>>>> RACING&BREEDINGNEWS

Monday 11 February 2019

HARRIS READY FOR MORE AFTER TE RAPA TRIUMPH



Troy Harris returns to the Te Rapa birdcage after securing a Group One victory on Melody Belle (Trish Dunell)

pair of elite level victories on the weekend has jockey Troy Harris keen for more as he continues his resurgence from the battle he has had with his weight over the last few years.

Forced to ride over fences for a period of time after struggling with his weight, Harris has made a concerted effort to continue his flat-riding career and reaped the benefit at Te Rapa on Saturday when piloting Sponge Bob (NZ) (Keeper) and Melody Belle (NZ) (Commands) to victory in the Gr.2

Warren Storm Lifebrokers Waikato Guineas (2000m) and Gr.1 BCD Group Sprint (1400m) respectively.

Harris was feeling justifiably satisfied with his efforts on Sunday but also eager to continue on the upward path he is currently on.

"Actually, I'm a little tired as it was a pretty long day although I was in bed fairly early last night," he said.

"It was a dream result and thankfully I could repay the faith

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HARRIS READY FOR MORE AFTER TE RAPA TRIUMPH

(Continued from page 1)

that people placed in me to get the job done for them.

"It's been a tough time with my weight issues and trainers and owners lose faith in you if you're turning up to ride their horses overweight all the time.

"I hope now that they will have that faith in me to put me on as I feel good about where I am and I'm working hard to maintain that level.

"I've changed my diet and do a lot of running along with what I do on the track during the week. I ran about 10kms on Saturday before the races and that has really helped me."

Harris was quick to thank his manager Dean Williams who played a major role in securing the mount on Sponge Bob after Michael Coleman fell ill on Friday, as well as having Harris available to ride after he incurred a suspension when riding at Hastings on January 30.

Harris had been booked to ride Melody Belle and was only able to take the mount after being granted a stay of proceedings on his suspension by the Judicial committee.

"Dean did a fantastic job with my appeal on the suspension, so I really have to say a big thanks to him," Harris said.

"He also got me on Sponge Bob, so I guess it's a double thank you. He rang me on Friday evening about 6:30pm and said he could get me on Sponge Bob in the Guineas as Michael was ill and I was really keen to take the ride."

Harris was taken by the effort of Sponge Bob, who was having just his fourth start when tackling the Guineas, after breaking his maiden status at Te Rapa three weeks earlier.

"During the race he gave me a good feel although he only does what he has to most of the time," he said.

"He was travelling well, but when I asked him to improve, he came into it nicely and when I gave him a couple with the stick, he really put in.

"On that performance you would have to rate him a good chance in the Derby, but I guess it is up to the owners if they want to pay the late entry fee.

"If they do, I would be keen to ride him."

Sponge Bob wasn't amongst the original nominations for the Gr.1 Vodafone New Zealand Derby (2400m) with his connections having until February 19 to pay a \$30,000 late entry fee to secure a place in the blue riband event that is run at Ellerslie on March 2.

While confident he was on a winner during the running of the Waikato Guineas, Harris admits he didn't have the same feelings when piloting Melody Belle later in the day.

The victory was the first for Harris at Group One level since successful for the same trainer/owner combination in Te Akau Racing and Fortuna Syndications in the 2008 New Zealand 2000 Guineas (1600m) on Tell A Tale (Tale Of The Cat).

"Te Akau have been really good to me so it was nice to repay the faith they had in putting me on the mare," Harris said.

"I had been over to Matamata and galloped her in the build-up to the race and she was flying.

"I knew she had been disappointing when unplaced at Trentham at her last start, but I thought if she was back to her best, she was going to be hard to beat.

"That wasn't the feeling I was getting half-way through though, as we were in a tough spot and not really going anywhere.

"It was only when I got on to the back of Ardrossan with about 250m to run that she started to pick up, but when she saw the gap at the 100m she just flew.

"That last bit was super and I do think she is looking for a little further now."

Now that Harris has made that breakthrough at the highest level, he is determined to make the most of any opportunities that come his way.

"I feel great going to the races now, after previous years where I had to waste to drop a few kilos," he said.

"You just feel terrible and you don't want to be there, but it's good now."

- NZ Racing Desk





MELODY BELLE BRINGS UP SPECIAL MILESTONE FOR RICHARDS

he stunning victory by Melody Belle (NZ) (Commands) in the Gr.1 BCD Group Sprint (1400m) at Te Rapa on Saturday marked several milestones for those associated with the outstanding mare.

