



# OTI GAZETTE

*The official newsletter of OTI RACING*



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## CORPORATE STRUCTURES CAN BENEFIT TRAINERS

Few will argue that the level of professionalism of trainers in Australia has improved significantly over the last decade. In an environment where ownership numbers continue to grow through the syndication of horses, trainers have become more adept in balancing horsemanship skills with business needs to improve their operations.

The upshot of this trend has been the adoption of conventional business structures and systems into many training operations. Historically Lindsay Park and Tulloch Lodge have long been considered leaders in the way they structured their businesses. In the past decade, however, stables like Waller and Maher/Eustace have taken their corporate operations to new levels with quality marketing and PR resources added to their structures.

The interesting issue with these stables is that they have excelled on the track as their corporate structures have strengthened. It's a classical chicken and egg situation - does track success come before a stronger focus on business acumen or the other way around?

The stables mentioned are not unique in improving the way their businesses are managed. The job titles 'Business Manager' or 'General Manager' are being added to many stables as the more astute trainers realise that such roles can improve the financial management of stables and subsequently enable them to spend more time training.

Currently, the solid financial base supporting racing in Australia is complemented with a plethora of young training talent, both locally and overseas trained. Despite the long hours, it is an exciting time for the ambitious, talented and business savvy trainers to prosper. And if our trainers prosper, racing itself wins!

# OTI RUNNERS AND WINNERS

We're faced with a quiet weekend of runners following the conclusion of the Sydney Autumn Carnival.

## At Cranbourne on Friday night

After a pleasing first-up run when finishing 3rd at Sandown, **MARCHONS ENSEMBLE** is set to contest the 2025m Benchmark 70. The rise in distance is certainly favourable and a win is within his reach.

## At Hawkesbury on Saturday

**HASSTOBEGOOD** is presented with an achievable task in the 1300m Benchmark 78. She hasn't enjoyed the heavy ground this campaign but should the track come up in the soft range, she's more than capable of being in the finish. She's a mare in great form at home.

## At Sandown on Saturday

The talented **EAGLES CRAG** is likely to make his return to the races after two successful jumpouts, including a win at Terang. A proven first-up performer, he contests the 1600m Benchmark 78. We hope the rain stays away, which will give him every chance of being competitive despite the wide draw.

**HARMYSIAN** is set to tackle the 2400m Benchmark 78. With a run over the mile and a half journey now under his belt, he's at peak fitness and should prove very competitive once again.

## At Horsham on Saturday

**ALMSGIVER** should be primed for the 1800m 0-58 Handicap. In this grade, over this distance with two runs under his belt, he's expected to be hard to beat. Hopefully he can settle amongst the first few and prove hard to hold out.

## Warrnambool May Racing Carnival

OTI is likely to be represented with a number of competitors at next week's May Racing Carnival (May 3-5). **Rider in the Snow** will make his jumps debut, and both **Toregene** and **Dyerville** are out to break their maidens. On the Thursday, **Andress**, **Eaglemont** and **Pankhurst** may feature, and there's a chance **Future Score** could contest the Cup.

## WINNERS



### VARDANI

2500m BM82, Morphettville  
*Trained by Archie Alexander*



### CLOUDLAND

1280m Maiden, Newcastle  
*Trained by Kris Lees*

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Suggestions for topics, interviews, or opinion pieces are always welcome.

Should you wish to share your thoughts, please email [alexandra@oti.com.au](mailto:alexandra@oti.com.au)

# A CONVERSATION WITH SIMON O'DONNELL

## ON HIS CHILDHOOD

I was born in Deniliquin, NSW. We had a dairy, beef and wheat property up in the Riverina. My dad started with two or three broodmares from his father. We used to breed two or three a year and race them as a family and that was the start of my interest in horse racing. The passion continued when I got to the legal age of being able to race horses. It's been something I've done since. It's something that's very hard to get out of the system, a lot of racing purists are very right in what they say: It's curable by death and death alone!

## ON MEMORABLE SPORTING MOMENTS

I was very lucky that cricket and footy gave me some fantastic memories over the journey. My favourite memory from a clear point of view was Australia winning a World Cup in '87 and a Sheffield Shield victory in 1991. Probably the greatest thrill outside of sports was the 2008 Melbourne Cup with Bauer, which still resonates with me as the greatest thrill I've ever had. Terry and I were lucky enough to win Derbies and some really good Group 1 races but the one that really sticks out to me is being beaten by a narrow margin in the 2008 Melbourne Cup.

