



# OTI GAZETTE

*The official newsletter of OTI RACING*



## IN THIS EDITION

WEEKEND  
RUNNERS AND  
RECENT  
WINNERS

AN INTERVIEW  
WITH DAVID  
EUSTACE

FOAL WATCH

OBSESSING - A  
STAYER TO  
FOLLOW

PINECLIFF  
STABLE VISIT

BIG PHILOU -  
ARTICLE BY TIM  
HOLLAND

QUIZ

SNIPPETS

## The Arc - Simply the best!

Ask ten racing purists around the world, "what is the world's most prestigious race?", and over half will tell you 'The Arc'. Officially known as Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, it is run on the first Sunday of October - this weekend.

Inaugurated in 1920 after the First World War, it is named after the victory march of the Allies through the Arc de Triomphe monument at the top of the Champs-Elysees. Ironically, until then most French races were restricted to French-bred horses only, so the Arc race was seen as an invitation to all comers to compete.

Now sponsored by Qatar, The Arc rates in the top six stakes money races on turf with over A\$4.3m going to the winner (A\$6.5m if the horse is French-bred). However, given geldings cannot compete, the real prize is in the breeding benefits. A filly who wins the race will improve her value no end, while a colt or stallion will guarantee himself the prestige of being an Arc winner as he fulfills his breeding career. Champions on the track and at stud include Sea The Stars, Montjeu, Peintre Celebre, Urban Sea (the dam of Galileo) and more.

Winners of the race come from all around with France, UK, Ireland and Germany all featuring prominently. The Japanese, now regarded as an elite jurisdiction for both racing and breeding have not yet been able to win. That's despite a flood of over 10,000 racing patrons travelling from Japan to watch Deep Impact run 3rd in 2006. The Japanese influence on betting with the caused turnover to be up by 55% on the day. The best an Australian horse has done is finish 2nd in the late 1970's. Strawberry Road, possibly Australia's best export, finished 5th in 1984.

Last year, Alpinista, a mare bred and owned by Kirsten Rausing, a passionate Swedish breeder won the race. Prior to the parade for the trophy presentation (complete with horse drawn coaches) down the Longchamp straight, connections of both the winner and runner up were in tears as jockeys returned to the mounting yard. Such is the emotion generated by this prestigious race.

Surrounding the main race are two days of the best racing one would wish to experience. Catering for most categories, there are eight Group 1's, two Group 2's and two Group 1's for Arab horses. For connections, a win on Arc weekend rates with Royal Ascot, the Breeder's Cup or Spring Carnival success.

As one would expect, Frankie Dettori has won The Arc six times, more than any other jockey. However, in Bart Cummings fashion, Andre Fabre, France's Champion trainer, has won it 8 times over. Andre will start Sevens's Knight on Arc weekend for OTI owners in the G2 Prix Chaudenay, a race he has won a record 12 times. Let's hope its 13 after this weekend.

# OTI WEEKEND PREVIEW

We've been fortunate enough to enjoy a fruitful start to the spring, courtesy of the feats of Athabaskan (Listed & Group 3 wins) and Cepheus (Group 2 win).

The former will next contest the Group 3 Bart Cummings at Flemington (Oct 7) in a bid to qualify for the Melbourne Cup, and Cepheus will continue his path towards the \$3m Big Dance via the \$1.5m Alan Brown Stakes at Rosehill (Oct 7).

In recent weeks, we've also seen talented 3yo's emerge in the form of Licensed, Vivvy Air and Deakin, who could all be destined for stakes racing in the coming months.

Looking ahead to the long weekend (for many), we've got plenty of action across the three days in both hemispheres.

In the video [\*\*HERE\*\*](#), Terry and Shayne will take you through our runners, which includes the likes of Sevens's Knight, Toregene and Dick Whittington at stakes level.

You'll also get a look at the Tattersalls Sales Ground in Newmarket!



*Sevens's Knight, set to contest the G2 Prix Chaudenay at Longchamp*



**CEPHEUS**

1500m Group 2 Shannon Stakes, Rosehill  
Trained by Matt Dunn



**ATHABASKAN**

2400m Group 3 Colin Stephen Quality, Rosehill  
Trained by John O'Shea

## WINNERS



**LICENSED**

1200m 3yo Maiden, Cranbourne  
Trained by Mick Price & Michael Kent Jnr



**VIVVY AIR**

1200m 3yo BM64, Seymour  
Trained by Archie Alexander



**DEAKIN**

2341m Maiden, Roscommon (IRE)  
Trained by Joseph O'Brien



**KHANGAI**

2200m Maiden, Bairnsdale  
Trained by Mick Kent



**ATHABASKAN**

2400m Listed CTC Cup, Randwick  
Trained by John O'Shea



**DICK WHITTINGTON**

2200m Stayers Series Final, Pakenham  
Trained by Phillip Stokes



# AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID EUSTACE

*An interview with David Eustace -  
Co-Trainer at Ciaron Maher  
Racing*

Click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) to watch the full interview with trainer David Eustace, where we chat about his upbringing in England, his short jockey career and how he got to where he is now as a trainer and racing enthusiast.



