

What makes a good stallion?



Warning

It's a question we're often asked when choosing a stallion for our mares. There's a choice of 500 or more registered in Britain and Ireland and fees range from a few standing at over £50,000 downwards.

The top price bracket includes: Empire Maker, Giants Causeway, Green Desert, Indian Ridge, Pivotal and Singspiel whilst the lower echelons, at around 1/50th of their fee, comprise some surprisingly well known names such as Busy Flight, Minster Son, Rock City, Sharastani and Terimon. So what are the determining factors that make a stallion successful? Principally racecourse performance, bloodlines and fashion. You'll notice that a lot of



Pharly

those at the lower end of the fee scale were proven distance horses (a Derby horse is a 3 mile chaser in the making) - but the emphasis today is very much on speed over stamina and durability. A lot also has to do with whether progeny are bred to race or for the sale ring. Breeding for racing puts the emphasis on soundness, conformation and performance. Breeding for the sale ring is quite different - it's important to look good on the sales catalogue page and have a fashionable pedigree. That's why unproven stallions start out at surprisingly high prices - the bloodstock industry is the built on hope over reality. But, of course, a few of the new stallions make it and go on to command top fees - but for most it's the slippery slope towards the bargain basement. This price polarization is further exaggerated by top stallions commanding high fees and only covering the best mares too - no wonder they're successful and the 'not so good' stallions don't do so well with poorer mares! It's very tough for horses condemned to the lower reaches after only a couple of years to reverse the trend. And good

stallions also simply drop out of fashion because they're considered too old - even though genetically their age makes no difference to their progeny. So there are bargains out there to be secured with the proviso that you need to be breeding to your own criteria - and not worrying what value others would put upon the results in the sale ring! The almost inevitable fate for stallions that slide down the popularity stakes - or never manage to reach dizzy heights - is to be exported. That usually guarantees that the youngsters they've left behind will go on to become superstars!



Selkirk

So what do we look for?

- **Racecourse performance** (ideally a Group 1 winner and a stallion, that also managed to win at 2 years, with a high Timeform rating)
- **Dam's pedigree** (she too needs to have shown top class racecourse performance)
- **Conformation** (the chosen stallion needs to have the size and conformation to compensate for any weaknesses in our own mare)
- **Distance** (preferably a 7 - 10 furlong performer)
- **Pedigree** (from a family that will reinforce bloodlines in our own mare)
- **Temperament** (we need to breed manageable youngsters)
- **Proven** (shown ability to breed winners and hopefully 'improve' his mares)
- **Success** (ratio of winners to runners - rather than total winners or prize winnings which favours stallions with big books)
- **Price** (having evaluated all the above we compare the fees to determine which we think is best value)

From recent coverings we've selected Environment Friend, Generous, Most Welcome, Pharly, Safawan and Wizard King as representing best value - only time will tell if we were right!



Most Welcome



2005 Open Day

This year's Open Day at the stud will be Sunday 17 July. Although it's still a long time off we've already had several enquiries from owners anxious to include our Open Day at the stud in their plans. West Wales is a long trek for many who come from as far afield as Sussex, Yorkshire, Essex, Scotland - and even from abroad! So why not

make the most of your visit and enjoy the pleasures of the local unspoilt countryside and nearby coastline? Just ask the office if you'd like ideas of what to do or where to stay. Everyone will receive a formal invitation in due course together with details of the day. We very much hope that as many of you will come with family and friends too.

The boys at home

With the sudden departure of Buggy (Sweep Home) into training, Backpacker (25yrs) and Princes de Galles (12yrs), the two elder statesmen, are having a quiet time in their field without his Tigger-like attentions!

