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# BREEDERS' UPDATE



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# BREEDERS' UPDATE

December 24, 2020

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## BRAY EXCITED AT SALES PROSPECTS

Brad Reid

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

Or so the carols that have been bellowing out from shopping mall speakers since November tell me.

The good news for a fellow grinch and even those who lap up this time of year is that we are less than eight weeks away from the national yearling sales.

The 2021 version will represent the third instalment in which bloodstock auction powerhouse NZB have been at the helm.

The results since their introduction in 2019 have been remarkable. This was capped earlier in the year when several lots went deep into uncharted waters for the standardbred market, shattering records left right and centre.

While \$200,000 is a relative common for the galloping code, it was a barrier crossed only three times in the history of standardbred sales in New Zealand.

Last year saw several lots go beyond that threshold and the atmosphere over three days of selling was electric.

The 2021 edition will see 430 lots catalogued and despite Covid forcing cultural and process changes to the way business will be conducted, there is a lot of optimism within the industry for what lies ahead.

NZB Standardbred representative Cam Bray has been extremely busy over the last few weeks with plenty of travel around the country inspecting the various drafts of yearlings around the country.

"James Jennings, John Curtin, Michael House and myself have seen probably a good 70 or 80 percent of the horses catalogued

"With the current Covid world we are living in it's very tricky. We have had catalogue issues in terms of getting them where they need to be in Australia: this has put greater emphasis on information being available online.

"We've had plenty of people ringing and asking questions already that we need to have the answers too. That has been a positive in terms of knowing there is a lot of interest there already.

"Buyers are wanting to know what the types are like, whether we have seen a certain individual horse etc. There are buyers who are working off bigger lists who are spreading the net a bit further this year given they can't travel to physically see the horses," he said.



*Inspections have been in full swing and the NZB Standardbred contingent are captured in action at Rosedale Farm in Canterbury*

The greatest impact that Covid will have on the upcoming sale will be the inability for the international buying bench to travel and see the yearlings.

That has done little to quell the overseas interest in our stock. What we are seeing in other markets is that the inability to travel has seen the passive income usually reserved for holidays and the like, burning holes in the back pockets of consumers everywhere.

There is already evidence of consumer behaviour changing in the form of the Thoroughbred Ready to Run Sale conducted by New Zealand Bloodstock earlier in the year.

"We've built from scratch a live bidding system where our buyers can sit at home and bid on yearlings in real time. It worked fantastically with our thoroughbred Ready to Run Sale which traditionally had been dependent on the international buying bench being present.

"Even without the physical inspections, its turnover, its clearance rate, everything was up. And that's purely on the fact they don't have to come here to purchase anymore. The vendors did the job with the marketing of their stock and the buyers can purchase with confidence from the comfort of home," said Bray.

The last sentence of that paragraph should hopefully resonate with the vendors and consignors alike. There will be a greater emphasis on the marketing of yearlings and in particular utilising the digital and print platforms available.

"For the buyers it's going to come down to more of an elimination game and be a lot more calculated. This presents a challenge to vendors who are going to have to be more mindful of how they present their stock, particularly in the digital sphere leading up to the sales," he said.

Traditionally it has been a hard sell to encourage standardbred vendors of the importance of taking early photographs of their yearlings.

Understandably vendors are perhaps a little gun shy of presenting their yearlings to market while they are still developing through December and January.

It's only natural to want to show your investment in the absolute best possible light.

However, there are a number of advantages to getting high quality digital photos up of your yearling early, and better still a video. Given the inability of overseas interest to travel for the foreseeable, the use of photographs and videos will play a pivotal role in helping to attract interest and ultimately sell each yearling. This extends to the domestic buying bench also.

"Bearing in mind that the digital stuff isn't to showcase the farm or the brand as such, but to give people the opportunity to view your horse as if they would when they were here.

"The emphasis should not be on the slow-motion videos with dramatic music backing. It has to be nuts and bolts, walking up, walking back, an actual pace and seeing the movement of joints as you would otherwise in person.

"We can accommodate anyone as far as that's concerned. We have an ability to update photos as the yearlings progress.

"For mine it's important to have something online for your yearlings now or as soon as possible.

"These yearlings are a lot more advanced than a lot of our vendors often realise. It's imperative that when our NZ clientele and international clientele in particular look online they have something other than the pedigree page to look at.

"There are a number of processes they are going to have to go through from seeing a pedigree they like to the point of buying a horse. Myself I would be putting photos up earlier and then perhaps updating the sets leading into the sales."

The standardbred sector had its first true experience of



selling on a digital platform when Covid19 put pay to the All-Age Sale traditionally held in May. The success of the sale on the Gavelhouse platform was proof that an inability to travel will not slow down the local or overseas interest in our stock.

"The most positive thing for me is the All Age Sale which was run on a complete Gavelhouse sale and completely electronic. We saw a number of our good international buying bench active. It does put the emphasis back on the good diagnostic media and imagery.

"There has been some North American interest – that was one of the reasons we had John Curtin on our trip. You look how good our horses are going around the world, there is a huge interest there and its about trying to capture that.

"Rachel has been inundated with requests for catalogues and information and is it any wonder when we are the greatest source in the world for purchasing nice horses.

"The changes in the Australian handicapping system will be a positive in my opinion for the Yearling Sales vendor, although it is probably going to be negative to the going horse seller because of the way it has been structured.

"You are going to see Aussie's who are want to buy yearlings and take them home to develop. Now they are not able to buy the twenty or thirty thousand dollar racehorse and sneak it over there on a lesser mark," he said.

Bearing all of the above in mind, Bray doesn't see the lack of international presence being an issue and points to the close knit nature of our Australasian market being another factor in seeing a strong Australian influence come auction time.

