



# OTI GAZETTE

*The official newsletter of OTI RACING*



## IN THIS EDITION

### NEWS & RUNNERS

### OTI WINNERS

### MATT STEWART

### A CONVERSATION WITH RON STEWART

### OTI QUIZ

### OTI OWNER PROFILE - STEVE AND PERSEPHONE LOBB

### PENSEUR WITH MITCH FREEDMAN

## RACING IS ALIVE AND THRIVING

Despite the naysayers and anti-racing folks' opinions, the spring carnivals in both Melbourne and Sydney were a huge success. Crowds, although in restricted numbers, were allowed back to the track, betting turnover was up, six TV stations covered racing on certain days and all horses got through their races safely.

There were plenty of well deserved 'pats on the back' at the end of the week. It seemed, certainly based on the figures, that neither Melbourne or Sydney suffered as a result of the additional activity in Sydney. The major races in Melbourne were won by elite horses as were the relatively new feature races in Sydney. While it could be argued that the quality of the races was thinner than would be expected, field sizes were comparable to past years.

This all goes to show that the interest in horse racing is NOT on the wane. More people in Australia, mainly through partnerships and syndicates, are buying horses. One trainer quipped recently that 'it is as if they were not making any more' - such is the demand. The recent sales to Australians in both Europe and the USA reinforces this view.

Australia is not alone when it comes to the current popularity of racing. Sales results in the USA have reached all time highs and new markets continue to emerge in the Middle East and Asia. It's an exciting time.

At OTI, we too enjoyed a successful spring with the win of I'm Thunderstruck in the \$7.5m Golden Eagle being the highlight. Amazingly, despite our reputation for staying types, the longest race won by an OTI horse over the two weeks was over 2000m. Even more amazing was the win of 2yo filly Lady Laguna at Eagle Farm. She is the first two-year-old we have ever had win, let alone race, before Christmas!

Runners this weekend for OTI

At Canterbury this evening

**COMME BELLA FILLE** runs in R5 1900m BM72 for John O'Shea with Tommy Berry riding from barrier 1. A mare who continues to improve through her preparation, we are hopeful of a good run on rain affected ground.

At The Valley this evening

**BLUE OCEAN** runs in R6 1600m BM70 for Phillip Stokes with Madison Lloyd riding from barrier 2. He goes into the race in good order and an improved showing is expected.

**VARDANI** also runs in R6 for Archie Alexander and Johnny Allen from barrier 5. In good form at home, he will have come on from his last run.

Tomorrow at Newcastle

**HOLSTEIN** runs in R7 1600m GR3 Spring Stakes for Matt Dunn with Andrew Adkins riding from barrier 8. A winner on his last start, he is stepping up to stakes class now in a race that should suit.

Tomorrow at Doomben

**SOUTHERN ROCK** runs in R7 2000m BM80 for Matt Dunn with Kyle Wilson-Taylor in the saddle from barrier 9. We are hopeful of a very strong performance from an in-form horse.

Tomorrow at Dunkeld

**MISTA RAZZLEDAZZLE** runs in R7 1000m BM64 for Lindsey Smith with Will Gordon riding from barrier 6. Returning after a spell, we hope to see him hitting the line strongly.

On Sunday at Donald

**MILESTONE** may run in R5 2000m BM64 for Trent Busuttin & Natalie Young with Jordan Childs riding from barrier 10. Should he start, he'll need to step up and show some form.

**PETRUCHIO** runs in R6 1620m Donald Cup for Archie Alexander and Will Price riding from barrier 7. Very well weighted, we are hopeful of a good performance from this consistent galloper.

**ALMSGIVER** runs in R7 1620m BM64 for Matthew Williams with Dean Yendall riding from barrier 12. Off the back of a disappointing effort last start, we hope to see him return to form after freshening up well at home.

## LAURIE LARMER OAM

OTI's most senior owner, Laurie Larmer, was awarded his OAM for services to the community at Government House in Melbourne on November 11.

A World War II pilot with Bomber Command, he is already the recipient of France's Legion of Honour.

Laurie is pictured here with Anthony Howard, the Governor's husband. He had attended school with Mr Howard's father in Ballarat.

Laurie's next visit to Government House is scheduled in two years, when the Governor calls him back to celebrate his 100th birthday!





# OTI WINNERS



## I'M THUNDERSTRUCK

Golden Eagle, Rosehill, 1500m

*Trained by Mick Price & Michael Kent Jnr*



## SEAWHATYOUTHINK

Mortlake Cup, Mortlake, 2000m

*Trained by Matthew Williams*



## SEIXAS

Novice Stakes, Wolverhampton, 1000m

*Trained by Sir Mark Todd*



## HOLSTEIN

3YO BM68, Randwick, 1600m

*Trained by Matt Dunn*



## SPIRIT OF GAYLARD

Listed TAB Trophy, Flemington, 1800m

*Trained by Mitch Freedman*



## LADY LAGUNA

2YO Handicap, Eagle Farm, 1000m

*Trained by Annabel Neasham*

# MATT STEWART

A few years ago I pitched two projects to the Victoria Racing Club that despite some promising dialogue, ended up in the too hard basket. More accurately, the not for us basket.

