



# OTI GAZETTE

*The official newsletter of OTI RACING*



## IN THIS EDITION

**OTI WEEKEND  
RUNNERS**

**OTI WINNERS**

**AN INTERVIEW  
WITH MURRAY  
BAKER**

**MATT STEWART**

**JOHNNY MURTAGH**

**VADAMOS COLT**

**OTI EMPLOYEE  
SPOTLIGHT**

**QUIZ**

## WONDERFUL WARRNAMBOOL... AND ITS IMPACT

With over 25,000 patrons attending the 3-day carnival at Warrnambool last week, the appeal of the sport was shown at its best. This is despite Warrnambool being over 200 kilometers from Melbourne and jumps racing being prime focus for the carnival.

Local and Melbourne people moulded with trainers and jockeys to produce good times on and off the track and to raise funds for local charities. The passion and excitement of the carnival matched it with any carnival witnessed around the globe.

The Warrnambool experience is a far cry from what is happening in Melbourne at the moment. Be it the ongoing saga with vetting processes for the Melbourne Cup, the future of Sandown Racecourse, the track plans for Caulfield or loss by Victoria as the nation's preeminent racing jurisdiction, the chasm between horse people in Victoria and Racing authorities continues to widen.

When one looks at the makeup of the boards of RVL and the various clubs, it is little wonder that views of those who run racing and those who at the coalface differ significantly on so many issues. At Board level, there seems to be a lack of appreciation of the opinions of those who best understand the functional needs of our sport. While we all appreciate that those needs must be balanced with financial and political considerations, one wonders, given many of the recent decisions, whether sufficient emphasis is given to the views of our horsemen and horsewomen.

At Warrnambool, it was interesting that, while there was strong representation for most sectors of racing, and our passionate Racing Minister, few board members from RVL or our city clubs were to be seen. One of the most effective ways of understanding any sport or business is by the application of the old principle "Management By Walking Around".

For those not there, it was an opportunity lost.

# OTI RUNNERS AND WINNERS

A busy Saturday awaits, with two of our gallopers set to contest the Andrew Ramsden Stakes in a bid to earn a spot in the Melbourne Cup.

## At Scone

After failing to handle a testing surface last time out, **DICK WHITTINGTON** will appreciate the conditions at Scone in the 2200m Benchmark 78. Hugh Bowman was rapt with how the horse felt last start and once again rides, so we hope to see this Group-performed stayer bounce back to form.

**HASSTOBEGOOD** is another who has been forced to race on unsuitable ground over the past few months, so we hope she's afforded every chance of making use of a good surface in the 1300m Listed Luskin Star Stakes. She is a talented mare on her day and has shown herself as capable in this grade.

## At Flemington

Group 2 winner **HEZASHOCKA** will make his return in the 1600m Benchmark 78. He is sure to be better suited out over further but has trialled up well for this and seems to have appreciated a beach training environment. A finish in the first half dozen would be pleasing to see moving forward.

Seasoned campaigner **PETRUCHIO** is another who may make his return in the same race, though it's dependent on how he comes through his Terang trial win from earlier this week. He will appreciate the open spaces of Flemington but is likely to be in need of the outing.

**HARMYSIAN** will make the step out to 2800m in the Listed Andrew Ramsden Stakes, a distance he's proven at. We've always felt he would enjoy racing at Flemington, and with even luck, is capable of being in the finish.

Fresh off a dominant display at Sandown on Wednesday, **SOUND OF CANNONS** is poised to back up in the Andrew Ramsden Stakes. The change of scenery/race direction sparked him into gear on Wednesday, where we saw him deliver on the potential he's always shown. The 2800m and Flemington track are major positives.

## At Eagle Farm

**NEVER NO MORE** is out to end his run of seconds (last three starts) in the 1400m Benchmark 85. He's racing in a lovely vein of form and is presented with another winning opportunity. He is enjoying life at Matt Dunn's Murwillumbah base and is once again expected to be very competitive.

## At Sunshine Coast

Now third-up, **SEA CROSSING** should be making his presence felt in the 1600m 0-62 Handicap. He's two runs back have been solid, but its time for him to step up and show he's capable of winning on Australian shores. With the meeting be moved to the poly at Sunshine Coast, it will only help his chances.

