

Sunday 30 September 2018

PATRICK ERIN WINS THE GROUP 1 METROPOLITAN



Patrick Erin (purple sleeves) heads off stablemate Brimham Rocks (Bradley Photography)

After being denied by centimetres in two Group One races on Epsom Handicap day, Sydney's premier trainer Chris Waller has celebrated a big-race win with **Patrick Erin (NZ)** (Gallant Guru) in The Metropolitan.

Leading home a one-two finish for the Waller stable in Saturday's 2400m Group One handicap at Randwick, Patrick Erin chased down stablemate Brimham Rocks (Fastnet Rock)

to land his first Australian win by a short half-head.

Waller earlier had Fiesta (I Am Invincible) finish a half-head second to Oohood (I Am Invincible) in a blanket finish to the Group One Flight Stakes for fillies.

Then D'Argento (So You Think) was denied by Godolphin stable stalwart Hartnell (Authorized) by the same margin in

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PATRICK ERIN WINS THE GROUP 1 METROPOLITAN

(Continued from page 1)

the \$1 million Epsom Handicap with fellow Waller-trained runners Unforgotten (Fastnet Rock) and Shillelagh (NZ) (Savabeel) third and fourth respectively.

"It feels a lot better now than it did 40 minutes ago," Waller said.

A fourth placegetter in this year's Wellington Cup over 3200m, seven-year-old Patrick Erin is in his second preparation for Waller after being sent from New Zealand by the stayer's owners.

Ridden by Corey Brown, Patrick Erin went into The Metropolitan at his third run from a spell and Waller felt the stayer was still on the improve this campaign heading into the event.

"I knew we had to get him up to a suitable distance and I wanted to make sure I still kept him fresh," Waller said.

"He's a horse we're proud of and it's a pretty special win."

Waller indicated he would now consider an even bigger staying target with the gelding who is nominated for the

Caulfield and Melbourne Cups, although he only has 50kg in both races.

He is eligible for a weight penalty for Saturday's win.

"We've got the St Leger here in two weeks and obviously you've got the Cups in Melbourne," Waller said of spring options.

"I think two miles is really going to suit him. That's when he'll really hit his peak so I think we'll be having a good look at the first Tuesday in November (Melbourne Cup) and working back from that." –AAP

Race	ATC Metropolitan H. Gr.1 2400m
Winner	Patrick Erin (NZ) 2011
Owners	Mrs JR Smith, EST PE Smith, Miss JP Smith, Mr GJ Handisides, Mr AC Handisides
Trainer	Chris Waller (Rosehill)
Breeding	by Gallant Guru (AUS) out of Mega Babe by Personal Escort (USA)
Breeder	P E Smith

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I AM A STAR TOO STRONG IN STOCKS STAKES

Am A Star (NZ) (I Am Invinible) has gone back-to-back in the Group Two Stocks Stakes at Moonee Valley and will now chase wins at a higher level for the remainder of the spring.

The Shane Nichols-trained mare was sent out the favourite for Friday night's 1600m-race for mares and despite a tardy start gave her backers little cause for concern.

Nichols however admitted he was far from calm before the race.

"It's wonderful to get it over and done with," he said.

"It's been a long drawn out day with the night races and when they're short-priced favorite's like that you want the win.

"I was a bit toey tonight. I'm usually pretty calm but I was happy with my horse and I'm glad she's got the job done."

Nichols will assess how the mare pulls up but said the Group One Toorak Handicap at Caulfield on October 13 was the next logical assignment.

The Group One Myer Classic at Flemington on November 3, a race she won in 2016, remains a focus.

"Last year she went to the Toorak off a win here and did feel it," Nichols said.

"She's won five Group Twos so we might as well have a crack at as many Group Ones as possible."

Race	MVRC WH Stocks S. Gr.2 1600m
Winner	I Am A Star (NZ) 2013
Owners	GE Harding
Trainer	Shane Nichols (Mornington)
Breeding	by I am Invinible (AUS) out of Star Band (USA) by Dixieland Band (USA)
Breeder	Eales Racing Pty Ltd
Sales	2014 National Weanling; Broodmare & Mixed Sale; V: Rich Hill Stud, P: Llanhennock Trust; \$12,000



I Am A Star has Group One assignments ahead of her after her Gr.2 Stocks Stakes win (Bruno Cannatelli)



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SANTA MONICA ON TARGET FOR STAKES TARGET

Underrated mare **Santa Monica (NZ)** (Per Incanto) showed she was ready to tackle her biggest assignment next month after producing a comprehensive performance to win at New Plymouth on Saturday.

The five-year-old had registered a pair of runner-up finishes at her most recent starts, with one of those coming behind speed machine Prom Queen (NZ) (Super Easy) at Ruakaka. Despite that form recommendation the Per Incanto mare was largely overlooked as a winning chance in the NZB Insurance Pearl Series Race (1200m).

