



OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING



IN THIS EDITION

WEEKEND
RUNNERS AND
RECENT
WINNERS

AN INTERVIEW
WITH DECLAN
BATES

STONEWALL
EQUESTRIAN
SPONSORSHIP

'MILES IN FRONT'

INTRODUCING
A GREY 2YO COLT

QUIZ

OWNER
INTERVIEW

SNIPPETS

The Trans-Tasman Love Affair

It's hard to summarise Australia's relationship with New Zealand. In so many areas we are foes – cricket, rugby, netball to name a few. However, if there's one area where we seem to get along well, perhaps more than some states in Australia with others, it's racing.

We buy each other's horses, Australian's welcome Kiwi horses to Australia with open arms and relish the success of New Zealand-bred jockeys in Australia, and most importantly we acknowledge that we need each other to make Australasian racing and breeding world-class.

While there is some argument that our breeders compete with each other, the irony is that often, as we have just seen at Karaka's Ready to Run Sale, Kiwis will pin hook weanlings and yearlings from Australia, educate them in New Zealand, then sell them back to Australians. Such is the fluidity of trading between the two countries.

There are, however, some noticeable differences in the racing cultures of the two countries. Despite the proposed improvements in stakes money in New Zealand, it will still lag behind Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. To help offset this, it's far cheaper to have your horse trained in New Zealand. Indeed, to make the most of both situations there is an argument that, even with air freight costs, it's cheaper to train your horse in New Zealand then ship it to Australia to campaign in the carnivals.

New Zealand's relatively poor stakes situations is the product of the Kiwis being modest punters. The culture of the country is far different to Australia when it comes to having a bet. The lack of revenue to racing as a result, hopefully improved by the involvement of Entain (Ladbrokes) in the next decade, means that racing attracts far less revenue from the gambling sector.

The biggest cultural difference between the two countries is the trading of horses, especially ready to race or tried horses. Australian owners are generally reluctant sellers of their racehorses. If owners are in a syndicate, it becomes almost impossible for buyers to get a deal done. The common response is 'although I'm getting 10 times what I paid for the horse for my 5%, the money is not going to change my life and I may forgo a lot of fun.' On the other hand, Kiwis will generally sell, and throw in the mother-in-law for free! In fairness, unlike Australia where owners can rely on stakes money to help pay their way, Kiwis often rely on trading.

While OTI's business revolves around the premise that 'good horses can come from anywhere', we take particular pride in the success of Australasian horses excelling both at home and especially in Hong Kong, the epitome of a best practice racing jurisdiction. Success by our local horses at places like Royal Ascot is simply cream on the cake.

OTI WEEKEND RUNNERS

OTI and our owners have enjoyed a healthy amount of winners over the last few weeks including Listed success on Cup Day for Warmonger, and two Country Cup victories with Harmysian and Sous Les Nuages.

Looking ahead to the weekend, we've got five runners, starting with Chimed on Friday night at The Valley. We then look forward to seeing last start winner Warmonger and Big Dance place-getter Cepheus step out again in quality races.

In the video [HERE](#), Terry will take you through our runners for the weekend.



HARMYSIAN
2006m *Kyneton Cup*, Kyneton
Trained by Clayton Douglas



WARMONGER
1800m *Listed TAB Trophy*, Flemington
Trained by Mick Price & Michael Kent Jnr.



SOUS LES NUAGES
2000m *Mortlake Cup*, Mortlake
Trained by Matt Cumani



WINNERS



CADAZIO
1600m BM64, Ballarat
Trained by Mick Price & Michael Kent Jnr.



OSTILE
1856m Maiden Highweight, Kyneton
Trained by Mitch Freedman



GUIDO
3800m BM78 Highweight, The Valley
Trained by Mitch Freedman



SPERANZOSO
2000m Maiden, Seymour
Trained by Clayton Douglas



STEP ASIDE
1300m BM72, Rosehill
Trained by Chris Waller



BIG STORY
1600m BM64, Ballarat
Trained by Mick Price & Michael Kent Jnr.



SETOSA
1000m 3yo Maiden, Ballarat
Trained by Phillip Stokes

AN INTERVIEW WITH DECLAN BATES

An interview with Declan Bates - multiple Group 1 winning jockey, recently winning two Group 1's within Cup week!

