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# BREEDERS' UPDATE



THE BREEDERS' AND WOODLANDS  
STUD PRESENT  
THE BREEDERS' UPDATE.

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# BREEDERS' UPDATE

April 23 2021

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## TONE DEAF STALLION LEVY ANNOUNCED BY HRA

Brad Reid

Any positivity in the Australian breeding industry coming off the back of news that the number of mares served had increased for the first time in thirteen years was short lived with a sudden and shock announcement from Harness Racing Australia officials.

In short, the 'proposal' reads;

*The Harness Racing Australia (HRA) Executive is proposing the immediate introduction of a new Stallion Levy which will raise the critical funds to promote, improve and support the harness racing industry.*

*Invoiced to Stallion owners following a 42-day positive test result, the 15 per cent levy on the advertised Service Fee of Shuttle and Internationally Domiciled Stallions (transported and frozen semen) is anticipated to raise in excess of \$2mil annually. In practice, the levy will therefore be applied to the connections of Stallions who are serving mares not just in Australia, but across multiple jurisdictions and/or both hemispheres in any given year*

The official press release can be read [here](#)

Andrew Kelly, Chief Executive of HRA, confirmed that it does not apply to NZ mares services by Australian based shuttle stallions. But it will be applied to NZ based stallions serving Australian mares.

On this basis if Bettor's Delight was to serve a full book of mares in Australia at an advertised service fee of \$25,000, Woodlands Stud could be up for a levy of around half a million dollars.

A stallion now domiciled in Australia and no longer shuttling like Art Major would be safe from any such levy.

This levy revives a proposal that was first mooted a decade ago in an HRA breeding report that resulted in the well-known import levy on imported horses.

As to be expected the announcement was met with immediate furore from those the levy proposes to be helping. Breeders.

As one prominent participant suggested: "If you want something to shrink, tax it. If you want something to grow, subsidise it."

In an ironic use of the word 'naïve' the press release states that: *While there is the potential for some Stallion Owners to simply pass this cost on to Australian breeders, this would be extremely disappointing and naïve*

*given the competitive nature of the Australian breeding industry, the multitude of opportunities available to these Owners globally, and the long-term support afforded these Stallion owners and Farms over an extended period.*

If Harness Racing Australia expects any business to take a 15% hit on their margins and not pass it on to the customers, they are beyond dreaming.

The cost will be worn by breeders, plain and simple.

It was put to me that breeders will as a consequence be incentivised to support the colonial stallions. That is wishful thinking, and it is far more likely that many commercial breeders will simply breed less of their mares.

Speaking with a respected Australian Stud Master, you start to get an understanding for just how badly this levy sits with stakeholders in their jurisdiction.

The individual states that the state breeding association they work with have received the largest amount of feedback on any breeding issue in recent memory, and not a single piece of that has been in favour or positive towards the proposed change.

"We had finally started to get some traction in creating a progressive and positive atmosphere and there is no doubt that this has gone a long way to ruining it," they said.

"The timing of this shows just how out of touch Harness Racing Australia are. We had just negotiated terms to stand a new stallion in the flesh and it's something we were really excited about.

"We've gone and made all the arrangements, negotiated on terms and now we are looking at around \$75,000 in costs we hadn't budgeted for."

The other irony of the levy is that it proposes to benefit breeders.

It's hard to imagine how that could be the case when the funds generated by the levy are simply going to be funnelled into race stakes at the top end of the sport.

We know from our own data that we are not losing participants from the top of the tree and while it is great to have our aspirational races, the grass roots participants are the lifeblood of the sport and the ones being siphoned out of it.

Some lip service is paid to directing funds to fillies and mares racing and state legislative bodies, but there is more smoke than substance in how this will occur.

There are questions from breeders in Australia how the import levy, introduced to support breeding, is being used by state bodies. As it stands, many of the states are simply at a loss to explain where the funds generated off the import levy on overseas horses goes.

There is also a consistent and clear message from HRA in recent times that it has no intent on working with New Zealand jurisdictions to maximise our market share in gambling turnover.

As it stands both codes are struggling to swim against the rising tide that is sports and greyhound turnover both domestically and offshore.

Harness racing in Australasia has become such a boutique industry that we are without a doubt better together from a product standpoint.

Yet there has never been any willingness to maximise our Open Class calendar for example, and if anything, the rescheduling of races in recent years has been done to 'protect' Australian interests and stop our horses from being able to easily compete.

The import levy and the flouting of 'Australian Bred' in the press release from HRA follows a similar trend of being counter competitive to the New Zealand product. Whilst they owe us no favours, they almost certainly owe it to their own breeders who ironically bear the cost of their very own import levy.

"This proposal has not been well thought out at all. It broadly follows the same principals in which HRA adopted the stallion limits policy overnight and without any direct consultation of studs," they said.

"We have asked for discussion papers to see how they have come to the conclusion that this is a good idea, but we have been told that the content disseminated online is the only framework or material available."

The Australian individual is not confident the proposal will be able to be overturned despite their being a 'consultation' period of 6 weeks.

They are of the opinion that the decision has been made and stakeholders are now left to pick up the pieces and attempt to make the best of a bad situation.

Studs from New Zealand with Australian bases and vice versa have recently engaged counsel to challenge the 150 limit to the stallions services imposed last year.

Whether this issue gets tacked on to the legal challenge remains to be seen but it does seem to blur the lines between what represents free trade.

Andrew Grierson of Woodlands and Graeme Henley of Alabar are both of the opinion that this is not a levy, but a tax.

Henley expressed that there is simply no way in which the costs will not be passed on to the customer.

"In most cases our margins are so small that what the levy will equate to is more than what we would get out of standing a shuttle stallion.

"And even if we wanted to be bold and absorb the costs ourselves, for the most part that decision is not our own



to make. The stallions owners have to make that call and can't see them accepting what is being proposed.

"Whatever HRA think they are going to collect from the levy will reduce because quite simply less shuttle stallions will be available as a result," he said.

Henley also pointed out that while the levy was 15% in many cases the actual cost would be closer to 25% on what they were collecting due to discounts on the advertised fee.

