O'Brien and Declan McDonagh from barrier 13 with blinkers for the first time. He should run very well.

**CAMPHOR** runs in R8 2400m Premier Handicap for Jessie Harrington with Emma Doyle claiming from barrier 8. This is likely to be her last run before the Tattersalls December Mares Sale, but the slower ground conditions should help.

## Next week

**AMADE** takes his place in the GR3 Geelong Cup over 2400m for Phillip Stokes on Wednesday. After an unusually disappointing run, he has worked well of late and we hope to see a good run in a race that has been kind to OTI of late. At Moonee Valley on Saturday week, we may have three Group 2 runners in **ATTORNEY** in the Moonee Valley Gold Cup, **SPIRIT OF GAYLARD** in the Moonee Valley Vase and **ROMANCER** in the Crystal Mile. At Randwick, we are also likely to have **CEPHEUS** running in the Listed City Tattersalls Club Cup.

## IRISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SPRING RACING PREVIEW



OTI will jointly host the Spring Racing Preview with the Irish Chamber and will be joined by special guests Johnny Murtagh and John O'Shea.

Register now via  
<https://t.co/ps9hIB9752?amp=1>

# OTI WINNERS



## I'M THUNDERSTRUCK

GR1 Toorak Handicap  
Caulfield, 1600m

*Trained by Mick Price and Michael Kent Jnr*

A terrific win for a horse having just his 8th career run. All roads now lead to the Golden Eagle on October 30.



## RIVAPORT

3yo Maiden  
Tarbes, 1500m

*Trained by Antoine de Watrigant*

A well-deserved win for this consistent filly, who could potentially contest a valuable Class 3 at Deauville next week.



## SEIXAS

3yo+ Class 5  
Wolverhampton, 1021m

*Trained by Sir Mark Todd*

A most-impressive and authoritative win by this filly, who looks to have some real upside. She could return to Wolverhampton on October 30.



## SPIRIT OF GAYLARD

Maiden  
Bendigo, 1500m

*Trained by Mitch Freedman*

A lovely start to the campaign for this talented son of Puissance de Lune. He could step straight into Group 2 company on Saturday week.

# A CONVERSATION WITH LINDA MEECH

## On her childhood

I grew up in a tiny town called Pongaroa on the East Coast of New Zealand. My parents had a sheep and cattle farm. I used to ride around the farm helping my Grandad and Dad shift stock or just for fun. Grandad was the president of the local pony club, he was a very good horseman and I wish I had learnt a lot more than I did from him. None of my family were in racing though my Grandparents went to the races in Woodville occasionally, and Mum took us to the gallops and trots a couple of times as kids which I loved.

## On deciding she wanted to be a jockey

My Great Grandmother had this really neat painting of a jumps racing scene in her sitting room above the fire place. It had horses jumping and jockeys falling off, and it looked very exciting. We went to a racing stable when I was about ten years old for a pony club excursion, and a lady told me I would be too big to be a jockey and I remember getting a bit upset about it. Though she probably looked at my brothers and sisters and thought I'd grow tall like them as they are all fairly tall. I'm the runt of the litter! It wasn't until I was at secondary school that I started in racing. I started riding work and thought I'd like to have a few race rides, and when I was an apprentice to Janice Webster, I started riding for Kevin Myers.

## On the biggest influence on her career

I would have to say Kevin Myers, as without him I would never have come to Australia. I travelled with a team of horses for him in 1998 and we stayed in Ballarat with Paddy Payne Snr. Though it is hard to single out just one person after so many years of riding, Paddy Payne was a huge help to me. I wasn't much good early as an apprentice and he kept helping and giving me the confidence to keep trying. Peter Moody has played a big part in my racing life as well.

