

POCKET POWER VS POLITICIAN



DAVID THISELTON

Who was better, Pocket Power or Politician? This question was put to some older industry people at Clairwood recently and, not surprisingly, Politician won hands down within the limited survey group.

The two horses are the only ones in history to win the Queens Plate and J&B Met twice in successive years.

The two chief arguments in Politician's favour were that, firstly, owing to circumstance last year and to a change in race conditions this year, Pocket Power was very favourably weighted for both his Met wins and, secondly, most of our top horses nowadays leave for overseas, usually after their three-year-old year.

With the Met now virtually being a Weight For Age race, besides a once off 2kg penalty for Grade 1 winners, Pocket Power carried 58kg but ran at level weight-for-age conditions to five other horses and gave away only 2,5kg away to the bottom weight whilst Politician carried 58,5kg and gave plenty of weight away all around, including 15 half-kilos to second-placed Festive Season.

"Pocket Power is a very good horse but Politician was exceptional and I think he could have put Pocket Power on his back and carried him home," said former Durban Turf Club handicapper, Colin Buckham. "With the new weight conditions, this year's Met was a non-race. In Politician's day there was never a Met where they only talked about second."

Top veteran jockey, Garth Puller, added, "In Politician's day there were always three or four top horses that you had to beat but today those three or four are overseas. Pocket Power would have to go to Dubai before we knew how good he really is as the horses he's beating here are basically handicappers."

Chief stipe and former jockey, Harold Taylor, said, "Another reason I'd opt for Politician is because he won his race from an impossible position even with top weight."

In 1979, Politician extracted himself from a pocket on the rail before making up a considerable number of lengths in the final 100m with a surge so incredible that it escaped the notice of TV commentator Francois Wolfaardt, who had written him off, until the final stride. Jockey Bertie Hayden later admitted that the horse had done it all on his own.

Trainer Craig Eudey, who grew up idolising Politician, raised another two points, "Politician was unbeaten in Cape Town and also won in Johannesburg as well as at his home in Durban. It should also be remembered that Politician won his second Queens Plate from the front. No, I think Politician would have towed Pocket Power."

Pocket Power, who hasn't won outside of Cape Town yet, is a lazy type who relies on a devastating late surge to win his races and running him from the front would never be an option.

The lone voice for Pocket Power came from one of Durban's most enthusiastic owners, Georgina Buchanan, who started going to the races at the age of five in her native Mauritius.

"Considering the foot problems Pocket Power has had to overcome I would have to vote for him."

There are a few more points that can be raised in Pocket Power's defense, one being that in the Met he beat Buy And Sell (placed fourth), who ended up last season as probably the best three-year-old middle distance horse in the land, while last season he beat the best three-year-old miler, overseas bound Kildonan, at Weight For Age terms over a mile.

Also, it could be argued that if the likes of Sushisan, Kapil, Fearless, Argonaut, Elusive Fort and Divine Jury had still been here the Queens Plate and Met fields would have been stronger than in Politician's years rather than just the equivalent. After all, Hunting Tower wasn't far off the best three-year-olds in his year and won the July as a four-year-old with 55kg compared to Politician's 58kg, but Pocket Power beat Hunting Tower by a comfortable two lengths at level weights in the Met and by 3,85 lengths in the Queens Plate.

The final twist in the tail comes by quoting legendary commentator Ernie Duffield who had this to say back in Politician's time, "He only won two top division handicaps, one being the July, where he had an advantage over the entire field, and all of his other wins were at weight-for-age or conditions races where he had a weight advantage. Politician proved himself to be the best horse of his age but the old-time greats would have given him a start."

It sounds uncannily similar to the opinions on Pocket Power today and it raises the question whether, with ever more lenient conditions prevailing, one has to have a phenomenon like Horse Chestnut before a current horse can be considered better than a past horse. For, as the old adage goes, "You can only win." Sentiment does play a part in opinion too, as photographer Anita Akal, said, "I'd vote for Politician only for sentimental reasons as he was the best horse around when I was starting out on my career. What a magnificent, bull of a horse he was, I loved photographing him."

