



OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING



IN THIS EDITION

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When to Buy – Yearlings, Breeze Ups or Tried Horses?

With the yearling sale season now in full swing, the age-old question on when best to buy your racehorse is raised again.

At OTI, we make no excuses for our long-held policy of trying to buy 'going' horses. By 'going' horses, we mean those that have showed some ability in a race, jump out or breeze up. With buying racehorses being a high-risk venture, we simply believe that each step you take to eliminate that risk gives you a better chance of having success on the track, providing, of course, you do not have to pay an unacceptable premium to do so.

Although essential to our breeders, yearling sales are arguably the riskiest market in which to buy a horse. It will cost a yearling buyer at least \$50,000 on top of the purchase price to see if the horse is capable of being competitive. The buyer can also be assured that if a premium has been paid for a colt, there's a better than even money chance that the horse will be a gelding within 12 months, thus reducing the horse's value to what it can win.

In recent years, the growth of breeze up sales, especially Karaka, the acceptance of jumpouts as a source of stock, and the ever-increasing acquisition of European horses, now provide owners with an array of purchasing opportunities. Lately, the success of the online auctions has added a further (and popular) means of buying your racehorse.

Our sales companies do a great job for the breeders in our industry and proudly quote statistics surrounding the prices paid for their horses. It's not surprising, however, that so few statistics on the racetrack success of their sales are quoted. Quite simply, when it comes to higher priced yearlings, the statistics would not be all that flattering.

As we well know by now, there's a lot more to buying at a yearling sale than attempting to justify the horse's purchase price. The buzz, euphoria, expectations - call it what you will - creates great theatre for players and spectators alike, but that's little to do with economics. As the great late trainer Colin Hayes once said, "the best businessmen in the country leave their brains at the door of a yearling sale." How true, but clearly they take their hearts into the ring, otherwise yearling sales would not be what they are.

This Saturday, some fortunate OTI owners will have the thrill of Lady Laguna running in the \$1m Listed Magic Millions Fillies & Mares event. Unpresented at any yearling sale, she was purchased out of the paddock at Spendthrift Farm as a yearling for a very modest price. Having earned over \$700,000 for her owners and being worth that much again as a broodmare, she helps confirm the adage that good horses can come from anywhere.

OTI WEEKEND RUNNERS

Weekend Preview

It's been another successful few weeks for the connections of OTI with plenty of winners around the traps. A highlight was Lady Laguna winning the Listed Nudgee Stakes for trainer Annabel Neasham, which was her second win at black-type level. It was also great to see Krementz and Fretta saluting again.

Looking ahead to the weekend, we've got a busy Saturday in Australia with Lady Laguna competing in the Listed Magic Millions for Mares&Fillies as well as two runners in the January Cup and some exciting runners at Flemington. All that and much more.

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



LADY LAGUNA
1200m **Listed** Nudgee Stakes, Doomben
Trained by Annabel Neasham

WINNERS



KIMMORLEY
1700m Maiden, Warrnambool
Trained by Maddie Raymond



KREMENTZ
1400m 3yo BM70, Flemington
Trained by Mick Price & Michael Kent Jnr



EAGLEMONT
1615m BM85, Doomben
Trained by Matt Dunn



SPERANZOSO
2580m BM64, Cranbourne
Trained by Clayton Douglas



FRETTA
1600m 0-64 Handicap, Bendigo
Trained by Mick Price & Michael Kent Jnr.



KNIGHTLAILA
1726m BM64, Geelong
Trained by Phillip Stokes

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. PIETER RAMZAN

Dr. Pieter Ramzan - *Clinical Director at Rossdale Veterinary Surgeons in the UK and author of the published book **The Racehorse: A Veterinary Manual***



Where did your interest in horses, specifically racehorses, start, and did you always want to become a vet?

I grew up in the lower Hunter and from an early age spent all my spare time working for a cutting horse trainer on one of the neighbouring farms. Weekends and holidays were spent either travelling to cuttings or mustering stations across NSW. These guys convinced me to become a vet rather than a trainer, and so from my early teens that was my singular goal.