While there is the argument that colonial stallions will benefit, should a breeder be forced to make a commercial decision that impacts their first choice of mating their mare?

Victoria just this year had introduced a change to their much touted first win bonus on Vicbred eligible horses.

Where a \$7500 bonus was payable after the first win for Vicbred eligible progeny, that has changed to be \$12,500 for progeny of New Zealand or Australian born stallions that stand permanently in Victoria.

Most of the states in Australia currently have similar schemes or series that incentivise supporting their local stallions anyway, so it's hard to see how the cost benefit of this proposed change does anything to help the situation.

The other thing to consider is how much this will impact the industry sponsorship budgets of the studs and whether or not this will suffer as a consequence.

As it stands it is increasingly difficult to attract new sponsorship money into the sport and the studs play an enormous role in filling that void.

For many of the studs it is too early to say where the cards will fall but as the dust settles, we will be sure to be keeping a close eye on the situation as it envelops.

As we did in 2011 the NZSBA is proposing to make a submission of our own to HRA as this is clearly a discriminatory levy and in breach of CER and all subsequent treaties.

The NZSBA has already briefed our MFAT's trade folks who have opened a file and advised the NZ High Commission in Canberra.

What was intended to be an attack on the US shuttle market has not become a clear threat to the New Zealand breeding sector and it's something we will actively monitor going forward.

Watch this space!!

# **LITTLE BIT OF LUCK AND PATIENCE REWARDS SOUTHLANDER**

**Brad Reid**

The win of Mach's Back last Saturday at Wairio was the start of what promises to be a very exciting few weeks for Invercargill breeder Murray Little.

The son of Mach Three, from his foundation mare Dream Angel, was beautifully driven by Max Hill to score at microscopic odds.

But Mach's Back is only one part of a story that has had plenty of twists and turns along the way.

It's another one of these countless breeding tales that seems to reward perseverance and encourage others to hang in there when all might seem to be lost.

Little's interest in horses started from a young age along with that of his nephew, Malcom.

"I remember when I was a kid listening to the radio and going to the races down here when Robin Dundee and Cardigan Bay were racing.

"My favourite horse though was a pacer called Holy Hal (Hal Tryax – Sandra Kay), I just really liked the name," laughed Little.

For Murray the interest kicked into high gear upon graduating university and joining an Invercargill law firm.

"My boss at the time asked me if I wanted a foal because he had one that he didn't want that was closely related to Sapling.

"About a month later in the mail at work I got a service fee for Son of Afella, the cunning bugger," he laughed.

"It never got to the races, but I bred one by New York Motoring out of the Jay Bee breed that qualified and a few foals from her also. It wasn't until a group of mates and I leased Solitaire from Jill Smolenski that I started to get serious," he said.

This is where the breeding journey started to heat up for Little and it will see him travel from Wairio to the bright lights of Group One racing at Alexandra Park this weekend.

Little is the proud breeder of a runner in the Taylor Mile which we will come too shortly and it all transpires from keeping the faith in the dam of Mach's Back, Dream Angel.





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*Max Hill rates Mach Back to perfection for win number seven at Wairio last Saturday.*

"Dream Angel's dam was Solitaire and she was born with only one nostril which left her with a deformed looking mouth and jaw," he said

"The owners were going to put her down at birth because it was deformed to the point you could see all her teeth on one side.

"She was a lovely mare and I think Freeman Holmes may have given her to Jill Smolenski who had been caring for the foal from time of birth.

"Her good feeling towards the foal was obviously rewarded in the future which is quite amazing really," he said.

As we now know, Solitaire's future wasn't as a racemare as a bowed tendon, not one nostril that put paid to that.

As a broodmare however the daughter of Soky's Atom hit the ground running.

"We had an agreement with Jill to have the first foal out of her which cost us basically the price of the service fee for Dream Away and cost to date of purchase.

"We named her Dream Angel but the mates that I was in with decided they wanted out when it was clear she wasn't going to make an early type, so I bought them out of their shares," he said.

It turned out to be a prudent move.

Despite being left with what was now his first real broodmare, the next foal from Solitaire who just happened to be a full sister was starting to show up as something pretty special.

"All of a sudden One Dream exploded on the scene and I had a full sister in the paddock," he laughed.

One Dream would dominate her crop winning two- and three-year-old Filly Pacer of the Year.

No three-year-old pacing filly in New Zealand has ever won more stake money in a season than One Dream.

When you consider in the last 20 years the list of champion fillies includes Elect to Live, Mainland Banner, Kiwi Ingenuity, De Lovely, Adore Me, Dream About Me, Spanish Armada and Princess Tiffany it is quite remarkable.

The daughter of Dream Away amassed \$641,613 in stakes winning 10 of her 13 starts.

Her only two defeats on New Zealand soil were being beaten a half head and a head by Running On Faith in the Northern Oaks and then the Three Year Old Diamond.

One can speculate or perhaps you could say one could dream about what would have happened had she raced the boys that year in a crop that included Changeover and Gotta Go Cullen.

Nevertheless, her legacy continues through her six daughters that are now all at stud, and recent Group One winner and impressive juvenile pacer, Montana DJ.

Through Dream Angel, Little has developed his own tail line of the One Dream family over the last 15 years or so.

The first foal by Red River Hanover went as expected given the stallion's mediocre success and the subsequent filly was given away as a hack.

"I think she was a buy back and in hindsight the \$20,000 bid for her wasn't bad money," he laughed.

The second foal for Little produced a colt by McArdle who was no star but produced a win and 12 placings from 26 starts.

The third foal was a scrawny filly by Christian Cullen called One Christian and she proved to be a bit of a handful. So much so that Little instructed Wayne Adams after three starts that he no longer wanted to persevere with the mare.

"I ended up leasing her to Brent Macintyre and a syndicate he had put together.

"She had a bit of gate speed and the day she won her



only race was probably the only good draw she ever got. She led all the way, and they couldn't catch her.

"She was a bit cantankerous and was only a small thing, she isn't very big, but she was tough and that's the reason I decide to breed from her," he said.

One Christian was sent to stud after only seven starts for the sole win with Macintyre breeding the first foal from her as part of the arrangement that saw him take over her training.