A tardy start didn't enhance her prospects but aided by a heady ride by apprentice Darren Danis, who hugged the rails throughout, Santa Monica produced an irresistible finish to burst clear in the closing stages and claim her fourth career victory from just her 22nd start.

Trainer Stephen Ralph admitted he got a bit of a surprise when his charge burst up the fence in the straight as he had been anticipating her finishing on out wide.

"I lost her on the corner and was looking out wide for her," Ralph said.

"Then I spotted her on the fence and thought she has got this.

"The form behind Prom Queen is very good so we're happy to win this one."

Ralph has the Gr.3 Sweynesse Stakes (1215m) at Rotorua on October 20 as the mare's next target.

"Hopefully we can get into that



Santa Monica bursts clear to score at New Plymouth (Peter Rubery, Race Images)

Rotorua stakes race now and get some black print," he said.

Danis was sporting a wide grin when questioned about his daring tactics to spear his mount through a needle-eye gap in the run home.

"We got squeezed at the start but I didn't want to panic as I knew she has a good turn of foot," he said.

"I saw the gap open up on the inside so why not take the easy way home.

"All I had to do was push the button and she just went and showed a real good turn of foot."

Santa Monica is the grand-daughter of top racemare Balmacara (NZ)

(Bassenthwaite) who numbered the 1993 Gr.2 New Zealand Thoroughbred Breeders' Stakes (1600m) amongst her eight career wins, before it was upgraded to the Group One status it now enjoys.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	Taranaki RC NZB Insurance Pearl Series H. 1200m
Winner	Santa Monica (NZ) 2013
Owners	Stuart & Cherie Hope
Trainer	Stephen Ralph (Te Awamutu)
Breeding	by Per Incanto (USA) out of Monarch by Volksraad (GB)
Breeder	Protech Design Trust





BIT LIPPY FULL OF CHEEK IN SUCCESSFUL THREE-YEAR-OLD DEBUT

Pocket rocket **Bit Lippy (NZ)** (Showcasing) carried on where he left off last season when he dealt to his three-year-old rivals over 1200m at Avondale on Saturday.

The Wayne Hillis trained gelding raced exclusively in stakes company as a two-year-old where he signed off his juvenile campaign with victory in the Gr.3 Phoenix Park 2YO Classic (1200m) at New Plymouth following minor placings at his first three starts.

The son of Showcasing was given plenty of time to get over his exertions by connections as he had been unsighted on the track since his victory in February. Punters hadn't

forgotten about that performance as he disputed favouritism with fellow Matamata galloper Nirvana In Fire (NZ) (Showcasing) in the seven-horse field that featured a number of contenders for the up-coming spring three-year-old features.

Patently handled by rider Cameron Lammas, Bit Lippy stalked the pace throughout before easing into the clear at the 200m mark. Sent to the lead by Lammas, Bit Lippy eased clear to score with plenty in hand from debutant Rip Em Up (NZ) (Rip Van Winkle) and Valalie (Snitzel), who both made up good ground in the run home.

"It's nice when they come out and

win like that first up as you know you're on the right track," said Hillis.

"You never know going from a two-year-old to a three-year-old. He was consistent in every race he had so you would expect him to come up alright but you just never know."

Hillis has the Gr.1 Al Basti Equiworld Dubai New Zealand 2000 Guineas (1600m) at Riccarton on November 10 as the main target for his charge although he is unsure of the exact path he will take to get him to the spring classic.

"We'll look for something in two or three weeks," he said.

"We've just got to fill in time between then and now."

Minor placegetters Rip Em Up and Valalie could also be seen in Christchurch for the three-day New Zealand Cup Carnival as they both hold nominations for the Gr.1 gavelhouse, com New Zealand 1000 Guineas (1600m) on November 17.

- NZ Racing Desk



Race	ARC Auckland Alarms H. 1200m
Winner	Bit Lippy (NZ) 2015
Owners	DE Evans
Trainer	Wayne Hillis (Matamata)
Breeding	by Showcasing (GB) out of Ceramic by Van Nistelrooy (USA)
Breeder	MJ Evans

Bit Lippy and Cameron Lammas run out comfortable winners at Avondale (Trish Dunell)





HONG KONG IMPORT SCORES POIGNANT VICTORY AT AVONDALE

There were emotional scenes in the Avondale birdcage on Saturday following the win of former Hong Kong galloper, **Born Dragon** (Nicconi).

Amongst the ownership group of the six-year-old is injury-stricken jockey Maija Vance who is currently in the Otago Spinal unit as she begins the long road to recovery following a horror race fall at Rotorua that saw her suffer major damage to her spinal column.