*Pictured: David Eustace and Ciaron Maher*

## **Some questions asked of David Eustace:**

**Who do you think will be the best country to be represented in races like the Melbourne Cup?  
Will horses from England or Ireland dominate the locals?**

"If you asked me a few years ago it definitely would have been an international horse, but it's become very difficult now to import them with all the regulations. There will be a very small number of international runners I think. I don't actually know who is coming over, but I hope an Australian horse can win it."

**What are some of the characteristics you're looking for when buying a horse or "picking a good racehorse"?**

"We're lucky enough to have a lot of good horses and most of the times the good ones are not the ones that probably stand out, which makes it quite difficult. Assessing yearlings is a really hard skill and getting it right is probably more luck than judgement. A lot of people look at movement and action all the time, but the way they walk and the way they gallop can be very different, which can become quite confusing. The most common thing I talk about is probably a "deep girth", which is the part between the wither and the bottom of the stomach, where you want a lot of depth. Most good horses have that."

**How do you place your horses in the right races and how important is it?**

"It's very important, probably even more for our stable. We're planning for so many horses and with the races all year around you can run your horses all year around for a lot of money, whereas in England you have more of a season and it's easier to plan their bigger preparations. It's probably easier to plan a good horses' preparation than an average horse, because you have to be very particular about the track, jockey and conditions."

**How is the science going to develop over time and what role will it play in training racehorses?**

"One of the things we're working on is maximising return for the owners and we have system in the office where we can track acceptances in Australia so you know which horses are in the race. As your horse goes into the race you can see where you get a better return. We obviously have the pedigree analysis as well and now the heartrate monitors, which can tell a lot about their fitness, recovery and where they are at in their preparation. It also means Ciaron and I don't always have to be there in person to see them work as we can go through the data afterwards and still get a very good picture of where they're at. Gene tests is also something we use, which practically tells you which distance range suits your horse best. It's quite interesting and will certainly be used more and more in the future."

# FOAL WATCH

As the new breeding season comes into full swing we welcome the arrival of some of our new foals.

The first one to arrive in early August was a strong filly by Hellbent out of Colourmegal, born at Twin Hills Stud. The success of Hellbent's progeny continues to rise, with the likes of Benedetta and Magic Time being most competitive in Group company. OTI's own Vivy Air has shown plenty of talent. 2yo colt Tophet also presents as a promising horse for the future.

As with all "babies", they grow up too fast!



*Pictured: 2 days old*



*Pictured: 1 month old*

## OBSESSING - A STAYER WORTH FOLLOWING

Over two years ago, we acquired Obsessing (previously known in Europe as Obsession). He had won his last three races in France – one over 2400m on the flat (by 9 lengths) and the other two over hurdles (the second by 12 lengths).

Having sustained an injury in the UK, Obsessing, now fully recovered and in full training, is under the care of the Maher & Eustace stable in Ballarat. He impressed in a 1300m trial at Ararat (replay [\*\*HERE\*\*](#)) on September 28 and is now poised to be very competitive over 2000m first up.

Obsessing represents a unique and exciting opportunity for those chasing a dual-purpose horse, and opportunities are now available in the gelding (please contact [\*\*oti@oti.com.au\*\*](mailto:oti@oti.com.au)).



***Obsessing wins by 12 lengths at Auteuil***



## PINECLIFF STABLE VISIT RECAP

On Sunday the 17th of September we were fortunate enough to have the Freedman camp open their doors to us for an exclusive behind the scenes look at their Pinecliff property.

Pinecliff is a state-of-the-art equine training facility on the Mornington Peninsula. The tour included a look through the property, a meet and greet with Sam Freedman, as well as a parade of horses such as Green Fly, Elderberry, Chimed etc. It was pleasing to see the horses looking bright and well.



We were introduced to 'Tophet', our 2yo colt by Hellbent who has taken the eye of Sam Freedman. He got through to a trial in his first preparation and is now enjoying a spring break.

Final shares remain in the colt, who looks to be set for a summer and autumn campaign as a 2yo.