The first was to run the picnic racing final at Flemington on Blamey Stakes Day. The idea was to showcase Victoria's unique grass roots racing and its wonderful elements on the sport's grand stage; provide a peek into what I believe is the sport's best "face."

As crowds increasingly deserted the city tracks, they kept streaming into the picnics and I thought this magnificent circuit deserved some prime-time exposure, which would be good for the picnics and good for racing. Alas, the project remains in someone's in-box, or maybe in "deleted items."

The school project suffered the same fate. I proposed a promotional blitz for racing through schools, with the idea that hordes of kids would arrive at Flemington from Southbank via boat. They'd first visit Phar Lap at the Melbourne museum, hop on a boat, learn about the industrial history of the Maribyrnong, arrive on track along the river side, tour some stables, meet some horses, chat to some inspirational apprentice jockeys.

I reckon it's a shame that project gathered dust. I thought schools would have been keen to participate five years ago but I'm not so sure any more.

Racing has experienced a PR challenge in recent times. Community resentment over gambling and animal welfare and two fatalities in the Melbourne Cup would make the racetrack a hard sell as a potential school excursion.

But the spring carnival proved that racing has stories that can be sold anywhere, even to schools. They are stories that resonate and inspire.



Imagine Jenny Duggan explaining her story to a group of school kids.

Duggan is a 43-year-old claiming apprentice with three kids who suffered horrific injuries in a race fall at Scone last year yet after months of agonising rehab has become a star of Sydney racing.

Imagine the looks on the kid's faces when Duggan described her list of injuries; fracture of the neck, right shoulder and skull, a broken nose, three bleeds to the brain, damaged wrist, heel and AC joint. Her optimistic outlook is inspirational, as is her ability to juggle a resurgent career and three young kids.

It seemed the whole world was urging Duggan along when she rode Ojai for Godolphin in the \$1 million Golden Gift at Rosehill last Saturday. Alas, Ojai ran third.

Imagine trotting out James McDonald to a group of kids who know nothing about racing. He'd tell them about how when he was their age, all he wanted to do was own dairy cows. Leading New Zealand jockey Lance O'Sullivan told six-year-old McDonald that being a jockey would help buy some cows, so McDonald's journey began.

Imagine telling that story with a highlight reel of Cup Week; the skill, the danger, the celebration and achievement.

There has probably never been more scepticism about horse racing out there in the real world. You don't see school buses at Flemington.

But you can't tell me that stories like McDonald and Duggan wouldn't captivate a room full of kids.



# A CONVERSATION WITH RON STEWART

## On his childhood

I grew up in South Australia and my father took me to the races from a young age. I was small, loved sports and my father would say "why don't you become a jockey". One day at the races in Cheltenham, I jumped on a mechanical horse and met a few jockeys and went from there. Since I had no horse experience I went to TAFE for six months to learn to ride. I was about 15 years old and weighed only 25kgs!

## On his early career and mentors

I have strong memories of my first ride and win. You never forget them. I spent my early career riding in the country and on the dirt tracks. I moved to Canberra and was apprentice to Bernie Howlett who had a huge influence on my career, and life. We are still very close, he continues to check in on me, gives advice and he wasn't afraid to give you a spray either! After being champion country apprentice I moved to Sydney and was leading apprentice for a season, but would have claimed it a second year if it had not been for a motor bike accident.

## On riding abroad

I was in Sydney and spotted a leaflet in the clocking town looking for riders in Singapore and applied. I thought I'd just stay 3 - 6 months for the experience, but ended up there for 8 years. I loved it, and met my wife Cheryl there who was also a jockey. I also had stints in Macau and Mauritius, but felt after some time that I should settle down, and that was when I returned to Australia.

## On flying helicopters

I'd always loved planes and helicopters and when i was young I used to build and fly radio control planes. I'm not quite sure why I decided to give it a go, but I did and absolutely loved it. It was hard work though, especially the study and theory side of it as I'd left school young, and at 30 was back studying. It took 5/6 months of serious study but I passed and I now have a commercial pilots licence which is something I find very satisfying. I don't have much time to fly anymore, but I'd like to hope that I can win some more big races and own my own helicopter and fly around for fun!