## ON VISITING INTERNATIONAL STABLES

I had some great opportunities, particularly over in the UK. I'd often go to the races with Robert Sangster and a number of the other high profile families in my 20's. That, as well as many other things, really stoked the passion. In Europe, they showcase the history of the horse. It's a great place to race, the tracks and facilities are all unique. They are very different to Australia and to experience tracks like Goodwood, Sandown Park, the Curragh, and Newmarket you can't help but just thoroughly enjoy European racing.

## ON WHAT INTRIGUED HIM ABOUT RACING

The fantastic thing about sports is that you are in charge of some parts of your destiny. With horse racing, you're fully engaged emotionally but there's very little you can do about it. So many factors are out of your control, from jockeys, to the draw, to the state of the track, to the pace of the race. All the things that have relevance to the result. You have no control over them but you're fully engaged as though you're sitting on the horse's back. I think that's still such a fascinating part of the industry.



## ON HIS MENTORS

My Dad was probably my greatest mentor seeing the passion that he put into the game, and the thrill that it gave not only Dad but the whole town in a way. It was something that really encapsulated my early passion for horse racing. As time goes on, I think the key ingredient to being successful is that you've got to be open minded and take in as much information as you can. I remember George Smith, and in some of the early days I used to travel around with Percy Sykes the legendary vet to the yearling sales and just walk around, listen, watch, and learn. I think that's really important as you go forward and is your best chance of having some success.

## ON OUR FIORENTE FILLY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SIMON

Our Fiorente Filly out of Kirra Sand is something that Terry and I discussed 25 or 26 years ago now. We loved our stayers and Terry had some fantastic success before we put our heads together. We were unashamedly well-biased towards buying staying horses, particularly out of Europe. I think here at home there are so many opportunities not just for milers but for 2000m horses. This filly has a really good pedigree to run a journey. Fiorente is going well, and she is out of an O'Reilly mare that won from 1600m and above, so I'm really hopeful she becomes a nice staying filly for all of us and we have a lot of fun with her.

I'm very excited to be back in the fold as such, and back in the bumble bee colours so let's hope she can greet the judge and give us a lot of fun.



# MATT STEWART

Ed Dunlop drifted off into a tangent when Racing Victoria last week announced its revised veterinary quarantine requirements for international Melbourne Cup horses.

Dunlop, of Red Cadeaux fame, focused less on the vet checks and more on possible financial incentives. This led to an interesting discussion about far-flung Australian racing and what might be required to entice the world's best horses; not the OK ones who come out for the Melbourne Cup or Cox Plate - the real deals, the headline grabbers.

Dunlop suggested Australia would have to roll out the red carpet if it was to compete with the likes of Dubai and Saudi Arabia in enticing genuine show-stopper horses. One of those is Mishriff, who won the inaugural Saudi Cup and is now the highest-earning horse in history. He returned to Saudi this year, all-expenses paid, and ran down the track. Nothing creates division in racing, especially down here, than suggesting that if you want talent, you'll have to pay for it.

It works in rock and roll. You don't get Taylor Swift unless you dig deep (possibly a bad example, given her last minute Melbourne Cup backflip of a few years back).

Racing is different, although VRC chairman Neil Wilson said his club was interested in the invitation concept and what it might mean. How far do you go to get them?

Gai Waterhouse was horrified at the thought of paid talent.

Talk of it was rekindled last weekend after Golden Sixty won again at Sha Tin and became the highest-earning champion on HK history. After it was announced Golden Sixty would now head to Japan for a big race in June, some wondered what it would take to lure a horse like him – or an Enable, Hurricane Lane or Almond Eye – Down Under.

Pay them? Not on your life, says Gai. "They can come and pay their own way as we have to do to go to Royal Ascot," she told RSN.



"Everything is laid out for them to come. They only have to buy their ticket. If they want to come the money is here. There is no reason they should have any more frills and deals. In my opinion they should come and hold their own equally with our horses. To pay them to come here is not necessary."

Godolphin's Aussie head Vin Cox and leading owner Nick Williams agreed with Gai.

The problem is this.

Whacking on big purses for our biggest races has not proven enough to overcome the obstacles of quarantine, location and the fact our carnivals are run out of season for most foreigners.

Gai and others are right in theory but not practice. If we truly crave for us to be a destination for the world's champions, we will surely have to offer incentives. That's if we truly want them. Will they value-add? Will they embarrass us by being too good?