Please click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) to view and listen to an update from Sam on the day.



**TOPHET**

## QUIZ

### NAME THE STALLION

*Hint: Honrado*

1. Who trained G1 winner and successful sire Magnus?
2. Who won last year's Group 1 Epsom Handicap?
3. Which stallion is dual-stakes winner Athabascan by?



# BIG PHILOU - ARTICLE BY TIM HOLLAND

As the Spring Carnival gathers momentum in Melbourne, it is interesting to reflect on moments from Carnivals past.

Over the decades a very small number of elite horses have lit up individual Spring Carnivals with spectacular performances which have made their names synonymous with those particular racing seasons. Names that come to mind are Carbine in 1890, Poseidon in 1906, Phar Lap in 1930, Rising Fast in 1954 and 1955, Tulloch in 1957 and Makybe Diva in 2005.



The 1969 Carnival had one such star performer: the incomparable young sprinter/miler, Vain. Unusually, in that Spring there was also another horse whose name managed to attain a lasting place in racing history. Although his form on the track was good it was nowhere near the level of the above-mentioned group and yet he is still very well remembered. That horse was Big Philou.

Big Philou was a 4yo son of French sire Le Filou, whose name translates as “trickster”. Big Philou was a quality stayer but his fame rests on his connection to two particular races, in neither of which he crossed the line first and in one of which he didn’t even make it to the starting gates.

I think it’s fair to say that back in the day betting on Cups doubles was a bigger feature of racing than it is now, with large sums bet on early odds, and with very large potential payouts at stake on some outcomes.

In 1969 bookies were carrying a huge liability on Big Philou on the Cups double, so when he crossed the line in second place to Nausori in the Caulfield Cup a lot of bookies jumped for joy, although it proved to be “going the early crow”. I’ve heard Roy Higgins say that when he got back to scale he told Bart Cummings that he was going to protest, to which Bart shrugged and said “why bother?”

Well, why bother indeed, but after Roy lodged the protest, Big Philou became the only horse in the 20th century to win a Caulfield Cup courtesy of the stewards room. The crowd reaction was intense and ugly, which it often was in those days, and invites the aside that while we don’t see noisy, angry displays at the races these days, social media has well and truly taken the place of on-course crowd demonstrations as the conduit of vitriol from disaffected punters.

So, Big Philou having got the first leg of the Cups double up at the Heath, he headed to Flemington to try and complete the deal. While his day at Caulfield could be described as controversial, his day at Flemington could only be described as sensational, in fact probably the most sensational day in the history of Australian racing.

Early in the day on his way to the course Big Philou began to scour heavily (diarrhoea), and it turned out that he had been administered an excessive dose of a purgative called Danthron. 39 minutes before the race the sirens sounded and the hot favourite was scratched by order of the vet. The place was in uproar.

That afternoon Rain Lover made history by becoming only the second horse to win consecutive Cups, but it was Big Philou who was the most memorable name to emerge from the running of the 1969 Cup despite not even being in the field.

In the aftermath, a former Cummings strapper, Les Lewis, was charged and acquitted over this, although he was later jailed in relation to doping of a Cummings horse, King Pedro, in another race.

CONTINUED BELOW...



# BIG PHILOU...CONTINUED

Lewis denied involvement in the Cup doping, but many years later on his deathbed claimed responsibility and implicated some Sydney people who stood to lose big money if the Cups double had been completed by Big Philou. Lewis said that he had been given a large sum of money to do the nobbling of the favourite.

All of this was enough to firmly entrench the name of Big Philou in the annals of Australian racing, but the horse with the "trickster" connotation in his name was able to conjure one more claim to fame before his retirement from the track. Having recovered from the effects of the pre-Cup doping he raced in the Autumn in one of those extremely rare events in Australian racing history: a black-type two-horse race.

This was the Queen Elizabeth Stakes, with Rain Lover the only other runner. In winning, Big Philou was able to extract revenge of sorts on Rain Lover for the Melbourne Cup result, but the race is also memorable for Bert Bryant's commentary. With 2500m of racing to call and only two runners, Bert had already run through the field a couple of times by the time they had gone about 100m past the post the first time, at which point he confided to his listeners: "nothing much is going to change for a while here, so you've probably got time to go and put the kettle on and make a cup of tea and come back when it gets interesting!" An amusing addition to a call in which the always-theatrical Bryant was able to mine all the comedic angles he could in the time available.

