

How to pick a yearling

Finding a successful formula when it comes to securing a top yearling remains an eternal battle.

In the early 1990s, it's claimed that US trainer D. Wayne Lucas changed the face of yearling sales when he started buying by looks and not off the page. Lucas bought the best-conformed, most athletic horses irrespective of pedigree and price.

This is an Australian view - trainer Lee Freedman says: "You realise more and more how many good horses look different. If every attractive horse would be a great racehorse and we'd all be bidding on them, paying ridiculous money."

Freedman does not favour any colour: "I look for an athlete, price aside, but what that is can be different to different people. If I like the horse, I am willing to forgive the faults. Those faults only help me determine the price."

"I want the horse to catch my eye. That first impression is important. I like an intelligent, attractive head, particularly with fillies."

Trainer and former jockey Robbie Griffiths comes from a racing family. For Griffiths the yearling sales are a gamble. Griffiths buys "on spec." For that reason, Griffiths needs to be frugal and diligent at the sales. "I try to buy the best-looking yearling out of a proven mare with athleticism."

"I am forgiving of faults. Faults pull them up in the ring, but not on a racetrack." "I like an intelligent head, well-balanced body, athleticism, good walker and good genetics and horses light on their feet, and they must walk well, with an overstep. The horse needs to have a big barrel. I don't care if the horse is only 15 hands tall, as long there is plenty of room for a big heart and lungs. I remember my time as a jockey that all the good horses I rode were like Harley Davidsons, you could hardly get your legs around them!"



The perfect specimen

My biggest dislike is a heavy walker. Generally they are heavy plodders at the gallop." Bloodstock Agent David Gabbedy is now based in Melbourne, where he is the principal of Belmont Bloodstock.

As a bloodstock agent, Gabbedy has a different approach to the sales from that taken by the trainers. "I like to get a first impression as soon as the horse walks out. If it is an eye-catching, athletic horse and I like it, then I am happy not to worry too much about faults."

"Personally, I love a horse with a strong rear end - the push-off power - and a horse that really uses that rear end in the walk."

"Yearlings can improve, or go backwards, in that short time. At the sales, it is important that they are handling the pressure. It is exactly the temperament and toughness you are after in a racehorse."

"Personally, the main fault I steer clear of is a yearling that is 'back in the knee.' I also don't like a horse that is really upright in front, like they are standing in high heels (the perfect angle of the pastern should be 45% and it is generally accepted that the angle of the shoulder and the pastern should always be the same)."

Sceptre - the greatest ever Classics winner?

Statistically, Sceptre's record in terms of Classics won is the greatest and in 1902 she performed the phenomenal feat of winning the 1,000 Guineas, Oaks, St.Leger and the 2,000 Guineas - and almost won the Epsom Derby. Sceptre was exceptionally well bred. She was by Epsom Derby winner, Persimmon, out of Ornament, a sister to the 1886 Triple Crown Winner Ormonde. Sceptre won 2 starts out of 3 as a 2 year old.

In both, the 1,000 Guineas and 2000 Guineas, she won in a canter. In the 1,000 Guineas, she broke the track record winning in 1:39 secs and simply turned the classics into a procession. She bruised a foot before the Epsom Derby and finished 4th as a result of jockey Randall giving her a hopeless start and too much to do. In the Oaks two days later, she crucified her rivals.

In the Grand Prix de Paris, history repeated itself with Randal riding a pathetic race and in the Coronation Stakes, a repetition of the Derby took place again and jockey Randall was sacked.

In the St. Leger, Sceptre won in a canter home. On retiring to stud, she produced one colt



Classic winner Sceptre

(Grosvenor) and seven fillies. Maid of the Mist, the best of Sceptre's produce, won three races. Maid of the Mist became the dam of two classic winners, Craig an Eran (2,000 Guineas) and Sunny Jane (1917 Oaks). Craig an Eran also ran a good second to the ill-fated Humorist in the 1921 Derby. Sceptre, although she faced defeats, carved a niche for herself amongst racing's greats of the last Century. Her feat of winning 4 classics may never be equalled in Racing History.

Did you know?

The horse evolved about 50 million years ago in what is now North America.

WINNING P RACING ST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

WINTER 2013/14



Celestial Bay (right) back at home enjoys some welcome grass - now rugged up and turned out with older sister Divine White (chestnut) and her dam Snowy Mantle (grey)

Home for Christmas!

