



OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING



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MORE INFORMATION NEEDED BEFORE SANDOWN IS SOLD

"You cannot be serious" may have once belonged to John McEnroe. Today, it could be more aptly applied to the likelihood of a sale of Sandown Racecourse.

It has been announced that RVL and the Melbourne Racing Club have signed an agreement that such a sale would only occur should it be in the best interest of racing. For many in the industry, it's akin to saying "kids, we might move Christmas, we can't tell you when, but it will be better!".

As a resource for racing, trainers love Sandown. It's a preferred racetrack for many reasons. To date, industry participants have been given few clues as to what may be offered up that would make the sale in the best interest of racing. Indeed, with all the vacant land within the environs, why hasn't a Moonee Valley style proposal been put forward as a possible outcome.

Clearly, the powers at the MRC want to sell. They have prepared the necessary rezoning applications for it. One wonders why they didn't go to MRC members first to not only gain approval for a sale process, but to potentially save the costs associated with the rezoning.

If the MRC and RVL want to get the industry on side with a sale of Sandown, it is crucial that stakeholders know what's to be gained. Unless both do that, they risk the same type of backlash that the Hawthorn Football Club faced when presented with a proposal to merge with Melbourne in the mid 90's.

OTI NEWS

OTI will be represented in three states this weekend.

At Rosehill on Saturday

Impressive debut-winner **LADY LAGUNA** is looking for back-to-back successes for Annabel Neasham in the 1100m 2yo Handicap (Race 1). Having trained on well and improved for the trip up north, the filly is once again expected to be very competitive.

At Gold Coast on Saturday

Last-start winner **SOUTHERN ROCK** finds himself in another suitable race as he contests the 2200m Benchmark 80 (Race 2). Having raced consistently all preparation, he was a deserving winner at Doomben last time out and with the claim of Kyle Wilson-Taylor, trainer Matt Dunn is expecting a bold performance. Should conditions be extremely testing, he may be held back a week.

Luckless for much of the campaign, **STUCK WITH YOU** is out to find winning form in the 1800m Benchmark 75 (Race 3). If there is tempo in the race and he's afforded an economical run in transit, it would not surprise both Matt Dunn and connections to see him right in the finish.

At Warrnambool on Sunday

Both **MISTA RAZZLEDAZZLE** and **VARDANI** will take their place in the 1400m Benchmark 64 on Jericho Cup Day (Race 9). The former, **MISTA RAZZLEDAZZLE** returned in good style to finish 2nd at Dunkeld a fortnight ago, a race which was used in lieu of a trial. Up to a more suitable distance and with a run under his belt, trainer Lindsey Smith expects him to be in the mix.

The latter, **VARDANI** has struggled to find form to date this campaign for Archie Alexander, though his last-start effort at The Valley can be forgiven. Returning to a track and distance in which he showed promise in his Australian debut, we hope to see him hitting the line well.

OTI SPRING STATISTIC

Over the course of the spring, OTI had 14 stakes winning/placed performances, highlighted by Toorak Handicap winner **I'M THUNDERSTUCK**, who also took out the \$7.5m Golden Eagle.

OTI WINNERS



SOUTHERN ROCK

2000m BM80, Doomben

Trained by Matt Dunn



COMME BELLA FILLE

BM72 1900m, Canterbury Park

Trained by John O'Shea



EIDOLON

1500m Maiden, Mornington

Trained by Trent Busuttin & Natalie Young



DAQIANSWEET JUNIOR

1600m BM64, Pakenham

Trained by Phillip Stokes

MATT STEWART ON THE JERICHO CUP

I was having an animated chat this week with a racing administrator about the Jericho Cup.

I was telling him that I feared the concept had been neglected, marketing-wise, and he half-agreed. But he insisted the industry fully grasped the importance of it and that it had great potential.

He'd known for some time that I was a Jericho cheerleader, a true believer, and that there was a growing gang of us that had become more passionate about the Jericho Cup the more others seemed not to be.

At the end of the chat, the administrator said: "So I'll see you at the Zipping on Saturday then?" It made me think of the term "lip service."

He'd heard but he hadn't listened.

Of-course I wasn't going to the Zipping on Saturday. I assumed by his enthusiasm for the Jericho that I'd be running into him on that famous hill down at the Bool.