Backpacker was the founding racehorse and retired here in 1994 having graced some of the country's top tracks including Ascot, Kempton, Sandown and Ayr in a career which spanned 6 seasons over



Backpacker flies the open ditch in the 1992 Scottish Grand National

He really had no regard for their status as successful racehorses being totally in charge of his elder brother, Princes de Galles, and bouncing and rollicking poor old Backpacker abominably. Despite this the 'old man' was still in control and could occasionally be seen leading them up the field at a brisk gallop whilst leaping imaginary large fences! So it's probably not that surprising that Backpacker spent a couple of days in mourning and found his sole companion somewhat lacking and made no bones about showing it. Contrarily Prince was perfectly happy to eat and sleep peacefully and now both have settled for a quieter life!

fences. He was a remarkable jumper who left one's heart in one's mouth yet he never fell. His name even appears on trophies graced by the likes of the legendary Tingle Creek.

Prince de Galles is by far the best racehorse produced by his sire Prince des Coeurs. Trained by Peter Bowen and retired in 2003 he was a late starter and had his first run over hurdles when he was 7 confounding his trainer's predictions by finishing a close 2nd at 66/1. Paul Flynn struck up a great relationship with him and they became one of the most consistent partnerships running up a sequence of wins and places in long distance hurdles.

WINNING POST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

2/2005

It's Festival fever!



The build up and hype has gone on for months - but, at last, the Cheltenham Festival is nearly upon us. It's the first year of a four day meeting, extended from the usual three, and, as an added bonus for the Irish, St. Patrick's Day falls on the Thursday! It's racing's biggest betting bonanza so we've asked Homebred's professionals two questions. Firstly, what's your banker bet? And, what's your idea of a live outsider? These are their thoughts...



Peter Bowen continuing to ride high in this years trainers table says: "Baracouda

in the stayers hurdle is my banker - Doumen is very bullish about his chance. My longshot is our own Take the Stand - hoping the ground comes up fast enough for him to run".

Amanda Perrett

was a leading amateur over jumps herself - she and Mark have made joint selections. Amanda says "The banker's got to be Moscow Flyer in the Champion Chase".



Mark Perrett was a top jockey under both codes who makes no apology for

his on going love of jumping. Having ridden a 100-1 winner for us it seems best to ask him for an outsider "My longshot would be Joly Bey". Unfortunately he won't start at 100-1 though!

Gerry Enright

former stable jockey for Josh Gifford: "Best Mate's got a great chance of making history. As for an outsider - perhaps Royal Shakespeare".



Sweep Home starts work

Homebred's unraced five-year-old half brother to our winning hurdler Prince de Galles, Buggy, is now in training. He's being ridden daily around local lanes by Sheena Hill to start strengthening legs and to help reduce his waistline. He'll be transferred to Peter Bowen's yard in a few weeks with the intention of running in N.H. flat races this summer. He's looking a picture and also proving to be very popular with Homebred owners who've watched him develop over the last couple of years.



Know your rules: Remounting

The issue of remounting has been in headlines recently and the Jockey Club has come under pressure to redraft the relevant rule 152(i). Certainly we have never wanted our horses remounted after a fall and the circumstances surrounding Ruby Walsh's remounting of Paul Nicholls' star underline the welfare issue. The current rule states: "Any horse getting away from its

rider may be remounted, but should it have run out of the course or continued before being caught it should be brought back to the part of the course where it parted from its rider, and if it is a steeplechase or hurdle race it should continue by jumping all the remaining fences or hurdles. Any rider so losing his horse may be assisted in catching it and remounting it without risk of disqualification".

Course factfile: Folkestone

Folkestone is one of those tracks you either love or hate - and because we've had a winner there we quite like it! The undulating 11 furlong oval track offers racing under both codes - and more than often extremes of going - in the winter it's usually very soft, but very firm in the summer months.