Although events conspired against Celestial Bay at the end of her first season, our confidence that she'll prove even better next year is undiminished. Heavy ground at Sandown, then unprecedented kick-back at Wolverhampton and finally missing the break at Lingfield prevented her showing her true form. Sky is a lovely big filly who will prove a lot stronger next year after returning home for her well earned break. The plan will be for her to return to Sylvester in the spring for a turf campaign in races up to a mile. Although she's not repeated her sprint form over longer distances we feel sure she will stay further. So, with her speed, there's a lot to look forward to in 2014!



Girl power!

Make a Fuss (left) and Delagoa Bay (right) are now back in training. Make a Fuss (Lucy) has grown very well and has also strengthened up and, still a maiden, will be prepared for a sprinting campaign in 2014 - although she may get further. Delagoa Bay (Poppy) is already a proven stayer and will also be campaigned on the flat in 2014. Poppy has also done very well having enjoyed a summer out at grass. We are hopeful that both will prove up to winning races next year - and shares are still available in both via the website www.homebredracing.co.uk or by calling 01293 884433.

Did you know?

Bookmaker's profits on British racing are over £1 billion per annum.

A Dark Horse



Dubai Prince (above) is a horse to look out for over timber this season. Trainer John Ferguson describes Dubai Prince as 'my secret weapon' - so expect him to be aimed at top prizes. Even the Champion Hurdle... You heard it here first!

Did you know?

British racing annually generates over £400 million in tax revenues for the government.

Seen in all the right places!

2.55 RACE 6		fastracktosuccess Finjaan RUK	
James Seymour Stakes (Listed Race) (Class 1)		Winner £20,982.70	
		1m2f Row	
£37,000 guaranteed For 3yo+ which have not won a Group 1 Pattern race in 2013 Weights 3yo colts and geldings 8st 12lb; fillies 8st 7lb; 4yo+ colts and geldings 9st 2lb; fillies 8st 11lb Penalties after February 28th, 2013, a winner of a Listed Race 3lb; of a Group 3 race 6lb; of a Group 2 race 9lb Entries 13 pay £185 Penalty value 1st £20,982.70 2nd £7,955 3rd £3,961.20 4th £1,963.20 5th £965.30			
6347023	CHAPTER SEVEN 21	4 9-2	
1	ch g Excellent Art-My First Romance	Harry Bentley	123
(3)	Stuart Williams Pearl Bloodstock Ltd		
2759156	FATTSOTA 20 D1	5 9-2	
2	b g Oasis Dream-Gift Of The Night	Daniel Tudhope	119
(2)	David O'Meara Middleham Park Racing XXVIII & Partner		

Our filly Make A Fuss is out of a full sister to the dam of Group winner Finjaan who retires to stand at stud in Newmarket in 2014. The whole race card at Newmarket was sponsored by Gazely Stud including Finjaan in the name of each race on Saturday's racing at HQ. Finjaan, a winner of Group 2

and Group 3 races and only beaten a short head in the Group 1 Dewhurst stakes, will stand at a £4,500 fee. Finjaan - and Make A Fuss - are from a great family, grandam Cheval Volant being a triple Group 1 winner and grandam of 1,000 Guineas winner Lahan. So not much for our filly to live up to!

The importance of Encosta de Lago represented by this statue at the stud



Seen the Wizard of Oz!

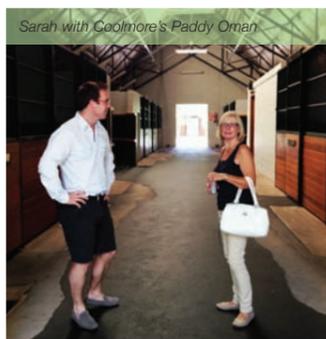
Sarah describes visiting Coolmore Stud in Australia. Coolmore Stud (Australia) is situated in New South Wales, approximately 2 hours' drive north of Sydney and on the northern edge of the Blue Mountains. It is in the Hunter Valley famous for its wines, Semillon and Shiraz in particular. Apart from stud farms the area is also known for grass fed beef (Aberdeen Angus) and dairy, producing delicious cheese.

local rangers spraypaint them pink to show the animal is dead and not suffering and there is no joey in its pouch. It's not surprising as despite bush fencing they are seeking