While the win provided stand-in rider Troy Harris with his first Group One success since 2008 it also secured Jamie Richards his 50th victory at stakes level as a trainer.

By any standard it is a remarkable achievement for the twenty-nine year-old who is in his first full season in sole charge of the Te Akau Racing stables after commencing his career at the Matamata operation in partnership with Stephen Autridge.

Richards was philosophical about the achievement when quizzed about it after the event.

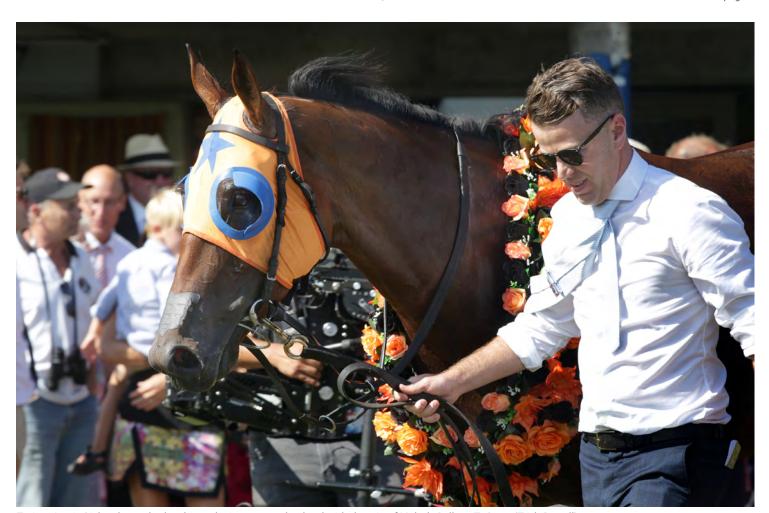
"I wasn't actually aware of it so,

if that is correct, then I'm certainly pleased to reach that mark at this stage of my career," he said.

"My focus is on the horses that we prepare and I guess if I'm doing my job properly then those type of records become a bonus along the way."

Richards was quick to admit that any prospect of achieving the 50 stakes win mark seemed a remote

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Trainer Jamie Richards notched up his 50th victory at stakes level with the win of Melody Belle at Te Rapa (Trish Dunell)





MELODY BELLE BRINGS UP SPECIAL MILESTONE FOR RICHARDS

(Continued from page 4)

possibility as Melody Belle appeared to be struggling mid-way through Saturday's contest.

"I had just about given up on her as she didn't seem to be travelling at all well coming to the home bend," Richards said.

"My thoughts drifted a bit to what had happened last time at Trentham and maybe she was trying to tell us she needed a break.

"When she picked up in the straight and finished off like that it made it a very special win.

"She left a little bit of feed last night, but that is to be expected. She was bright as a button on Sunday morning and seems to have come through the race really well."

Melody Belle will now head to the Gr.1 Haunui Farm WFA Group One Classic (1600m) at Otaki on February 23 before being sent to the spelling paddock for a well-deserved break.

Richards also confirmed that exciting two-year-old Probabeel (NZ) (Savabeel) will contest the Gr.3 Magic Night Stakes (1200m) at Randwick on March 16, a pre-cursor to a tilt at the Gr.1 Inglis Sires' (1400m) at the same venue three weeks later.

"She (Probabeel) had ten days in the paddock after the Karaka Million and really thrived," he said.

"She has come back looking a picture so we're really excited to be able to confirm where she will be going next.

"Her main aim is the Sires' in early April so we will head across before then for a lead in to that in the Magic Night Stakes in March. "At this stage the Golden Slipper (Gr.1 1200m, March 23) is still a possibility but Brendan (Lindsay) just wants to keep his options open around that one."

Owned by Cambridge Stud proprietors Brendan and Jo Lindsay, Probabeel has won three of her four starts including a stunning performance to score in the Karaka Million 2YO (1200m) at Ellerslie on January 26 at her most recent start.

- NZ Racing Desk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brennan delighted with Derby prospect

Cambridge trainer Lauren Brennan has confirmed that her promising three-year-old **Sword In Stone (NZ)** (Redwood) is New Zealand Derby bound after a fighting performance for third in Saturday's Gr.2 Warren Storm Lifebrokers Waikato Guineas (2000m).

Having just his third raceday start, Sword In Stone was forced to take up an unfamiliar role outside the pacemaker in the Guineas before being edged out by Sponge Bob (NZ) (Keeper) and Arrogant (NZ) (Ocean Park) in a desperate three-way finish.