The resulting Net Ten Eom colt had big raps, but never lived up to expectations.

"I remember down the line Brent saying to me he had a two-year-old out of One Christian that was the goods but for whatever reason that never unfolded," said Little.

By this stage Little had taken a colt by American Ideal (second foal) out of One Christian to the yearling sales and received \$20,000 for him.

The colt called Christianshavtime lines up in tomorrow night's Group One Taylor Mile as the fourth favourite having come of age as a four-year-old for trainers Logan Hollis and Shane Roberston and the ATC syndicate.

"He was a nice colt and I remember Tank Ellis was pretty keen on the horse having seen him every down the beach and may have been the underbidder.

"I'm looking forward to tomorrow night because like his mother, I think he has a bit of untapped gate speed that hasn't been used. He can get a bit hot by all accounts and has been best driven with a sit and we all know how fast he is when saved for one run at them," he said.

In the 20/21 season Christianshavtime has made the leap from nice three-year-old to genuine Open Class pacer. Five wins and six placings from 13 starts as a four-year-old in some very good Northern company is testament to that.

He has shown his blazing speed on several occasions this campaign, on one occasion running straight past champion three-year-old Krug after sitting three the pegs in a six-horse race.

He adopted similar tactics a fortnight ago when sitting four the pegs before coming four wide to easily run over the top of Kango and Havtime, a mare who ironically Little races with Malcolm and his wife Sandra.

"He's a nice horse and I was surprised the buyers at the sales didn't want his Art Major half-sister at this year's yearling sales," he said.

"She only got to \$20,000 with a reserve of \$30,000 but by all accounts she has broken in really well. I've seen a video of her and she really looks the part.

Little has retained a full-sister to Christianshavtime along with a Sweet Lou three-year-old that is due to

come back in from the spelling paddock and a Betterthatcheddar two-year-old who is showing promise with Kirstin Barclay.

"She is in with a group of five horses I have bred from mares like Suvarno Hanover, Dream Angel and Donthavtime and Kristen has said they are all going to make racehorses which is good.

From having only one mare to now breeding several has been a quantum leap for Little but shows how deep the passion runs with the moniker, 'havtime' affixed to the majority of his own stock.

"How the 'Havtime' moniker come about was I purchased a mare called Donthavtime (Mach Three – Time To Say Goodbye) from Frank O'Meara who won seven.

"It started my love affair with Mach Three progeny, and I was pretty sad when he passed away, I think I have won about 25 races with his progeny.

They included the likes of the 10-win mare Havtime who was a yearling sales purchase by Malcolm and Murray after deciding they would invest in some well-bred fillies.

"Malcolm bought two outright and we bought three together, and it ended up being quite a good sale for us.

"When Havtime won the three-year-old yearling Sales Fillies Final, four of the purchases ran in the race and we had the quinella at each end of the field being first and second and last and second last," he laughed.

Tying this all back together is the seventh win of Saturday's son of Mach Three out of Dream Angel.

The Southland gelding is being sent on a Northern sojourn to try and capitalise on his hot form this campaign and will race out of the same barn as his close relative, Christianshavtime.

"I sent him and his paddock mate up to Logan Hollis on Monday," said Little.

"I wasn't going to send his paddock mate, Betahavtime but there is the futurity series up there we are going to have a crack at," he said.

Little is no longer breeding from Dream Angel, but he does own one of her last five foals, the eldest being a Betterthatcheddar two-year-old and a Sweet Lou yearling.

The mare is now in the care of Gavin Forbes with the fans of his former cult hero Lord Forbes crying out for a mating between the pair.

Whether that happens remains to be seen but at only 18 years young there is plenty of life left in the old girl just yet and with One Christian and few other daughters from this line in the care of Little, a few chapters yet to be written.





*Jim Curtain and Milliondollarmonkey make it win number seven for the son of Monkey Bones at Rangiora last Sunday*

## **NO MORE MONKEY BUSINESS FOR TALENTED TROTTER**

Jonny Turner

A wedding present more than four decades ago keeps delivering for the Hill family.

Trainer Brian Hill, wife Cheryl and daughter Kristie have been enjoying a brilliant run with the talented but sometimes naughty Milliondollarmonkey.

Hill has recently produced the stylish grey trotter for back-to-back wins from his stable for his breeder-owners Cheryl and Kristie.

Milliondollarmonkey comes from a successful line that has passed the test of time as well as Brian and Cheryl Hill's marriage.

The trotter's lineage can be traced back more than four decades to the day the couple tied the knot.

"My father was given Single Girl by Ted Lowe as a wedding present and this is where the family has come from," Kristie Hill said.

"Single Girl left Single Lord, he was a magnificent pacer."

"And she left a trotter called McShane and he won a heat of the Interdominions and beat Scotch Notch."

"I actually watched the video the other day, which was a pretty cool find."

Single Girl is Milliondollarmonkey's fourth dam.

The seven-year-old trotter is out of Ruby N Diamonds, an Iraklis daughter of Dancing Master mare Carmenchita. Carmenchita is from Single Majesty a Lordship daughter of Single Girl.

With three pacing stallions on his dam's side, it's clear the origins of the Hill breed are not in the trotting gait.

However, Carmenchita changed all of that.

"Where the trotting came from was through little Carmenchita, who I won my very first race with, Hill said.

"I sent her to Iraklis because I just loved him, he was a magnificent horse."

"The result was Ruby N Diamonds. When Dad was breaking her in he said the tighter he had the hobbles the harder she hit them trotting."

"So he took them off and she never ever paced."

Ruby N Diamonds won three races as a trotter and placed 15 times. Her talent meant the Carmenchita was now a trotting mare.

"At that point, we had gone to a pacing stallion with Carmenchita and she had left Maddison Hill."

"But Dad and I really like our trotters so we were straight off to Sundon with her the next year."

Sending Carmenchita to Sundon proved a masterstroke with the resulting foal being the smart seven-win mare, Sunchita.

Though she was smart on the track, Sunchita hasn't proved as successful in the breeding barn as her half-sister, Ruby N Diamonds.