In conclusion, comparing different eras will always be difficult, but as Colin Buckham said, "Difference of opinion is what makes horseracing the great game it is".

Sun bursts through to lift Balanchine

Sun Classique came from what looked an impossible position to win the Balanchine Stakes, the feature race at the Etisalat-sponsored eighth meeting of the 2008 Dubai International Racing Carnival.

The four-year-old filly's victory in the 1,777m turf contest was the highlight of a treble for the South African trainer-jockey combination of Mike De Kock and Kevin Shea.

A winner at the very highest level in her native South Africa, she coasted home on her UAE debut at Nad Al Sheba earlier this month. However, it was nowhere near as easy this time for the Australian-bred star.

She was stuck behind a wall of three with 150 metres to go, but Shea managed to switch his mount to the outside just in time to grab Many Colours and win by a neck.

"She got herself out of trouble, which is the sign of a good horse," said Shea. "She does stay so the Dubai Sheema Classic might be an option, especially as Eagle Mountain, who was going to run in that race, is injured."

There was a South African 1-2-3 in a blanket finish to the 2000m turf handi-

cap, in which Engrupido prevailed for De Kock and Shea by a short head. The Herman Brown-trained duo of Alpacco and Diamond Quest filled the other places.

The De Kock-trained Frosty Secret prevailed in another tight finish, after getting the better of Sarissa by a head, in the Etisalat Hotspot, a 1200 metre dirt handicap.

Leading British trainer John Gosden, whose Royal Oath finished second in the Group 2 Al Fahidi Fort yesterday, went one better with Racer Forever, under Ryan Moore, in the 1300m turf handicap.

"He got a lovely gap up the rail and it was a very pleasing performance," said Gosden, who has been coming to Dubai on and off for the last 15 years.

"We've had a good time with the three horses, Escape Route's picked up some prize-money, and Royal Oath ran really well yesterday, considering he was sick when he arrived, and he'll run in the Group 2 Jebel Hatta on Super Thursday now."

The Alan Jarvis-trained Wise Dennis was making it two on the night for the Brits, when obliging under Ted Durcan in the Etisalat Greentune, a 1777m race on turf.

"He was pretty unlucky on his first run here, and I think he would have won with a clearer run," said Jarvis. "We'll look at the Jebel Hatta on Super Thursday now."

HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, trainer Doug Watson and jockey Richard Hills combined to win the first two races.

The eight-year-old Mutasallil took the Etisalat Weyak, an 1800m handicap on dirt, which followed Mutamarres' win in the Etisalat Wasel, a 1300m turf handicap.

And both races were won in identical fashion with Richard Hills on top form, dictating matters from the front.

Watson said: "Richard's given them both great rides. Mutasallil has been a good servant to the yard, and we thought he'd be able to dictate with a small field."

A Carnival meeting doesn't go by without Saeed bin Suroor training a winner, and he left it to the closing Etisalat Handicap, a 2000m turf race, in which Glen Nevis and Durcan just caught his stablemate Imperial Star.



James Maree

DAVID THISELTON

A recent racemeeting at Turffontein for workriders would not have been possible had it not been for the foresight of former jockey and now trainer, James Maree, one of the unsung heroes of South African horseracing.

Reigning Champion workrider, John Nel, emerged as the top rider on the day with two wins and four seconds although both Abraham Makhubo (second) and Jackson Feni (third) actually both rode three winners apiece. Maree founded the Thoroughbred Racing Development Centre which is funded by the Racing Trust and teaches riding skills to stable employees. "The quality of workriders was very bad so I approached the authorities and about two years later they came back to me and asked if I was still interested," he said.

The Centre was launched in August 1999 on Maree's farm and has been a resounding success. "About half-a-dozen licensed riders have come out of the clinic," said Maree proudly.