What part of Ireland did you come from?

I come from Wexford on the south east coast of Ireland.

How did you get involved in racing? Is your family in Ireland involved in the sport?

My father was a builder, but he was always passionate about horses and horse racing. He would breed a few thoroughbreds and train them in his spare time, so I grew up around the sport. We always had ponies at home and my four siblings and I basically grew up on horseback, my eldest brother Micheál became a jockey before me and I followed him into it.

Who was your master as an apprentice?

When I started as a conditional jockey, which is like an apprentice jumps jockey, Phillip Rothwell was my master. I had quite a bit of success but also a lot of injuries and as I was very light, I decided to switch to the flat. I then moved to the UK where I was apprentice to David Evans, a good trainer and a hard task master where I learned a lot. He has produced some good jockeys including Hollie Doyle, who was apprenticed to him at the same time I was there.

Who has been the biggest influence and mentor on your career?

My father and brother were the main influence on me becoming a jockey. In my early years of riding I was helped a lot by jumps jockey Alain Cawley, I probably lacked some tactical awareness initially and he helped me improve a lot.

What is the most difficult and most rewarding part of your job?

I think the most difficult part is maintaining a work life balance, especially since we had our two daughters. My wife works Monday to Friday and I would be racing most weekends, so I think as a jockey your family sacrifices a lot in order for you to be as successful as you can on the track. The most rewarding part is seeing the joy they get when I have a big success, it makes all the sacrifice worth it.

Could you imagine going back to Europe and riding over there for a while?

It's something I would love to do but I'm very focused on my career in Australia and maintaining the relationships I've built here. I think any international experience you can get is good to improve your riding and profile so if an opportunity presented, I would definitely consider it.



Pictured: Declan Bates after winning on Chaillot

You started your career as a jumps jockey in Ireland. When and why did you decide to come over to Australia?

I decided to come over in 2015, having been in the UK for a couple of seasons I was making a living but not getting on a good quality of horse so didn't really settle there. I had been to Australia in 2012 on the jumps jockey tour and had also visited for Shane Jackson's wedding. It was him who pushed me to come here as he thought it would be a good move. My now wife Jennifer and I came over thinking it might be a good experience for a year and then possibly go home but we both fell in love with the country and decided to stay.

Do you have a specific goal you would like to reach in the near future?

I'm not really one for setting goals other than staying injury free and riding at the top of my game consistently, but at the start of this season my manager Pete set a goal to finish in the top 10 in the Metro Premiership. He's doing a great job and even before the two Group 1 winners last week I was sitting around 10th, so hopefully I can maintain that and hopefully climb even higher.

You won two Group 1's within a week during the spring carnival. Is there a specific Group 1 you would now like to win?

The Melbourne Cup, no explanation needed I'd imagine.

Given the opportunity, what's the first thing you'd change in Australian racing?

I would like to see jockeys paid for jumpouts, which might sound selfish but whilst I'm in a good position getting plenty of rides, there are a lot of jockeys struggling and those are the ones who ride a lot of jumpouts and quite often still miss out on the race day ride. The fact is they are risking their life in every jumpout, so there should be a reward for that risk I feel.

MILES IN FRONT

'Miles In Front' is a documentary about some of the possible feature horses lining up in the 2023 All-Star Mile, filmed by Racing Victoria to promote the 2024 edition of the race.

It gives an insight on the preparation of each horse, trainers plans, training methods, raceday snippets and more. The documentary also features the late I'm Thunderstruck, who sadly passed away only two weeks after the 2023 running of the All-Star Mile. The previous year he finished 2nd in the race behind Zaaki at Flemington.

Watch the trailer for the full documentary [here](#).

The full version can be watched on Foxtel, Docos, Binge and Kayo Sports.



TSHA STONEWALL EQUESTRIAN SPONSOR

We were proud to again be one of the sponsors for the Maiden Team Challenge at the Thoroughbred Sport Horse Association (TSHA) National Titles last Saturday. It was terrific to see the OTI team riders competing in the challenge and they managed to score 5th place from eight teams.