"We tried for five years to get her in foal, and we ended up getting her in foal to One Over Da Moon. We are really excited about it because we have got a really strong colt like her."

"I think she and Ruby N Diamonds will go to What The Hill next year."

Carmenchita also left three-win trotter Sunny Bill (Sundon), one win pacer De Real Diva (Real Desire) and current racehorse Muchacha Bonita (Great Success).

She has also left a four-year-old Majestic Son entire, which Hill describes as a work in progress.

De Real Diva became a hack after retiring from racing, leaving Ruby N Diamonds, Maddison Hill and Sunchita in the Hill family's broodmare band.

Maddison Hill has had one foal by Sportswriter for a group that includes trainer Chris Chalmers.

Hopes are high that Ruby N Diamonds can leave another star performer following Milliondollarmonkey. Her next foal is a four-year-old by Majestic Son named The Crown Prince.

"He has been to the workouts a few times for a couple of thirds and a first against the older pacers. He was a three-year-old at the time and we have just taken our time with him. He is quite a big boy, but he quite a nice horse and we are looking forward to him. He won't be far away from the trials."

The Hills also have a yearling filly by What The Hill from Ruby N Diamonds.

"Tim Trathen broke her in for us and he really liked her. He said she was a really nice filly."

"We have also got a nice little Majestic Son filly. We went straight back to Majestic Son because Dad really liked Crown Prince."

"She is not in foal at the moment, she does her foals very well and it is at her own expense."

Hill admitted when she bred Milliondollarmonkey trotting genetics were not the whole focus.

"I had my heart set on a grey trotter, I always wanted a grey trotter. So we sent the mare to Monkey Bones and I got a beautiful grey colt."

Mixing up Milliondollarmonkey's work regime looks to be one of the keys to his recent success.

The seven-year-old is thriving and part of that should be credited to his swimming regime.

"We felt he has always had a lot of ability, but it has just been him putting it all together with his little quirks. We are pretty thrilled with him at the minute."

"We sent him out to the beach to Regan Todd's and he did a wonderful job with him. And he was really cool with me because he is a bit of a pet. He swum him and did beach work with him and got two massive wins with him."

"Lately I have been taking him around to Toliman Lodge – Ken Barron and Blair and Lisa Orange – and swimming him."

"You always hold your breath a little bit, but we are thrilled with him."

It is not just Milliondollarmonkey that enjoys a varied work schedule.

Hill sees all kinds of horses and all kinds of horse sports in her work as the Lower South Island Territory Manager for NZSNA sponsor Dunstan Horsefeeds.

"It is cool to see young horses coming through that have been raised on Dunstan. It is a great bunch of people that I work with and that makes it all that much better."

Between working her horses at her father's stable and her work with Dunstan Horsefeeds, Hill sees all spectrums of the horse world.

"I look after all of the harness community and we have equestrian horses, galloping stables, so it is really diverse and interesting."

## **TOM GIVES COURTMAN A 'BLOODY GOOD NIGHT'**

Garrick Knight

Doug Courtman's association with Cambridge Raceway goes back almost 50 years. So, it was only fitting that the first winner he bred is recording its victories at the Waikato venue.

Carse O Fern Tom made it career win number three last Thursday night proving too good in the hands of trainer/driver, Matty White.

Courtman, a Holstein Friesian dairy farmer from Ngahape, was on hand for the occasion and said it was a little more exciting than the last win, in August.

"It was bloody good the other night," he said.

"His last win was during a lockdown at the end of August and there was only about 10 of us on course.



"The big grandstand was all blacked out and we didn't even get a photo with him."

Courtman was all smiles for the photographer this time, more than happy to pose with his five-year-old son of Highview Tommy.

Carse O Fern Tom is the first horse he bred after acquiring his Presidential Ball dam, Mhairi, from the Karaka mixed sale in 2015.

"She was in foal to Stunin Cullen at the time: Sandy Yarndley owned her but was having a dispersal of mares."

Mhairi is a great granddaughter of broodmare great, Black Watch, a family Courtman had admired from afar for years.

"I've been around harness racing all my life but I only recently got around to spending my money on it," he joked. "My father, Wally, was the Club President at Cambridge for 20-odd years and I used to be the starter at the trials there and at Claudelands back in the 1970s.

"So yeah, I've been around the racing scene in Cambridge for a fair while"

Despite the commercial appeal of Mhairi, Courtman just wanted to breed to race and his first stallion choice was based on his heart, not his head.

"Highview Tommy was a favourite horse of mine for years so when he was available I went to him for two years.

"Of course Carse O Fern Tommy is the first and then there's his three-year-old sister, Mhai Tommie, who's had the one start with Matty too.

"She's just back in work and has to shape up this time I'd say."

Courtman has opted to breed every second year and now has a yearling filly by Downbytheseaside called Mhai Surfer Girl while she is back in foal to the same stallion.

His farm, "halfway between Te Awamutu and Otorohanga" is home to Mhai Surfer Girl at present. Mhairi is a long-term resident of nearby Breckon Farms.

"They put her in foal. I keep them there until it's time to be broken in, then they come back here after that.

"I don't have the facilities to deal with a broodmare so she's better off over there."

That Stunin Cullen bred by Yarndley but owned since birth by Courtman is named Carse O Fern Cully and he is now a 35-start maiden raced on lease by young New Plymouth trainer, Brodie Ellis.

The obvious question is where does the 'Carse O Fern'



prefix come from? Perhaps Courtman's ancestral roots? "Not quite. I think it is Scottish, but I'm a Kiwi.

"One joker told me it means 'valley of fern'.

"Back when I grew up, all the old farms used to have a name on the gate. In the early 90s I was living at place near Kaipaki that was called 'Carse-o-Fern'.

"I've been here 20 years and have named my Holstein Friesian stud Carse-o-Fern. I thought it would be nice to name the colts I bred with that too.

"I've stuck with 'Mhai' for the girls because of the dam's name."

When Courtman was looking for a trainer for Carse O Fern Cully back in 2016, he approached veteran horseman, Mike Berger.

"I started off there and then Matty came and joined him in partnership.