"We really wanted to do the chasing on Saturday, but he was a victim of circumstances really," Brennan said.

"He jumped so well that he ended up being caught three-wide so Michael (Rodd) had to push forward on him and ended up stuck outside the pace.

"He fought on very bravely and has pulled up very well from the run.

"We will push on to the Derby now with Michael indicating he wants to come back and ride him which is a really good endorsement."

Sword In Stone is currently rated a \$10 chance behind favourite Cutadeel (\$6) in the TAB Fixed Odds market for the Gr.1 Vodafone New Zealand Derby (2400m) that will be run at Ellerslie on March 2. – NZ Racing Desk



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EXCITING TIMES AHEAD FOR PROMISING MARE



Vinnie Colgan and Rondinella are out on their own as they approach the finish line at Te Rapa (Trish Dunell)

xciting staying prospect **Rondinella (NZ)** (Ocean Park) gave racing fans at Te Rapa on Saturday another glimpse of her undoubted talent as she treated her rating 82 rivals with disdain when scoring handsomely over 2100m.

The Ocean Park four-year-old mare was all class as she looped the field for rider Vinnie Colgan with 600m to run, before cruising clear in the home straight to win untouched by six lengths.

Touted by co-trainer Roger James as a potential topliner early in her three-year-old season, Rondinella had that campaign cruelly ended when suffering a hoof injury soon after finishing fourth in the Gr.2 Sir Tristram Fillies Classic (2000m) a year ago.

Patiently handled, the daughter of Group One performer Valpolicella (NZ) (Red Ransom) signalled her return to the

track with a fresh-up win over 1400m last November. Four starts since then have yielded two further victories as James and co-trainer Robert Wellwood continue to get her career back on track.

"I expected her to be very hard to beat," James said.

"I've said from day one that she was very high-class and while we've had a hiccup or two, we are going to keep reaping the benefits as she is a very good mare."

James was at his cryptic best when signalling the way forward for his charge.

"When you're coming through the grades, it's a little bit one race at a time," he said.

"Don't be surprised if I do something a little bit out of leftfield with her in the autumn as we have to take advantage of that abundance of ability that she has."

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FOR PROMISING MARE

(Continued from page 6)

James isn't dwelling on what could have been but for the injury the mare suffered, although he did admit it was a dreadful feeling when he discovered the situation.

"I'm one to look forward not back but I was nearly in tears when I discovered her injury in the autumn," he said.

"You get over these things and it has been handled well by everybody and she is problem free now.

"It may have been a blessing in disguise as she is more mature now."

Rider Vinnie Colgan, who was substituting for the ill Michael Coleman, was quick to reiterate the comments made by James about the mare's ability.

"The race went to plan as I got off (the rail) as soon as I could and the rest of the race just went perfect," he said.

"She's very talented and Roger has always had a big opinion of her.

"She's going to be a great mare."

Bred in partnership by Haunui Bloodstock, Garry Cranny and Cathy Franich's Frantic Bloodstock, Rondinella is raced by Haunui Farm and Franich.

The win was part of a special treble on the day for Haunui Farm who also saw horses that had been sold by them at the National Yearling Sales in the past three years pick-up victories in the Gr.2 Cambridge Stud Sir Tristram Fillies Classic (2000m) with Imelda Mary (NZ) (Ferlax) and the Gr.1 BCD Group Sprint (1400m) with Melody Belle (NZ) (Commands).

- NZ Racing Desk

Race	Waikato RC Risk Management Group H. 2100m.
Winner	Rondinella (NZ) 2014
Owners	Mrs C Franich & Haunui Bloodstock Ltd
Trainer	Roger James & Robert Wellwood (Cambridge)
Breeding	by Ocean Park out of Valpolicella by Red Ransom (USA)
Breeder	G J Cranny; Frantic Bloodstock Ltd & Haunui Bloodstock Ltd; Auckland; NZ





CHINA THE NEXT STEP FOR THORNTON

raig Thornton will begin a new chapter of his life in China this week.

A highly regarded international jumps jockey in his past, Thornton has trained the winners of over 100 races in New Zealand in a career spanning 17 years.

However, most recently Thornton has endured a 16-month hiatus from hands-on horsemanship following the sale of his Cambridge-based property to Andrew Campbell in October 2017.

"It wasn't that I was sick of training, I love training, I've always enjoyed it my whole life," Thornton said.

