



# OTI GAZETTE

*The official newsletter of OTI RACING*



## ROYAL ASCOT... SIMPLY THE BEST

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Royal Ascot is pomp and ceremony, but there is far more to it than that. As a racing week, it is unsurpassed for racing quality, global representation and partying, be they patrons in the Royal Enclosure or in the spacious grounds inside and outside the track. The 'new stand', now over 10 years old, took a long time to be accepted by the die-hard English traditionalists, however it now works very well. It is easy to move around and a short walk from the mounting yard. As a piece of architecture, it is a stunning building. Not only is it the most magnificent of any racing grandstand in the world, but compares well with any modern structure.

However, the important action was on the track where patrons were treated to a feast. For us Australians, Nature Strip, Chris Waller and James McDonald made us feel very proud in witnessing the great win. Although there were far more valuable races for the horse at home, the impact of the win helped reinforce Australia's position as the preeminent breeder of sprinters. With a little more luck in running, Artorius could well have cemented that reputation.

Time will tell if other winners ultimately earn the title as a champion, as Nature Strip has already done. The unbeaten Baaeed jogged up in the opening race of the carnival. Starting at 1/6, some are making comparisons with Frankel, but he has some way to go yet. He's a truly exciting horse. Speaking of Frankel, his unbeaten 3yo daughter, Inspiral, dominated her rivals in the Coronation Stakes. Her win had all the hallmarks of a champion is the making.

As for OTI, Timour ran a very brave race in the Queen Alexandra Stakes over 4343m, beaten less than 3 lengths. James McDonald was full of praise for him and indicated he will mix it with our best stayers when he gets to Australia. Our other runner, Vina Sina, pulled in running, so he will need to settle better to be competitive in the top races.

For international trainers and owners, Royal Ascot was a generous and helpful host. Supported by Tattersalls, the sales company, they were supplied with their own dining room and concierge. No doubt those lucky to attend will want to repeat the experience.

# OTI RUNNERS AND WINNERS

We are faced with a very busy weekend of runners, both locally and internationally.

## At Randwick on Saturday

**COMME BELLA FILLE** is hunting her third win in a row when she contests the 1800m Fillies & Mares Benchmark 78. She continues to go from strength to strength and will appreciate the rise in distance at this stage of her campaign. We expect another bold showing.

**FUNAMBULIST** faces a big jump in grade when he steps out in the 2600m Stayer's Cup, but with the claim of Ellen Hennessy, who has won on him twice, the gelding will carry just 49kgs. He is the type who can stay all day, so hopefully we see a genuinely run affair.

**MIRANN** is still adjusting to things in Australia but will hopefully find himself in a better rhythm in the 1800m Benchmark 88. He'll be asked to settle further back in running to close off strongly. A repeat of his effort in the Listed Gosford Gold Cup behind Q22 winner Numerian would see him going very close.

## At Caulfield on Saturday

**HEZASHOCKA** backed up his impressive return win with a solid 3rd placed effort last time out, and now looks well-suited in the 2000m Quality Handicap. He is a stayer on the rise who is more than capable in this company.

**PETRUCHIO** sits on the cusp of getting a run in the 1600m Benchmark 78. Should the ground come up heavy, he'll likely be saved for another day. He is going better than his recent form suggests, so we hope he's given a fair chance next time out to show his true ability.

**EAGLES CRAG** has gained a start in the same race, but will only took his place if the ground isn't too soft. We were left a touch disappointed by his last run at Swan Hill, but its hoped the application of blinkers will see him more focused in the concluding stages.

## At Eagle Farm on Saturday

**STUCK WITH YOU** is likely to make his return in the 1200m Benchmark 78. It's by no means a suitable journey for him and will be viewed as a preparatory run for the campaign ahead. His trials have been solid, and he appears to have come back very well this time in.

## At Eagle Farm on Saturday

**TAAFFEITE** jumps to Listed class in the 2150m Tattersall's Gold Crown, which is a big ask for the mare. Having said that, it is a good opportunity for her to attain some black type against her own sex. She's a tough staying mare whose best form would see her capable of finishing in the first four.

## At the Curragh (IRE) on Saturday

**CHICAGO BEAR** is another looking to make it three wins in a row when he steps out in the 2000m 4yo+ Handicap on Derby weekend. Johnny can't fault his work and he's bounced through his Leopardstown win in good fashion. His new connections are hoping for a bold showing before he boards a plane to Australia.

**CATENA ZAPATA** will feature in the same race. He was a bit disappointing last time out when running his race upside down but has had time to get over that performance. He has done plenty of schooling work at home and heads into this race fresh and well.