Folkestone racecourse is off junction 4 of the M20

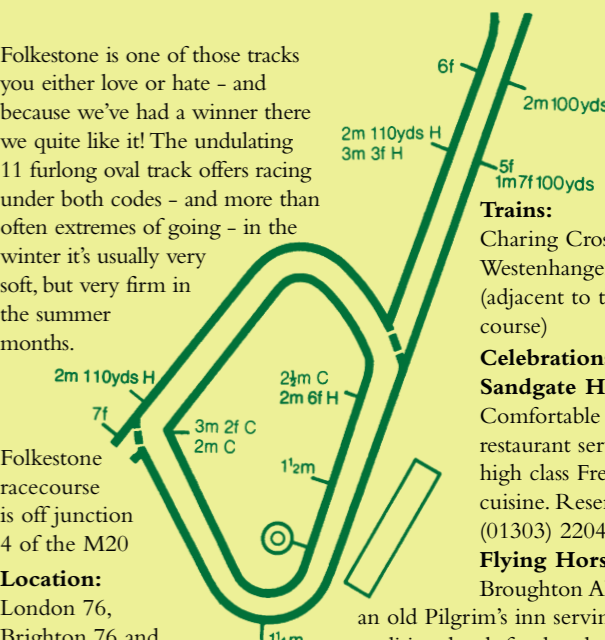
Location: London 76, Brighton 76 and Maidstone 33 miles.

Telephone: (01303) 266407

Trains: Charing Cross to Westenhanger (adjacent to the course)

Celebrations: Sandgate Hotel: Comfortable seaside restaurant serving high class French cuisine. Reservations: (01303) 220444

Flying Horse: Broughton Aliph, an old Pilgrim's inn serving good traditional pub food and offering bed and breakfast too. Reservations (01233) 620914





Artist's impression of the new grandstand

Ascot's race against time

Ascot racecourse is now looking to stage the Royal meeting in 2006 elsewhere as their £185 million redevelopment may not be completed in time. The 2005 meeting is already scheduled to be run at York but Ascot says "It's a challenging schedule and there's no time to spare for bad weather etc. We have contingency plans in place and York would again be the

obvious favourite to do so again". The real concern is not construction of new facilities but whether the new surface will have sufficient time to bed in. Trainers have already voiced concerns over how new and old sections of the track will match - variable ground is known to be a crucial factor in causing leg problems for racehorses.

Race course attendances on the up...

Racecourse attendance rose to a record 6,047,226 racegoers in 2005 - an average of 4,650 per meeting. Although overall attendance was up average attendances were down due to the increased number of fixtures on the all weather.

Tote plans new bet...

Tote betting accounts for just 3% of the total horserace betting market so a new bet is now planned to attract punters. The "Swinger", which originates from South Africa, challenges punters to find two horses in the first three - personally I find it hard enough to find one in the first three!

Stallion Profile: Hamas

Hamas is a superbly bred son of Danzig out of Fall Aspen, a Group 1 winning mare who has foaled an amazing 12 individual winners of 48 races each winning Group or Listed events. So it was no surprise that Hamas was useful himself. Very useful in fact, spread-eagling a good field to land the Group 1 July Cup beating College Chapel and Zieten who are themselves now leading stallions. In all Hamas won 5 races from 5 to 8 furlongs proving himself to be very speedy in attaining a Timeform rating of 125.

Bay, or dark brown, Hamas is a good looking horse who's sired the winners of over 400 races and over £3½ million in his first 8 seasons at stud. From his pedigree, track performance

and initial success at stud it's surprising more hasn't been heard of him. Hamas originally stood in Ireland where competition is intense and when his books dwindled and he didn't provide a superstar he was moved to France where he slipped into obscurity. Under management of the Shadwell Stud Company who look after some of Europe's top stallions it's likely his fortunes are to change for the better. He now stands at the Pitchall Stud near Stratford and, at a modest fee considering his background, should attract a good number of mares. Back in the land of his success on the racetrack it would be no surprise to see this close relative of Dubai Millennium (described by Sheikh Mohammed as the best racehorse there's ever been) at last produce his own superstar. Let's just hope it's one of ours!



Cadeaux Genereux

The creation of a racing machine...

We take a look at the really quite recent arrival of the Thoroughbred racehorse.

Since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Thoroughbred has been developed in Britain as the supreme 'racing machine', which is now capable of covering a mile at something approaching 40mph and shorter distances at correspondingly faster speeds. The name 'Thoroughbred' is the literal translation of the Arabic Kehilan, meaning purebred, and it is widely known that the English Thoroughbred traces back to three Arab stallions imported in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Byerley Turk, the Darley Arabian and the Godolphin Arabian were crossed with native and other mares and produced the forerunners of the modern Thoroughbred. Although it is frequently overlooked, other stallions such as the Leedes Arabian and the Lister Turk also played a part in the early days of the breed, but the three 'founding fathers' take precedence as it is possible to trace direct tail-male lines back to them.