Like the others who believe the Jericho is the greatest gift horse racing has had in 50 years, I will be at Warrnambool on Saturday, and Sunday. The kids and I will make a weekend of it in keeping with the intended nature of the Jericho, as a festival.

The plonking of the Zipping Classic to Caulfield on the day before the Jericho was disrespectful to the Jericho and clear evidence that the powers that be do not see the Jericho as a flashing neon light for racing. If they did, they'd have afforded it clear space, no distraction, for this upcoming weekend.

Jericho creator Bill Gibbins has worked tirelessly to implement his dream, and fund it. He stood in a small tent in the main drag of Warrnambool last Saturday, his last big spruik for the race he invented but is now relinquishing the reins. With some help from the Warrnambool Racing Club and the decision makers up in town, Gibbins has at least begun to create a weekend festival; functions on the Friday and Saturday nights, a town parade.



Others have talked about a weekend pony club gymkhana that would culminate on course on Sunday. Imaginative types such as Sandy McGregor have imagined air force sky divers descending onto the track at the duration of the Last Post.

Was no one aware of this grand vision when they dropped the Zipping bomb on the Jericho weekend?

The club imposed a 5000 cap on its crowd that is hard to explain. There is no Covid cap now. You can have as many as you like at any racetrack in the state and "the believers" believe that with proper promotion – and vision – you could get 15-20,000 at the Jericho Cup.

Someone has fumbled the ball.

Racing Victoria proudly announced this week that it would take over the funding of prizemoney for the Jericho meeting. Gibbins promised he'd fund the first four years, then hand it over.

Gibbins IS the Jericho. When he fades from view, so will much of the original energy and innovation of this concept that came to him when someone gifted him a book called "Bill The Bastard." The story of the cranky and brave war horse, who had dragged the wounded to safety in the Middle East battlefields, taken part in an impromptu desert race called The Jericho Cup, became Gibbins' obsession.

It's one thing for RV to offer up the cash, another for it – and Warrnambool, and Country Racing Victoria – to deliver on a vision that can grow beyond even what Gibbins imagined. I'll be there on Saturday, and Sunday, back Monday after nine holes at Port Fairy. The administrator who told me how much he loved it will be at Caulfield.

A CONVERSATION WITH ANDREW BOBBIN

On his childhood

Horses have always been part of my life. I grew up on a farm in Bemboka, which is a dairy farming area in the Bega Valley. Horses were always around, Dad broke in a few horses for fun, and my brother and I rode horses up the steep rise, taking inspiration from the movie Phar Lap. It was on one of those rides uphill, that I decided I wanted to be a jockey or a trainer. Since I'm over 100kg now, that ruled being a jockey out!

On his professional sporting career

As a 16 year old, I was scouted by what is now the St George Illawarra Rugby League side. It was a great experience, and at the time that league was switching from semi professional to fully professional. When I started, it was as important to pack your going out gear before a game! I played 100 games in reserve grade, and one first grade so I wasn't really good enough. During my time playing footy, we were also required to work and I was given a job with the local TV station. When I finished playing league I decided I wanted to go to London and with that TV experience I got a freelance shift at CNN, and it went from there. It was a great time, I went to 50 different countries including Iraq during the war producing TV programs. One of the shows was "The Winning Post", which profiled the horse racing industry around the world, and was hosted by Francesca Cumani. I was like a kid at Christmas. I had a front row seat at the Kentucky Derby to racing on a frozen lake in St Moritz, to visiting Coolmore in Ireland, but my favourite of all was Chantilly. I was regularly gathering notes and absorbing as much knowledge as I could, as I knew I still wanted to train.

On moving into racing

After 10 years in London, I decided I really wanted to get into racing after all, so I returned to Australia and thought I wanted to work for Gai Waterhouse. I knew it was going to be hard to get one on one with her, so I suggested to CNN that I do a feature on the Inglis Easter Sales and interview Gai. I told Gai then of my change of career, and six weeks later I was working for her. It was a fantastic experience. I learnt a lot from her, primarily that you have to work very hard in this game, do things properly and there are no short cuts. One thing she said to me that very much stuck was "If you haven't got owners, you haven't got a business. Look after them."



