



OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING



FURTHER STAKES BOOST SIGNALS GOOD TIMES

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Racing Victoria's announcement of an extra \$26m in stakes money is great news for all for more reasons than the obvious. As well as adding to the existing lucrative returns available, it helps bridge the growing gap between our two major racing jurisdictions.

Although the increases to some feature races will catch the headlines, the more important benefit flows to the country and Saturday races where there have been increases across the board. A schedule of those increases is contained within the Gazette.

New South Wales had already announced major increases from July 1st totalling around \$25m, but have now added a further \$3m to the Golden Eagle, a race that now becomes the most lucrative for owners in Australia. The higher stake money promoted for the Everest has to be shared with the nominated slot holder thus halving, in most instances, the end purse.

Although the focus remains on NSW and Victoria, Queensland Racing continues to also thrive as stake monies grow in that state. The Magic Millions, a concept that has stood the test of time, continues to expand as Queensland racing generally joins its southern neighbours by increasing financial return to owners, trainers and breeders.

Australian Racing, now clearly a world leader in providing financial returns to stakeholders, should be most grateful to our forefathers of the sports who set up systems to create our current stakes model. Be it the introduction of the TAB over half a century ago, or the fight, led by Peter V'landys, over a decade ago, we now have funds flowing back into the industry that are the envy of the racing world. As we go through a period when the wagering licences are up for renewal, let's hope all jurisdictions, especially Victoria (who almost sold out to bookmakers fifteen or so years ago) recognise and protect the benefits we currently enjoy.

OTI RUNNERS AND WINNERS

At Goodwood (UK) on Friday

Rising stayer **MERCIAN HYMN** is seeking his first win in our silks in the 2418m Class 4. A smoother passage in running should see the gelding close to the mark off the back of solid performances in his two starts this time in.

At Randwick on Saturday

Talented New Zealand-bred mare **COMME BELLA FILLE** is chasing Saturday metro success in the 1600m Fillies & Mares Benchmark 78. Her return win was full of merit and her record over a mile is strong. Though she'll benefit from a rise in distance in time, she is more than capable of being in the finish in this grade.

At Eagle Farm on Saturday

HOLSTEIN has certainly mixed his form to date but should finally get a chance on a better surface in the 1600m Group 3 Gunsynd Classic. It is a major step up in grade but when at his best, he is capable of being competitive here. Hopefully the trip away can help switch him onto the task at hand.

At Sandown on Saturday

MARCHONS ENSEMBLE will compete in the 2400m Benchmark 78, where he's sure to enjoy the softer conditions likely to be on offer. From the soft draw, we're likely to see him sit handier in running. He's a horse in good form that can certainly make his presence felt in the finish.

EAGLEMONT is deserving of his step to Saturday class in the 1600m Benchmark 78 following his dominant win last time out. He appears to be thriving in work and although faced with a tricky draw, has form and fitness on his side. A heavy track would however likely see him scratched.

PETRUCHIO will contest the same race second-up. His return effort was sound given the frustrating run in transit and he should have taken good improvement from that outing. He's a two-time winner at this track and distance, which gives us confidence of a more forward effort.

HEZASHOCKA returned with a brilliant fresh up win at Flemington over a mile but will enjoy the rise in trip in the 1800m Handicap. He's a Group 2 winner on wet ground, which is certainly a positive given the likely conditions on Saturday. There's no reason to suggest he can't feature again here.

At Swan Hill on Saturday

There is no doubt **TOREGENE** has a good deal of ability, but a great deal still to learn. She drops back considerably in class as she contests the 1300m Fillies & Mares Benchmark 64. If she can free roll and relax better in running, she could prove very hard to beat. The trip away at this stage of her career will be a good educational experience.

PANKHURST's two runs back this time in on heavy ground should be ignored. She will appreciate racing on a better surface in the 1600m Benchmark 64 and is ready to show her true form. Matthew Williams has been happy with the mare's work in the lead up and we hope she can bounce back.

WINNERS



CHICAGO BEAR

1800m 4yo+ Hcp, Leopardstown
Trained by Johnny Murtagh



ARMANSKY

2100m Maiden, Echuca
Trained by Matt Cumani



FUNAMBULIST

2600m BM64, Gosford
Trained by Annabel Neasham

AN INTERVIEW WITH ADAM CRETTENDEN

Were you always involved in racing, or did your interest develop over time?

I grew up in Essendon, (not all that far from Moonee Valley or Flemington) and I found racecourses fascinating when I was a boy. I have no family background in racing and the opportunity came up in Year 11 English to do a project called a 'Communication Project'. I called the Harness Racing Board (as it was known in 1992) and was put in touch with Rob Auber, who was race calling a lot at the time. He assisted me right through the project that year, including the one day where I had to publicly broadcast an event.

How did you decide you wanted to be a race caller?

It was after the conclusion of that project. I found my one race calling experience in that project an incredibly nervous experience. However, Rob Auber encouraged me to continue going to the trials with him and occasionally I'd call a trial or two. I became more comfortable with it, got better at it, and by the end of Year 12 I knew I wanted to pursue it.

What is it that you love most about racing?