The move to racehorses came much later, indeed growing up in the stockhorse/cutting world we had something of a prejudice against Thoroughbreds. My first job in the UK was in Dorset in a real James Herriot-type practice covering both cattle and National Hunt horses, and I soon realised that becoming a good horse vet and racehorse work went hand in hand. And then came my first visit to Newmarket, which completely opened my eyes to working with these wonderful athletes.

As an Australian, what encouraged you to base yourself in Newmarket, UK?

Initially I only planned to work a couple of years in Newmarket, learn my trade then return home. However Newmarket is hard to leave: the density of horses and rubbing shoulders with trainers, vets & farriers at the top of their game means that one sees and learns so much more than in most other places. There is a real collegiate ethos both within and even between the three big Newmarket equine practices, with vets regularly consulting each other for opinions and sharing knowledge, and this constant self-improvement leads to great job satisfaction. At Rossdale you also tend to get thrust into research and teaching opportunities, which is a nice way to give something back to the profession. And because of Newmarket's centrality one forms strong relationships with bloodstock agents, trainers and owners who have international reach, which also leads to regular visits to other training centres. The UK is a great hub from which to do there-and-back trips across Europe for pre-purchase exams and sales. I find this mix of routine racing yard work, bloodstock sales and exposure to high level facilities in the big hospitals a really stimulating environment in which to work...however I still try to get back to Oz when I can for my dose of family and sunshine!

As a vet over the years for many of the UK's top trainers, do you get emotionally involved with the horses you treat? Is the success of these horses the most satisfying aspect of your duties?

I expect most medical professionals would say that maintaining an emotional distance from your patients is a healthy thing. That said, one can't help but get close to a lot of animals under your care, and over the years I've had soft spots for some horses that we've nursed through setbacks and gotten back to have long careers. Racehorses in general are wonderful to interact with and when an animal trusts you so completely the feeling is reciprocated. Particularly satisfying is to follow the horses that you've known since early in life, or vetted abroad, then looked after daily through training and which subsequently break through into international competition: meeting a horse in Dubai or Flemington that you last saw in the UK makes them feel like close travelling companions. Of the OTI horses that have headed down under I have fond memories of Bauer, Manighar, Quest for Peace and Ruscello.

What gave you the idea to write your first book *The Racehorse: A Veterinary Manual*?

If you are a physician or sports person, you can access several excellent sports medicine reference books that neatly condense all the information you need to make the right decision about how to approach injuries particular to different sports. I had long felt that it was crazy that we did not have such a resource for the world's most important animal athlete, the Thoroughbred racehorse. While there are plenty of big veterinary tomes out there, information on racehorses in these is fragmented and often outdated or contradictory, and typically written by vets mostly dealing with hospital patients. Much of the really useful knowledge about racehorse medicine in the hands of clinicians working in the Thoroughbred world never makes it to scientific papers or textbooks. There was a real need to gather this all together, assimilate it with the science and put it under one roof in a concise format that could benefit not just vets but training staff and owners.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. PIETER RAMZAN

What are some of the major transformations/changes in veterinary practices with racehorses since you became part of the industry?

Obviously there have been the technological advances, particularly the rise of standing imaging of the lower leg—such as with MRI, CT & PET; also mobile imaging in general, and over ground endoscopy to assess wind problems. But actually it has been less about the ongoing access to these technologies and more about what we have now learnt about many common problems from using them, and how this has fed back into their management. There are many conditions (good examples are joint chips, some OCDs and suspensory branch tears) that not so long ago might have caused a horse to fail a vetting, or to be prescribed surgery or extensive rehab, that now might not require any intervention or change in training at all. I think as racing vets we have become much better at looking out for the things that actually really matter such as early signs of fracture, and being bolder about disregarding the things that are unimportant. There is also now a much greater awareness about tailoring rehab to the individual, rather than just giving everything three or six months off. The overall result is that horses these days have a much better chance of seeing out their full career potential, whilst at lower risk of serious injury, which is obviously great for them but also good for connections.