## WINNERS



### MARCHONS ENSEMBLE

2000m BM70, Warrnambool  
Trained by Trent Bussutin & Natalie Young



### TOREGENE

1400m MDN, Warrnambool  
Trained by Matthew Williams



### RIDER IN THE SNOW

3200m MDN-HDLE, Warrnambool  
Trained by Symon Wilde



### EAGLEMONT

1800M HCP, Sandown  
Trained by Ciaran Maher & David Eustace



### ALMSGIVER

1800M 0-58HCP, Horsham  
Trained by Matthew Williams



### FUNAMBULIST

2000m MDN, Hawkesbury  
Trained by Annabel Neasham



### SOUND OF CANNONS

2400m BM70, Sandown  
Trained by John O'Shea

# AN INTERVIEW WITH MURRAY BAKER



## **What was your first interest in horses?**

At the age of 12, I worked for a trainer in Napier. I used to ride a horse called Embrace that was a half brother to Light Fingers. Since then, I've always love being involved with horses.

## **Why did you decide between cricket and training?**

When I returned from Europe after playing cricket, I got a job working with Ray Cotter at Te Rapa. Ray, who trained Summer Regent (who won a Cox Plate) was influential in my career and a good mentor.

## **When did you start training by yourself?**

I started in 1978 and my first winner was a horse called Visier who won a non-tote race at Otaki. He went on to win a stakes race before being sold to the USA.

## **How many Group 1 winners did you have and who were the best of them?**

I had 35 Group 1 winners in New Zealand and 22 in Australia. My best horse was Dundee, who is now a very good stallion. Amazingly, he only had one run in New Zealand. Others who were top quality Group 1 winners include Bonneval who won the Underwood and the Australian Oaks. She won 6 Group races in a row. Turn Me Loose was also a top horse and is also now a stallion. He, who unlike most of our other horses who were stayers, was a sprinter/miler.

## **Did your training style change over the years?**

I realized that to be competitive in Australia, you had to concentrate on the stayers. So my attention has always been focused on producing a good staying horse.

## **What is the key element in your training success?**

For me, given the sort of horses I trained, giving them plenty of time to develop was an essential ingredient to my success. I always felt that with the staying types, time was a huge asset. Giving them time to develop was a huge benefit.

## **How influential have you been in Bjorn's career?**

Before Bjorn went off to study as a pharmacist, he worked around the stables. He then worked for me when he came back from Europe and decided to train. However, Bjorn is his own man and has done a remarkable job in Australia.

## **Was trading or training more important in your business career?**

Obviously I needed to do both as our prize money in New Zealand is poor compared to Australia. Australia is in a wonderful position at the moment with its prize money so it is just natural that we New Zealanders trade. It's the only way many trainers can survive. Despite that, it was training that gave me the most satisfaction.

## **What are your plans for retirement and will you race any horses?**

My wife and I plan to spend more time in Sweden in retirement as Marianne is originally from there. We will, however, continue to race one or two horses in New Zealand and with Bjorn in Australia.



# MATT STEWART

Of all of the photos of Phar Lap, my favourite is the one where he is hoisted on the boat.

There he was, The Red Terror with his ears pricked over the top of that crate that would deliver him to Parts Unknown. Verry Ellegant, soon to be walked up that ramp into the bowels of a plane bound for France, got me thinking about our great equine adventurers.

Phar Lap, mostly.

The world was a very big place when Phar Lap embarked on a weeks-long odyssey across the Pacific, bound for California, then Mexico.

Australia was a young nation finding its way in the world. By ship and by air, Phar Lap and Charles Kingsford Smith brought the world closer.

If not for this quest to win this big race that had popped up in the Mexican desert, a dirt race worth a staggering \$100,000, the Phar Lap story would not have elevated him to the same level of folk lore. His race record had proven him arguably the greatest Australian horse of all-time. Those who had seen Carbine may have argued differently and those who lived long enough to see Bernborough and Tulloch after Phar Lap may also have piped up.

Phar Lap's hero status had been magnified by the Great Depression and he departed our shores with more than mere parochial expectation. Our national identity was on the line.

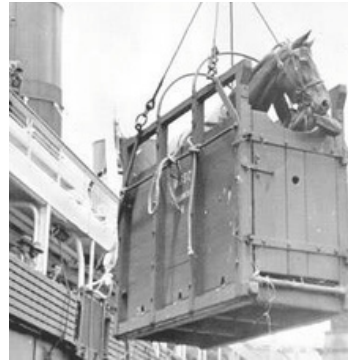
When he died tragically in California just weeks after winning at Agua Caliente, the legend was sealed. No champion before or after had a story so rich.