They are post and rail fenced with mesh below. Since Australian yearlings birthdays are 1st August the breeding season is coming into full swing now. Mares to



Australia's best - Encosta de Lago



Sarah with Coolmore's Paddy Oman

Currently, exceptionally dry conditions and temperatures in the 30's, combined with the seasonal high winds have produced numerous bush fires throughout NSW and one nearby was listed 'out of control' so helicopters with water 'slings' could be seen overhead. There is a high population of wombat and kangaroo. Sadly, the latter can be seen frequently as roadkill, and

the lush watered grassland. Inland from Newcastle are areas of open cast coal mining. Paddy Oman, who showed us round, explained the staff were attending a protest vote in local town Denman, against the spread of the coal mining. Coolmore Stud's hundreds of acres of green paddocks are rye grass and watered by licence for extraction from the Hunter River.

be covered arrive (they're called dry mares) and then there are acres of paddocks with visiting wet mares (those with foal at foot) waiting to be covered and those waiting for their final scan for testing 'in foal'. Then there are all Tom Magnier's own mares and foals. There are small paddocks for the mares to foal outside which are lit and have cameras and observation

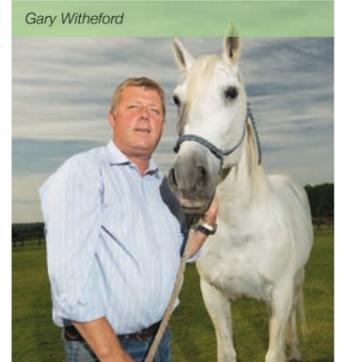
huts (unlike our mares who foal inside to keep sheltered). Another area is for the yearlings who are brought out for half an hour per day in preparation for the yearling sales. Any to be kept will be sent away for breaking (backing). There are 4 full time resident vets with full lab facilities. 150 staff are resident with houses and leisure facilities. Finally we reach the stallion paddocks who cover the mares early morning and evening and are brought in at 9am to the large American barn for the day. There is an area for hosing them down but if muddy they'll be fire hosed outside! Then they get their wafer of hay - except for one who is persuaded to perform more quickly so as to get back to it! At the end of the barn is the covering area, filled with deep rubber chippings. The mare wears padded boots to protect the stallion. A groom stands at her head and one at her shoulder. Two will attend the stallion and direct him to a firm area for him to balance better. Outside the barn is a statue of Encosta de Lago - the founding Australian stallion Danehill who can be seen in a lot of the pedigrees. Encosta de Lago is now 20 years old and still performing. A fine looking man, he was enjoying a well-earned snooze, but put up with the photos, went and had a drink then resumed his position. He has a lovely temperament and Poppy (Delagoa Bay) looks very like him in the head. It was very special to meet him and we'll be explaining to Poppy what she has to live up to. No pressure then!

Did you know?

It's estimated that there are over 75 million horses worldwide... and the UK horse population is now higher than the era of horsedrawn transport!

Meet the horse whisperer

Gary Witheford is a horseman who is proving increasingly worth his weight in gold to trainers who use him to put his unique skills to work on their most troublesome horses. This 'horse whisperer's' smartest and most trying pupil Sea The Stars, one of a batch of 48 horses owned by the Aga Khan which Witheford and his son Craig broke in for John Oxx two years ago, won the Juddmonte International. Every bit as satisfying was a win for a six-year-old sprinter with a renowned aversion to starting stalls called Barney McGrew. The horse, who has been infamous among the nation's starting-stalls handlers since he was two, will do anything to evade going into his stall - so much so that one more failure would result in a six-month ban from racing in Britain. Witheford's magic touch meant a problem-free start before victory.