"One of the great things about the harness racing industry is there is a lot of camaraderie and linkages. A lot of trainers in Australia have a great relationship with New Zealand trainers who will be on the ground helping them with their inspections.

"If they do need help, we are more than happy to point them in the direction of independent advice if they don't necessarily want to deal with a company representative. There can be a stigma around dealing with the company as agents. We are more than happy to get independent views and advice free of our own to make the process as transparent as possible," he said.

As we get past Christmas and start to push through to January, the traditional Yearling Sales tours will begin. Interest and registrations from trainers and buyers being as strong as ever.

"Numbers are looking great. As always Canterbury is a bit of an unknown with so many of the training group based there and having the ability to do their own inspections. The early numbers for the North Island are very good and Southland is fully booked for the SBSR tour.

"There are a number of trainers that can see the opportunity to find new markets and are in it as much as we are. I have little doubt these sales will be a success. They have been in the past and they will continue to be in the future. Our vendors and consignors do a fantastic job, and our horses perform. The results speak for themselves," he said.

Bray has been impressed with the stock he has seen. As alluded to earlier he is of the opinion that a lot of the yearlings are further advanced for this time of year than previously.

"The yearlings are sensational, they really aren't. I've been really impressed with some of the progeny of the new sires like Downbytheseaside and Vincent to name a few. Lovely types. And same with your hardy annuals like Bettor's and Art Majors, it's going to be a cracking sale," he said.

## **MURDOCH STEPS DOWN AS CHAIR OF SIRES STAKES**

Brad Reid

You would be hard pressed to meet a man more passionate about harness racing than Invercargill lawyer, Cleland Murdoch.

The long-time owner, breeder and administrator has recently called time on his role as Chair of the New Zealand Sires Stakes Board after three years at the helm having taken over from Graeme Henley in 2017.

In a society where volunteers numbers are gradually declining, Cleland Murdoch has proudly ploughed countless hours into the administration side of harness racing in almost every facet imaginable.

Murdoch is on the Executive of the New Zealand Standardbred Breeders Association and is a committee member of the Southern Standardbred Breeders Association branch as well. He has also held positions as President of the Invercargill Harness Racing Club to go with his Sires Stakes roles.

"I became involved with the Sires Stakes Board as the NZ Standardbred Breeders representative and I've really enjoyed it. Somebody has to do those voluntary jobs, so I've always been prepared to put my hand up for some hard work if necessary," he said.

Murdoch has been replaced as Chair of the Sires Stakes Board by Peter Evans, however, will remain on the Sires Stakes Board where he has held a seat at the table going on 15 years.

In his time there he has overseen or been a part of a number of areas of change and countless challenges

Bray has been impressed with the stock he has seen.







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*Amazing Dream and Natalie Rassmussen greet the connections and Sires Stakes representatives of the Nevele R Fillies final*

as the fight to remain relevant is ever evolving.

It's never easy being put on the spot but when asked to discuss something he is most proud of when it comes to the Sires Stakes, he answered: "Undoubtedly the growing presence of the Sires Stakes as the predominant organisation involved in age group racing and having been able to maintain that," he said.

The pivotal role played by the Sires Stakes Board was none more evident in a post-Covid capacity when it was able to adapt to the curve balls being thrown its way and provide a glimmer of hope for harness racing at a time when it felt like there was little.

The rescheduling of races that were otherwise cancelled was a huge boon in salvaging feature racing and provided a huge shot in the arm to an industry desperately needing positives. No less than 10 feature races were rescheduled with over a million dollars in stakes being made available.

"We had funds set aside that weren't ravaged by Covid and were able to still plan races when clubs in particular were unable too due to their funding streams being up in the air.

"Incredibly we've also managed to keep the number of participants and nomination payments for the various series high in a challenging environment. Yes, the foal crops have reduced but the number of breeders making payments for their progeny has continued to grow. We've got a hardcore loyal band of clients in the Sires Stakes Board," he said.

In his 15 years with the Sires Stakes Board, Murdoch has worked with a number of influential people in his time. He says there were too many to name and thank, but did identify one ex board member who left a lasting impression on him and the way the Sires Stakes Board did business.

"Steve Stockman was on our board for a while and you could see how he is a very successful businessman.

"He brought a lot of business acumen to the board in

his time and the way he dealt with things. He could be quite challenging in what he said. He dealt with the hard issues in a really pragmatic way and is one person in particular that I believe did a lot of shaping of who we are and our continued growth," he said.

Some of the growth that Murdoch alludes too has come in the form of conditioned race series in which the Sires Stakes Board has identified some gaps in the market and endeavoured to bridge the growing gap between the elite and the grass roots of our racing crops.

While it is not the responsibility of the Sires Stakes Board to do so, they must be commended for taking a more holistic approach to the series in which they are coordinating.

"The wheels started to move under Graeme Henley's watch, but we decided that in order to move forward we had to extract ourselves from the elitist label we were getting in order to widen our appeal and remain relevant.

"In order to do so we had to cater to a greater proportion of our industry and its stakeholders, and the board moved to instate conditioned races to see more of the money spread around different groups of owners and classes of horses.

"I think we have been able to achieve that with races like the Mares race on Show Day which has been a barnstorming success. Races like the Uncut Gems are providing opportunities for horses that bubble just under the real top liners and give the participants a chance at some of the spoils," he said.

"We are now looking at trying to expand into fillies and mares' races for trotters. That is high on the agenda of the board to see if we can't make more of an impact in that area," he said.

Aside from Covid and the challenge of remaining relevant with dwindling foal crops, one of the greatest challenges Murdoch faced in his time as chair was juggling his love of the social side of racing with his representative duties.





For a man who much prefers the social side of racing to being in the limelight, staying away from the bar until after the Sires Stakes Final on Cup Day was a tall order.