"When Matty decided to go out on his own, Mike asked me if I'd go with him (White) because he (Berger) was winding down and reducing numbers.

"And to be fair Matty's been bloody good to deal with and I've been really happy with it.

"They still train from the same barn anyway. Whenever I'm there it looks like Mike has more horses so I guess he's struggling with his plans a bit!

"Matty's really honest about the horses and that's what I like! He's always said 'Tom' is going to be competitive around that 50 rating and that's proved to be the case."

If we're being fair, Courtman was probably pushing the proverbial uphill hoping to get a really good horse from Stunin Cullen or Highview Tommy, but his chances could be exponentially increased by Downbytheseaside.

"Matty's broken in the yearling and seems to really like it which is a great sign. Mhairi was one of the very ones to foal by him in New Zealand, actually."

Soon Courtman will own six horses from the same family and that might pose a bit of a problem.

"I'm small time – a one man band – and I'm starting to get all these horses around me."

That might mean Carse O Fern Tom soon goes on the market.

The horse with the Scottish name stolen off a Kaipaki farm gate by a sire that has left just six winners. By with three trips to the winner's circle – well two, to be precise – at his rookie breeder's favourite track, he's more than done his job.



*Ultimate Sniper, New Zealand's reigning Horse of the Year, has been purchased by Alabar and Nevele R studs.*

## **ALABAR AND NEVELE R SECURE SNIPER FOR STUD**

Jonny Turner

Ultimate Sniper, New Zealand's reigning Horse of the Year, has been purchased by Alabar and Nevele R studs.

He has been retired and will commence stud duties in the new season.

The recurrence of filling in the site of his leg injury meant that future options had to be evaluated and Alabar / Nevele R jumped at the opportunity.

"Both Alabar and Nevele R believe it's important and beneficial to the breeding industry to invest in high quality, well credentialed local stallions that appeal to breeders throughout Australasia," commented Nevele R's Ged Moorar.

"He's the number one stallion prospect we've had our sights on for some time so we're thrilled to be able to buy him. We appreciate the awareness of the owners realising that now was the time a decision had to be made. Sniper deserves a great chance at stud and we're sure he'll get excellent support from the broodmare owners of New Zealand and Australia," said Graeme Henley, Alabar.

The son of Bettor's Delight goes to stud on a five-race win streak – and as New Zealand's most intimidating racehorse.

He was brutal on NZ Cup Day 2019, sitting parked and crushing the opposition in a 1:55.3 mile rate in the junior free-for-all.

He then went to Auckland where he was simply sublime in dominating the Inter Dominion Championship. It was to be his career defining carnival.

"Winning the Inter Dominions was the thrill of a lifetime for the syndicate."

"He had no favours with the draws through the series but his will to win came through and he put up some amazing performances. We're in awe of what he achieved. His performances were Lazarus like!"

"To do what he did when he was just a four-year-old is incredible," said part-owner Philip Kennard.

In the first heat, Ultimate Sniper was three wide for the majority of the 2200m journey but still got up to win in 2:35.4 – a new NZ record. Truly astonishing given the extra ground he covered.

In the second heat, he was again three wide for the 1700m journey and still came his last half in 54.8 to win in a 1:52.6 mile rate.

In the third heat, he looked like he was no chance on the final corner but still found the strength to pick himself up and win – again recording a 54.8 last half.

In the final, he once again stamped his superiority sitting parked and proving too strong in 3:14.7 (1:56 mile rate) for the 2700m.

Few Inter Dominion campaigns have been so dominant – and certainly not by a four-year-old.

The world was at his feet.



Tragically he had suffered an injury at some point through the carnival and he was never to race again.

Unraced as a two-year-old, Ultimate Sniper quickly became a sensation as a three-year-old, being unbeaten through the Spring culminating in a dominant victory in the NZ Sires Stakes 3yo Final.

He also scored resounding victories in the Alabar Classic, NZ Yearling Sales Series Final, Northern Derby and NZ Derby on his way to being awarded NZ Three-Year-Old Pacer of the Year.

In total, Ultimate Sniper has retired with a record of just 20 starts for 14 wins, 1 second and 2 thirds for \$842,793.

"He's a gorgeous type and just the kindest, sweetest horse and really intelligent."

"It didn't matter what the tempo in the race was. He could fire a slick quarter if you wanted but really time meant nothing to him, he just did whatever he had to do so effortlessly," said co-trainer and regular driver Natalie Rasmussen

"He had a wonderful temperament and was a lovely horse to work with."

"He was very brave in what he did at the Inter Dominions, especially with him only being a four-year-old. He just had such a tremendous will to win."

"The Inter Dominions showed a glimpse of what he was capable of but we really felt he was only going to get better as he matured," added co-trainer Mark Purdon

A powerfully built black stallion, Ultimate Sniper is a stunning type. He is also beautifully bred.

He is a full-brother to Ultimate Machete who, like his brother, was also NZ's Three and Four-Year-Old Pacer of the Year. Their dam (Reality Check) was a smart race filly winning the NZ Yearling Sales Series Two-Year-Old Fillies' Final. She is also the dam of the top racemare, Major Reality (1:50.9, \$434,415) whose first foal sold for \$300,000 at this year's Auckland yearling sale.

His grandam is the NZ Broodmare of Excellence winner, Maureens Dream, who is a half-sister to the excellent sire Tuapeka Knight.

In the words of Philip Kennard...

"It's just such a gutsy family. Sniper had this tremendous will to win and he could just carry his speed longer than other horses."

"We never took him for granted, he always surprised us with what he could do and that made the thrills even greater."

"We made the decision to retire to him now to give him the best opportunity at stud. We could've carried on but now is the right time to give him his best chance – which he deserves. I'm sure we'll all get a lot of pleasure out of following his progeny"

Ultimate Sniper's fee and standing location will be announced shortly.



Lot 8 is a Bettor's Delight filly out of Queen Camille (NZ).

## **Blacktype Fount in 2021 National Weanling Sale Catalogue**

### **NZB Standardbred**

NZB Standardbred's inaugural 2021 National Weanling Sale will see 130 quality youngsters head through the sale ring at Karaka on Monday 3 May.