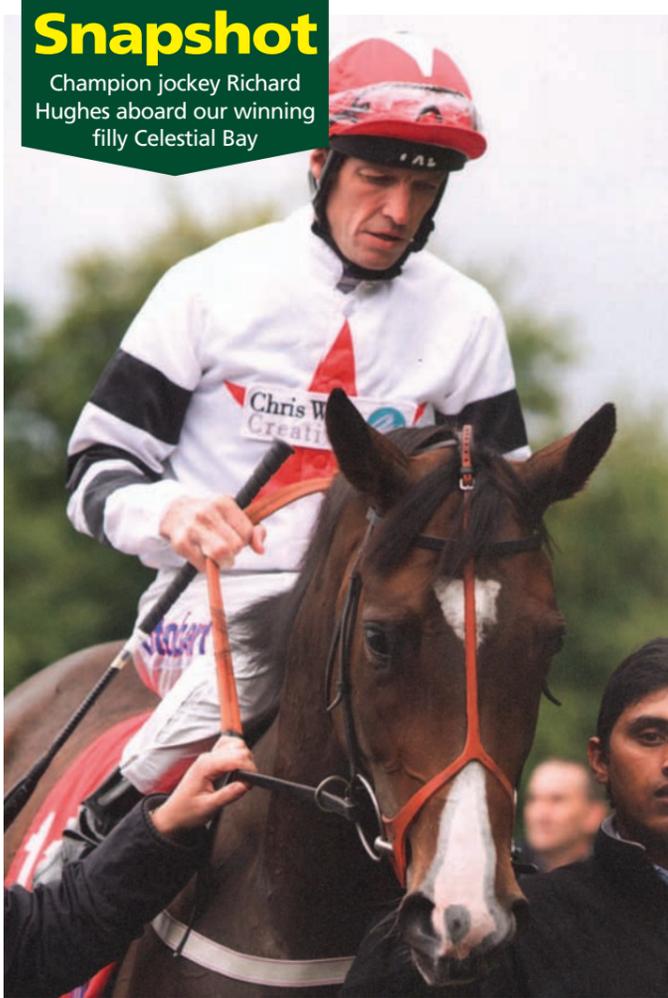
Gary Witheford

Sir Michael Stoute's Spanish Moon had similar problems, and is now banned in this country. He is allowed to race abroad, and under Witheford's guidance he loaded like a lamb before winning the £220,000 Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud in France in June. Ghanaati, Casual Conquest and Fleeting Spirit are three other Group One winners this season whose connections rely upon Gary's calming presence. The Pewsey-based Witheford, began his career as a stable lad for Stan Mellor, but, despite establishing a reputation as being fearless with difficult horses, he followed the well-trodden path of many a Lambourn lad who found that their wages

could not support married life and so left racing. Then Eric Wheeler, Mellor's former head lad, asked him to help deal with a horse which was particularly bad at the stalls. "Everything I do is pressure-release," he said. "Horses hate being pulled, or yanked, or pushed. With half a ton of horse you have got to teach the animal to follow you." Not just horses, either. Witheford has worked with deer, llamas and has even broken a zebra colt. But racehorses remain his main line, with Sea The Stars top of the tree. "You usually have a pretty good idea even as yearlings if they are going to be any good and as soon as Craig sat on Sea The Stars he thought he would be special." Witheford renewed his acquaintance with the colt at Epsom, leading him into the stalls before the Derby. York will also linger long in the memory. "It was like seeing my children do well. Barney McGrew is the most difficult horse I've dealt with. If he was human he'd be on the dole or in the pub. He's always working out ways of avoiding the stalls and what works getting him in one day never works a second time. He's taught me more than any other horse." Gary has helped with our own Make A Fuss - who he described as "a little sweetheart!"

Snapshot

Champion jockey Richard Hughes aboard our winning filly Celestial Bay



The closing bumper at Exeter today is interesting as longtime Homebred owners Dave and Hilda Luscombe have their own home bred youngster Flamenco Lad making his racecourse debut. There are encouraging reports about him from home gallops and any rain will help his chance in a race that Modus is also of interest for his rookie trainer...a dual forecast on these 2 outsiders would pay handsomely - in a race in which many are well connected and will all be fancied!

Take a tip!

Although the tipping area of the website is for fun rather than serious punting - it's nice when we get things right.

This shows advice posted on the Homebred website on 22nd October. We had a bit of inside info about Flamenco Lad from his breeders who have also been loyal Homebred owners. Flamenco Lad had previously been considered quick enough to make his debut on the flat - but played up at the start and was withdrawn. But there were encouraging reports about 'going well at home'. New recruit to the training ranks Robert Stephens also saddled the well-connected Modus in the same race and was also quietly fancied! Advice was to put them in a forecast bet - which paid handsomely as Modus and Flamenco Lad finished first and second respectively - paying no less than £3,247.30 for a £10 forecast. Quite a result if we say so ourselves!

Snapshot

Homebred's retired winner Welsh Assembly competing in the British Dressage Finals ridden by Midge Enright.