## At Donald on Sunday

**SELF WORTH**'s debut didn't exactly go to plan, but we hope to see an improved showing in the 1204m 2yo Maiden, should she take her place. She should have taken good improvement from that outing, though a race on the synthetic on Tuesday does appear the more likely option.

**ALMSGIVER** had a valid excuse for his last-placed effort in his most recent run, so we do expect him to bounce back in the 2000m Benchmark 64. He has a good preparation to date and the signs at home show he can continue that.

## At Windsor (UK) on Saturday

**MERCIAN HYMN** may take his place in the 2299m Class 4. He was bogged down by the big weight last time out, so this race does look more suitable. He may well be a type who is more effective around the 2000m journey, but this run should help us make a firmer assessment.

## Next Week

We will likely see the debut's of two exciting Price/Kent Jnr trained two-year-olds next week. **CADAZIO**, a gelded son of Tarzino is likely to head to Bendigo on Thursday for the 1400m Maiden. **STRUCK TWICE**, I'm Thunderstruck's full-brother will head to the 1400m Maiden at Pakenham next Sunday. Read more about the pair [HERE](#).

## WINNERS



**TOREGENE**

Swan Hill, 11 June 2022  
Trained by Matthew Williams



**COMME BELLA FILLE**

Randwick, 11 June 2022  
Trained by John O'Shea



**FUNAMBULIST**

Gosford, 09 June 2022  
Trained by Annabel Neasham



# AN INTERVIEW WITH LISA COFFEY

*Lisa Coffey is founder and director of Racing Hearts. Racing Hearts offers Equine Assisted Therapy to all ages while rehoming and retraining ex-racehorses. She has taken on a number of ex-OTI gallopers, including Tamland, Lunayir and Blue Ocean. Racing Heart's website can be viewed [HERE](#).*

## **Were you always involved in racing, or did your passion develop over time?**

I was a latecomer to racing but my passion didn't take any time at all to develop! I came from an equestrian background having done Pony Club from the age of 11 and then through to intervarsity show jumping and dressage teams in the UK. I was training competition horses at my home place and a friend of mine Gary Cribbin, who is a jockeys agent in Ireland, asked me if I'd be interested in riding a few horses a morning at a National Hunt yard. After learning how to ride with that different technique and a few jumps schooling sessions I was well and truly hooked!

## **Can you tell us a bit about your charity, Racing Hearts?**

Racing Hearts is a registered charity offering Equine Assisted Counselling and Psychology based across 3 farms on the Mornington Peninsula and Pakenham. Our team of therapists work with clients from the community of all ages and backgrounds that are struggling with mental health and general life challenges. The unique aspect of our therapeutic service is that instead of working in the confines of 4 walls, therapists see clients on the farm and work with a team of retired racehorses that have been identified as excellent therapy assistants. It is traditional counselling and psychology offered in a non-traditional way. Horses are integrated in a meaningful way through specific exercises with the client and partner as co-facilitators for healing and change. We currently see approximately 200 clients a week for therapy.

I am also an accredited retrainer with Racing Victoria and an official ambassador for the Racing Victoria Off the Track Program. At Racing Hearts we also retrain retired racehorses to find them excellent homes when they complete some further education and training. We tend to focus more on the horses that are more difficult to rehome for example older horses, horses that are perhaps not pretty enough for the show ring, horses with previous injuries and horses that are simply not athletic enough for higher level equestrian disciplines. All of these horses are involved in therapy sessions as part of their education.

## **How did the idea for Racing Hearts come about?**

I worked at Racing Victoria for 7 years and was lucky enough to have played a very small part in the beginning of the Off the Track program with Cara Kavanagh who spearheaded the program. I had gained my counselling qualifications in Ireland and completed my psychology degree whilst at RV and when I left I really had to take time to think about what I really wanted to do next. I knew I wanted to help people and help horses so I went to the Equine Psychotherapy Institute in Daylesford to learn how I could blend the two together in a genuine way. I knew instinctively that thoroughbreds would be incredible for this kind of role and so Racing Hearts was born.



## **What does the process of Racehorse Retraining look like?**

Every horse is completely different in how they present to us initially. We firstly get their vet history and have their teeth, feet, physio, worming and vaccinations done. If they need a spell they will get one for as long as they need. For horses freshly retired from racing we give them a minimum of 12 weeks and reassess whether they have let down enough and gained enough weight and condition to come into work. They also need this time to be in herds with other horses wind down mentally. In racehorse training, trainers often aim to switch their horses 'on'. Our aim is to switch them off and have them as relaxed as possible.