Phar Lap whetted our appetite for horse travel. The world had become a curiosity and Phar Lap proved our best were as good as any.

There have been many quests over the years; some successful, some tragically close.

The most haunting of all was that darned Grand National at Aintree where gallant Crisp had the race shot to bits – at some stages he was 100m in front – before wobbling near the wire to be nabbed by the subsequently great Red Rum.

Few remember that Kingston Town popped up at Hollywood Park, Los Angeles, as a last-ditch effort to rekindle his career.



From memory, Californian medication rules suited the battle-weary Kingston Town and he was sent to the legendary Charlie Whittingham as a nine-year-old.

Whittingham had enthused about "the King's" stylish workouts before the old horse sustained a career-ending injury.

In the mid-1980s the great Queensland wet-tracker Strawberry Road was flown to France for the last stage of his career. He was a darn good horse both in Europe and the US but it's the Arc that stands out.

With his owner John Singleton calling the great French race for Aussie fans, Greville Starkey took Strawberry Road four, five, six lengths clear up the long Longchamp straight.

That straight seemed never-ending as Strawberry Road's margin was quickly whittled back before he ran mid-field. Starkey, of course, was the villain for going too soon.

Starcraft ended up with Luca Cumani where he was so consistent that he was declared the European Champion Miler of his year.

And now Verry Ellegant, off to Chantilly for a crack at the Arc.

Reading between the lines, it seems Waller didn't want to go and the owners did.

Waller's no dill.

He resisted with Winx so he was never going to be cock-a-hoop about a great but ageing mare who was down on form in the autumn and looks a spent force.

But she's on a mission – and ever since Phar Lap, we've loved a mission.

## A MUST WATCH - JOHNNY MURTAGH "CREATING BELIEF"

Johnny Murtagh retired as a champion jockey in 2013 to take up full time training. OTI has already enjoyed considerable success with him as our numbers in Ireland continue to grow.

**THIS** video link takes you behind the scenes with Johnny as he struggled to overcome his alcohol issues as a young jockey.

You'll rarely see a more honest and heart warming story.



# OTI TO PLACE VADAMOS COLT WITH PRICE/KENT



OTI has acquired an exciting yearling recently broken in under the direction of the Price/Kent Stable. He is by Vadamos and the first foal out of The White Queen, a New Zealand mare victorious over a mile.

The colt was purchased as a weanling in 2021 and was broken in by highly respected educator John Ledger.

He is currently spelling and is due to commence work with the Price/Kent stable in September. Considering his pedigree, physique, and temperament, it is likely that he will race early next year in preparation for the 1400m and 1600m 2yo races.

He has impressed those that have worked with him and we are hopeful that the colt will produce much success when he begins racing.

## QUIZ

1. Which OTI horse is named after the coastal town on the Bellarine Peninsula?
2. OTI's Tom Melbourne won the listed Carrington Stakes under Chris Waller. Who trained him previous to Waller?
3. Jockey Hugh Bowman comes from which regional NSW town?
4. Which of OTI's horses shares a name with a luxury Australian skincare brand?
5. Who is the highest earning progeny of So You Think?



**NAME THE RACECOURSE**

*Hint: Thursday*

# CONGRATULATIONS LISA



Huge congratulations to Lisa Grund, who was recently awarded Dux of the Diploma of Equine Management course at Marcus Oldham College for 2020. Lisa also won the Ballarat Veterinary Practice Award for Horse Husbandry and Horse Health.

Lisa, originally from Germany, joined OTI as Management Trainee in March and has already established herself as a valuable member of the team.

We are delighted to have her as part of the team and wish her all the best in her post-academic journey.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Indented Head
2. Lee & Anthony Freedman
3. Dunedoo
4. Aesop
5. Think It Over

**NAME THE RACECOURSE:** Pakenham, VIC  
*Meetings are held Thursday nights at Pakenham.*



*INDENTED HEAD wins the 1400m 3yoF Maiden at Cranbourne, 07/01/22*

## HAVE YOUR SAY

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

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

OTI Management Pty. Ltd.  
204/425 Docklands Drive | Docklands | VIC | 3008 | Australia  
+61 (0) 3 9670 0255  
[oti@oti.com.au](mailto:oti@oti.com.au)