As a post-script, there is said to be a story about Bart from a couple of years after these events. His great mare Leilani was resuming in the early Spring, and Bart rang a big bookie and said that she couldn't win as she wasn't screwed down yet. The odds opened around even money, the bookie kept winding her price out to juicy odds for such a high class performer, confident that he was on the right side of a roort. As the odds kept drifting the punters kept piling in and the bookie continued to oblige them.

When she subsequently comfortably saluted the bookie found out that in fact he was on the wrong end of the hoped-for roort, and having to fork out a small fortune - or more likely, a large fortune - to punters, who couldn't believe their luck. Incandescent with rage he rang Bart to demand "what the f#@& was that all about!!!" To which the trainer replied "that was for Big Philou!" and hung up. If it's not a true story, it ought to be!

Bart thought that Big Philou was never quite the same after the Danthron affair and never fully realised his potential, although he did go on to win the Queen Elizabeth Stakes and the Underwood Stakes. While he was a talented and well-performed galloper, with the extraordinary events that surrounded his career he certainly punched well above his weight in terms of name recognition compared to his actual track record.

– Article courtesy of Tim Hollland

## SPRING RUNNERS

To keep up to date on our black-type performances and targets through the spring, click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) to access a spreadsheet of OTI runners/likely runners. It can also be found on the OTI website.

Date	Track	Race Level	Race Name	Horses Potentially Running	Distance	Race Type	Prizemoney	Result
02 Sept '23	Randwick	LR	City Tattersalls's Club Cup	Athabaskan	2400m	Qlty Hcp	\$200,000	1st
23 Sept '23	Rosehill	G3	Colin Stephen Quality	Athabaskan	2400m	3yo&Up Open Hcp	\$250,000	1st
23 Sept '23	Rosehill	G2	Shannon Stakes	Cepheus	1500m	3yo&Up Qlty Hcp	\$300,000	1st
Date	Track	Race Level	Race Name	Horses Potentially Running	Distance	Race Type	Prizemoney	Result
30 Sept '23	Mornington	LR	Ansett Classic	Dick Whittington	2400m	Open Hcp	\$175,000	
30 Sept '23	Longchamp (FR)	G2	Prix Chaudenay	Sevenna's Knight	3000m	3yo SW	€200,000	
01 Oct '23	Sandown	G3	Sandown Stakes	Toregene	1500m	Qlty Hcp	\$200,000	

# SNIPPETS

## SYDNEY TRACKWORK START TIMES PUSHED BACK

Recently, the Sydney racing community learned that, after years of back and forth, trackwork times at its Randwick, Rosehill and Warwick Farm racecourses would change. It was an effort, according to the Australian Turf Club (ATC), to align the working life of racing staff with more modern expectations.

Starting from February 1, 2024, Randwick will push its trackwork start time from 4am to 5am, as will Warwick Farm. At Rosehill Gardens, the start time will move out from its current 4.45am to 5.30am. It's a slight trend towards providing a more 'normal' lifestyle for those working hands on in the industry.

## GAI WATERHOUSE ELEVATED TO LEGEND STATUS IN AUSTRALIAN RACING HALL OF FAME

Racing's first lady Gai Waterhouse is set to receive the highest possible accolade when she's elevated to Legend status at the Australian Racing Hall of Fame and Racehorse Of The Year ceremony later this year.

Waterhouse, who was awarded the AO (Officer of the Order of Australia) in 2021, will join an honour roll that includes the likes of her late father Tommy Smith at the Perth event in November.

## MELBOURNE GROUP 1's OVER THE EVEREST FOR IMPERATRIZ

The \$15m TAB Everest now attracts a great deal of racing's attention in the spring, and is obviously firmly on the agenda of any ownership group with a high quality sprinter. So far, that's not to be for Imperatriz, who was a commanding winner of her return run in the Group 2 McEwan Stakes.

To date, her owners (Te Akau) are set on targeting Melbourne Group 1's (Moir and Manikato Stakes) over the Everest riches!

## MRC AND RNSW SIGN LANDMARK BROADCAST DEAL

The Everest and Caulfield Guineas will be broadcast side-by-side after the MRC opted to go it alone and ink a breakthrough deal with Racing NSW. With the VRC set to go against industry wishes and sign the Melbourne Cup Carnival to Channel 9 from next year, the MRC has agreed to work with Channel 7 and Racing NSW, bringing one of the biggest days on the Australian racing calendar together.

# QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Peter Moody

2. Ellsberg and Top Ranked in a dead heat finish

3. Almanzor, a son of Wootton Bassett

**NAME THE STALLION - LOPE DE VEGA, sire of OTI debutant on Friday, Honrado (pictured).**