There are several things. Firstly, I go to different places all the time. It's not a monotonous, "Groundhog Day" type of experience. Also, you just don't know what you might see on any given day. Racing is a great sport for producing something you've never seen before. Finally, I never had a pet growing up, let alone a horse. Being around horses at work inspired me to move to the country and surround myself with horses.

How did you learn the art of race calling?

Basically on the job. I started picking up work as soon as I finished Year 12. In the 1990s, many Saturday country meetings were non-TAB and that provided me with a great opportunity to gain experience, work on my style and start to get noticed by people within the industry.



Do you have a favourite track to call?

Doesn't bother me really. However, the shorter the distance to travel to the races, the shorter the work day is. My nearest track is Ballarat, so I always enjoy calling there!

What do you do in your time off, away from racing?

I enjoy running, I've always been a runner. I've had a few different hobby pursuits over the years including driving horses and writing books, but these days it's simply being around my 4yo daughter.

What made you decide to write about Manikato and Subzero? Why were you drawn to them specifically?

I'd been friendly with Subzero's owner, Graham Salisbury. He'd always ask me if someone would write a book on Subzero and one day I naively suggested that I would start doing some research for him. That ballooned quickly after he loaned me a heap of plastic tubs containing newspaper clippings which took months to catalogue. But by then I was committed to doing something with it and ultimately, that ended up being the book. After I wrote Subzero, I started reading books on other horses and couldn't believe that there had not been one written on Manikato. That one was a bit more straight-forward to research!

Adam Crettenden is a Victorian race caller with over 20 years' experience. He is also author of two racing books "Sub Zero: More Than a Melbourne Cup Hero" and "Manikato: The Man" .

REMINISCING RACES - THIS TIME LAST YEAR



COMME BELLA FILLE got OTI's 2021 winter off to a successful start, winning a 2100m Class 1 at Wyong on the 3rd of June, ridden by top jockey Tommy Berry. The John O'Shea trained mare has since gone on to provide OTI with much success, winning at Canterbury and Randwick Kensington.

Another taste of success for OTI last year was **ALMSGIVER**'s victory in the 1600m Maiden at Swan Hill on the 13th of June, ridden by Dean Yendall. The Matt-Williams trained gelding has since won at Horsham on the 30th of April 2022, and backed that up with a top performance during the Warrnambool Carnival.



KLOSTER rounded off OTI's successful June last year on the other side of the globe, winning over 1650m at Craon Racetrack in France. The grey gelding has since won at Cagnes-sur-Mer on January 21, and should be back later on this season to contest some valuable handicap events.

EASY 'CORNCRAKE' BREAD

With OTI's Corncrake nearing a race return, what better way to settle into the wintery weather that has just begun by making a comforting batch of "Corncrake Bread" to go with your hearty winter meals!



- 1 cup cornmeal or yellow polenta
- 1 cup plain flour
- 4 tablespoons caster sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon baking power
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 50 g unsalted butter, melted



Preheat oven to 180 degrees, and grease a non-stick loaf pan. In a large bowl, mix together the dry ingredients before pouring in the milk and butter. Lightly mix everything until all combined, and pour into loaf pan before baking for 20-25 minutes (or until golden brown on top). Best served warm!

CHICAGO BEAR MAKES AN IMMEDIATE IMPRESSION

Chicago Bear, whose acquisition by OTI was only confirmed on the eve of his race at Leopardstown (IRE) last Thursday, made an immediate impression with a tenacious victory after racing wide throughout. A replay of the race can be found [HERE](#).

Chicago Bear is a son of French stallion Siyouni. His progeny include Sottsass, winner of the Arc, and St Mark's Basilica, winner of the French Derby and the French Guineas. Siyouni himself was victorious at Group 1 level, winning the Prix Jean-luc Lagardere at Longchamp. Ebalista, Chicago Bear's dam, is bred by the Aga Khan and is half-sister to Irish G1 performer Eyshal.



Chicago Bear will remain with Johnny Murtagh and contest a race on Irish Derby weekend, after which he will relocate to Australia for the Trent Busuttin and Natalie Young partnership. Chicago Bear has won 3 of 9 starts to date, including his last 2 in which he has demonstrated a significant turn of foot and will to win.

This gelding possesses a great deal of upside, and we look forward to his arrival in July. He gives every indication that he will relish Australian conditions.

OTI QUIZ

1. 2021 Vic Derby winner Johnny Get Angry is trained by which former AFL coach?
2. Name 3 OTI horses that share a name with Victorian localities.
3. South Australian jockey Barend Vorster is from which country?
4. What is the oldest horse race in Australia?
5. At what French racecourse is the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe held?



NAME THE RACECOURSE

Hint: Widgee Turf

VALE LESTER PIGGOTT

It was Wednesday morning, 5 December 1990. The phone rang. 'You running anything on the weekend?'. Inwardly I groaned, I knew what was coming. I was running a handicapper slightly past his best in the 2,100m handicap at Saint-Cloud on the Saturday. An older horse with his issues, not a comfortable ride, Lester had ridden him 11 days earlier when he was a well beaten third. 'Ok, I'll come and ride him'. And so, to my embarrassment, he flew over at his own expense for one dodgy ride.