"It was just that Andrew came along with an offer that I couldn't refuse and I wasn't going that great at the time so it was a chance to consolidate things.

"Since then I've been waiting for something to come up really and I've had a year away from the horses and now I'm ready to get my teeth back into it."

Thornton will get the opportunity to do just that having accepted a 12-month contract as the principal trainer of a stable of 40 horses for Mr Hongwei Chen in China, initially spending two months in Wuhan province before travelling to Yulong Racecourse in Shanxi province.

Chen is a coal mining magnate from Inner-Mongolia who has thoroughbred interests globally, including in New Zealand where his horses carry the 'Not Usual' prefix and race under the Horse Feng Bloodstock banner.

Thornton travelled to China on Monday with Alex Teng, of Horse Feng Bloodstock, who will spend two weeks with Thornton to help him settle into his new role.

Thornton had been to China once before to attend the opening of Khorchin Racecourse in Inner Mongolia, he's also sought advice from others who know the area well.

"I've spoken to Graham Forbes who trained up there and Luke Danis, Darren Danis's father who's training up there now and they've given me pretty good insight in to what to expect," he said.

"They run on sand tracks and it can get quite deep so I'll have to figure out what kind of horses suit best and how to train them for it.

"It's going to be a learning curve for me, but I think stockmanship is universal, horses are all I know and it's all I'm qualified to do so hopefully I can adapt."

Having previously flown the New Zealand flag in North America, Japan and Australia as a jumps jockey Thornton is

taking a patriotic approach to his new vocation.

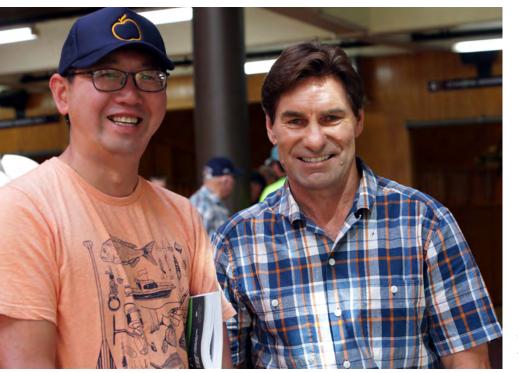
"I kind of feel like I'm representing New Zealand and I'm proud of that and I'm looking forward to the challenge. Hopefully I can bring some distinction to the New Zealand-bred horses up there," he said.

"I want to do well for the people who sell their horses to China too. I'll keep them updated on any successes that come so they can follow the horses that they've sold."

"I'm excited, it's a challenge, it's an adventure and it's another chapter and I'm looking forward to it."

- NZ Racing Desk

Craig Thornton (right) pictured with Alex Teng, is relocating to take up a training position in China (Trish Dunell)







STAKES TASK NEXT FOR TE AKAU TWO-YEAR-OLD

xciting two-year-old prospect

Harlow (NZ) (Proisir) kicked off
an outstanding day for trainer

Jamie Richards and the Te Akau Racing
team when she came from last to win
on debut over 1200m at Te Rapa on
Saturday.

On a day where Richards notched his 50th victory at stakes level when Melody Belle (NZ) (Commands) took out the Gr.1 BCD Group Sprint (1400m), Harlow showed she could be a contender to add to that record with an eye-catching performance in the first race of the day.

Consistent at the trials with two thirds and a second, Harlow was eased back to last from the outside gate by rider Matt Cameron and still trailed the field nearing the 200m, before kicking into overdrive and winning going away with her ears pricked.

"I knew there was going to be pace and the plan was let her settle and find her feet," Cameron said. "She did well to pick them up and she's a nice filly."

A \$41,000 purchase by Te Akau boss David Ellis from the Pear Tree Farm Agistment draft at the 2018 NZB South Island Sale, the showy Proisir filly became the seventh individual two-year-old winner this season for Richards.

"She's got a bit of presence about her, the white-flecky mane and tail makes her stand out," Richards said.

"We really like her. She trialled well and it was always going to be tricky from back in the field, but she showed her class and Matt gave her a lovely



Flashy filly Harlow storms to victory at Te Rapa (Trish Dunell)

ride.

"She was a cheap filly that Dave (Ellis) bought out of the South Island and she's on to the Matamata Breeders' Stakes in a fortnight."

A race Te Akau has won six times, the Gr.2 Matamata Breeders' Stakes (1200m) is the feature event at Matamata on February 23.

"She's got a beautiful frame and has a fair bit of maturing to do yet, so we're excited about her future," Richards said.