Among these are Petrus Ndlovu, Louis Nhlapo, Siphon Nhlapo, Menno Malherbe and LJ Katjedi. Maree thanked Phumelela, the RA and the Racing Trust for their input yesterday.

He has a team working for him but the actual instructing is done by himself from beginning to end.

A four month course on basic horsemanship is followed by an Advanced course, for those that show potential, where the emphasis is on race-riding tactics.

Workriders, who come mainly from the disadvantaged community, must be employed by a licensed trainer to qualify.

Besides using Maree's training tracks and horses, the Centre also has the use of a mechanical horse.

Maree revealed that no particular riding style is taught: "The three basics of

jockeyship i.e. seat, balance and grip are taught, but everybody has their own style and the riders adapt to what suits them best."

He added, "The course has had tremendous spin offs because if one person is successful there are at least 20 other people who benefit."

Maree had an illustrious career in the saddle himself and actually won the National Championships while still an apprentice. That came in his final year as an apprentice in the mid-sixties when he was indentured first to Loekie Coetzee at Turffontein and later to D.H. Harris at Alberton.

Subsequent to that he had many battles for the championship with Gerald Turner but never managed to win it again.

However he rode some outstanding racehorses including the great Sentinel as well as the likes of Home Guard, who was favourite for the 1969 Durban July but, with Maree up, was beaten into second place by Naval Escort.

Maree's disappointment wasn't long lived as he rode 33-1 shot Court Day to victory the following year in course record time.

"To win the July is the biggest thrill in any person's life. It is the race everybody wants to win," he said. "I wasn't expecting to win that year but if you haven't got a ticket you haven't got a chance. They set a very fast pace and Court Day came from way back."

Maree also won the J&B Met on a horse called Ding Dong in 1967. Starting at odds of 10-1, Ding Dong beat an illustrious field that included the legendary Sea Cottage as well as greats like Renounce and Java Head.

Comparing today's horses to those of yesteryear, Maree said, "There is no doubt that the horses today are much fitter."

Maree rode for about 20 years but had a few bad falls and retired relatively early in order to become a trainer in about 1980. He has trained some good horses like Hidden Fortune, who won the Newmarket Stayers triple crown in 1993, as well as the likes of Sea Horse, Escamillo, Prince Sutton and All Jazzed Up.

Lloyd wins Listed race at David Payne's expense

JEFF ZERBST

SYDNEY. - Jeff Lloyd had his first Stakes win in Australia and, ironically it was at the expense of his usual employer, David Payne!

Payne sent out 4-1 third favourite, Stripper, in the Listed \$75,000 Widden Stakes (1000m) for juvenile fillies, but she was a late entrant and Lloyd already had a ride booked. Larry Cassidy ended up aboard Payne's daughter of Danehill Dancer (IR).

Lloyd's mount was Delta Girl, by General Nediym out of a NZ mare. Trained by Graeme Rogerson, she went off at 7-2 on the back of a promising second place on her debut.

Portillo, from the powerful yard of Peter Snowden, was 28-10 favourite. She failed to quicken in the straight and as the runners topped the rise with 300m to run it was Stripper who loomed up as the likely winner. Lloyd, however, got to work on this one's inside and started cutting back the deficit.

Delta Girl drifted out in the run-in and appeared to carry Stripper out slightly. Under Lloyd's powerful urgings, Delta Girl finished the stronger to get home by a short head.

Larry Cassidy studied the patrol film and decided against lodging a protest, which he knew he wouldn't have won. Stewards in Sydney seldom reverse results in the boardroom. Cassidy, however, said he felt Stripper had deserved to win.

Lloyd said he was thrilled to have cracked the feature nut.

"It's good to get that first Stakes win in Australia," he said. "Things have been going really well for me."

Things got even better when Lloyd won the eight race on the nine-race program. He came with a barnstorming run on 5-1 chance Bellagio Wynn to snare 15-10 favourite God's Hand (Danny Nikolic) on the post to score by a short neck.

His double took Lloyd to 17 winners and put him back in third spot on the Sydney table - one ahead of fourth placed High Bowman, but well behind Blake Shinn (41) and Nash Rawiller (23).