"I only had to make one speech and be involved in a presentation, but when that isn't until around race nine, I did find myself getting thirsty at times," he laughed.

"In all seriousness I think one of the biggest challenges we have now is aligning the racing calendar with Australia. If we don't change that we risk being left out in the cold and it represents a massive opportunity for our industry to move forward.

"Just look at it from a breeding standpoint where there are a number of commercial mares being left empty if they aren't in foal this time of year. If it is something that stands to benefit our industry then it must be seen as a positive thing," he said.

Murdoch who has been breeding since the late 70's has a fair bit on at the moment.

Aside from his successful law firm in the heart of Invercargill's CBD, he has the summer racing circuit and yearling sales in his sights.

He heads to the sales in Christchurch with two yearlings being prepared by his good friends Dave and Dawn Kennedy of Beaudiene Breeding.

They bring with them some fine company, a yearling colt and filly by boom North American sire, Captaintreacherous.

"I'm selling the last yearling of the day which I don't know if it's a good thing or not, but Dave Kennedy has assured me I'm better off selling last then first," he laughed.

"They are both well-bred and are there to be sold. I am of the opinion that the sales could end up being great for vendors given the money that isn't being spent on overseas trips and travel at the moment.

Lot 430 is the Captain T colt out of the Real Desire mare, Northview Desire.

She is the dam of two-race winners from four foals of racing age with the 14 win pacer, Northview Hustler being the standout thus far.

The son of Bettor's Delight who was formerly trained by Ray Green has spent most of his career taking on the big guns both here and in Australia without any luck.

He is however an extremely honest horse and one anyone would be proud to own.

The dam in Northview Desire was unraced but hails from a strong American maternal family and her pedigree matches up beautifully with Captaintreacherous in my humble opinion.

For a start it's a string outcross with no duplications in

the first three generations. Secondly, it's not very often you see the dam of a successful American sire appear in both the top and bottom line of a pedigree in the country. It's even less common to see one appear directly in the maternal line in the pedigree.

The Ambro Nesbit mare Sunburn does just that with the Captaintreacherous colt headed to the sales.

She is notably the dam of Beach Towel (French Chef) who appears via the stallion line of Somebeachsomewhere as the dam sire to the great son of Mach Three. She is also the fourth dam of this colt with producing a 4x5 reverse sex cross to Sunburn.

"If they buy them by the pound, then I'll get well paid for the colt. He is a big boy," said Murdoch.

"The Captaintreacherous filly who I part own with Dave Kennedy is a lovely type also and out of a very hot and commercial fillies' family.

Lot 357 is out of a lightly raced Bettor's Delight mare in Galleons Pleasure who herself is a half-sister to New Zealand Oaks winner, Cheer The Lady. Another half-sister in Galleons Supreme (Christian Cullen) is of course the dam of another New Zealand Oaks winner in Spanish Armada.

The colts in the family aren't half bad either with the likes of Southern Supremacy winner Duke of Wellington and NZ & GN Derby placegetter Supreme Dominator also appearing on the page of the catalogue.

Murdoch is breeding from a number of well-bred mares on the fine Kentucky grass of the deep south. He isn't afraid to mix gait either which almost seems sacrilege in some circles down there!

"I've got a share in a trotting mare called Galleons Royale who has been served by Marcoola and I've been fortunate enough to breed from my good friend Gary Allen's mare Niamey (2019 Trotting Broodmare of Excellence winner). She is trotting royalty and it's unbelievable what she has done as a broodmare," he said.

"Gary owns her in partnership with Trevor Casey and invited me in as a partner when it's been his turn to breed. I've been eternally grateful to breed from a mare of her quality.

"The best one we have bred from her has been Arnold (Muscle Mass). He looks like he will head to the Great Southern Star for his new trainer Craig Cross and has recently won four or five in a row in Australia.

"We have a cracking Love You filly out of Niamey called Waitingforyou who is going to Phil Williamson's after they get back from Cromwell. We have just had a What the Hill filly drop from Niamey also," he said.

Murdoch shares more than just a few breeding interests with former HRNZ Chair, Gary Allen. The two have formed a strong friendship hailing back to Murdoch's



time as President of the Invercargill Harness Racing club well over twenty years ago.

"We formed a friendship first of all in the bar when the business was done - us southerners were all good stayers back in those days. Our friendship just bloomed from there and the two of us have bred some really nice horses together," he said.

"We are also breeding from Galleons Royale who has been served by Marcoola. She has left us a Love You three-year-old filly and a yearling filly by Creatine."

The Murdoch and Allen association extends deep into the pacing gait with a couple of mares also carrying the 'Galleons' moniker made famous by Allen and his late mother, Fanny.

They include Galleons Pleasure as mentioned above with the Captaintreacherous filly destined for the sales.

Another is from a Falcon Seelster mare by the name of C J Galleon.

The mare has had five colt foals and besides a Net Ten EOM bred by Macca Lodge in 2016, the mare has been exclusively bred to Southland super sire, Washington VC.

The best of them has been Triple VC (2013) who won five in Southland before being sold to Australia where he has won a further four races since arriving in October.

When discussing the three-year-old colt from the mare, you get the sense that Murdoch and connections are in for some fun through the summer and through into the Autumn this campaign.

"He's extremely smart and will be having his first start on New Year's Eve hopefully. He has attracted a hell of a lot of interest and the buyers were swarming around even before he qualified.

"We called him Quaddie VC because he is the fourth Washington VC colt we have bred out of the mare. He is quite a big horse and is very similar to his older brother James Galleon who won his first seven from 10 races in Perth before going sore," he said.

C J Galleon has produced a Raging Bull colt this season and has been served by world champion son of Dragon Again, Fear The Dragon.