Within fifty years of the arrival of the Byerley Turk in Britain in 1689, Thoroughbreds were being taken across the Atlantic by the early settlers - the first recorded being Bulle Rock, a son of the Darley Arabian, who arrived in 1730. From these, the vast American racing industry of today has evolved. Since those days, Thoroughbreds have been exported

worldwide - indeed, wherever there is racing there are Thoroughbreds. Although the elegant long-legged Thoroughbreds, with their great presence and quality, are easily recognizable, there are, as in other breeds, different types. These have been developed in answer to the demand for sprinters or for middle or long-distance horses. The sprinters, who need to generate enormous acceleration over short distances, are usually short-coupled, with shorter musculature, while the stayers are usually longer and rangier, with longer muscles and bones. In Europe, the accent has been on middle and long-distance horses, while in America the pressure for quick results has resulted in the development of speed and early precocity. Australia, too, produced youngsters that were great sprinters, so that many of their middle and long-distance races were won by the marvellous types produced in New Zealand. Recently, however, Australian Thoroughbreds have earned an enviable reputation for stamina and toughness.

All this may seem not to have a great deal of relevance to the horse ridden by the average rider, but that is not so. The majority of Thoroughbreds are still bred for the race-track, but it is those which are not suitable for racing that so often find their way into what may be called, for want of a better description, 'leisure ownership'. In Britain, Thoroughbreds of the more substantial, galloping, hunter

type have been extremely successful in show jumping and eventing at the highest level. As hunters, in galloping country such as the English Shires, they are without peers. For the general rider, however, the Thoroughbred - beautiful, high-couraged and versatile though it is - is not necessarily the most suitable as it requires very careful handling. The Thoroughbred now exerts enormous influence in the development of other breeds. Now any breed that, in the course of its evolution, requires an infusion of quality, almost always turns to the Thoroughbred.

Thoroughbred factfile:

Height Between 14.2hh to 17hh. Average approximately 16hh.
Colour Any solid colour, including grey, with bays, browns and chesnuts predominating. White markings allowed.
Head Very refined and intelligent. Big, bold eyes. Medium-length ears.
Neck Elegant, arched neck.
Shoulders Markedly sloped. Well-defined, prominent withers.
Body Deep through, giving plenty of room for heart and lungs. Short back, well-sprung ribs. Strong, muscular quarters. High croup, tail set high.
Limbs Hard legs with minimum of 8 inches (20 cm) of bone (except in the very smallest). Well-let-down hocks.
Action Long, low, raking stride, covering a great deal of ground.

Annie gets a new name



Annie (red jacket) returns from work

The search for a racing name for our two-year-old College Chapel filly 'Annie' netted many good suggestions including Degree Zero, Home Express, Cathedral Steppes, Bolshoi Ballerina. Having canvassed a wide range of opinions we gave 'Divine White' the deciding vote suggested by David Russell who wins a 1% share in her first two-year-old season. Amanda Perrett says "She doesn't look out of place amongst some very expensive two-year-olds by the very best stallions. She's got a great temperament and I hope to have her ready to run by May".

Why racing is important

Although horseracing might be considered by many to be a frivolous part of the entertainment industry it has now become an important element of the UK economy. Over 100,000 are now directly, or indirectly, employed in racing. It's the shop window and the high profile tip of a much bigger equine 'iceberg'. In fact the horse population is now bigger than ever - even than in the days before real horse power was superseded by the internal combustion engine. From farriers and feed merchants to vets and valets the equine market is now the sixth biggest industry in Britain and bloodstock sales make an important contribution to export earnings.

Snapshot

Homebred Star (centre) ridden by Paul Flynn. Picture courtesy of Vernon Clarke



We'd like to hear from you

Let us have your ideas and views...



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