Best performance of the day came in the fifth race at Moonee

Valley, Melbourne. Trainer Mick Price sent out Danehill Dancer gelding Light Fantastic in this Listed Nissan Stakes (1200m) for three-year-olds and the 7-2 second favourite looked all at sea as he trailed 18-10 favourite Gibraltar Champion, and several other runners, into the short straight.

Then, as Price puts it, the gelding's "motor kicked in". Light Fantastic (Craig Newitt) exploded past the hotpot, who'd won a WFA Listed race in her previous start, and then kicked her brains in. Light Fantastic won by 2 ¾ lengths in a time only half a second behind the track record of Miss Andretti, who's an Ascot winner! And this in only his second start after a soft maiden win at a country track!

If Light Fantastic isn't a superstar in the making, I'll eat his year's feed.



DELTA GIRL (Lloyd, inside), defeats Stripper (Larry Cassidy).

Joshua Dancer

DAVID THISELTON

Joshua Dancer has been one of the most talked about stallions this season with his progeny excelling on the race track and his three-year-olds featuring prominently in the classic races run to date.

The Graham Beck-owned sire with the infamous fertility problems is currently lying in the top ten on the national stallion log.

From 54 foals his current three-year-olds, which are his sixth crop, include Grade I winner Pointing North, Grade II and Grade III winner Joshlin, Grade III winner Joshua's Dream, Grade I third-placed Joshua's Mistress and Grade III winner as a juvenile Stately.

American Barry Irwin, who buys many successful South African horses-in-training for his flourishing international syndicate operation, Team Valor, has bought no fewer than five Joshua Dancer females to date, his most recent purchases being Joshlin and Joshua's Mistress.

Joshua Dancer, whose racing career was cut short by injury, is by Danzig out of the Alleged mare, Miss Alleged, who won the Grade I Breeders Cup Turf and the Grade I Hollywood Turf Cup. He has a testicular disease but with the aid of technologically advanced drugs his vet, Dr. Dave Mullins, and the stud manager of Avalon stud in Mooi River where he is currently standing, Sue Winter, are hopeful that he could cover up to 40 mares this coming breeding season.

Last breeding season, without any advertising, he covered 34 mares and got 25 in foal.

Dr. Mullins explained that the semen of some stallions lives for up to five days but by last breeding season Joshua Dancer's semen

was only alive for six hours.

However, he was not only given a semen-extender drug that increased the life to 12 hours but the mares were treated with an Australian product called Ovuplant which enables the ovulation to be timed to the point of covering.

The mare is first palpated until she has a 3,8cm long ovarian follicle and the Ovuplant is then implanted and this drives the follicle towards ovulation.

Joshua Dancer is able to cover one mare a day using this method.

"Without this advanced technology he would only have gotten about two in foal last season," said Dr. Mullins.

Sue Winter added, "We have had many enquiries recently including from Anton Procter who would like to send us a U.K. imported mare who is closely related to Qui Danzig. Joshua Dancer has an ongoing disease so we will have to do tests before the breeding season to assess the quality of his sperm before deciding how many he will cover. At best we are hoping he can do 40. His list of mares is growing so obviously, if we find he can only do 20, we will have to pick and choose the best of these mares."

She continued, "I have been in contact with Veterinary Homeopath, Dr. Niven, who has recommended a remedy called Eco-him which increases sperm count and improves fertility. He said we would need to get him on it six weeks before the season. We have re-consulted Dr. Niven, and are also doing research and consulting vets worldwide, to see if this Eco-him or any other remedies can be taken right now to help his fertility."

Winter added that Joshua Dancer had stood at a "ridiculous" covering fee of R7 000 and R8 000 for the last two seasons respectively and Avalon Stud would be in discussions with Beck to address this point.

Lammerskraal Stud

DAVID THISELTON

Mike Rattray's Lammerskraal Stud achieved a rare feat when two full sisters they bred, Nania and Vermilion, finished first and second in the final big race of the Cape Sizzling Summer Season, the Grade III Riverworld Stud Prix Du Cap over 1 400m for fillies and mares.