## On returning to race riding after giving birth

I stayed pretty fit while I was pregnant. I helped out in the stables and would go running, then walking once that got a bit too uncomfortable. It was tough initially after Wilbur was born, as I had a C-Section and couldn't do much. I have taken time to build up my fitness so it hasn't been a major struggle and it's still improving. It is really difficult having a baby and trying to ride. Mark's Mum Leslie looks after Wilbur when I'm at the races and Joan Murphy looks after him in the mornings, so I can ride work. There's still a bit of fine tuning to be done.



## On training and riding winners

It was a huge thrill training my first winner, it was very special as my brother owned him and he strapped him. There's a lot of work when you have any racehorse. As a jockey, you're just a cog in the wheel, when you train, ride and have them from yearlings it's more like you're almost the whole wheel. It's very satisfying. I haven't renewed my license this season, but perhaps I will reapply in the future once things settled down. As a jockey, I find it easier to ride for somebody who doesn't try to tie you down to a lot of instructions as there are so many variables once the gates open, things don't always go to plan. Though I understand from training how hard it is to do and that all jockeys aren't the same as me. If I'm out the back looking after a horse on race day and saddling it up I don't feel like I know as much as I do about how the track is racing, compared to if I'm riding or in the jockeys room watching things more closely.

## On the harder aspects of being a jockey

The thing I hate the most is doing interviews, I'm not really that into talking about myself, I get very self-conscious, I don't have the best voice for it. Race falls are one of the downsides, they hurt. I've had quite a few and have been lucky to bounce back after them. I think only other jockeys really understand why we keep doing it, we're probably all a bit mad.

## On where she sees herself in ten years

With a little ten year old boy who's hopefully happy and healthy. I'll be 51 by then so I won't be race riding anymore. My dream job would be to go to the sales and look at horses for someone, it's something I really enjoy. My Grandad rode his horse until he was 86, he passed away from a bad heart, but I think I would like to be like him.

# VADAMOS 3YO HEADED TO BJORN BAKER

~ Most impressive trialler in New Zealand ~



In a faultless manner, **TEKAPO** dashed home his last 400m in 22.6 seconds in a recent Cambridge trial.

Spotted by our agent Phill Cataldo, he is a well-balanced individual with a beautiful temperament and is sure to continue to develop with time.

He is by Champion Racehorse Vadamos, whose first crop are starting to hit their straps as three-year-olds. **TEKAPO** is also out of two-time winner Snow Petal, who has had two foals to the races for two winners.

**TEKAPO** will be trained at Warwick Farm, NSW by Bjorn Baker, who finished third in the NSW Metro Premiership last season.

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

## OTI QUIZ

1. When did Caulfield Cup runner Duais last win?
2. When was the Caulfield Cup first run?  
1879, 1889 or 1901
3. Name the first three home in the 2020 Caulfield Cup?

### NAME THE RACECOURSE



*Hint - Home of the 2021 Breeders Cup*

# MATT STEWART

A week ago, there were three certainties in racing but Zaaki's defeat means there are now two.

It is gilt-edged guaranteed that the weather bureau will botch race-day weather predictions and a living certainty that track managers will never – ever – admit they've underwatered.

I feel for the bureau.

Racing people like to describe it as racing's worst tipster. This has been good for me, because it relegates me to second.

But it's a bit unfair.

This might sound completely made-up but the lack of airplanes in the air because of Covid and its rotten travel freeze has robbed the bureau of one of its best tools. The data gleaned by pilots way up there in the sky assists in more accurate forecasts; information like approaching storms or high winds that planes avoid.

With not many planes in the air, this vital information has not been received by the world's weather bureaus and already wonky forecasts become wonkier.

Race-day forecasts are Russian Roulette.

Caulfield trackman Jason Kerr was dealt a pretty volatile hand last week. The forecast was for increasing rain right up until Saturday, but it didn't come.

The track was rated a Dead 4 at the start of play but was upgraded to a Good 3 after just one race. That was a clue that things weren't quite right, coupled with information from early morning trackwork that the deck was already firm.

Dave Eustace summed up the deck the next day when he declared it "way too firm." He said that was the consensus of most trainers.