Trained by Maija's parents Bob and Jenny Vance, Born Dragon was having his first start in New Zealand after winning three times from 20 starts in Hong Kong. Expected to provide a forward showing, the Nicconi gelding sat handy to the pace throughout before forging clear in the home straight to set off some jubilant reactions amongst the crowd in attendance.

"I knew he went fast as he's one of the fastest horses I ride," said Bob Vance after the race.

"He's a lovely horse with a big stride although he didn't settle well but he got away with it.

"Sprinting is his go so we will now find another nice race for him."

Vance had quipped before the race that if the horse didn't perform today his daughter may be looking for a new trainer as he provided an update on her current prognosis.

"She (Maija) is pretty banged up," he said.

"The broken ribs don't help as she is trying to rehabilitate. She has movement

in her right leg but none in her left although she does have some sensation in her left leg.

"Her arms and hands are very good and from her waist up. It is going to be a long slow process but luckily the spinal cord wasn't severed, just damaged.

"It has been put in place so it can't get worse, it can only get better.

"She's handling it very well."

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	ARC West Brook Wines Waimauku H. 1200m
Winner	Born Dragon (AUS) 2012
Owners	The Thoroughbred Tepu Syndicate
Trainer	Jenny & Bob Vance (Ardmore Lodge)
Breeding	by Nicconi (AUS) out of Obligato (AUS) by Redoute's Choice (AUS)
Breeder	Bowness Stud



Born Dragon strikes success at his first start in New Zealand (Trish Dunell)





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OUR PINNACLE ADDS TO RED-HOT RODD'S TALLY



Our Pinnacle puts paid to his rivals with a strong winning gallop to the line (Singapore Turf Club)

Australian jockey Michael Rodd capped a memorable week with a third winning treble on Friday night.

The Rodd rampage began last Friday with King Zoustar (Zoustar), Cracking Tottie (NZ) (So You Think) and Ottawa (Brave Tin Soldier), followed by an identical haul the following Sunday with Raffles Cup winner Debt Collector

(NZ) (Thorn Park), Gold Reward (Warrior's Reward) and Murrayfield (NZ) (Pins).

The purple patch didn't stop there with Rodd bringing up another hat-trick of wins at this Friday's standalone meeting aboard Centenary Diamond (Kitten's Joy), Cash Is King (NZ) (Tavistock) and **Our Pinnacle (NZ)** (Pins).

On Our Pinnacle, Rodd said Stephen Gray had told him the one-time winner in New Zealand might be a little underdone second-up, but his staying ability might still get him over the line.

I was rapt Stephen put me on for the ride. He did tell me he missed one piece of work, but he might still be

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OUR PINNACLE ADDS TO RED-HOT RODD'S TALLY

(Continued from page 9)

right as he is a natural stayer and can still finish it off," said Rodd.

"With the horse scratching (Paragon Star), I thought he could go with the pace, but he had to work a little before he found the lead.

"He then switched off nicely and he was such a pleasure to ride. I had to wind him up down the hill when another horse came next to him.

"Once he got on the bit, he took off again in the straight and won a nice race."

Our Pinnacle was never in doubt once Rodd gave him full bore inside the last 300m.

Gray said he was not surprised at all Our Pinnacle had already stamped himself as a Singapore Derby prospect at only his second Kranji start.

"There is an interesting story behind this horse. He was trained

by Cliff Goss, a great trainer in New Zealand who used to train in Macau and is now past 85, but who is still fit and well," said the Kiwi handler.

"Cliff owned and trained this horse himself, more as a hobby. He had three starts in New Zealand for one win.

"One day, we discussed and he said this horse could be a Singapore Derby horse. We got a group together, and raced half of the shares with Cliff.

"It's the same bunch of owners (Rajah Blue A Stable) who owned El Don (former Kranji horse trained by Gray), who has now won two races in Australia for Peter Gelagotis. He went there because he is a 2400m horse and there are no races for him here.

"But this Our Pinnacle is a really nice horse, and I knew he'd run well tonight as he ran real super at his first start (fourth to Elise in a Class 4

Premier race over 120m on August 12).

"He's trialled well since. He's easy to train and he had a good rider on.

"I'm really happy he won because Cliff and my father (Kevin) were good friends in Palmerston North. Many people don't realise that, but racing is a lot about history and friendship, it means a lot to me."

-STC

Race	Singapore TC Class 4 H. 1400m
Winner	Our Pinnacle (NZ) 2014
Owners	Rajah Blue A Stable
Trainer	Stephen Gray (Kranji)
Breeding	by Pins (AUS) out of Red Delicious by No Excuse Needed (GB)
Breeder	G J Chittick
Sales	2015 National Weanling; Broodmare & Mixed Sale; V: Waikato Stud, P: Upstage Bloodstock; \$16,000