You are a nominated vet for the HKJC. What would you say are some of the major differences in the vetting assessment of European horses heading to HK as compared to Australia?

Although there is a rigid protocol and quality control stages for vetting a horse for HK, the actual veterinary assessment differs little whether a horse is headed to HK or Australia. Both are places where the training conditions are generally tougher than in Europe, and where there is greater potential for regulatory hurdles to affect a horse's ability to compete. Just like top level athletes in any sport, good racehorses often carry and cope perfectly well with certain orthopaedic niggles, but a crucial part of assessing horses for both Australia and HK is to work out which are likely to remain manageable and which could tip over into being problematic with the change in training environment. The HKJC model has often been considered a cumbersome process to get through but actually its format and approval stages are quite transparent and consistent and lend confidence to purchase decisions, in contrast to some of the current screening protocols to compete in Australia.

You are also retained by one of the teams for the legendary Palio in Siena, Italy. What encouraged you to take on such a role?

I'm a bit of an Italophile and through working with Italian trainers (Luca Cumani & Marco Botti) and others in Newmarket I've travelled a lot and picked up a tiny bit of the language. However the connection with Siena actually came about partly through a chance meeting there with an Italian vet I knew through racehorse work. For many years my wife Sarah (also a horse vet) and I made the Palio the focus of our summer holidays, becoming more and more immersed until finally I was asked ten years ago by the Drago contrada to work as their vet. It was a big step for them (non-Italian vets are pretty much unheard of) but also for me, clashing with the busy summer racing season in the Thoroughbred world. I nearly said no to them and am so glad I didn't! The perception of the Palio in the outside world is of a single chaotic race of thrills and spills, but in fact it is a year-round chess game with many layers of history and intrigue that keeps the whole community from young to old in thrall, with a Spring season of prep races in the surrounding Tuscan hills and horses that race for many years and become household names. The contrada vets hold a very unusual position inasmuch as the people of each part of the city look to them as being something akin to their football coach, team doctor and trusted advisor all rolled into one, a level of responsibility and celebrity that one certainly doesn't experience anywhere else in the vet world! I'm very lucky to be involved.

What do you see as the most significant change to occur in UK racing over the next 20 years?

It's hard to know how things will play out in UK racing in the medium term. For sure, the UK and Ireland will remain the place that people will come to source some of the best bloodstock and horses in training, and the premier races will always benchmark the international calendar. However there are big financial pressures and an ongoing staffing crisis that make it increasingly hard for smaller trainers and owners to keep going, or at least conduct training in the traditional format as we know it. It will take a concerted effort for the UK to revitalise its local racing product in a way that keeps it from slipping into just being a nursery for other more lucrative jurisdictions. Speaking as a vet, I feel that the expertise, ethics and standard of care embodied in the large UK Thoroughbred veterinary practices is second to none and has untapped potential for boosting engagement with the public around racehorse welfare.

OTI RACING BALNARRING CUP

We are once again proud to be sponsoring the Balnarring Cup. It will be run on Friday January 26.

Arguably the best picnic racing course in Victoria, it promises to be an enjoyable day beside the picturesque bushland of the Emu Plains Reserve on the Mornington Peninsula. More informal than our city meetings, picnic racedays offer a different and inviting experience to both young and old.



The Balnarring Picnic Race Club has a long and proud history dating back to 1863. It was in that year that the Hastings and Balnarring Racing Club, as it was then known, commenced racing. The site used for the first meeting remains the site used today. The first Balnarring Cup was held in 1948. It was won by a horse called Helenette.

In recent years, the Balnarring Picnic Racing Club has continued to develop its on course facilities and looks forward to a long and bright future. The Club is proud to have been awarded the David J Bourke Award for being the leading picnic racing club on several occasions in recent years (most recently for the 2015-2016 season) and considers these awards to be acknowledgement of the Club's commitment to improving facilities and enhancing the race day experience of all involved in our meetings.