Our OTI Welfare Coordinator Campbell was at the event to support the team (see photo below). We also want to say 'Thanks' to Krissy Harris & her team for putting on a wonderful event.

How good do the OTI jumps look!



INTRODUCING POP'S PIPE

Striking 2yo Colt to be Trained by Phillip Stokes



When it became clear that three-year-old filly, Setosa, was well above average, we were quick to secure her half-brother, a two-year-old grey colt now named Pop's Pipe.

The features that make Pop's Pipe an attractive proposition are:

- Standing at 16 hands tall, he is a correct, loose walking individual with a laid-back demeanour.
- He is from a deep female family that includes his half-sister Setosa - a 3yo filly and a winner and place getter from her two starts, who we expect to be most competitive at metropolitan level.
- He is by American shuttle stallion, Vino Rosso, who served only two seasons in Australia. Vino Rosso is a Breeders Cup winner and amassed US\$4.8m in prizemoney.
- The colt is midway through his education with Julien Welsh at Pakenham. Julien is an industry renowned leader in early education and the initial reports have been most pleasing. To view footage of the colt under saddle, please click [here](#).
- The colt is paid up for Vobis Platinum - the highly attractive Victorian breeding bonus system.

For more information about the colt, please contact us at oti@oti.com.au.

QUIZ

1. Which Melbourne Cup winner has passed away in the last few weeks?
2. Who trained NZ stallion Tarzino?
3. What distance is the Jericho Cup?

NAME THE RACEHORSE

Hint: One week, two Group 1's



OWNER INTERVIEW - MICHAEL BURKE

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Melbourne - my parents were publicans. Our family home was in Hawthorn, but we lived in city pubs for half the time. I was born at the Imperial opposite parliament, but we also lived at the International and the Cecil before moving to The Edwards Lake Hotel in the northern suburbs.

Were you interested in racing as a young person?

My father was into racing, and owned a few horses (before syndication). I remember mucking around in rusty starting gates with other kids in the infield on Cox Plate Day, before the spring carnival became such a big event. I became interested in racing as a teenager at school - De La Salle produced a few trainers, jockeys and bookmakers back then.



Pictured: Michael and his wife Susan at the 2017 Kentucky Derby

What is the race you would most like to win?

I really want to win a Melbourne Cup - the big prizemoney in Sydney isn't as exciting to me as the prestige of a Melbourne or Caulfield Cup. I guess we kind of went close with Ruscello all those years ago.

What are some of your favourite racing memories?

My favourite racing memory is Ruscello winning the Lexus Stakes on Derby Day, and then qualifying for the Melbourne Cup a few days later.

Does your family get involved?

Susan and I have purchased shares together before, but this syndicate is a little different. I set this syndicate up with a few mates, when we couldn't decide what to give a friend for his 50th birthday. Turns out a free sub-share in 5% of a beautiful horse is perfect! We've kept the syndicate going, and are now looking at our third horse.

Which horse excites you the most and why?

Vivy Air is exciting - she is huge, and has so much potential! I love how Archie and Annie Alexander really look after her - she's not over-raced, so just kept in good nick for big races. A big future here I think.

You race most of your horses in your own syndicate. Do you have any traditions you do before a race or after a race?

If I've got a horse running in a city Group race - I can't eat or drink at all before hand. I can't sit still. It's very stressful!

If you were in charge of the racing industry for one day, what is the first thing that you would change?

If I was in charge of the racing industry, I'd keep meetings to a maximum of 9 races only - the clubs get greedy running 10, often with poorer or smaller fields.

I'd also like to see a national racing body, so states aren't competing with each other on major race days - the industry has enough external challenges, without having to compete with internal frenemies!

BARRIER ROGUE - BY TIM HOLLAND

G'day fellow travellers of the racing game!

I've been reading this august journal for quite a while and have found myself in agreement with a number of the editorials on the state of racing, particularly the organisation of Victorian racing. I thought I would throw my thoughts in from the cheap seats.

We've just come off a great Cup week, and credit to Flemington for the show they put on. The tsunami-like surge in crowds over the four days that built up from the mid-1990s to about 2008 has subsided somewhat and stabilised around figures that are still strong. Most jurisdictions would kill for those crowds.

However, we need to be in a mode of continuous improvement of our racing product and the racing experience we can offer the public.