"Hopefully, she's another nice horse that can work her way through the grades. She's a laidback filly and the team has done a great job getting her to the races in wonderful order."

Harlow is the second winner for Rich

Hill Stud's young stallion Proisir, who was represented by Tauranga winner Tappy's One (NZ) last month.

- NZ Racing Desk

Race	Waikato RC Te Akau Racing 2YO H. 1200m.
Winner	Harlow (NZ) 2016
Owners	Te Akau Blonde Bombshell Syndicate (Mgr: Karyn Fenton-Ellis MNZM)
Trainer	Jamie Richards (Matamata)
Breeding	by Proisir (AUS) out of Joan's Girl by Pyrus (USA)
Breeder	Miss A C Miles & M J Simpson; Canterbury; NZ
Sales	2018 South Island Yearling & Mixed Sale V: Pear Tree Farm Agistment Ltd \$41000 P: DC Ellis



NZ STALLION AWARDS

THE CENTAINE AWARD

STALLIONS	EARNINGS	
SAVABEEL	\$9,706,722	
ROAD TO ROCK	\$5,317,002	
DARCI BRAHMA	\$5,113,038	
O'REILLY	\$4,469,161	
PINS	\$3,997,387	
PER INCANTO	\$3,043,790	
TAVISTOCK	\$2,755,571	
MASTERCRAFTSMAN	\$2,557,815	
OCEAN PARK	\$2,415,140	
RIP VAN WINKLE	\$2,378,223	
Criteria: Sire whose NZ-conceived progeny have accumulated the highest stakes earnings worldwide		

THE DEWAR STALLION TROPHY

STALLIONS	EARNINGS
SAVABEEL	\$5,859,314
O'REILLY	\$2,543,427
PINS	\$2,402,587
DARCI BRAHMA	\$1,607,117
TAVISTOCK	\$1,601,655
RIP VAN WINKLE	\$1,578,470
PER INCANTO	\$1,476,184
OCEAN PARK	\$1,401,230
RELIABLE MAN	\$1,247,305
IFFRAAJ	\$1,169,488

Criteria: Sire whose progeny have accumulated the highest combined stakes earnings in Australia & New Zealand

THE GROSVENOR AWARD

STALLIONS	EARNINGS
SAVABEEL	\$2,934,378
PINS	\$1,353,732
PER INCANTO	\$1,272,734
DARCI BRAHMA	\$1,050,165
RIP VAN WINKLE	\$928,105
IFFRAAJ	\$849,743
SHOWCASING	\$827,037
MASTERCRAFTSMAN	\$786,657
ALAMOSA	\$770,805
O'REILLY	\$759,046

BEST PERFORMERS	EARNINGS
PROBABEEL	\$581,000
MADISON COUNTY	\$576,625
SANTA MONICA	\$182,250
DEE AND GEE	\$95,625
TE AKAU SHARK	\$196,875
WYNDSPELLE	\$101,625
XPRESSION	\$94,500
DANZDANZDANCE	\$291,000
ON THE ROCKS	\$305,325
TIPTRONIC	\$105,950

Criteria: Leading Sires by Earnings in New Zealand





NZ BRED WINNERS IN **SINGAPORE** FEBRUARY 6

HORSE & BREEDING	BREEDER	RACE	SALES DETAILS
LIM'S RHYTHM (NZ) 2014 by Rock 'n' Pop (AUS) out of Paixanito by Zabeel	D C Ellis & K W Fenton-Ellis MNZM; Waikato; NZ	Singapore TC Year of the Pig S. 1400m.	
SUPER RAY (NZ) 2015 by Nadeem (AUS) out of Deecruz by Pins (AUS)	D J Myers; Central; NZ	Singapore TC Prosperity S. 1400m.	2017 Ready to Run Sale V: JK Farm \$20000 P: Isdale Racing Stables
KING'S SPEECH (NZ) 2014 by Darci Brahma out of Serenity Princess (AUS) by Encosta de Lago (AUS)	The Oaks Stud; Waikato; NZ	Singapore TC Abundance S. 1400m.	2016 National Yearling Sale - Select Session V: The Oaks Stud \$80000 P: S Gray
LARRY (NZ) 2014 by Mastercraftsman (IRE) out of Larrinka by Volksraad (GB)	BT & G S McKenzie; South; NZ	Singapore TC Good Luck S. 1600m.	2016 National Yearling Sale - Select Session V: Phoenix Park \$35000 P: Riverview Farms
METTLESOME (NZ) 2011 by Gallant Guru (AUS) out of Irish Jig by O'Reilly	E J & Mrs M Strauss	Singapore TC Windfall S. 1700m.	2013 National Yearling Sale - Festival Sale V: Bradbury Park \$7000 P: Anna Scott Rcg