"Northview Desire is late and is due to drop any day now to Always B Miki. She was booked to Art Major but that will depend on when she has the foal; I may or may not breed her this year. We might try one on foal heat and see how we go but not a hundred percent certain just yet.

"The other mare I am breeding from is a mare called North View Lass who has been served and has a positive to Raging Bull," he said.

While not a notable producer, a quick glance at the re-

cord books shows that this is a sentimental line for Murdoch having begun breeding from her Grand Dam, Cheeky Lass (1967 Dick Adios) in 1984.

Harness racing in general would be a lot poorer if not for the likes of Murdoch and for all he has given to the game.

It's fitting given the difficult year he and his family have been through with the loss of a young grandchild that there is a bit to look forward to in the coming months.

We thank him for his time as our representative on the Sires Stakes Board and more recently as chair. and his ongoing involvement with his role with the Southland and NZ Breeders' Associations.

## **KENNYS GET EARLY PRESENT AT CAMBRIDGE**

Garrick Knight

It's not often you'll see the names Paul and Mary Kenny as winning breeders, even though they have effectively bred more of them than anyone else in the country over the past decade under the Woodlands Stud banner with Andrew Grierson.

Mary is the daughter of the late breeding tycoon Charles Roberts and her and husband Paul managed Roberts' affairs in the years leading up to his death as he suffered from an erosion of cognitive function.

One of the very few horses the Kennys have bred under their own name though is Ideal Agent, a winner at Cambridge last Thursday night for local trainers Andrew and Lynn Neal.

He's a son of Lady Smack, an unraced half-sister by Bet-tor's Delight to champion racemare, The Orange Agent. The Kennys purchased Lady Smack off her breeders, John, Moira and Trish Green and Peter Bult, after an inglorious qualifying effort in early 2015 for trainer Bunty Hughes.

"Bunty mentioned to us that she might be for sale and would be interested in her" said Paul Kenny.

"We said yes and offered what we were happy to pay for her. It all just came out of the blue, really.

"And this was just a matter of weeks before The Orange Agent came out and won the Northern Oaks at Alexandra Park.

"It's purely a hobby for us. We've just got Lady Smack together and Mary's got one other mare in her name as well."







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The reason for the purchase, mainly, was because the Kennys were on the hunt for a Bettor's Delight mare to send incoming rookie sire, Sweet Lou.

"From memory it was to go to him but we ended up going to American Ideal who, at that stage didn't have a huge following in New Zealand."

The Kennys and Grierson have very little cause for complaint given how their breeding empire has flourished over the past decade, but one legitimate gripe would be the lack of appreciation for American Ideal in New Zealand.

Despite continually producing high quality horses he has never really achieved the commensurate success in the sale ring, nor been patronised appropriately by local breeders.

His stocks in Australia were always high and that's why the Kenny and Grierson made the decision to stand him in Victoria from last year.

"It's been a wonderful move. They have such a huge regard for him over there.

"And the horse loves it there, too. Not that he didn't also love it here at Woodlands.

"He's just had so many more mares to serve being based over there, not to mention a resurgence in popularity on this side of the Tasman, too."

Kenny points to Pukekohe trainer Ray Green is a notable example of someone who identified, and has benefited immensely from American Ideal's lack of sale ring appeal.

He and wife Debbie made large profits from millionaire earner Hard Copy and current star Copy That, both of which were purchased cheaply as weanlings and sold for larger sums as juveniles.

"Ray is a very, very clever man.

"He has said he targets American Ideals because he reckons they sell for 'unders' at the sales."

The Kennys have now started to retain any American Ideal fillies bred out of Roberts' families based on a theory adopted from leading American studs.

"If you look at every broodmare band of a major stud in North America, you will see they have a significant number of Western Ideal mares in their broodmare bands.

"And the best way of sourcing that here is through American Ideal.

"So, with a couple of exceptions, most of our American Ideal fillies are now being retained.

"Enjoy Me is one that came from the first crop that we had the set aim of retaining them from. And we are hav-

having a lot of fun racing her."

In fact, at the time of interview, Kenny was preparing to driving to Cambridge on Christmas Eve to watch Enjoy Me race.

Ideal Agent sold for \$20,000 at the 2018 Karaka sale, purchased by Tauranga's Colin Eynon through the Neals. Sadly, Eynon died on the morning of last week's race, aged 87, after a battle with dementia.

"We felt it was a moderate sale," said Kenny.

"We never go to the sales expecting the moon and the stars. American Ideal at that stage didn't seem to have a huge following."

The Kennys failed to yield a foal from Lady Smack the next two seasons; she failed to conceive to Sweet Lou and then had a traumatic foaling of a full brother to Ideal Agent, which died.

"Just a bit of bad luck, really. She's been a bit of a challenge.

"But we do have a lovely Sweet Lou colt out of her for the forthcoming yearling sales. He looks really nice."

The colt is unnamed, along with the 37 other lots being offered by Woodlands Stud, something Kenny says is designed to give buyers an extra treat.

"The first pleasure somebody gets when buying a thoroughbred at the yearling sales is working out what name to give it.

"So, why make a chore for the breeder and deny the buyer the pleasure of doing it?

"Besides, over the past 10 years or so, we've shafted ourselves out of so significant names when the horses didn't develop as hoped.

"It was an HRNZ initiative to allow this to happen, and I think it should be applauded as a good idea."

## **STRATFORD BROTHERS TO CONTINUE FAMILY LEGACY**

Jonny Turner

Canterbury brothers Jason and Hamish Stratford are bucking a trend as they aim to continue their late father Mike's legacy in standardbred breeding. Each year harness racing sites and newspapers are filled with ads for dispersal sales after long-time and successful breeders







*Coravally Star and Jessica Grant-Young breeze on by to pick up another win on the grass, this time at Rangiora last Sunday*

such as the Mike Stratford pass away.