The Northern Hemisphere doesn't have to offer big incentives, although some do. There is a traditional flow between Europe and the US, and Japan and Hong Kong. They can drop in and out rather than undergoing a fortnight's quarantine before and after arrival at their destination.

Our relatively good prizemoney does not counteract the hardship of getting here.

So obviously, we will have to reach deeper if we are to fluke one of these global megastars. We either pay or accept our lot.



# OTI OWNER SPOTLIGHT - LAURIE LARMER



At approximately 3:15pm on Monday, a hefty silence pressed down upon Flemington Racecourse. The bustling establishment turned mute as owners, trainers, jockeys, and spectators paid their respects to the memory of our ANZAC heroes.

One ANZAC hero in particular, Laurie Larmer, was present at Flemington to cheer on Barade in the Les Carlyon Handicap.

WWII bomber pilot Laurie Larmer, 98, has led a remarkable life. He is a recipient of the prestigious French Legion of Honour, France's highest military award. In 1945 at the age of 21, he flew several missions over Germany alongside 10,000 other Australians who flew in Bomber Command.

Larmer is a member of the VRC and lifelong racing enthusiast. He recalls fond memories of racing and nominates Phar Lap, Bernborough, Vain, and Tulloch as his favourite horses. He particularly names Bernborough as his favourite, by a short winning margin.

"It was the time just after World War II and everybody needed a bit of a kick along and Bernborough just seemed to be the horse to do it," he says.

He currently has an interest in four horses with OTI, which we are delighted to share with him.

Click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) to watch the VRC's conversation with Laurie.



## OTI HUNTER VALLEY TOUR

This week OTI Sport clients enjoyed a tour of the Hunter Valley studs visiting Yarraman Park, Kitchwin Hills, Arrowfield and Coolmore Stud seeing the leading stallions.

Staying in luxury accommodation in the Upper Hunter Valley, it was an enjoyable and informative trip for all.

For more information on future tours contact  
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# OTI WELFARE FUND SPONSORS EQUESTRIAN EVENT



Last Friday, OTI were proud to be the naming sponsor of the 6-bar event at the Stonewall Equestrian Championships in New South Wales. OTI's Equine Welfare Coordinator Campbell Wansborough attended the event on behalf of the team.

The carnival was hosted by the Thoroughbred Sport Horse Association, an organisation who does an outstanding job in organising and funding events for retired racehorses. Ultimately, their work helps create opportunity and demand for thoroughbreds in their lives post-racing.

Despite the inclement weather, the event was a great success with 7 competitors passing the final round and sharing the winning spoils. Incredibly, riders as young as 14 years old featured among the winning entrants.

A set of jumps endorsed by OTI's Equine Welfare Fund were a terrific feature in the 6-bar event and are likely to reside at Stonewall Equestrian for future competitions.

Footage from the 6-Bar event is currently being compiled, with a feature set to appear on Channel 7 in the near future. Be sure to keep an eye out!

[Click here](#) for more information on the OTI Equine Welfare Program.



## OTI QUIZ

1. Who rode OTI's I'm Thunderstruck to victory in the G1 Toorak Handicap last year?
2. What do stakes winners Lunar Flare, Stars of Carrum, and Hawkshot all have in common?
3. Which OTI runner caused an upset in the Listed Straight Six last year at \$126?

### NAME THE RACECOURSE



*Hint - Mista Razzledazzle*

# OTI TO RACE FIORENTE FILLY WITH SIMON O'DONNELL



OTI has recently joined forces with our good friend Simon O'Donnell to race this 2yo filly in the care of Symon Wilde at Warrnambool.

She is by Melbourne Cup winner Fiorente. Her dam, Kirra Sand, is a hearty New Zealand-bred mare and a Group 3 winner herself. The filly is a striking black staying type with an athletic walk. Big and strong at two, she has been given three educational preparations as she grows into her frame.

Renowned as having a great eye for a youngster, Simon O'Donnell acquired the filly as a yearling and recently noted that "she has a really good pedigree to run a journey". He has been delighted with her progression since purchase and believes that she is an exciting staying prospect for her 3yo season and beyond.

Click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) to watch video.

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

## QUIZ ANSWERS

### NAME THE RACECOURSE

1. Jye McNeil
2. They are all sired by Fiorente
3. Romancer

Port Macquarie, NSW.  
Mista Razzledazzle won a BM66 at Port Macquarie on April 10, 2022.

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