It was Lester Piggott who was responsible for my being in France. Returning from America in early 1985, jobless, I had bumped into him and he asked me if I had any plans. I didn't.

'You should go and work for this Fabre guy in France, he's very good, you know.'

He wasn't wrong there. It was the year he was to spend much of riding for André so he kindly made the phone call and got me the job. I got to know him quite well, often ferrying him from the airport to the races in my Austin mini. He was fun, chatty. Those in the car park at the races were always baffled by the mode of transport of this icon of the sport but I think it rather amused him. Lester was never about bling; limousines weren't required to go from A to B.



Returning to Saturday, 8 December 1990. It was a miserable day, raining hail. The old horse cocked his jaw, pulled Lester's arms out, came to win then faded to be third. Returning to the unsaddling enclosure dripping wet, freezing cold, Lester got off and gave the horse a friendly pat before trudging off to the jocks' room. There wasn't much to say.

Back in the car, returning to the airport after his one ride, he said 'He's silly that old horse, he shouldn't pull like that, he could have won, you know.'

I think most jockeys would have used considerably saltier language about the horse or, more so, the fact that he had paid for his own plane ticket and sacrificed a day to come to France for one average ride in shocking weather. But he wasn't unhappy, more the opposite: I had the impression he'd enjoyed his day. It was a month after his famous comeback ride on Royal Academy in the Breeders' Cup and he knew how much he'd missed it.

He had a unique empathy, relationship, with horses. It wasn't sentimental, more mutual respect. He would ask for more when they had more to give but not when a horse was empty. He knew the difference, sometimes being unjustifiably penalised for easing one down. Never did I hear him using pejorative language about a horse that, occasionally for understandable reasons, some do. He liked them.

I feel lucky to have known him.

John Hammond **Chantilly**

It was sad to hear of the death of Lester Piggott, a champion jockey and legend of racing.

Our thoughts go to his family and closest friends who, while mourning his death, will rejoice in the memories of his remarkable life.

In racing, results do not lie. One only has to look at the statistics around Lester's career to appreciate that, as far as the Northern Hemisphere was concerned, he was the best of the best.

I got to know Lester in his latter years and quickly got to appreciate his wit, conversation and sharp mind. He certainly had some habits that were not everybody's 'cup of tea', but in the context of how he had to struggle to keep his weight low and meet the demands of trainers and owners, it is understandable.

When he last visited Australia as a guest of OTI in 2017, he wooed our clients and fellow guests with his racing stories, many untold to his fellow Englishmen.

No doubt, we'll see a movie on Lester's life. He'd love to be around to select its cast. At 5'7", the same height as Lester, Tom Cruise, would be in the running as the stat. Lester would like that!

Terry Henderson **Melbourne**

HAPPY RETIREMENT HARBOUR VIEWS

With hefty hearts and a great sense of pride, OTI Racing bid farewell to Harbour Views as he continues on to the next chapter of his life.

The 7yo gelding, originally hailing from France, started his career explosively with 5 consecutive wins. A highlight no doubt was his win in The Listed Sofitel in 2021.

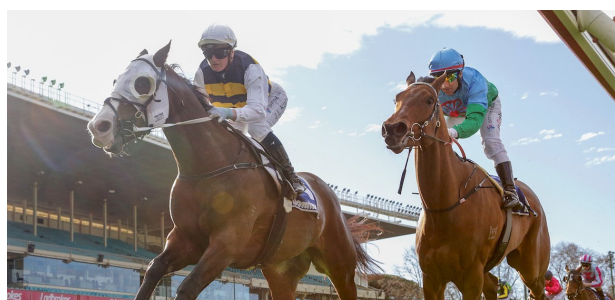
OTI and connections wish Harbour Views all the best for his retirement from racing.



*Harbour Views wins at The Valley,
13 June 2020*

VIC PRIZEMONEY INCREASE

Racing Victoria has announced an all-encompassing prizemoney injection which will see the total amount of prizemoney on offer surpass \$300 million. They are as follows:



COUNTRY	NOW	BEFORE
Standard	\$27,000	\$25,000
Premium	\$37,500	\$35,000
BM70+	\$40,000	\$35,000
Night	\$40,000	\$35,000
CITY		
Midweek	\$55,000	\$50,000
Saturday	\$150,000	\$130,000
FEATURES		
Champion's Mile	\$3 million	\$2 million
Champion's Sprint	\$3 million	\$2 million
Champion's Stakes	\$3 million	\$1.5 million
Australian Cup	\$3 million	\$1.5 million
Coolmore Stud Stakes	\$2 million	\$1.5 million
Caulfield Guineas	\$3 million	\$2 million
Manikato Stakes	\$2 million	\$1 million

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Denis Pagan
2. Inverloch, Indented Head, Lorne, Eaglemont, Docklands, Erskine Falls.
3. South Africa
4. The St. Leger Stakes (1840)
5. Longchamp

NAME THE RACECOURSE

Answer: Turffontein (SA)

Widgee Turf is sired by stallion Turffontein.



Eaglemont wins at Sandown, 11/05/22

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