The passion for breeding horses often stops in these times at one generation and breeds either die off or are continued by others.

But that is certainly not the case for the Stratford brothers with their father's Classiebawn Stud breed.

"The old man was doing it for thirty plus years," Jason Stratford said. "And my grandfather [Bernie] obviously bred horses himself."

"So my brother and I are going to carry it on and see where it goes."

Jason Stratford admits he and his brother Hamish are a little green when it comes to standardbred breeding.

Though they have been around horses all of their lives, they had little direct input into their father's standardbred breeding interests.

Though Jason has bred thoroughbreds.

"We have been around horses since we have been young," Stratford said. "The interest has always been there."

"With Classiebawn too much hard work has gone into it to split it all up and sell it all away."

"So, we are going to have a crack at it."

The Stratford brothers are finding their way in the breeding game with the help of several industry participants.

Many of them were friends of their late father.

They include Bruce Negus, Anj Mugford, Bruce Hutton, Warren Stapleton, Mike Louch, Terry Chmiel and Robert Anderson.

"We have had a lot of help from various different people," Stratford said. "These people have been very helpful since the old man passed away."



"I have learned a hell of a lot in the past three or four months."

"Obviously when we have walked in we knew nothing."

"So, we are learning every day."

With the good support they are getting, the Stratfords are looking to modernise the Classiebawn Stud operation/

"We have obviously got a few good people around us, we have obviously taken on a few different things."

"Like social media, we have Anj Mugford doing that for us and she has done all of our foaling. She has been really good."

"The social media is going great guns at the moment. We have started that and every post gets two to two and a half thousand views."

"We have had people from as far away as Australia enquire about shares in horses. So, it is going really well, better than expected."

"Obviously we have had a lot of help from Bruce Negus, too."

The late Mike Stratford undoubtedly make his mark on the New Zealand standardbred breeding industry. Negus recently estimated he bred and owned 200 horses.

Among them is Locharburn, who Stratford sold before he went on to win 14 including the New Zealand Derby and then stand at stud.

Stratford's sons want to produce more like him and to further commercialise the Classiebawn Stud breed.

"We have taken a bit of a different line. We want to get it so it is commercial."

"We will race a few and then sell a few on, just to keep the till ticking over. I know it is hard to get a good horse



that pays for everything, but we might get there one day.”

Classiebawn Stud’s future products will be a mix of sales yearlings and horses that will be tried and either sold or retained for breeding.

“We will have one or two for the sales next year. We are getting three broken in at the moment with various trainers.”

“We probably won’t have anything racing until these ones come on.”

More Corravally Stars are just what the Stratfords have in mind.

The three-year-old, bred by the late Mike Stratford, has a touch of quality about him and ran a commendable seventh behind It’s All About Faith in the Group 1 Sires Stakes Final on New Zealand Cup Day.

An overdue winner at Rangiora last weekend, the three-year-old is from’ Courage Under Fire mare, Bowenvale. “The next one is a Sky Major who we have sold to the same owner as Corravally Star.”

“We have just had a filly foal by Art Major out of Bowenvale. She will be her last foal. We will obviously keep her and keep the lines going.”

Veteran producer Penscroft is still among the Classiebawn broodmare band. She was served late by Sweet Lou last season and is still to foal.

“Robert Anderson is breaking in two young ones including a Bettor’s Delight filly from Penscroft.”

Bowenvale and Penscroft are among six mares the Stratford brothers put in foal last season.

The resulting foals include an Art Major filly from Regal Suzy, a Locharburn filly from Gotta Classie Girl, a Sky Major colt from Monaveen, a Sunshine Beach filly from Stradowan as well as Bowenvale’s Art Major filly.

The Stratfords have also recently added Glacier Coast-er to their broodmare band.

## ***RACING: Briefing to New Government***

If you’re interested in some light holiday reading follow this link <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-12/Racing%20BIM.pdf> to the briefing from the Department of Internal Affairs to the new Minister for Racing, Hon Grant Robertson MP.

It is an interesting, easy to read overview of the status of the racing industry, funding pressures and COVID impacts.

It covers the issues facing the TABNZ, the implementation of the new Racing Industry Act, appointments to the boards of the TAB NZ and the Racing Integrity Board, challenges facing our sport including the future capitilisation of the TAB NZ.

## ***CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO INDUSTRY BODIES***

### ***TAB NZ: independent Directors***

### ***RACING INTEGRITY BOARD: Board Members***

The Government through the Department of Internal Affairs is calling for directors for TAB NZ and board members for the Board.

Background information, the required skills and attributes, time commitment and remuneration and the appointment process can be found on the DIA website and also following this link

NOMINATION FORM: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Appointments-to-Statutory-Bodies#current>

## ***ATTENTION ALL BREEDERS***

### ***HRNZ***

Application forms to register this season’s foals were posted out late October to the person who according to our records is the first named owner or lessee of any mare for which there is a 2019/2020 service record.

If you have not received an application form and believe you should have please contact this office.

Remember the cost of registration is \$195 per foal if application and payment is made by 1 April 2021.

The form should be lodged and paid for by the due date even if you do not have all of the required details. In this way breeders will avoid the imposition of late fees.

### ***IMPORTANT NOTICE – Branding & Microchipping***


This year foals will be branded AND microchipped. Both the brand symbols and the microchip number are required when applying to register your foal(s).

If your foal is not already branded and microchipped please send the notification card that was enclosed



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For News Articles that have appeared on our website for background information on microchipping click here and here

In the coming months HRNZ will provide more information on microchipping.