On his training career to date

It has just been over one year since my first runner and to date we have had 22 winners and 33 seconds. We've had a Saturday winner at Caulfield, and three metropolitan winners in Adelaide. A lot of the horses I'm training are tried horses who are perhaps out of form and needing a change of scene, so it is satisfying to see them returning to form. It has been hard work, but I've been prepared for that and I always knew I was leaving a cosy career in TV, but it was something I've always wanted to do.

On his training facilities at Grampians Racing

It is a unique 100 acre property outside of Stawell on a natural sand bank, which is a perfect place to train.

There is a 1600m grass track, as well as tracks through the bush. We have a knee deep splash pool for horses to wade in after exercise as well as a pool to swim. The heavy sand track allows us to get the horses heart rates up without putting pressure on their joints, which is so important. The variety and peaceful environment is unique, and sets me apart from some of my competitors.

On training Rollet for OTI

I remember meeting Terry many years ago at the Arc meeting in France during my CNN days, and to think I'm now training for him and OTI is a huge privilege. I'm looking forward to receiving Rollet in the next few weeks, and having watched his races and spoken to Joseph O'Brien I know he'll benefit from the facilities here as they are ideal for stayers and European staying types. He is a maiden with evident ability so I look forward to bringing him through the grades.

OTI OWNER PROFILE - RHETT KOCH

Rhett grew up in Blackburn, having moved there at a very young age from Footscray. He can recall his Dad taking the family along to Sandown races not all that long after the course opened, and on a later occasion toting along his camera with him to photograph the champion horse Baghdad Note.

Who was your first winner and where?

Corridor Talk at Geelong in March 2001

Most successful horses you've owned?

Aloisia, she gave us a lot of excitement and fun. Quick Thinker, who sadly had to be retired this year

Race you would most like to win?

Without a doubt the Melbourne Cup

When you win that special race, how will you celebrate?

Initially with ownership connections and then with family and friends who have an interest in racing...fine wine will be flowing

Favourite racetrack?

It was Moonee Valley. Great atmosphere, especially on Cox Plate Day and with race viewing much akin to an amphitheatre. I'm not sure what the future restructuring will bring

What racetrack/meeting/carnival do you enjoy attending?

Besides The Valley, the Caulfield Spring Carnival

Black Caviar, Winx or Makybe Diva?

Hard call, but I'd lean towards Winx

What International races have you attended and particularly enjoyed?

Not been graced with that opportunity yet, but I would love to experience Royal Ascot



Which carnivals would you like to attend next?

Next years Spring Carnival, at all three metropolitan tracks

Who introduced you to OTI/how did you get involved with OTI?

An acquaintance who knew Simon O'Donnell quite well and also got me involved with my first OTI winner, Amistosa

What do you enjoy about racehorse ownership?

The thrill of owning a good racehorse, the adrenalin pump on race day and the association with other racing partners who hold that common thread of interest

Favourite jockey?

Hard one, but at present Jamie Kah and when she resumes on her winning way.

Favourite racing memory?

The day Aloisia won the Thousand Guineas

OTI horse you look forward to seeing running in future?

Assuming he recovers well from his rehabilitation, Ottoman Emperor

OTI QUIZ

1. Which training centre in Australia closed it's doors this week?
2. How many Japanese trained winners were there at the 2021 Breeders' Cup meeting?
3. In which Australian state was a horse race first run?

WHERE IS THIS RACECOURSE ... ?



OTI SECURE TOM MELBOURNE'S HALF-BROTHER

~ Teofilo colt to be trained by Johnny Murtagh ~



This straightforward colt is by Teofilo, sire of 2021 Ascot Gold Cup winning Subjectivist, and Melbourne Cup winners Twilight Payment and Cross Counter. With his dam being Roshanak, he is the half-brother to the OTI fan favourite, Tom Melbourne.

From the famed Ballymacoll bloodlines, that include Melbourne Cup winner Fiorente, this colt will be trained in Ireland by Johnny Murtagh for the early stages of his racing career, before moving to Australia where he will be trained by Chris Waller, with the hope that he can contest stakes class.

OTI and Johnny Murtagh have had considerable success together with winners including **MIRANN** and **OTTOMAN EMPEROR** (Group 3 winner at Goodwood this year).

OTI QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Caulfield
2. Two
3. New South Wales

WHERE IS ... ?

Co Kerry, Ireland.

Racing has taken place on land donated by Daniel O'Connell to the people of South Kerry, which started in 1852.

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