"OTI Racing have been a terrific partner of Balnarring over the past few years, helping us deliver a premium Balnarring Cup experience for patrons and the racing industry. Terry, Shayne and the team have achieved incredible success over the past 25 years, but importantly, have played a crucial role in the welfare of racehorses and the health of the racing product across all levels.... we're proud to partner with OTI to deliver great race day experiences" - Ben Fraser (president at the Balnarring Picnic Racing Club).

The next picnic meeting at Balnarring will be held on January 14, 2024. If you would like to acquire tickets for the Balnarring Cup meeting, click [**here**](#).

Following the Balnarring Cup meeting on January 26, 2024 there will be two further picnic meetings before the end of their racing season (March 10, 2024 & March 30, 2024).



Pictured: OTI's Shayne Driscoll with the 2023 Balnarring Cup winner

INTRODUCING EL ROCA x TAPPUTI '21

Quality 2yo R2R filly with Bjorn Baker



We're excited to be racing this gorgeous two-year-old filly by El Roca out of Tapputi, who we secured in partnership with Bjorn Baker at the recent Ready to Run Sale in New Zealand.

This is a quality, medium-sized, beautifully conformed filly with a good length of stride. She clocked a 10.7 sec breeze, doing so in a straightforward and fluent manner. Watch her parade and Breeze-Up, including Bjorn Baker's comments [here](#).

Sourced with the help of our NZ agent Phill Cataldo, he said ***"I just love this filly. She is such a balanced mover and was a real favourite of the sale."***

Currently enjoying a break at Celbridge Farm (NSW), the filly has recently commenced work with Bjorn in the hope she will be ready to race in her two-year-old season. This is an ideal filly to target towards rich black-type racing Australia wide.

For more information about the filly, please contact us at [**oti@oti.com.au**](mailto:oti@oti.com.au). Final shares remain.

QUIZ

1. Which major Thoroughbred Sale is currently taking place in Australia?
2. How much prizemoney has Lady Laguna earned to date? (guess within \$100,000)
3. Which OTI horse is on the path to the NZ Derby this year?

NAME THE STALLION

Hint: Savabeel



SNIPPETS

David Eustace to train in Hong Kong

While rumours have been around for some time, it is now confirmed that David Eustace of Ciaron Maher Racing will now move to Hong Kong to train in his own name.

David has enjoyed a remarkable career since basing himself in Australia. A key part of the Maher Racing team, he will be sadly missed in Australia. There is no doubt however, that his talents will be out to great use when he settles into the challenging Hong Kong market.

OTI is exceptionally grateful to David for his help over the years. Not only has he developed into a great friend, but his family, including his brother Harry, who trains for us in Newmarket have been most helpful to the OTI family.

Famous Magic Millions Beach Race

The crowd-pleasing beach gallop took place on Tuesday morning at the Gold Coast in the lead up to the start of the Magic Millions Thoroughbred Sales on the same day. The barrier draws for Saturday's big raceday were also concluded and OTI looks forward to see LADY LAGUNA step out in the Listed Magic Millions Fillies & Mares race over 1300m. Watch the beach race [here](#).



OTI reaches another milestone

As we celebrate 25 years of OTI this year, we have achieved many significant milestones in that time. With over 1,000 overall winners since establishment in 1999, our 400th individual winner was recorded on Sunday at Warrnambool with Kimmorley.

Included in the memorable moments are 140 wins at Group and Listed level and over 400 stakes placings. Our 14 Group 1 wins include Cups, Derbies and Guineas. We have won stakes class races in eight different countries.

In the 2023/24 season to date, we have already celebrated 53 wins. These includes eight black-type level races as well as Cepheus' win in the \$1.5m Alan Brown Stakes.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Magic Millions Gold Coast Sale
2. \$738,000
3. Interlinked - running this Saturday at Flemington for Busuttin Racing

NAME THE STALLION - Embellish, son of Savabeel, standing at Cambridge Stud in New Zealand



OTI's Embellish 2yo gelding with Busuttin Racing