#### Foal Registration

Phone: 03 964 1200

HRNZ Fax: 03 964 1205

P.O. Box 459, Christchurch 8140

Email: [jfrench@hrnz.co.nz](mailto:jfrench@hrnz.co.nz)

Email: [cameron@hrnz.co.nz](mailto:cameron@hrnz.co.nz)

## **GRANT CRABBE REFLECTS ON THE GREAT SHARTIN**

David DiSomma

Shartin's breeder Grant Crabbe is "over the moon" with the decision to retire the 2019 USA Horse of the year.

After winning 46 races and nearly \$4m the seven-year-old has been sold to Indiana-based Kountry Lane Standardbreds where she will start her career as a broodmare.

"She has had some quarter cracks in her foot that may have slowed her up and that may have played a part in the decision but she's done it all and I'm over the moon with how it's gone.

"I feel very lucky that everything fell into place with her."

Crabbe bred the mare (Tintin in America – Bagdarin) and after winning a trial at Ashburton she was sold to Australia before going to the United States, where she won 15 from 19 in 2019 on her way to being named Dan Patch Horse of the Year. She had 20 winning miles in 1:50 or better with her best being a world record 1:46.4 at the Meadowlands.

"I would have watched 99 per cent of her races," says Crabbe, "there can't be many horses who have done what she has done."

"I sell horses if they are good and part of the gratification is them going well for the next person."

Crabbe says he knew from the time she was broken in that she was "special".

"But she has exceeded all expectations."



horses that doesn't stop him hoping another champion could be just another the corner.

The 67-year-old has seven horses on his Prebbleton property near Christchurch, including a Gold Ace filly to Bagdarin named Stunner and a two-year-old filly by A Rocknroll Dance out of Pure Opulence called Lamarli.

Now Crabbe can't wait to see what Shartin produces off the track. She will be bred to two-time USA pacer of the year Captaintreacherous and two-time New Zealand Cup winner Lazarus.

"It's like she's gone full circle and we have her progeny to look forward to."

The fastest pacing mare in history won five times from 12 starts this year (\$NZ622,142) with the owners deciding the seven-year-old was now ready to become a broodmare.

"In my wildest dreams I never thought I would have a mare like Shartin," said owner Richard Poillucci, "It does not happen very often in our industry and in a lifetime for an owner."

Shartin has been sold for an undisclosed sum to Ola Yoder, owner of Kountry Lane Standardbreds in Indiana.

"The barn will not be the same without her for sure," said trainer Jim King, Jr. "Hard to imagine this barn without her and looking forward to her next race.

"It's been the driving force for me these past three years. We knew this day would come so ...it's tough."

In total she won 46 of her 68 starts with earnings of \$2,667,563 (\$NZ3,745,946).

"I can't hardly tell you what's it been like to have owned and raced a world champion like Shartin," said co-owner JoAnn Looney King, "she's the dream horse I longed for since I was a young girl in the horse business. She's the dream horse everyone longs for."

"When I walk by her stall and speak to her I have some sadness but I know it's best for her and for the team," says JoAnn Looney King, "but damn it's going to be hard to watch her walk out of that barn for the last time."

## **NEW ROLE FOR DELIGHTFUL MEMPHIS**

After winning over a quarter of a million dollars in the United States, former top racemare Delightful Memphis has returned home to be a mum. It's rare - but far from unprecedented - to bring an American-based horse back to New Zealand to become a broodmare.





*Delightful Memphis in action at Yonkers Raceway. She is set to return to New Zealand for her connections and will head to stud.*

"It would have cost us \$30,000 to bring her back," says majority owner Wayne Higgs, "usually it's 22,000 but with Covid etc it's cost more."

"She's come back in fantastic order."

After going into quarantine the seven-year-old daughter of Bettor's Delight has had a date at Nevele R stud near Christchurch.

"She's been served by Always B Miki," says Higgs.

"We think if she produces a good looking foal to that breeding at the yearling sales, it'd go pretty good."

Trained by ex pat Kiwi Nifty Norman in New Jersey Delightful Memphis won nine from 35 in the United States, and \$US188,000 (\$NZ266K).

"She didn't win a real big one we ran into a horse called Shartin which was unfortunate, and before that we ran into Spanish Armada," Higgs said ruefully.

The Canterbury bred-Shartin was all but invincible in the States in 2018 and 2019, winning 15 of 19 on her way to being named US Horse of the Year last year while in this country Spanish Armada won 14 from 19 races in the 2016 and 2017 seasons. Delightful Memphis was runner-up to her on no fewer than nine occasions.

Now the Higgs bred and owned Stylish Memphis is his star horse with eight wins from 19 starts, but is playing second fiddle to six time Group one winner Amazing Dream.

Stylish Memphis is now being set for a southern campaign this summer while Delightful Memphis gets used to her new life off the track.

"Her mother has had 10 foals to date so it would be nice to get somewhere around that number also out of Delightful Memphis."

## **SAM BALLANTYNE - OBITUARY**

David DiSomma

After nearly 50 years' involvement in the harness racing industry in this country Sam Ballantyne has died in Christchurch, aged 74.

A studmaster, trainer and driver Ballantyne was born in Scotland where he bred horses, just as his father had done.

He also raced horses regularly throughout the UK at venues such as Prestatyn in Wales and it was during this time he crossed paths with now prominent Auckland trainer Ray Green (of Copy That fame).

They would become mates.

"The UK scene then was like a league of nations. I'd bump into Sam twice a week and I'd drive horses he bred and then sold on, he was right up there with the best."

"He was associated with a lot of Derby winners – he was a top breeder and he sold a lot."

In the 1970s he made the decision to go to New Zealand. According to Green he was "looking for some adventure in his life."

After settling in Christchurch he married into one of the country's most prominent harness racing families. His wife Judy was the daughter of Freeman and Peggy Holmes, of Noodlum fame. He also set up his stud operation, Eastwood Lodge.