The Joey Ramsden-trained three-year-old Nania, a Grade I winner as a juvenile, won impressively under Glen Hatt by 1,25 lengths from the Shane Humby-trained Vermilion.

Both fillies are by Lammerskraal's three-time National Champion stallion Western Winter out of the Pas De Quoi mare, Nacarat.

Lammerskraal stud manager Sally Jordaan paid tribute to Nacarat's dam, Tawny Red (Northfields), who also produced the full-siblings by Western Winter Set Afire (three-time Grade I winner) and Aquila Rapax (stakes winner) among others.

She couldn't think of any particular reason why Western Winter has done so well with this family other than that the Western Winter and Northfields cross has also produced the likes of Surveyor (Grade I winner SA and Grade III winner Dubai) and Field Event (Grade I placed). Tawny Red died giving birth to a Western Winter colt, Phantom Red, who is Lot 28 on the "Green Pages" Select Sale at the National Yearling Sales in April.

The late mare also has a promising son in training, the three-year-old Mike De Kock-trained colt, Rudra (Parade Leader), who has won twice and finished second in a Listed event over 1 800m.

Nacarat herself, whom Jordaan described as a "rolling battleship", won her first start by ten lengths but after winning four races in seven starts she was knocked on to the rail in a subsequent race and was never the same again. She has had bad luck recently too, aborting a Fort Wood colt last season.

However, Jordaan revealed that another of her progeny, the two-year-old colt Target Acquired, a full-brother to Nania and Vermilion, is a "smart youngster" in training with Dean Kannemeyer and can't be far off his first run.

Nacarat is currently in foal to Lammerskraal's new stallion, Go Deputy, a USA turf horse who won six races including a Grade I over 2 400m. Jordaan said, "Go Deputy is remarkably similar in temperament to Western Winter."

She described both horses as incredibly steadfast and masculine characters who do not "spook" easily or suffer the flightiness or stupidity

associated with some thoroughbreds.

"They have a great calmness but of the type you would associate with a horse in the old days who you would trust to carry you across a raging river during a storm, rather than the calmness of a gelding", she said.

Both are very virile and fertile although Go Deputy only received 34 mares in his first season.

"The broodmare band in South Africa is not big enough to support the number of stallions we have but Go Deputy will make it even with limited support. With his looks, racing record and pedigree he can't go wrong," said Jordaan. Like Western Winter's sire, Gone West, Go Deputy is out of a Secretariat mare.

Of Parade Leader, Jordaan said, "He is a very similar sire to Rakeen. His progeny need a bit of ground and they come on later. They need blinkers, need gelding and are quite spirited. A number of people believe he's been disappointing but we don't think that way and think that a good horse will come out of his current crop. Rudra for example looks very promising."

Lammerskraal, who usually keep five to six colts and about fifteen fillies from each crop, have also had noted recent success from their horses in training, with the likes of Centaur, Braggadacio, Jagged Ice, Bound To Travel, Anchor Ice, Ice Belle and Kayak (in Dubai) carrying the famous red and white colours with distinction.

Jagged Ice, who came within a whisker of winning last year's Vodacom Durban July, failing by 0,3 lengths to convert Rattray's boyhood dream to reality, is currently on holiday at Lammerskraal and Jordaan said he will be tried in blinkers next after showing no interest when running in the Queens Plate and J&B Met.

Jordaan added that the Basil Marcus-trained Western Winter colt, Wild Kodiak, had been very disappointing when 6-10 favourite on Saturday and the run is best ignored.

Lammerskraal's excellent pastures ideally support about 50 broodmares and as their broodmare count currently stands at 65 they will be selling 15 fillies and mares at the next Equimark broodmare sale to bring the numbers into line.

Jordaan revealed that Rattray liked mares who were not only good racetrack performers themselves but who had good performers in at least the first three generations of their female line. Added to that, they must be by a good broodmare sire and be a good specimen.



