

Sunday 17 February 2019

SURELY SACRED STAMPS DERBY CREDENTIALS WITH GUINEAS VICTORY



Surely Sacred (outer) battles hard for victory in the Gr.2 Schweppes Avondale Guineas (Trish Dunell)

Lightly raced three-year-old **Surely Sacred (NZ)** (Rock 'n' Pop) showed he will be awfully hard to beat in the Gr.1 Vodafone New Zealand Derby (2400m) in a fortnight when he scored handsomely in the Gr.2 Schweppes Avondale Guineas (2100m) at Ellerslie.

Spruiked as a Derby prospect after winning the Gr.2 Auckland Guineas (1600m) on New Year's Day, when having just his third career start, the Rock 'n' Pop gelding followed that up with a tidy effort for fifth in the Karaka Million 3YO Classic (1600m) late last month.

That effort saw him installed as second favourite for Saturday's traditional Derby lead-up, where he didn't let his backers down with a powerful staying effort to secure a narrow but impressive victory.

Settled in mid-field by rider Vinnie Colgan, Surely Sacred lobbed along nicely as pacemaker The Chosen One (NZ) (Savabeel) set a steady speed out in front. The attacks came at the 800m mark with In A Twinkling (Fastnet Rock) making a lightning move to dispute the pace as the tempo quickened.

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SURELY SACRED STAMPS DERBY CREDENTIALS WITH GUINEAS VICTORY

(Continued from page 1)

Not to be caught napping, Colgan sent Surely Sacred on a searching wide run where he hit the front shortly after straightening before fending off the challenge of In A Twinkling by a head at the line, with Vernanme (NZ) (O'Reilly) running on strongly for third.

"It was a good, tough win as they put the pressure on pretty early," trainer Tony Pike said.

"Vinnie set him alight pretty early and he has hit the front early enough.

"He (Colgan) probably left a little bit of juice in the tank knowing he had already qualified for the Derby and he will improve off that again.

"Just the way he travelled up to them today was nice to see, he wasn't in any trouble and I can't wait for two weeks' time."

Pike was pleased with the effort by Colgan, who showed plenty of initiative to set out after the leaders at just the right time.

"Vinnie has elected to get on his bike and put him into the race which was probably the winning of it," he said.

"He possibly got there too soon, but he will improve and it would be nice to get a second Derby win."

Pike collected his first New Zealand Derby title in 2016 with Rangipo (Styker) and believes Surely Sacred compares favourably in comparison.

"This horse is probably more of a genuine stayer although he's still learning whereas Rangipo was the ultimate professional," Pike said.

"The Derby was his (Rangipo's) tenth run that season so he was just a real warrior, while this horse has a touch of class on his side.

"He (Surely Sacred) wandered around a little bit when out there on his own today, he did that when he got beaten here in the Great Northern Guineas, where he switched off.

"He nearly did that again today, but they had their chance to run him down and they couldn't".

Surely Sacred is a son of five-race winner Not Sure (NZ) (Masterclass) and was purchased by owners Raffles Racing from Waikato Stud's Premier draft at the 2017 National Yearling Sale.

The victory by Surely Sacred provoked some quick changes to the TAB Fixed Odds market for the New Zealand Derby with Surely Sacred now a clear \$3 favourite ahead of Vernanme (\$8) for the blue riband event to be held at Ellerslie on March 2.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	ARC Schweppes Avondale Guineas, Gr.2 2100m
Winner	Surely Sacred (NZ) 2015
Owners	Raffles Racing
Trainer	Tony Pike (Cambridge)
Breeding	by Rock 'n' Pop (AUS) out of Not Sure by Masterclass (USA)
Breeder	Waikato Stud Ltd
Sales	2017 National Yearling Sales- Premier Sale; V: Waikato Stud, P: Raffles Racing; \$160,000

NEWS IN BRIEF

Verry Elleegant pleases in return

Former New Zealand-trained filly **Verry Elleegant (NZ)** (Zed) resumed with an eye catching second behind Amphitrite (Sebring) in the Gr.3 The TAB Vanity (1400m) at Flemington on Saturday for new trainer Chris Waller and impressed rider James McDonald.

"Gee she's very strong, if she did everything right with her manners, she could be a serious horse," McDonald said.

The daughter of Zed won two of her three New Zealand starts for trainer Nick Bishara, and went on to win the Gr.3 Ethereal Stakes (2000m) and was placed in the Gr.2 Edward Manifold Stakes (1600m) for recently disqualified trainer Darren Weir.

Verry Elleegant went back to the rear of the field before tracking the eventual winner Amphitrite in the run.