Annabel Neasham was almost certainly diplomatic when she did not attribute Zaaki's defeat at \$1.28 on a track that was too firm for him. "Perhaps," she said. Ultimately it was Craig Williams and not the track that was thrown under the bus, with Williams dumped for the Cox Plate.

Zaaki had won on firm decks in Queensland but a firm Caulfield is a different beast.

It's almost certain that the firm track played some role in the defeat of Zaaki, which makes it absurd that some punters claim hard tracks makes for reliable results and more profitable punting.

I've spoken to dozens and dozens of trainers over the years who point blank blamed firm tracks when raging favourites had been beaten, almost always pulling up sore.

How does this benefit punters?

It certainly doesn't benefit the horses. Lots of money is poured into animal welfare in racing. Galloping them on tarmacs is hardly a welfare elixir.

Kerr conceded this week that his track had played a bit too firm last Saturday and he has adjusted his mindset. From now on, similar conditions as last week, with rain potentially arriving but perhaps-not, will mean more watering.

This is quite a breakthrough. Kerr is more upfront than most track managers, who regard the posting of anything other than a Good 3 or 4 as a failure, so they simply refuse to do it.

Racing would be far better off if track managers were more transparent and adjustable and the weather bureau was the best tipster in town. Alas, it couldn't tip a cue in a billiard hall.

# OTI OWNER PROFILE - DR TERRI CLUSE

**Where did you grow up?** I grew up on 10 acres in Penfield, South Australia. No one ever knows where that it is so I say 'near Gawler'. Mum and Dad are involved in Harness racing and at that time we had a trotting track at home, surrounded by glasshouses run by Italian and Vietnamese market gardeners. Lots of dirt and flies!

**When did you first get interested in racing?**

I think I've always been interested in racing having been surrounded by horses growing up. As a child I watched the movie Phar Lap a million times on VCR. Dad would come home from work and say 'is she watching bloody Phar Lap again?'

**Who was your first winner and where?** Our Insider in Western Australia.

**Most successful horses you've owned?** You could say I'm at the apprenticeship stage of my horse ownership career. Comme Bella Fille looks like she will be handy.

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

**When you win that special race, how will you celebrate?** Bollinger all round!

**Favourite racetrack?** Flemington.

**What racetrack/meeting/carnival do you enjoy attending?** I've been very lucky to have been to Royal Ascot and Prix de l'arc de Triomphe with OTI. Both are fantastic experiences. Saying that, Spring Carnival in Melbourne is my favourite time of year.

**Black Caviar, Winx or Makybe Diva?** Winx, only because I got to see her run. I was in Scotland when Makybe Diva and Black Caviar were around so don't have that same connection I guess.



**What International races have you attended and particularly enjoyed?** I have been very lucky to be able to attend both Royal Ascot and the Prix de l'arc de Triomphe with OTI. I loved both experiences, very different but would have to say Royal Ascot is my favourite, there's nothing like it. The Queen, top hat and tails, amazing racing - can't wait to get back there!

**Which International carnivals would you like to attend next?** I would love to get to Glorious Goodwood.

**How did you get involved with OTI?** I met Terry not long after moving to Melbourne in 2013. I'd been living overseas for a number of years and met him at our local wine bar. I thought not only has he got a great name, but he likes wine and is into horses - foundations of a great friendship!

**What do you enjoy about racehorse ownership?** I really love the friendships I have made with other owners. This sport really brings people together from all walks of life.

**Favourite racing memory?** Seeing Winx win the Turnbull Stakes in 2018.

**OTI horse you look forward to seeing running?** Comme Bella Fille - it would be good to actually get to the track sometime soon!!!

## OTI QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Wednesday, Coongy Cup at Caulfield
2. 1879
3. Verry Ellelegant, Anthony Van Dyck and The Chosen One

**NAME THE RACECOURSE**

Del Mar, California.

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