## On riding Selino

It was a huge thrill for me to ride Selino to victory in the Sydney Cup in April. I've been lucky to ride Group 1 winners in Singapore but to ride one at Randwick was very special, and for Chris who had supported me from early in my career. When I got the late call up to ride in the Melbourne Cup I jumped at the chance. It wasn't straight forward as I was in Queensland so I had to drive 18 hours in order to get to Melbourne. It was fantastic to be in the race on a horse who was guaranteed to stay, and the crowd of 10,000 felt bigger. It has made me even more determined to try and ride in the race again.

## On free time and maintaining his weight

Prior to my daughter being born, I used to play golf, but now when I have free time I spend it with her, and at home doing jobs in the garden etc. My wife says I need to sit down and relax but I'm not good at sitting still! Luckily I've always been pretty fortunate with my weight, unlike some of my fellow jockey friends I can ride comfortably at 50kgs if I need to. I eat a lot of sashimi, as it is very healthy and a good source of protein.

## On future goals

I'd like to ride more good horses, and I do love riding abroad so if the opportunity was there I'd probably return to Singapore to ride. My father is Scottish so I would love to ride in England one day and experience that, though I am not sure how I would enjoy the weather. I've become quite spoilt when it comes to warm weather and sunshine!

# OTI OWNER PROFILE - STEVE AND PERSEPHONE LOBB

Steve grew up on the family property in Muntham, between Casterton and Coleraine in South-West Victoria, while Persephone grew up in Dorset, England. Her school was located between Newbury, Ascot and Sandown and her mother would only take her out from school when there was a meeting on! Steve had a long family tradition in the sport, and at school only read the Sport Globe and any bloodhorse magazine!



**First winner?** **SL** - Wanera at Warnambool in June 1979 **PL** - Au Revoir in the Derby Trial at Toulouse. We happened to be in France at the time and watched the race in a bar in the hills above St Tropez

**Most successful horses you've owned?** Au Revoir and Le Juge

**Race you would most like to win?** **SL** Either of the major Spring Cups. **PL** - The Cox Plate

**When you win that special race, how will you celebrate?** **SL** - With all the other co owners. I regret very much missing Au Revoir's Zipping Classic win. **PL** - Golly, every way but the win itself is probably enough

**Favourite racetrack?** **SL** - Flemington and Royal Ascot **PL** - Goodwood and Flemington

**What racetrack/meeting/carnival do you enjoy attending?** **SL & PL** - Spring time at Flemington and the major summer meetings in England

**Black Caviar, Winx or Makybe Diva?** **Both** - Winx

**What International races have you attended and particularly enjoyed?** **Both** - We have attended Royal Ascot for some years now and the Chantilly main days

**Which carnivals would you like to attend next?** **Both** - Sydney and Melbourne this coming autumn

**Who introduced you to OTI/how did you get involved with OTI?** **SL** - I have always been interested in the middle distance and staying horses and was following what Terry and Simon were doing at the time, sourcing stoutly bred tried horse from overseas. I first met Terry at Eagle Farm and we took up the opportunity to become a partner in Au Revoir

**What do you enjoy about racehorse ownership?** **SL** - I have participated in horse racing all my life, from my days at Casterton to Western Queensland and what I enjoy seeing the most from an ownership group is the enormous respect a racehorse commands whether it is successful or not

**Favourite jockey?** **SL** - James McDonald has a skill which I think in time will put him alongside, or quite probably ahead of the post war greats. **PL** - Craig Williams

**Favourite racing memory?** **Both** - Standing in the enclosure at Flemington before Au Revoir's Cup run

**OTI horse you look forward to seeing running in future?** **SL** - Lady Laguna, and hoping to see Montabot return to his French form next autumn. **PL** - Lady Laguna

## OTI QUIZ

1. Name the first three home in the 2021 Mackinnon Stakes?
2. In which country did James McDonald have his first GR1 winner?
3. Who is the sire of the Victoria Derby winner Hitotsu?

WHERE IS ... ?



# PENSEUR WITH MITCH FREEDMAN

*~ Son of So You Think from family of Ace High ~*



Mitch Freedman, trainer of OTI owned Flemington Listed winner Spirit of Gaylard, has recently had the arrival of **PENSEUR** into his stable.

Acquired by OTI as a weanling, he is an athletic and well-conformed type, who has been described by his trainer as having all the makings of a nice stayer.

By So You Think, sire of multiple Group 1 winners including OTI owned Quick Thinker. His dam Loretto was a winner and half-sister to three black-type winners. The colt descends from the family of ATC Derby winner Ace High.

Click [here](#) to view footage of the colt and listen to Mitch Freedman's initial thoughts on the colt.

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

## OTI QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Zaaki, Cascadian and Mo'unga
2. New Zealand
3. Maurice

### WHERE IS ... ?

Caymanas Park, Jamaica.  
Located in the capital city of Kingston.

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