We begin with ground work and establishing how the horse responds to being handled. Some are gentle and respectful and some not so much which can be dangerous in a new home. Once groundwork and a horse/human working relationship is established we will integrate riding. Riding starts gently, especially if the horse has not been ridden for a number of years. Some horses that come to us have not been sat on in more than 10 years so it's important to take our time to avoid injury and psychological stress for the horse. Once we get to know the horse under saddle, we work out what they enjoy/don't enjoy, what they're talented at doing and what they're not so good at and we build an exercise plan from there based on their strengths. We will always take them on trial rides and if required will take them off our farm to clinics and competitions for them to gain some experience and for us to see how they cope in a new environment so we can work on this if needed before they go to their new owners.

We see what we do with them as teaching them a new language. They have already been ridden, but in a very different way with different commands and with a very different expected outcome from the rider. Once we feel they have a grasp of this 'new language' and will understand what is being asked when other riders ask in different environments, we will start looking for suitable homes. The most important thing for us is that we find the horse the most suitable home where they will be loved and cared for and both them and their new owners will be safe in their endeavours.

### **How do you determine whether or not a horse is suitable for Equine Assisted Therapy?**

To be suitable as a therapy horse they need to be healthy and happy in themselves first and foremost. Horses need to be safe to work with e.g. not inclined to viciously bite or kick and are safe and comfortable participating in the exercises carried out in particular sessions for example being groomed by 4 people at one time, having feet picked up, being led by someone with no horse experience etc. They also need to be able to feel safe enough with people to tolerate being touched or poked by accident in places that they may be sensitive eg. Being brushed on their sensitive flanks without a big movement or reaction. For ridden sessions, our horses need to be comfortable standing still whilst being mounted by unbalanced people from a mounting block. They also need to be comfortable standing for periods of time usually up to 10-15 minutes at a time. Again, they must feel safe enough with people that they don't have big flight reactions to someone taking a while to get their bridle or headcollar on or a client poking them accidentally on the rump with their foot whilst dismounting. They also need to feel safe and regulated enough to be present with people who feel incredibly unsafe and are completely dysregulated. This might look like anything from a person who is sweating with an elevated heart rate and is shaking to a young person in a hyper state moving very quickly/running and shouting. In assessing our horses for suitability for therapy, we try to simulate as many situations as possible that we can predict they might have to deal with and work on desensitizing them and helping them feel safe in situations where they are unsure and uncomfortable. I have found that most thoroughbreds are suitable for un-mounted sessions but not all are suitable for mounted sessions. We can train some to be comfortable assisting in mounted sessions, however there are some that are simply not destined to be therapy assistants.

### **You've taken on OTI retirees Tamland, Lunayir and Blue Ocean. What has your experience with them been like?**

Myself and the team have thoroughly enjoyed working with each one of these horses and they are all completely different in size, shape and temperament. Because Tamland and Lunayir had been rehomed a few times since retiring we didn't have a huge amount of information about them but I find that makes the journey of discovery and getting to know them more exciting. I also genuinely feel that, apart from past medical issues which are always good to know to save time and reduce the possibility of reinjury, what their past has been like can be completely irrelevant. At the end of the day, we need to work with the horse as they are in front of us day to day. We're not working with what they may or may not have done in the past. If they have fears, weaknesses, strengths, lots of past education, no past education etc, we will find that out through our assessment and training program. Blue Ocean arrived last week and is settling in very well. We are aiming to take him on lots of trail rides and find him a home of this nature. Lunayir is thriving in his home in Ballarat with a couple and their young family. He is their family pet (and my favourite of the 3!). Tamland has developed into the most beautiful horse. He is ready to find his new home and will absolutely excel with an experienced rider in dressage or adult riding club activities.

### **What do you think could be done to improve Equine Welfare across the board?**

I feel that one of the things that could be improved in general is promoting all the good work that is being done more to the general public rather than preaching to the converted. I understand that this can be difficult as the media tend to lean towards drama and bad news stories over the feel good pieces. Finding a way to educate the next generations coming through about the high standards of horse welfare in Australian racing is also an area that needs a serious lift.



### **How can we find out more and what can we do to support Racing Hearts?**

I would love for everyone to follow us on Instagram @racing\_hearts\_therapy and Facebook @racingheartsaus and check out our website [www.racinghearts.com.au](http://www.racinghearts.com.au) We are always incredibly grateful for any donations that are made to our charity and all donations are tax deductible. Your donations go towards enabling us to subsidize therapy programs for our communities in need and help cover the large overheads that go into retraining retired racehorses.