NZ BRED WINNERS IN **SINGAPORE** FEBRUARY 8

HORSE & BREEDING	BREEDER	RACE	SALES DETAILS
BARTIMAEUS (NZ) 2014 by Makfi (GB) out of	G Harvey; Auckland;	Singapore TC Class 4 H. 1200m.	2016 National Yearling Sale - Select Session V:
Cinemascope (AUS) by Mossman (AUS)	NZ		Westbury Stud \$70000 P: Stuart Hale & Co

NZ BRED WINNERS IN MALAYSIA FEBRUARY 6

HORSE & BREEDING	BREEDER	RACE	SALES DETAILS
SANDY'S PRIDE (NZ) 2013 by Pour Moi (IRE) out of Eagle Feather (AUS) by Quest For Fame (GB)	J Hendrickson, Miss S J & S J Munro	Selangor TC Class 5 H. 1200	2015 Ready To Run Sale V: Jamieson Park \$11000 P: Ms SA Shaw
FLASH ONE (MLY) Mighty Man (NZ) 2011 by O'Reilly out of Sentura by Volksraad	Nearco Stud Ltd	Selangor TC Class 4 H. 1200	2012 National Weanling; Bloodstock & Mixed Sale V: Curraghmore Stud \$125000 P: Lyndhurst Farm 2013 National Yearling Sale – Premier Session V: Lyndhurst Farm \$150000 P: Michael Freedman/Michael Wallace B/S
ZHUHAI (MLY) Dragon Lair (NZ) 2011 by Iffraaj (GB) out of Foxy Blonde by Volksraad (GB)	Mrs V S Vandorp	Selangor TC Open 1200	2013 National Yearling Sale – Premier Session V: Haunui Farm \$80000 P: Dr KC Tan
IMMORTALITY (NZ) by Mettre En Jeu out of Crichele by Lord Ballina (AUS)	Letham Stud Ltd	Selangor TC Class 4 H. 1600	



NZ BRED WINNERS IN MALAYSIA FEBRUARY 10

HORSE & BREEDING	BREEDER	RACE	SALES DETAILS
MR EPIC (NZ) 2008 by Falkirk out of Marzeri by Marju (IRE)	Windsor Park Stud Ltd	Selangor TC Class 5 H. 1200	
EL TORDILLO (NZ) 2013 by Dalghar (FR) out of Figeac by Zabeel	Pencarrow Thoroughbreds Ltd	Selangor TC Class 4 H. 1200	2015 National Yearling Sale - Select Session V: Pencarrow Stud \$10000 P: Mr WC Lim
WAR DRAGON (NZ) 2014 by Battle Paint (USA) out of Jabot by Green Perfume (USA)	Chequers N.Z. Ltd	Selangor TC Open 1200	
I AM THE BOSS (MLY) Motaja (AUS) Sorgino (NZ) 2014 by Pour Moi (IRE) out of Roxon by Postponed (USA)	Mrs N E & P E Izett	Selangor TC Class 4 H. 1400	

NZ BRED WINNERS IN **HONG KONG** FEBRUARY 7

HORSE & BREEDING	BREEDER	RACE	SALES DETAILS
MANAGEMENT STAR (NZ) 2013 by Darci Brahma out of Bella Rosalia (GB) by Singspiel (IRE)	JML Bloodstock Ltd; Central; NZ	HKJC Yue Yee H. 1600m.	2015 National Yearling Sale - Select Sale V: Little Avondale Stud \$65000 P: John Foote B/ stock
PRANCE DRAGON (NZ) 2014 by Power (GB) out of Wanaka by Green Perfume (USA)	Standard 2080 Ltd; Waikato; NZ	HKJC Fat Choi H. 1200m.	

NZ BRED WINNERS IN **HONG KONG** FEBRUARY 10

HORSE & BREEDING	BREEDER	RACE	SALES DETAILS
RIGHT CHOICE (NZ) 2014 by Mastercraftsman (IRE) out of Grand Belt by O'Reilly	K & Mrs K A Gray;	HKJC Rose H.	2016 National Yearling Sale - Select Session V:
	Central; NZ	1400m.	Bradbury Park \$90000 P: John Foote B/stock

