



# OTI GAZETTE

*The official newsletter of OTI RACING*



## WHAT SETS AUSTRALIAN RACING APART

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There are two features of Australian racing that, when combined, provide unique advantages over all other racing locations. Together they provide the sport with a good share of the gambling dollar as stake money and the framework for the highest global participation in horse ownership.

Punting is in the lifeblood of our excellent stakes. Thanks to the good work of Peter V'Landys a decade ago and the introduction of the Point of Consumption Tax, racing receives a fair share from the money bet on horses. Like Hong Kong, such funds help boost prizemoney and gives owners the chance to get a return from their involvement.

While the prizemoney assists in promoting ownership, it's the work of the syndicators and trainers that is primarily responsible for the significant growth in ownership participation. Over the past 20 years, the formation of racing partnerships and syndicates has given Australia the highest per capita ownership of any racing jurisdiction. In Australia for example, 32 people per 10,000 have an interest as an owner. This compares to 6.5 per 10,000 in Ireland and 2.5 in the UK.

Australia lead the way in the manner it regulates the syndication of horses. Thanks to some shonky operators late last century, the industry is now well-controlled. Given the volume of activity among both the syndicators and trainers, we now see relatively few people abuse the trust involved in forming and managing an ownership group. For more information on this topic, you may like to listen to Terry Henderson who recently spoke at the [International Thoroughbred Breeders' Federation Webinar](#).

The combination of good stakes and the large population of owners has benefited all who are a part of the industry. Breeders are enjoying good times as a result of good sales results and suppliers throughout the sport are busy. Indeed, the major component missing for the industry to prosper even more is manpower. Like so many other industries at the moment, we lack skills in many parts of the sport to take full advantage of the good times.

# OTI NEWS

There are potentially eight runners set to represent OTI this weekend, headlined by our undefeated 2yo filly **LADY LAGUNA**.

## On Saturday at Randwick

**LADY LAGUNA** makes her much-anticipated return in the 1000m Listed Lonhro Plate (Race 1 – 12:25pm). Importantly, she looks to have progressed since her back-to-back two-year-old wins in November and following a pleasing jumpout at Warwick Farm with James McDonald aboard, Annabel Neasham is confident of a good showing from the daughter of Overshare.

## On Saturday at Caulfield

Both **AESOP** and **VARDANI** are set to contest the 1800m Benchmark 70 (Race 2 – 1:15pm), with the former having just his second start in Australia.

Having pleased Phillip Stokes between runs, **AESOP** should enjoy the step up in trip and is once again expected to be doing his best work late.

**VARDANI** also steps out to 1800m on Australian soil for the first time, though his French form suggests it shouldn't pose a concern. After not looking to enjoy being on the rail and inside horses last start, we hope to see him working home strongly down the outside for Archie Alexander.

## On Saturday at Doomben

**STUCK WITH YOU** is looking to make it three wins on the trot at his favourite track as he contests the 2200m Benchmark 78 (Race 2 – 1:43pm ADST). Matt Dunn has done a fantastic job to get the gelding in winning form so deep into his preparation, and there is little to suggest he won't be making his presence felt again. Hopefully the claiming Kyle Wilson-Taylor, who has ridden him so well in his last two wins, can navigate a path from the wide alley.

**NEVER NO MORE**, who returned to form in terrific style on the Gold Coast last month, is expected to be very competitive in the 1350m Benchmark 85 (Race 8 – 5:33pm ADST). He should have taken good improvement from his first-up assignment and looks to have enjoyed the space between runs at Matt Dunn's Murwillumbah base.

## On Sunday at Ararat

After being given little chance on return, **DAUNTLESS** is looking to bounce back in the 1300m Maiden (Race 2 – 2:15pm). With a more conservative ride planned, this lovely daughter of Not A Single Doubt is more than up to breaking her maiden in this class.

**DARCI'S DEBUT** is an acceptor for the 1100m Maiden (Race 3 – 2:50pm), though a draw of barrier 16 means this promising 3yo filly will likely be saved for another day. With a suitable 1200m option scheduled at Ballarat on Tuesday, we may well see her step out then. Off the strength of her performances at the trials, it would not surprise if she's in the finish.

## On Sunday at Bendigo

**RED MUSCAT** makes the jump to Benchmark 64 grade over 1600m (Race 5 – 3:45pm) following his impressive first-up win at Camperdown. Though there are queries over the quality of those behind him in that win, the manner in which he won has given Archie Alexander a lot of confidence moving forward. As a son of Redwood, there is no doubt he'll enjoy longer distances in future but hopefully, he can once again work home well on the big galloping track that is Bendigo.

## MURRAY BAKER RETIREMENT



OTI would like to congratulate Murray Baker on his remarkable training career following the announcement of his retirement.