Highlighted below are several standout lots featured in the National Weanling Sale session, many of which are destined to follow in the footsteps of their black-type-winning relatives.

Consigned by Alabar, Lot 3 is a filly by Majestic Son out of Philadelphia H (NZ) (Revenue). This Lot's granddam is the multiple Group One-winning trotter Martina H (NZ) (Sundon).

Lot 8 is a Bettor's Delight filly out of Christian Cullen mare Queen Camille (NZ) offered on account of Woodlands Stud. She is a full sister to multiple Group-winning Henry Hubert (NZ), winner of the Group Two Christchurch Superstars Pace (1980m) and the Group Three Northern Southland Cup (2700m).

Lot 19 is a filly by exciting sire Always B Miki consigned by Alabar. She is out of Sheza Monkee (NZ) (Sands A Flyin), who is a full sister to nine-time Group One winner Monkey King (NZ).

Offered by Woodlands Stud, Lot 24 is a What The Hill filly out of Spur To Action (NZ) (Pegasus Spur). Her dam is a full sister to superstar trotter and multiple Group One winner Speeding Spur (NZ).



Consigned by Alabar, Lot 50 is a son of Always B Miki out of twice Group One placed mare (Famous) Alchemist. This Lot's dam was runner up in Group One WA Mares Classic (2130m) and ran third in the NZ Sires' Stakes 2YO and 3YO Finals.

Lot 51, a filly by Sweet Lou out of Bet I Can (Bettor's Delight), is a full sister to Group Three NZ Sapling Stakes (1609m) winner My Ultimate Chevron (NZ). She is offered by Woodlands Stud.

Popular first season sire Vincent's progeny were in demand at the 2021 National Standardbred Yearling Sale and Lot 77 is a daughter of the thrilling stallion out of winning mare Cyathea (NZ) (Fake Left). This filly is a three-quarter-sister to Group One placed Star Of Montana (NZ) (Art Major) offered by Alabar.

Lot 91 is a colt by Rock N Roll Heaven out of Bettor's Delight mare Forte Chapel (NZ). This Lot is a full brother to Group Three winner Rock N Roll Chapel (NZ) consigned by Alabar.

Always B Miki filly (Lot 93) out of Franconia (NZ) (Art Major) is closely related to Group One winner and fellow NZB Standardbred graduate It's All About Faith offered by Alabar. This Lot's granddam is Group One-winning performer Coburg (NZ) (Falcon Seelster).

Lot 105 is a colt by Sweet Lou out of Kamwood Elsie (NZ) (Falcon Seelster) consigned by Woodlands Stud. He is a half-brother to Group One Harness Jewels Four-Year-Old Diamond (1609m) winner Lancewood Lizzie (NZ) (Bettor's Delight).

Offered in Woodlands Stud's draft, Lot 111 is a filly by What The Hill out of Group One placed Landora's Pearl (Earl). She is a three-quarter-sister to One Muscle Hill (NZ) (Muscle Hill), who placed second in the Group One Harness Jewels 2YO Ruby (1609m).

What The Hill filly out of Mega Belle (NZ) (Sundon) (Lot 119) is a half-sister to Group One Harness Jewels 3YO Trotters Ruby winner Prime Power (NZ) (Monarchy). She will head through the ring under the Woodlands Stud banner.

Lot 126 is a filly from the first crop by Ultimate Machete out of Motu Racy Girl (NZ) (In The Pocket). Offered on account of Alabar, she is a full sister to Group One placed Vanquished (NZ) (Bettor's Delight).

Adding further appeal, all weanlings offered in the Sale are eligible to be nominated for the Harness Million Sale Race Series.

NZB Finance is pleased to offer further benefits to prospective buyers with a pinhooking facility through to NZB Standardbred's 2022 National Yearling Sale in Auckland and Christchurch. Find out more by contacting NZB's Finance Manager Eion Fraser at [Eion.Fraser@nzb.co.nz](mailto:Eion.Fraser@nzb.co.nz).

Leading consignors Woodlands Stud and Alabar will both host a public parade showcasing their weanling

drafts on Sunday 2 May at the Karaka Sales Centre, with all buyers welcome to attend.

*Woodlands Stud weanling sale parade commencing at 1:00PM, Barn C*

*Alabar Farms weanling sale parade commencing at 2:30PM, Barn B*

All weanlings have been inspected by an NZB Standardbred agent, for more information contact bloodstock representative Cam Bray by calling +64 21 737 199 or email [Cam.Bray@nzb.co.nz](mailto:Cam.Bray@nzb.co.nz).

View the full weanling sale catalogue online [here](#)

## **ONLY OFFSPRING OF EUROPEAN STALLION ON THE BOARD**

Joshua Smith

A keen interest in European trotting has led Canterbury trainer Michael Purdon to one of the most exciting juvenile trotters in the country.

Purdon spent a year working for Yabby Dam Farm trainer Anton Golino in Victoria and he said listening to the well-travelled horseman's tales instigated his interest in European racing.

He began to follow racing in the region, particularly France, and when scouring a standardbred.gavelhouse.com catalogue his eye was taken by the pedigree of Mystic Max, a colt by French stallion Village Mystic, who is available to New Zealand and Australian breeders through Haras des Trotteurs.

Purdon was familiar with the deeds of the Group One winning son of Love You and was pleasantly surprised to see one of his progeny offered in the sale.

"I have been following European racing mainly since working for Anton Golino in Melbourne," Purdon said.

"He had travelled around America and Europe, and the way he used to talk about European racing really piqued my interest.

"I found him (Mystic Max) on gavelhouse. He was bred by Tardina Lodge and I was quite familiar with the stallion, but I didn't realise he was available here.

"When I saw him, I decided I would get him if I could because I knew the job his sire was doing in France. Thankfully I was able to purchase him."



Purdon's final bid of \$9,501 was able to secure the colt, who is his sire's only live foal in New Zealand.

He showed glimpses of promise when on debut in the Gr.3 New Zealand 2YO Trotting Stakes (1980m) at Addington Raceway earlier this month, but broke when running home late.