"He was a top stockman," says retired bloodstock agent Bruce Barlass, who worked at the Lodge for five years (1978-83).



"His care for the horses, especially broodmares and foals was paramount"

Among the other people he employed were now top American-based trainer Mark Harder, Grant Payne and the late Dennis Smolenski.

"In the biggest years 250 mares would be served there, to the two stallions Plat Du Jour and Nardins Byrd," said Barlass. Other stallions there over the years included Australian champion pacer Preux Chevalier.

Gee du Jour (Plat du Jour – Geena) won the 1991 Rowe Cup while Folie Bergere, a Plat du Jour – Del Parole filly, trained by Ballantyne, finished third to the colts in the first ever Sires Stakes final in 1984.

After starting out in the mid 1970s, Ballantyne trained the last of his 73 winners (Amenophis) at Addington on January 2011.

As a driver he had 35 wins with Graikos arguably his best horse (8 wins – 17 starts).

Among his stand out performances was a second to Lord Module in the Group 1 Pan Am Mile in 1979.

"He was very professional," says Green, "and his horses were always immaculate."

"He would fit in with anyone, he was likeable and agreeable."

## **JIM WAKEFIELD - OBITUARY**

Awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to harness racing in 2012, respected breeder, owner and administrator Jim Wakefield has died in Christchurch, aged 87.

The NZ Trotting Owners Association representative on the Harness Racing New Zealand executive from 1998 to 2010, he went on to become Chairman from 1999 to 2003.

According to friend and former HRNZ chair Ken Spicer: "He will be remembered as one of Harness Racing's best leaders and administrators."

A key figure in developing the Racing Act 2003, he was also Harness Racing New Zealand's first appointment to the New Zealand Racing Board (2003-06), and chaired the organising committee for the World Trotting Conference in Christchurch in 2007.

Former HRNZ chief executive Edward Rennell remembers someone who was "very professional in everything he did .. he treated everyone with respect".

"My abiding memory is that he was very strong on industry integrity and maintaining high standards."



As an owner, breeder and prolific yearling sales purchaser he and wife Dr Susan Wakefield have been associated with star horses such as Bettor's Strike, Sparks a Flyin (21 wins), Texican, Scorching, London Express and London Legend (25 wins).

Bettor's Strike was second in Monkey King's 2009 New Zealand Cup with the Wakefields having a long and successful association with both driver and trainer that day, Dexter Dunn and Cran Dalgety.

Outside of harness racing, Jim Wakefield was a fellow (Hon Retired) of the NZ Institute of Chartered Accountants having been a member since 1956. He joined the Christchurch office of what became KPMG in 1952. He spent 27 years as a partner in the firm with three of these being Christchurch managing partner.

"He was a very astute business man, hard but very fair," says Spicer

Highly thought of in the business and harness racing worlds, Wakefield was also a chairman and director of numerous private and public companies, as well as a philanthropist and avid art collector.

Spicer: "A very modest and understated man, as a friend he was a great mentor and was always available to give advice ... he was a wonderful man."

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## **NZSBA BROODMARE LISTINGS**

The NZSBA has developed a section of its website to make available free listings of mares that breeders do not intend to breed for the upcoming season.

While we would love to see you breed as many as possible, we understand that personal circumstances are unique and the costs associated with breeding will see some tough decisions being made.

Whether you are prepared to give the mare away, make a lease arrangement or see her sold, we would like to see every MARE get a chance at stud this season and there will be breeders out there looking to put mares in foal.

To view the current listings we have on our website, copy paste this link into your browser;

<https://thebreeders.co.nz/for-sale-lease/>

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# From the Chair

## A Message from John Coulam, HRNZ Chair

Greetings fellow harness racing participants. I've been one month into the role as Chair of HRNZ and it is now timely to bring you up to speed with the priorities facing the Board.

Firstly, thank you to Phil Holden who has fulfilled the position of interim Chief Executive over the last six months or so. Phil reverts to being an Independent Director of the HRNZ Board on 11 January and we welcome Gary Woodham into the Chief Executive position effective 11 January.

### Positive News

Too often we can be distracted by negative matters when there is so much that is positive about this wonderful industry and the people who work in it.

Over the first four months of the season, harness racing turnovers show an 18.3% increase year to date and the HRNZ traffic light report as at 6th December reflects how well we are doing.

HRNZ KEY STATISTICS - 2020/21 SEASON					
as at 6th December 2020					
KPI	2019/20 YTD	2020/21 YTD	% Change from LY	2019/20 Actual	Status
Total totalisator races	728	806	10.71%	2,049	●
Total number of starts	7,831	9,084	16.00%	22,182	●
Average field size	10.76	11.27	4.77%	10.83	●
Total number of individual starters	1,774	1,828	3.04%	2,711	●
Average starts per horse	4.41	4.97	12.57%	8.18	●
# Races < 8 starters	59	54	-8.47%	164	●
Average winning dividend	\$7.82	\$8.35	6.78%	\$7.92	●
# Races favourite < \$2.00	186	176	-5.38%	488	●
# Races favourite < \$1.50	55	42	-23.64%	133	●
Fixed Odds Yield (%)	14.8	16.4	10.81%	13.8	●
Off-course turnover (\$000)	33,344	37,146	11.40%	85,066	●
On-course turnover (\$000)	3,572	2,591	-27.46%	7,584	●
Fixed odds turnover (\$000)	28,500	35,792	25.59%	75,015	●
Total domestic turnover (\$000)	65,416	75,529	15.46%	167,665	●
Exported turnover (\$m)	26.45	26.61	0.60%	81.03	●
Domestic market share T/O (%)	25.2	25.8	2.38%	27.2	●
Domestic market share GBR (%)	25.6	26.1	1.95%	28.4	●
Combined market share GBR (%)	16.0	16.7	4.38%	16.7	●
Total stakes (\$000)	10,253	10,963	6.92%	26,258	●
Average net stakes per race (\$)	14,084	13,602	-3.42%	12,815	●
Races starting on time % (within 60 seconds of scheduled time)	65.7	78.2	19.03%	71.3	●
<div> <span>● Ahead of Last Year</span> <span>● Consistent with Budget/Last Year</span> <span>● Down on Last Year</span> </div>					
* Export as at 29th November 2020					
** Stakes figures do not include non-tote races and are programmed stakes					



## Sapere Venue Report in Relation to Otago/Southland Racing Venues

We have been advised that this report will not be completed until late January and made available to the HRNZ Board early February.