Owner of the month: Jan 08 - Rupert Plersch



The Gold Circle Owner Achiever Award for the month of December has been awarded to Rupert Plersch. Dubai-based, German-born businessman Rupert Plersch has been a stalwart of trainer Herman Brown's Summerveld yard and the combination had a particularly successful January with Plersch involved in five of the stable's winners. The first of these was Ansel on New Year's day, followed by Annawood, Blank Cheque, National Command and There's The Light. Plersch is the founder of VIP Thoroughbreds, a syndication operation which has the aim of uniting enthusiastic race goers to share in the excitement of the winner's circle. Five winners in a month are just reward for a loyal patron of the sport of horseracing.

Well done Rupert!

Horse Export

DAVID THISELTON

Five more top South African racehorses have changed hands recently and at least two of them will soon be chasing the big money that is on offer at some of the world's major international racing centres.

Pointing North, the first Grade I winning progeny of one of the season's most talked about sires, Joshua Dancer, was bought by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum's Zabeel Racing International for an undisclosed sum.

The bay three-year-old gelding, formerly trained by Robbie Sage, is unbeaten in four races, culminating in his impressive win in the Grade I Bloodstock SA Cape Guineas, and he will now head for New York via the Mauritius quarantine station.

Pointing North, who was bred by Northwood Stud, was initially bought for a mere R100 000 and was raced by the Tawny Syndicate which includes all of Jeff Shill, Greg Blank, Larry Nestadt, Hilton and Darryl Yutar, William Nsele, Fred Wilensky, Gary Barber and first-time owner, Robert Segal. Interestingly, Gary Barber is the co-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Spyglass Entertainment who produced the film Seabiscuit, the true story about the legendary rags to riches American racehorse which bore that name.

Two more of Joshua Dancer's three-year-old crop, Joshlin (a twice Graded race winning filly formerly trained by Alan Higgins) and Joshua's Mistress (a Grade I placed filly formerly trained by Piet Steyn), were recently purchased by Barry Irwin's Team Valor, a prolific International syndicate operation, but they will be remaining in Cape Town with the country's current leading trainer, Justin Snaith.

Joshlin was bred by William Engelbrecht while Joshua's Mistress was bred by Henry and Pat Devine and their initial price tags were a mere R30 000 and R80 000 respectively.

Irwin has now bought five Joshua Dancer females in total and said to Racegoer recently,

"The reason I bought the Joshua Dancer fillies is that other than Al Mufti, I consider Joshua Dancer to get the most American-like horses of any sire in South Africa. When I bought Stately for 100,000 ZAR (I think it was), people asked me why I would buy a cheap filly like her and I told them that where I come from a filly that looked like her by the same sire would bring \$100,000 in dollars not rand! I buy my yearlings without looking at the catalogue, so when she made my final cut, it was based purely on her physical presence and not her pedigree."

The former Dennis Drier-trained Street Cat, an Australian-bred three-year-old colt by Tale Of The Cat, is currently in quarantine at Kenilworth and is on his way to Hong Kong. He has won three races from six starts and was placed fourth behind the likes of Seventh Rock and Argonaut in the Gold Reef Resorts Medallion (Grade I).

The former Tyrone Zackey-trained Warrior Man, a three-year-old colt by Model man who was initially a R230 000 purchase bred by High Season Stud, has moved to the yard of Herman Brown Jnr.

Brown, speaking from Dubai yesterday, said, "We have not discussed his future plans with the owners yet but hopefully he will stay in South Africa for the rest of the season."

Warrior Man has won his last two starts most impressively and is seen as the best Derby prospect in the land.

Some will argue that these high profile exports are bad for our racing but it is something of a catch 22 situation. The overseas dollar recycles money back into our industry meaning owners have good spending power at our Sales and this leads to the confidence breeders need in order to invest in better quality bloodstock.