He returned to the Christchurch track on Friday and showed no signs of ill-manners, beginning well for driver Blair Orange to take an early lead and trotted fluidly throughout, winning by 1-3/4 lengths over Rakero Blaze, with a further 1-3/4 lengths back to Ellaria Sand in third.

"I was very happy with the run," Purdon said. "He won a bit more convincingly than I thought he might. He had been training a lot better around home since his last start.

"I thought he would be quite competitive, but to win the way he did was something else.

"He has always shown that he has a bit of ability and he is worth pressing on with."

Purdon admitted to being slightly frustrated with his colt's misdemeanor on debut, but he said a slight training adjustment proved to work well in-between runs.

"It was a bit frustrating, but in saying that it was a bit of a learning curve for me as well," he said.

"Steering-wise I might have been letting him get away with a bit much at home. After I saw that I got on top of it and it paid off today."

His win on Friday should qualify him for the Harness Jewels at Cambridge Raceway in June, however, Purdon said he would like to get through the Sires' Stakes before making a final decision.

"His next start will be the Sires' Stakes Prelude on May 1. Not being eligible for the Harness Millions, and the Sires' Stakes Final being the 21st, I will either look for a race in-between or if need be I will trial him," Purdon said.

"We will see how he goes in his next couple of starts and make a decision of whether or not to take him to the Jewels. At this stage it looks like he will go, barring bad luck."

It's an exciting time for Purdon at the moment and he said he has another juvenile trotter at home that could be just as good as Mystic Max.

"I have got another two-year-old trotter, Nortie Nortie, he has been trialling up quite nicely," Purdon said.

"Going off their track work there is not a lot of difference between him and Mystic Max at this stage."

By Andover Hall, Nortie Nortie is another product of Tardina Stud, with Purdon purchasing the gelding out of their 2020 New Zealand Bloodstock Standardbred National Yearling Sale for \$35,000.



Lot 8 is a Bettor's Delight filly out of Queen Camille (NZ).

## **DIAMONDS DAY DRAWS NEAR FOR INVERCARGILL AND ASCOT PARK!**

### **SOUTHERN HARNESS**

Diamonds Day, a premier race day which sees the finals of several of the south's top harness race series, will take place at Ascot Park Raceway in Invercargill on Sunday 2 May.

The Invercargill Harness Racing Club will host the event with feature races including major Group 2 races, the \$40,000 Alabar Southern Supremacy Stakes Final, the \$40,000 Macca Lodge/Nevele R Stud Southland Oaks Final and the Diamond Creek Farm 2-year-old Classic also with a stake of \$40,000 plus the \$20,000 Regent Car Court Southern Cups Final.


Racing starts at midday and there is a great opportunity for the ladies on race day with a special coupon offer in the Southland Express on both Thursday 22 and 29 April. Bring the coupon along and ladies will receive their first glass of wine free, an ideal opportunity for all ladies but especially any duck shooting widows that weekend.

There will be free tea and coffee on course all day long as well in Lizzie's Café on the ground floor of the facility.

Admission to the course on the day will be free.

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# KENTUCKIANA ACCEPTS INVITATION TO RISING SUN

Jonny Turner

Cran & Chrissie Dalgety gladly accepted an invitation for their star three-year-old Krug to start in Australasia's most exciting new harness race this week.

Queensland officials handed Krug one of just four invites to the newly created A\$250,000 feature the Rising Sun at Albion Park on July 10.

All four of the exclusive invites for the inaugural \$250,000 Group 1 The Rising Sun have been handed out, with classy Kiwi Krug the latest to confirm his place at Albion Park later this year.

Top New Zealand trainer Cran Dalgety has this week accepted the invitation from Racing Queensland and the Albion Park Harness Racing Club.

Krug accepted the three-year-old wildcard spot for the first running of the new feature race, alongside Expensive Ego, who was the first to accept an invitation for the race with the winner of the Group 1 NSW derby, Patsbeachstorm, and one of the leading NZ four-year-olds, Copy That, following suit.

Krug has been a star across the ditch, winning two Derby races, including the New Zealand Derby earlier this month.

"All the three-year-olds in Australia and New Zealand, to get down to the last couple and get a nod for an invite, it is a privilege," Dalgety, a third generation horse trainer, said.

"Our racing schedule for three-year-olds is pretty tame after June, so the main thing for us was to have a go at a couple of other Derbys – being the Melbourne and Queensland ones for us.

"There is a little bit on the plate for us to consider with the horse."

To kick-start three action-packed weeks at Albion Park over the TAB Queensland Constellations, the Group 1 Rising Sun – the richest race in the Southern Hemisphere for three and four-year-old pacers – will make its highly anticipated debut on July 10.

Dalgety, who has had many a quality pacer over the journey, rates colt Krug as one of his best ever to be in his stable.

He has almost \$500,000 in prizemoney already, with 13



victories and five minor placings recorded from just 20 career starts.

"It is exciting for all concerned and being really new," Dalgety said of the new Group 1 Rising Sun.

"Some of the four-year-olds will be strong, when you think about horses like Expensive Ego being there, he is going really good and will be at the top of the three when it comes to favouritism.

"Drawing one or two for us, that is a major, major bonus for us, being on the rail at Albion Park."

Much of Krug's ownership group have been in the harness racing game for many years and the experienced horseman cannot wait to get the impressive youngster across to Australia.

Dalgety is arguably best known for his association with champion pacer Christen Me earlier in his career.

"It is always a challenge to bring horses over to Australia, but I have had my practice over the years," Dalgety said.

"I think I brought my first horse over to Queensland in 1996, winning the Queensland Pacing Championships with a horse called Desperate Comet, which was my first major travelling horse.

"I think we would have won around 100 races in Australia; we have had some luck with Victoria Cups, Miracle Miles and Breeders Crowns – we have had a bit of practice and been fortunate."

Racing Queensland Senior Harness Racing Manager David Brick said the first ever The Rising Sun is shaping up as an exciting field.

"We are looking forward to seeing them at Albion Park later this year," Brick said.

"We are rapt that Krug and Cran Dalgety have accepted this invitation as he has shown he is the best three-year-old in New Zealand over the last few months in the two derby races he won."