PICTURED: **TAMLAND** (above) and **LUNAYIR** (below) at Racing Hearts



# TIMOUR COMPETITIVE AT ASCOT

We were delighted to have two runners at Royal Ascot this year, **VINA SENA** and **TIMOUR**. A thrilling experience for all, OTI Racing were particularly enthused about the fantastic effort put in by the latter of the two.

**TIMOUR** (right)'s display of staying power in the 4343m Queen Alexandra Stakes was a superb performance, in which he held on for the duration of the distance and stormed home into 5th.

James McDonald, who rode **TIMOUR** in the Queen Alexandra Stakes, commended him for his run and suggested that he should be competitive amongst Australia's top stayers.



**TIMOUR** wins at St Cloud, FR.

## TRIAL WATCH - DARCI'S DEBUT



**DARCI'S DEBUT** has made a pleasing start to her preparation, with her first trial taking place on the 9th of June at Mortlake. A replay of the trial can be viewed [HERE](#). She can be viewed in the grey silks and orange cap, where she settles second and approaches the winning post nicely on the testing surface of a Heavy 10.

Following her Mortlake jump out, she trialed on Monday 20 June at Penshurst. She can be viewed [HERE](#) in the pink silks.

The filly jumped well, settling back towards the rear of the field. In the closing sections of the trial she demonstrated a pleasing turn of foot which saw her miss out on 1st place by a paper-thin margin.

The team at Wilde Racing are extremely pleased with the filly, noting that she has recovered well from her trials and is well-placed to be at the races soon.

As she is a young horse who has demonstrated talent over a half mile, the team are still in the process of assessing the most suitable distance for her to kick off at.



# TOM MELBOURNE VISITS FLEMINGTON

Very few horses can claim the title “fan favourite”, but ex-OTI galloper Tom Melbourne possesses genuine cult hero status.

The 11-year-old gelding amassed quite a crowd at Flemington on Saturday when he paid the track a visit, alongside fellow Living Legends resident Apache Cat.

Tom Melbourne, originally hailing from Ireland, secured a reputation for finishing consistently in 2nd place. Of his 51 career starts, he placed 2nd 14 times and won 6, many of which were at listed level or above. His public persona grew further as the popular twitter account @tommelbourne2 was created in his name and amassed a great following.



**TOM MELBOURNE** breaks drought to win at Randwick, 26 January 2019



**TOM MELBOURNE** (left) and **APACHE CAT** (right) at Flemington on Saturday, 18 June 2022

He now resides at the Living Legends, a lush complex in Melbourne's North which is home to many great retired racehorses. Among his fellow retirees are ex-OTI runner Gailo Chop, star sprinter Santa Ana Lane, and dual G1 winner Redkirk Warrior.

In his retirement years, Tom Melbourne has participated in showjumping and rider education. He has a larger-than-life personality and, according to the staff at Living Legends, is quite a bossy fellow!

## OTI QUIZ

1. Who is the sire of OTI's G2 Adelaide Cup winner **DAQIANSWEET JUNIOR**?
2. Trainer Aaron Purcell's first G1 win was with which OTI mare?
3. At which Victorian track did **I'M THUNDERSTRUCK** break his maiden?
4. Prior to 2022, who was the most recent Australian-trained horse to win at Royal Ascot?
5. OTI's triple G1 winner **GAILO CHOP** hails from which country?



**NAME THE RACECOURSE**  
**HINT:** Future Score



# ONE TO WATCH - GLENS TOP CAT

- Exciting 3yo ready to race -



Exciting Matt Cumani-trained galloper Glens Top Cat (IRE) is nearing his Australian race debut.

The son of Gleneagles contested a 1000m Burrumbeet jump out on the 15th of June, in which he jumped cleanly and demonstrated a fluent, unrestricted action. He finished 3rd in the heat, and is expected to be at his best in staying contests. The full replay can be viewed [\*\*HERE\*\*](#).

In his only race, which he contested as a 2yo, he was beaten by the race favourite only, a smart John Gosden-trainer performer. The horse that ran behind him then went on to win its next start.

OTI Racing is looking forward to the commencement of Glens Top Cat's racing campaign and are hopeful that a bright future is ahead of him.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Sweet Orange
2. Aloisia
3. Caulfield
4. Black Caviar
5. France

**NAME THE RACECOURSE:** Ballarat  
*Future Score is trained by Matt Cumani,  
who is based at Ballarat Racecourse.*



**DAQIANSWEET JUNIOR**  
*wins at The Valley,  
10 December 2021*