### 2021/22 Calendar

The consultation process around the 2021/22 racing calendar has started with the draft calendar being distributed to all clubs on 18 December. What each club has received is very much a draft reflecting the 2020/21 calendar. Once clubs have made their submissions and business cases in writing and the recommendations of the Sapere review are known and actioned, the end result will look different. The timeframe is tight, however, I encourage clubs to work with HRNZ to make submissions in either support of or against the status quo by February 5th. The Board will be considering the final draft in February. Please contact Catherine McDonald, HRNZ's General Manager of Racing, with any questions around this process or to discuss possible options prior to making your submission.

### Funding Models

Liz Bishop, HRNZ's General Manager of Corporate Services, is working with a consultative group to further refine the funding model to clubs for next season and to review the funding to group and feature races. Part of this process is to define what expenses relate to the industry as opposed to individual clubs. This work will begin in January and will go to clubs for feedback in due course.

### Social Media Policy

Work continues in the background developing the regulations around the social media policy. I wish to assure members that such regulations are being developed to deal with abuse and online bullying, not to restrict freedom of speech and debate of policies.

### Strategic Plan

The HRNZ Board will be taking the feedback from the industry day and renewing the strategic plan for the industry. One thing that was clear from the industry day is that participants are calling for a professional approach at all levels of the industry.

### Animal Welfare

As an industry, we cannot take our social licence for granted. The new Minister for Racing has made it quite clear that animal welfare across all three codes is a top priority. This too is a priority for your Board and we have already made good progress in this area.

I wish all participants and families a happy and enjoyable festive season. Enjoy the racing, the company of others and keep the turnovers up!



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# ***Kiwi mare Miss You N dominating her ranks in the Midwest***

Southern Hemisphere invader Shartin N has taken the mare pacing world by storm with her consistent efforts and speed, but it is another New Zealand transplant that is starting to turn heads in the Midwest — Miss You N.

Miss You N is the 6-year-old daughter by Betterhanceddar and has won eight of her last nine starts — all in opens or invitationals at Hollywood Dayton Raceway and Harrah's Hoosier Park.

Foaled in 2014, she is the product of the mating between the shuttle stallion and Woman In Black, who was lightly raced, but recorded four wins, a pair of seconds and three thirds in just 11 career starts.

In New Zealand, Miss You N recorded three wins in 17 starts and earned \$22,770.

She was exported in October, 2018 and ended up in the Ross Croghan barn for the Let It Ride Stable and Dana Parham. Miss You N quickly adapted to the U.S., winning eight of her first nine starts — all in conditioned events and all on the half-mile oval at Yonkers Raceway.

Dana Parham's Bottom Line Racing and Carl Howard become owners of Miss You N in mid-July and turned her over to Ohio's top trainer, Virgil Morgan, Jr.

In her 13 starts for her new connections, she has not missed the board with a 9-2-2 record and has earned \$124,550.

Miss You N was a scant nose away from having an active nine-race win streak. Her impressive run started with a gate-to-wire win on Sept. 25 at Dayton Raceway. The following weekend she once again was the pacesetter and recorded her career best 1:49 in the \$25,000 open over the Dayton five-eighths mile oval. Her 1:49 mile makes her the fastest offspring of Betterhanceddar.

"She's a really nice mare. She's so tactical and versatile," said Morgan.

The biggest victory this season was a 1:50.2 win in the \$67,500 filly mare invitational at Hoosier Park on Breeders Crown night. Dexter Dunn picked up the drive that night and thanks to an outside post position was forced to race off-the-pace. Miss You N was up to the task and scored a 1 ¾ length win.

"I think she's just as good, if not better, passing horses," said Morgan. "She loves to pass horses. You just have to look at that Hoosier Park win."

On Dec. 4, from the outside post #7, driver Jeremy Smith hustled Miss You N off the starting gate wings and led until the final stride, edged by pocket-sitting The Bethinator. The mare's seven race win streak was over. I

In her latest start, the filly mare open on Dec. 11 at Dayton Raceway, Smith reverted back to their usual front-end style to score in 1:52.1.

"Lately, she's been so much the best that it forces you to go forward with her off the gate," said Smith. "A lot of the guys respect her, so I get to kind of control the tempo and then we drag race home."

"She is the nicest mare I have ever had the privileged to drive," said Smith. "I refer to her as one of the 'extra ten percenters.' She's got that extra will to win."

Training Southern Hemisphere horses is nothing new to Morgan. He has been training Aussies and Kiwis for nearly 20 years, when the newly named Ohio "Hall of Fame" conditioner was training for Joe Muscara.

"We would get between five and 10 horses a month shipped up," said Morgan. "But that was 15 years ago. The pedigrees are so much better now. Back then, you would have some unknown sires and mares you have never heard of. That is not the case now."

Miss You N currently sits with more than \$300,000 in career earnings and Morgan and Smith are looking for more good things from Miss You N.

## **NZSBA THANKS ITS PARTNERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR ASSOCIATION**