The Kiwi three-year-old appreciated the good tempo and did not over-race as fiercely as she had done previously.

Waller suggested a race like the Gr.1 Vinery Stud Stakes (2000m) at Rosehill on March 30 might be an ideal long-range target.





GLORY FOR THURLOW IN AVONDALE CUP

Waverley visitor **Glory Days (NZ)** (Red Giant) made her first visit to Ellerslie a memorable one when she fought tooth and nail to win the Gr.2 Coca-Cola Avondale Cup (2400m) at Ellerslie.

The Red Giant mare proved a revelation during the spring/early summer where she won four races on end, culminating with the Listed Wanganui Cup (2040m).

Put aside for a short break after finishing unplaced in the Gr.3

Manawatu Cup (2200m), Glory Days resumed with a fast-finishing effort for second in the Listed Wairarapa Thoroughbred Breeders' Stakes (1600m) before trekking north for her first look at the Ellerslie track in Saturday's feature event.

Despite the unfamiliar surroundings, Glory Days handled her first experience of racing right-handed with aplomb as she produced a sustained finishing run to secure the upper-hand from outsider Blue Breeze

(NZ) (Bullbars) after the pair waged war over the final 300m.

Trainer Bill Thurlow was feeling quite emotional as he accepted congratulations immediately after the race.

"This is my biggest moment by far," he said.

"It means a hell of a lot as we only have a little, wee team.

"She's a horse we have always loved and had a lot of time for, but to come

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Glory Days (outer) proves too tough as she takes out the Gr.2 Coca-Cola Avondale Cup at Ellerslie (Trish Dunell)





GLORY FOR THURLOW IN AVONDALE CUP

(Continued from page 4)

and do this is bit of a dream really.

"She's so tough and it was a great effort as going the other way (right-handed) really did worry me.

"In saying that she handled it so well as she came around the corner good and I'm rapt for her."

Thurlow, has made no secret of the fact that he has his sights set firmly on next month's Gr.1 Barfoot & Thompson

Auckland Cup (3200m) with his charge, set out his plan for the mare over the next three weeks leading in to the Ellerslie feature.

"I think she will spend the next three weeks at home," he said.

"We had thought about the Nathans (Nathans Memorial, Ellerslie March 2) but it is highly unlikely on that run.

"She has 53.50kgs in the Auckland Cup, which is quite a luxury weight, so we will just keep her ticking over and come back in three weeks' time.

"We don't know how she will handle 3200m, but she doesn't pull, she just lobs along, and when you ask her to go, she just goes."

Bookmakers reacted swiftly to the victory with Glory Days now equal-favourite at \$4.50 for the Auckland Cup along with Charles Road (Myboycharlie) and Saturday's third-placed finisher, Five To Midnight (NZ) (Domesday).

- NZ Racing Desk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Doomben win for Follow Suit

Dour stayer **Follow Suit (NZ)** (Show A Heart) maintained his unbeaten record at 2200m and gave jockey Jeff Lloyd his 50th metropolitan winner for the season with a strong win at Doomben.

Follow Suit made it four wins from four starts at 2200m when he held out stablemate Vauclose Bay (Al Maher) to win the Tropical Fresh Handicap (2200m).

The race was another quinella for premier Sydney trainer Chris Waller who has dominated Queensland staying races since setting up a Gold Coast stable 18 months ago.

Waller's Queensland manager Paul Shailer said the trainer had worked out the right formula to win staying races in Queensland.

"It is no secret our stayers are a bit better than the Queenslanders. Chris knows the right horse to send here and they are always fit and well," Shailer said.

"Having someone like Jeff riding trackwork and in races for you is a big start," Shailer said.

Follow Suit was a two-time winner in New Zealand for Kevin Myers before joining Waller's team. -AAP

Race	ARC Coca-Cola Avondale Cup, Gr.2 2400m
Winner	Glory Days (NZ) 2012
Owners	G D and Mrs P A Thurlow and B J and Mrs S A McAree
Trainer	Bill Thurlow (Waverley)
Breeding	by Red Giant (USA) out of Bilancia by Montjeu (IRE)
Breeder	J D Georgetti & Ms G E Kenny



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MATAMATA VISITOR SCORES IN SOUTHLAND GUINEAS



Dylan Turner salutes as he guides Weaponry home at Invercargill (Wild Range Photography)

Matamata raider **Weaponry (NZ)** (Declaration of War) made up for some bad luck at his last start when he stormed to victory in Saturday's Listed **ILT Ascot Park Hotel Southland Guineas** (1600m) at Invercargill.