We have been lucky to have plenty of success together over the years including two Derby wins with Quick Thinker and Vin de Dance. We also purchased VRC Derby winner Kibbutz from Murray, and recently acquired Daqiansweet Junior on his recommendation.

Andrew Forsman, who has co-trained with Murray, will now take over the licence in his own right on 1st May, 2022.

# A CONVERSATION WITH LINDSEY SMITH

## On his early days

I grew up in WA, near Fremantle and didn't really have any interest in horses until I was about 12. On the way home from the school bus trip, I started to smell the horses that were over the fence, and I'd always look over and admire them. From that moment I was hooked. At weekends I started going into Rockingham to the stables.

## On his riding career

After working in the stables for a few years I took out my apprentice licence. I rode for about a year, but then became too heavy. If truth be told I had limited riding ability!

## On his mentors

I went to Victoria to work for Tommy Hughes, and was a strapper for him for about six years, in fact I was strapper in the Melbourne Cup with Salamander who came 2nd. After that I went to work for Henry Davis who had a real punting stable. I learnt a lot from him, including how to get horses really fit.

## On his early training career

After working for Henry I returned to WA and set up training myself. The only problem was that I didn't have a horse float, but across the road was a heavy sand track through the hills. I put some graded sand tracks in and worked the horses there. I noticed that my horses were becoming fitter than the average horse, and every now and then I'd dash them up the beach to improve their anaerobic fitness, and swim them in the ocean. It is the best water walker in the world, it costs nothing and you don't have to clean it!

## On the difference between WA and the eastern states

There are far fewer horses but there are a lot of good trainers in WA. I'm certain that the top 5 would hold their own if they came to train on the east coast. They probably go a bit harder in WA. There are a few more inexperienced riders. I do think that the tracks in WA can be a bit kinder to horses since they are sandbased, so when it is firm the horses don't jar up so much.



## On training in Warrnambool

I set up the stable about two and a half years ago and it hasn't been straightforward since we've been dealing with the pandemic for the majority of the time. Initially I went back and forth to WA as I could quarantine on the farm. I did that about eight times, but once I had to do hotel quarantine it became much more difficult, and I found it hard mentally. I haven't been back for five months now. We started with five horses in Warrnambool but we are now up to about 50. We have great stable facilities and we can use a number of beaches to swim and gallop the horses, so it is a similar set up to what I have in WA.

Warrnambool is a great place to train. Lady Bay Beach is close and we can gallop horses there, and we also now have some stables on 13th Beach to gallop the horses all year round.

## If he were in charge of racing for a day

I'd ensure that the main tracks that hold twilight and evening meetings had stabling so that horses can spend the night after racing, and make the journey back the following morning. This would improve the horses recovery but also importantly be safer for staff, so that they don't have the very long hours driving trucks. I'd also change the rating system a little bit, as it can be tough on horses that win a maiden and suddenly find themselves going up too quickly in the ratings. The good horses make it to the right mark quick enough.

## On his OTI horses

**ANDRESS** is a nice mare who won for us last week, and she'll have some more wins in her.

**NOTES** is a promising horse who has just arrived from New Zealand. He'll be at his best at around 2000m. He'll really suit tracks where he can take the lead and take some running down. I think tracks like The Valley will suit him really well. We will win a lot of races with him.

# MATT STEWART

Is the big broom about to sweep through our elite horse ranks?

It feels like it.

The big headlines in an off-season that including some recent trials up in Sydney have been about familiar names embarking on exciting international missions.

Verry Elleegant, who has been around long enough to be called a perennial, is off to the Arc in October. By the time she gets there, Verry Elleegant will be seven. Nature Strip will be almost eight when he canters to the gates for the King's Stand Stakes at Royal Ascot in June.

Had it not been for Covid, Nature Strip may have embarked on his odyssey a year or two earlier.

As it is our two headline horses will take on the world as veterans. Each has had 34 starts, each has climbed the metaphoric mountain so many times they no longer take happy snaps.

In all likelihood, the focus will have shifted away from these two grand warriors by the time they are floated to Mascot Airport.

Change is upon us. You can feel it. It's exciting. We may be poised for an upgrade, especially in the middle-distance ranks.

Our stayers have always been our Achilles Heel but Profondo and Hitotsu are not your garden variety Spring Champion Stakes and Victoria Derby winners.

They're not stretched out Snitzels or Deep Fields', they are sons of Japanese middle-distance superstars. They feel like fair dinkum staying stars, a class above most that have come before them.

A "beast" has emerged in the sprint ranks according to the Chris Waller stable.

The Black Caviar Lightning at Flemington later this month is shaping as a great race and also a baton change.



Perennials Nature Strip and eight-year-old Eduardo are the favourites but Home Affair, the three-year-old beast, is next in line. Home Affairs got scorched in the Everest furnace last October but found his feet in the Coolmore at Flemington a little while later and has taken giant strides through summer according to Team Waller.