Pointing North winning the Bloodstock SA Cape Guineas

Buddy Maroun

TRIBUTES are pouring in from around the world on the death of top South African trainer Kevin "Buddy" Maroun, who passed away in tragic circumstances in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He had just turned 51, one day before his untimely death.

Buddy fell gravely ill suffering from septicemia which turned into gangrene and spread through his body. He was admitted to hospital and then transferred to another medical facility, where he was placed under heavy sedation in intensive care. Surgical procedures were performed to clear infected parts of his body.

In his typical, tenacious fashion, Buddy fought extreme pain and a high fever until the very end. A supremely talented horseman, Buddy was long

recognised as the "undisputed king of sprinters". He took out his trainer's licence in 1992 and sent out a flow of winners for almost two decades, among them groups of sprinters of more or less the same age who raced together for extended periods of time and won multiple feature races between them.

He was terrific in getting the very best out of every horse, masterfully judging weights, race figures and later merit ratings. He placed his horses with an uncanny shrewdness, making the majority of his individual sprinters multiple winners, even those with moderate ability.

The "Buddy Maroun factor" was often referred to by his rival trainers and a legion of supporters, who stood astonished for many years as Buddy lined up his sprint machines time and time again to win, sometimes twice a week, often improving within a matter of days and winning even more convincingly despite huge allocations of extra weight.

While he had his critics, not a single one could point a finger at the condition of his horses. They were impeccably turned out without fail, shiny-coated and sound, never looking unhappy to be at the racetrack.

Most famous of all was Golden Loom, or "Goofy", who won 22 races in the 1990s and 2000s, and Al Nitak, acquired as a two-time winning stayer and turned into a sprint legend who won 11 more races including the Grade 1 Golden Horse Casino Sprint.

Other sprinters won with almost monotonous regularity in careers stretching up to 10 years, including Fov's Favourite, All Will Be Well, Noble Thatch, Greek Warrior, Geordoba, Come Thunder, Alarm Call, Fanyana, Time Goes By, Escobar and Vega. Many of them were owned by his leading patron, Andre MacDonald.

Although Buddy in recent years concentrated mostly on the speed merchants, his versatile talent stretched to middle distances and marathon trips. He won several classic features and stayers handicaps, including the FNB 1600 with Follow The Falcon and the Gold Cup with Highland Night.



Steve Bullen, Lisa Prestwood, Buddy Maroun and Bill Lambert

A distraught Louis Goosen, assistant to Buddy over the last few years, said: "Buddy and I shared many special moments together and went through ups and downs. He was a special person and the best horseman I ever worked with. He loved horses, he loved racing. I am bitterly sad."

Said Mike de Kock, speaking from Dubai: "Buddy was a master of his trade, a world class trainer who had no equal as a conditioner of sprinters. He was probably the most hardworking trainer in South Africa and he never got involved in the politics of racing, doing his own thing and concentrating on his horses."

Alec Laird commented: "Buddy was well respected in the training ranks.

He was a no-nonsense type of guy and his death comes as a big shock to us."

"Buddy was a magic trainer," said Joe Soma. "He kept to himself, respected others and the loss of his skills is a big blow."

Outgoing Phumelela Racing Executive Graeme Hawkins described Buddy as "one of the great horseman of the modern era" and added: "South Africa has lost one of its greatest trainers under tragic circum-

stances. He will be sorely missed."

Another tribute came from owner and close friend John Finlayson, who over the last year spent much time with Buddy on the training tracks. He said: "He spent hours teaching me patiently how to judge the potential of a horse by analyzing its eyes, it was amazing. Once he spent a full four days with me explaining the ins and outs of horses. He had a work rate second to none, I personally saw him riding close to 50 horses on an average morning.

"Another thing not everyone knew about was Buddy's love for and instant success with racing pigeons. He enjoyed them immensely and showed them to very few people."

Finlayson added: "Buddy had gone to Argentina to find and buy horses. He hadn't really travelled before and was looking forward to his trip, I had to point out some of the logistics of overseas travel.