The Jamie Richards-trained visitor had looked unlucky not to finish closer than fourth in the Listed **Dunedin Guineas** (1500m) when failing to find racing room at a vital stage that day.

This time rider Dylan Turner took

luck out of the equation when he bounced the Declaration Of War gelding out nicely from an outside barrier to sit just behind the speed before issuing his challenge on the point of the turn.

Weaponry and Upscale (NZ) (Tavistock) dashed to the front early in the run home before Dylan asked Weaponry for a final effort as he scooted clear to win handsomely from Upscale with race-favourite Air Max (NZ) (Nadeem) back in third.

Richards was delighted with the victory as Turner had followed his pre-race instructions to the letter.

"He (Weaponry) hasn't really had the run of the green in his last couple of runs," he said.

"He got caught behind horses at Gore two starts ago and then again at Wingatui last time.

"I spoke to Dylan before the race and basically told him not to be unlucky this time.

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MATAMATA VISITOR SCORES IN SOUTHLAND GUINEAS

(Continued from page 6)

“He bounced out of the gate nicely and then when the pressure went on, he got him into the clear and in a spot where he could dictate from, so it was a very good ride.”

Richards was undecided about future plans for Weaponry but believed he would be an even better type with some age on his side.

“There’s not a lot left for him down south so he will probably come home now for a spell,” he said.

“I think he has potential, but he will definitely be a better horse as a four-year-old.

“He can have a break now which will only be of benefit to him then we can decide where we go with

him next.”

Richards was also delighted with the performance of his two Gr.1 Vodafone New Zealand Derby (2400m) contenders, In A Twinkling (Fastnet Rock) and Prise De Fer (NZ) (Savabeel), after they finished second and fifth respectively in Saturday’s Gr.2 Schweppes Avondale Guineas (2100m).

“In A Twinkling went huge, it was a massive run,” he said.

“He had to do plenty of work in the run and really fought strongly in the straight, so it was a gutsy effort.

“Prise De Fer didn’t get a lot of luck as he got held up on the fence at a vital stage, but he has made up good

ground over the concluding stages.

“As long as they pull up well, they will both go to the Derby next.”

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	SRC ILT Ascot Park Hotel Southland Guineas, L. 1600m
Winner	Weaponry (NZ) 2015
Owners	Te Akau Weaponry Syndicate (Mgr: Kw Fenton-Ellis MnzM)
Trainer	J Richards (Matamata)
Breeding	by Declaration of War (USA) out of Cat Shmea by Felix The Cat (USA)
Breeder	Mrs S L Frost & Mrs R A Ramage
Sales	2017 National Yearling Sales- Premier Sale; V: Curraghmore, P: Mr DC Ellis; \$140,000

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cassidy, Cahill one-two an omen for NZ bid

Brisbane jockeys Larry Cassidy and Michael Cahill hope their quinella at Doomben is an omen for when they clash again next week in a New Zealand Group One.

Cassidy made the most of an inside barrier to guide Raiden (Foxwedge) to a neck win to Cahill’s mount Intrinsic (So You Think) in the Tropical Fresh Plate (1110m).

Cassidy will link with Sydney trainer Chris Waller to ride Endless Drama (Lope de Vega) while Cahill will venture across the Tasman to ride Bostonian (NZ) (Jimmy Choux) in the Gr.1 Haunui Farm Classic (1600m) at Otaki next Saturday.

It will be a home coming for Cassidy who learned his trade in New Zealand before going to Australia where he has ridden 43 Group One winners and won premierships in Sydney and Brisbane.

“I ride for Chris when I can and I always get reminded I was the jockey when Winx won the first of her 30 races in a row,” Cassidy said.

“Obviously to ride for Chris in a Group one is a real buzz.”

Cahill, who has ridden seven winners in the past three days, will reunite with the Pike-trained Bostonian after achieving Australian stakes success with the four-year-old gelding last year.

“I won the Daybreak Lover Stakes and the Sunshine Coast Stakes on Bostonian in the winter. I have only been to Wellington once before so I am really looking forward to it,” Cahill said.

Newcastle trainer Kris Lees trained both Raiden and Intrinsic and it continued the good run of his Gold Coast satellite stable. -AAP



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DESTROYER ECLIPSE DESCENDS FOR UPSET WIN



Destroyer Eclipse charges home to get the money on the line in Race 5. (STC)

Punters were treated to a \$209 shock when **Destroyer Eclipse (NZ)** (Alamosa) popped out of the woodwork to land the S\$70,000 Kranji Stakes C Division 2 race over 1400m in Singapore on Friday night.

But English trainer James Peters was his usual composed self at the winner's circle, saying that the win was "no fluke" in his books.