Adding to the baton-change vibe of the Lightning, 2020 winner Gytrash, who is now six, trialled poorly this week in Adelaide. Best behind him?

For three years all eyes at Waller's have been on Verry Elleegant and Nature Strip but they turned to Home Affairs after his second impressive Rosehill trial.

"He is an absolute beast, he has really matured," Waller's assistant trainer Charlie Duckworth told Sky Racing. "I know it sounds silly when you say it because it is such a short gap between spring and the autumn. He has really blossomed and developed and that win in the Coolmore was sensational. He has gone on with that and if anything, he has improved."

Another flash young thing, Marabi, is hot favourite for the Oakleigh Plate and is in the market for the Lightning, while the flashiest new thing, Espiona (Waller again) is so good she is \$1.70 for the Surround Stakes, a race that is over three weeks away.

Look at the big autumn markets, look at the fresh names; I'm Thunderstruck, Sinawann, Top Ranked, Lighthouse, Turath, even Anamoe.

In the Winx era there was just one name up in lights and since Winx, Verry Elleegant and Nature Strip and one or two others.

The next wave has arrived.



# OTI OWNER PROFILE - GEOFF MCCORMACK

## When did you first get interested in racing?

Around the age of 5 or 6, I loved horses even then, my father started taking me to the races occasionally via train to Caulfield. I saw Rising Fast win his second Caulfield Cup in 1955 aged 6. For a while I dreamed of being a jockey, and for a couple of years I spent my Saturday's at Mentone Racecourse. It began with me just loitering outside and watching the horses come and go. Then a stable took me in after seeing me there each week. I did any stable chore they asked, starting with the most menial/smelly tasks and later they started teaching me to ride and handle more. I'd ride 3 or 4 to and from the stables to the Mentone track for their work and then stay all day in the stables. I strapped a horse at Flemington one day on the Garret and Griffiths Float, but they wouldn't let me take him into the mounting yard as I was deemed too small.

**What carnivals do you enjoy attending?** Cup Week at Flemington and the Warrnambool Carnival.

**Black Caviar, Winx or Makybe Diva?** All three, prefer not to separate or exclude any of them.

**Who introduced you to OTI/how did you get involved with OTI?** I met Terry and Simon via being part owners of Brambles, the 2012 Queensland Derby winner. I bought into him as a yearling via trainer Peter Moody. I started buying into some of the imports and that lead to buying into younger OTI European horses in more recent years and racing over their as I have been hooked on European racing for some time.



*Geoff and Quick Thinker*

**What International races have you attended and particularly enjoyed?** Royal Ascot – I've done 4 of their Carnivals and have seen some extraordinary horses there. I saw Sea The Stars win his Derby. An incredible course and spectacle. I have done the Hong Kong International Day once also, great racing albeit in the smog. I may have missed my window now but as I love Derbies I'll leave the Irish Derby on my tattered list, I was headed there with OTI in 2020 but Covid put paid to that. Maybe Dubai World Cup meeting and possibly the Kentucky Derby.

**What do you enjoy about racehorse ownership?**

First of all I still love the horses but I also enjoy the camaraderie with the fellow part owners of the horse. It's kind of team sporting feel with a helping of parental pride in the horse thrown in that bonds owners together.

**Favourite jockey?** Whoever rode my last winner!

**OTI horse you are most looking forward to seeing run in 2022?** I'm hoping that we will see Ottoman Emperor fully recovered and back racing at Group level.

## BALNARRING PICNIC MEETING SUCCESS

4,000 people attended the OTI sponsored Balnarring Cup on January 26. With competitive racing, pipe bands and a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony, it was a fun day for all.

The picnic racing calendar is well entrenched around Victoria and its fan base is growing. Far more informal than our city meetings, picnic racedays offer a different, and to some people, more inviting experience to the major meetings.

Congratulations to all the connections of See It All, who won the Cup. OTI looks forward to entertaining its owners again come the 2023 renewal.



# GLENS TOP CAT TO MATT CUMANI

~ OTI and Cumani buy exciting 3yo from the UK ~



A son of Gleneagles, **GLENS TOP CAT** was second at his only start to date when putting in a very eye catching performance over 1400m. Subsequently the 3rd placed runner, who was some 3.75 lengths adrift, has won, confirming the strong form of our colt.

With an abundance of natural athleticism and a fluent action under tack, he looks an ideal prospect for success in Australia.

He will be trained in Ballarat by Matt Cumani, with whom OTI have had plenty of success when buying from the UK with the likes of **FUTURE SCORE**.

## **WATCH VIDEO**

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

## OTI WINNERS



### **DAQIANSWEET JUNIOR**

2500m BM100, The Valley  
*Trained by Philip Stokes*



### **KLOSTER**

1500m Class 3, Cagnes sur Mer  
*Trained by Edouard Monfort*



### **ANDRESS**

1400m Maiden, Hamilton  
*Trained by Lindsey Smith*

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