There are certainly some headwinds facing racing. But that's what challenges are for - overcoming them. One obvious one is the prize money challenge from NSW. I don't know what the NSW funding model compared to ours is, but it seems that like everything else in life, money talks. To that end Victorian racing needs to meet the challenge of good horses, jockeys and trainers being leached out to Sydney meetings on the biggest days on the Victorian calendar.

It seems that cooperation between jurisdictions is out of the question, and one wonders how long it will be before we see a \$20 Million race over 3200m at Randwick on Cup Day.

Do we need to join the arms race with NSW Racing, and if so, how to fund it? Well, a start would be to rationalise the administration of the Victorian metropolitan clubs. I think I'm right in saying that Victoria is the only State with more than one metropolitan racing club, and we have three of them! Three boards, three administrations and all that goes with that duplication. NSW and Queensland amalgamated their clubs years ago and there doesn't seem to be any reason why we don't do the same, other than the self-interest of the parties involved.

It's probably too much to expect board members to vote themselves out of a nice niche in the racing hierarchy as it tends to go against human nature, so it's a bit hard to see how such a self-pruning process would be instigated.

Could we have a transitional (albeit clunky) solution where rationalisation is phased in for boards, with current board members seeing out their terms with their Committee Member status but under a leaner over-arching structure that made the decisions? From a membership point of view categories could be established where members have access to the different tracks that they choose, with their annual fees depending on which city tracks they choose to get access to as members - ie, similar to now but under the umbrella of a single organisation.

In looking at the Spring Carnival offering, do we need to bolster the quality of Derby Day races and fields - refer the Golden Eagle, with the best 4yo milers in Sydney. What about the All Star Mile money moving from Autumn to Spring, where we should concentrating? What about taking on the Spring Champion Stakes with a significant lift in prize-money for the VRC Derby, while winding back the distance to 2000m? The 2500m in November is a grand tradition but has proved to be a career cul-de-sac for most that have contested it for quite a while now.

As I said, these are comments from the peanut gallery, and I don't have a detailed grasp of the nitty gritty of the Victorian and NSW revenue bases. What I do know, is that we need to do better in Victoria with our racing product, and we need a less atomised, less diffused decision-making process; that is, a more focussed leaner administration structure that has cut-through, and can make good decisions on keeping Victorian racing in a strong position.

Please!

SNIPPETS

All-Star Mile Revamped for 2024

Known as the only race where the public can vote their favourite runners into the field, the All-Star Mile will look very different next year. Racing Victoria has decided to remove public voting, ensuring higher rating horses, not necessarily popular runners, will make the final field. The priz money for the will also be reduced to \$4 million, down from \$5 million last year.

To get into the race, RV declared eight “win and you’re in” races and increased the field size to 16 horses. The first of those races was the Sir Rupert Clark Stakes at Caulfield last week. Find all eight races [here](#).

At this stage, the rich-owner ambassador element of the race will continue, but an exact process on how it will take place without the voting is yet to be revealed.

The 2024 All-Star Mile will take place on March 16 at Caulfield, two weeks before the Australian Cup.

Ladbrokes Owner Incentive Scheme

A new prizemoney initiative was created by Ladbrokes to reward owners and breeders by paying a bonus to registered owners of thoroughbreds who win a TAB Maiden Thoroughbred Race in Tasmania or Victoria during the Racing Year (further states could come onto the register).

The \$2,000 bonus will be offered on all TAB maiden flat races in Victoria, excluding the Future Stars Series. It is not offered on non-TAB and picnic maidens or on any jumps races. The prizemoney is split in accordance with each owner’s percentage of ownership.

Owners can complete a registration form on the Ladbrokes webpage, providing their personal details as well as the shareholding and registered name of their racehorse. Click [here](#) to get further information and to find the application form.

The Maiden Bonus is available across 1500 flat races in Victoria and adds a further \$3m to the prizemoney across those races.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Protectionist - winner of the 2014 Melbourne Cup
2. Mick Price
3. 4600m

NAME THE RACEHORSE - Pride Of Jenni, who won the G1 Empire Rose and seven days later the G1 Champions Mile



Pictured: Pride Of Jenni winning the G1 Empire Rose