The TAB has Expensive Ego rated as the favourite for the first ever Rising Sun, locked in at \$3, with Copy That on the next line of betting at \$6 and Krug a \$11 chance.

In total, the Constellations will feature 11 Group 1s with the addition of the Rising Sun and The Golden Girl.

# THE ART OF BREEDING

**If it's sauce for the goose.  
There is no correlation between  
racing performance and  
reproductive ability in the  
standardbred mare.**



*There is no correlation between racing performance and reproductive ability in the standardbred mare.*

by Alan Leavitt

The disparity between the phenotype, or visible horse, and the genotype, or invisible genetic makeup, is just as significant in the standardbred mare as it is in the standardbred stallion. Here, things can be simply stated; there is no correlation between racing performance and reproductive ability in the standardbred mare.

While this has been a demonstrable fact down through at least 10 generations of our breed, it still flies in the face of the actual practice of buying and selecting potential broodmares. A top race mare will inevitably fetch a high price when she goes through the sales ring at the end of her racing career. By the same token, the first foal of the same mare will get more than his share of interest at the yearling sale.

In technical terms, this is confusing the phenotype with the genotype. In layman's terms, it's the assumption that a top race mare will be an equally good producer of top horses. Alas, that simply is not so.

It should be noted here that there is another premise often in play regarding the public sale of good race mares. That is the acquisition of a "trophy" element, which also involves the public display of wealth. You see this especially in the thoroughbred world. Rich men, or women, frequently pay prices for great thoroughbred race mares that are far beyond any projected practical return, even if the mare should hit.

The principle that supports the purchase of "trophy mares" also applies equally to other areas of human life. Which is why you'll never see a matrimonial lawyer driving a second hand car. But that is too far afield for a simple horse breeder.

The question remains, however, how do you pick a future broodmare if racing performance is irrelevant? My answer is – buy the family. If a majority of the mares in a mare's maternal line have produced good horses, odds are at least even this mare will also be a good producer. And when you evaluate a family, you should

go right back to the foundation. Even though a mare eight generations back can have no direct influence on her descendants far down the generational line, for me it's essential that the original spring produced plenty of good water.

I've had a perfect example in my own life. Years ago, when Jim Harrison was running Lana Lobell Farms for me, he called one day and said he'd bought a mare.

In Jim's own words, "I bought a mare today. She isn't really as well bred as we like, but she was a good race mare on the half-mile track at Buffalo, and the guy took a \$12,000 yearling credit for her."

That mare was Matina Hanover. She herself produced Mack Lobell, regarded by some as the greatest trotter of all time, and through her daughters, granddaughters, and great granddaughters has made an indelible impression on the American trotter.

As to why Jim was not enthused about her breeding, he had her first two dams when he was running Hanover Shoe Farms, and they were nothing special. But her third dam was Miss Bertha Hanover, one of the sisters that were the foundation of the great Hanover broodmare band, and she bred on.

Parenthetically, another legendary matron that Meg and I were blessed to own was Amour Angus. She and Garland Lobell combined to change the entire course of the American trotter with their sons, Andover Hall, Angus Hall, and Conway Hall. And if you trace back Amour Angus' maternal line, you come to the same Miss Bertha Hanover who appears in Matina Hanover's pedigree. And it doesn't hurt repeating that Miss Bertha Hanover and her sisters were the foundation of the great Hanover broodmare band.

Matina Hanover and Amour Angus are not anomalies in that their phenotype, or what was visible to the naked eye, bore no resemblance to their genetic makeup, or genotype. The lesson is clear, and by now you're probably tired of hearing it again, but if you want to breed good horses, you want mares from good families, regardless of their ability or lack of it on the racetrack.





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# Spellbound ready to show her magic

Tim O'Connor

A little bit of advice from his legendary father has given young harness racing trainer Nathan Purdon the confidence to send former Kiwi mare Spellbound into the heat of battle without a lead-up trial.

Purdon has set the two-time Group 1 place-getter for Saturday night's Allied Express Ian Daff Memorial at Tabcorp Park Melton, where she will clash with the classy Gary Hoban-trained Tangoingwithsierra, who has won her last five starts.

Since moving out from New Zealand and setting up camp in Avalon, Purdon has only had the four starters at the races and is yet to break through for victory.

Spellbound, who has been here in Australia for the past couple of months, looks a talented acquisition for Purdon's developing stable, with her record sitting at five wins and 11 placings from 29 career starts.

She last appeared for former trainer Robert Dunn in The Leefield Station NZ Breeders Stakes at Addington during February, running seventh in the Group 1 event for the fillies and mares.

"She actually hasn't trialed. I was working her down towards a trial and she was just working probably a touch better than where I thought she was at," Purdon said.

"I was lucky enough when Dad (Mark) came over for the sales and he had a drive of her one morning. He said she was borderline, probably not quite race fit and going to take a lot of benefit from the run, but she's probably more forward than going to a trial too."

While wary he doesn't know the form here in Australia as well as he does back home in New Zealand, Purdon felt Spellbound was well placed to break through for his first victory as a trainer since setting up a base in Victoria.

"I'd like to think she's a pretty good mare. She's probably got to be in the top four or five in New Zealand, so to come over here and not meet supposedly the best mares going around in Australia, you'd like to think she's in with a good shot," he said.

"She sort of got into an awkward grade where she was meeting the best boys (in New Zealand), so probably the last handful of starts it wasn't really a true guide on how nice she was."

Purdon wasn't revealing any major plans with the daughter of Art Major, but did hint at a possible trip to Queensland for that state's carnival if the mare showed some promise.

Spellbound will be driven on Saturday night by Group 1-winning reinsman Stuart McDonald, who has recently made the move from Western Australia to Victoria. The pair will start from barrier six, with the field of 10 including fellow top mares The Pantheist (David Miles), Delightful Jazz (Ahmed Taiba) and Flying Jo (Allan McDonough).

The Allied Express Ian Daff Memorial is one of the major highlights on the Melton card, alongside the TAB Sapling Stakes for the two-year-old colts and geldings.

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