"He was excited when I phoned him last Friday night and said he had found three magnificent specimens. But he was in an awful lot of pain too, he could hardly talk and I urged him to see a doctor. I am most upset with this unexpected tragedy."

Finlayson concluded: "Buddy had just revamped his yard with some spectacular additions and improvements. There were a group of strong owners behind him, we had big plans for the immediate future."

Buddy is survived by his wife Claudia and their 15-moth old son Aiden, and an older daughter Leolita. - freeracer.co.za

"Buddy was a master of his trade, a world class trainer who had no equal as a conditioner of sprinters."

IOS Gold Circle Punters Club



DAVID THISELTON

Members of the Independent On Saturday Gold Circle Punter's Club Racing Syndicate nearly lifted the roof off the grandstand when their beloved Mazisi finished a surprise second in the third race at Clairwood recently and the excitement of owning a racehorse was laid bare for all to see once again.

Mazisi made steady headway all the way down the straight to clinch second behind runaway winner Afreet and even if this was her pinnacle nobody can take it from her that she once finished second to an Australian-bred horse bred in the purple running in the famous red, white and black colours of Des Scott, who owns her in partnership with Durban bloodstock agent, Andy Williams. The IOS Gold Circle Punter's Club was born out of a chance conversation at Summerveld training centre between Clyde Bawden, who is editor of the Independent On Saturday newspaper, and Praveen Naidoo, who is head of Gold Circle Communications Department.

They were there for an Open Media Day and, surveying the surrounds, Clyde Bawden commented that most punters did not know of the existence of this beautiful and fascinating place.

The quick thinking Naidoo then formulated the idea of running a competition for punters where the winners would be taken by Gold Circle for a tour of Summerveld and shown the basics of training racehorses.

Chad Cooke and Peter Lambert became the organisers and tourguides and the winning punters enjoyed Summerveld's magnificent clubhouse breakfast and a first-hand insight into training thanks to the willing participation of trainers Tony Rivalland and Mark Dixon.

Cooke, taken by the enthusiasm of the punters, then took the concept a step further by forming an ownership syndicate and he, Bawden and Lambert paid a visit to Micky Goss of Summerhill to look for a horse.

Goss kindly leased Mazisi to them. It was a generous offer as she had been set a reserve of R80 000 on the Ready To Run

Sale from which she returned unsold.

Cooke said, "The concept is a phenomenal way to bring people into ownership who could not have afforded it. It has been tremendous fun and the plan now is to increase syndicate membership and get more horses."

Mazisi, who is a chestnut by Albarahin out of a Northern Guest mare, weighed a massive 540kg when she arrived at Mark Dixon's yard and is fond of food. In fact after yesterday's race she chewed a patch of grass bare while waiting for the float!

Dixon said, "She is very robust and the more work you give her the more full of herself she becomes. She surprised me and it's nice for the guys. We thought at one stage she wouldn't win one but now hopefully she can."

Before yesterday's race Mazisi had finished one moderate fourth place but she was fastest over the last 400m on that day.

The owners, of which there are 27 in total, were elated with her performance yesterday and Bawden explained, "I spoke to Stuart Randolph afterwards and he has worked out that she doesn't like to be around other horses."

Parash Maharaj said, "I have always loved horseracing but couldn't make it as a jockey and I failed in my attempt once to become a commentator. But now I'm an owner and it has been a marvellous experience."

Greg Pascoe, also a first-time owner together with his wife Jasmin, has been a punter from a young age and said, "I didn't think she had a chance but I had 50 swingers with the winner and made a nice profit."

Ravi Reddy said, "I think everybody on the racecourse must have heard us cheering. I had confidence, she's such a beautiful filly, and I had places on her."

Sunil Singh has owned horses before, but a long time ago and said, "This syndicate membership is a very good concept to bring people to the racecourse."

Mazisi runs again on Wednesday and perhaps faces a tougher task against the colts but Sunil's son, young Sanjog Singh, thinks she has it in the bag, "She's a very good horse. I think next time she will win by five lengths."