He said the Alamosa four-year-old's last few unplaced runs had not left him indifferent, but more significantly, he had devised a clever little change in battle plan which to him, pulled all its weight in the final analysis.

Usually held up at the rear, even if his maiden Kranji win was recorded by leading all the way, Destroyer Eclipse was

ridden a lot closer to the speed this time.

Tracking up favourite Circuit Mission (High Chaparral) in fifth spot as roughie Justice Light (NZ) (Darci Brahma) towed the 12-horse field along, Destroyer Eclipse was certainly living up to his name when he stealthily came pouncing from behind to first upstage the top pick before asserting his superiority inside the last 150m.

Chalaza (NZ) (Road To Rock) and Circuit Mission put up a good struggle, but they were beaten fair and square by a contender not many might not have included in their calculations – except for Peters – but evidently was no pushover.

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DESTROYER ECLIPSE DESCENDS FOR UPSET WIN

(Continued from page 9)

“He ran a few nice couple of races which were better than what they looked on paper,” said Peters.

“As it was on the Short Course E tonight, Vlad and I did a quick change of tactics in the parade ring. I told him to ride him more positive.

“He’s quite a headstrong horse and that’s why he was ridden back to switch him off. So there was no fluke about tonight’s win.

“I think this horse (Destroyer Eclipse) can progress on to further.”

Though Duric did put heads together with Peters at the parade ring, the Australian rider was clearly not as confident they could pull it off.

“The E Course can be a tricky track, to come across the speed and all that, but I took advantage of his barrier (six) to ride him more positive,” said the two-time Singapore champion jockey.

“He jumped so well tonight. To his credit, he can be a bit aggressive but he relaxed well.

“He tacked on really well tonight. We came off the back of the favourite (Circuit Mission), and he got a bit lost on his own, but he was overall impressive.

“I won on him before but I haven’t ridden him for a while. I remember him as a dopey bugger, but he surprised me tonight.”

With that third win from 14 starts, Destroyer Eclipse has now amassed close to S\$160,000 in stakes for the Eclipse Stable.

-STC

Race	STC Kranji Stakes C Division 2 1400m
Winner	Destroyer Eclipse (NZ) 2014
Owners	Eclipse Stable
Trainer	James Peters (Singapore)
Breeding	by Alamosa our of Shezabeel by Zabeel
Breeder	Mrs A C Shaw & Wellfield Holdings Ltd
Sales	2016 National Yearling Sales- Select Sale; V: Wellfield Lodge, P: NZB as agent: \$22,500 – 2016 Ready To Run Sale of 2YOs; V: Riverrock Farm, P: Mr I Hartono; \$40,000





TWO IN A ROW **FOR WONDERFUL PAINT**

If there was a 'Ride of the Night' award to be handed out in Singapore on Friday night, not many would have begrudged Noh Senari the nod for his incredibly cool ride on **Wonderful Paint (NZ)** (Darci Brahma).

The Darci Brahma grey is a noted backmarker, that's a given. He had won all his three races in that fashion thus far, and with Noh in the plate at all of them.

For that reason, the bang-in-form jockey could perhaps be forgiven for his cockiness when they dawdled out to last on settling in the S\$70,000 Kranji Stakes C race over 2000m, and remained there for most of the way.

But there was much beefier opposition in the way this time, and when race caller Luke Marlow said they were packing up coming to the home turn, and Wonderful Paint was still a conspicuous distant last, Noh was on a hiding to nothing, with one of trainer Leslie Khoo's notorious sprays a most likely reception upon unsaddling.

Upfront, a wobbly Panache (Spinning World) was showing the white flag, but not his better-fancied stablemate Mr Dujardin (NZ) (High Chaparral) who promptly hit the front with a sweeping dash on the outside.

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Wonderful Paint (No 7) scores a brilliant last-to-first win in the Kranji Stakes C race on Friday. (STC)





TWO IN A ROW **FOR WONDERFUL PAINT**

(Continued from page 11)

A few pegs back, Wonderful Paint had finally decided to leave the “paint”, but on the Short Course, the alarm bells that Noh might have left it too late had gone off and was reaching a crescendo for most of those who backed him off the map at \$18.

On the inside, Majestic Empress (NZ) (Ekraar) could still settle the issue with a late sucker punch while Mr Dujardin was holding sway doggedly, but Noh had timed the moment he sets his mount alight with clockwork precision.

The fact that Wonderful Paint is a grey probably embellished the grandstand finish even more as he came motoring home with a sizzling turn of speed.

He did lay in a touch under pressure, but he never wilted and eventually went on to post a soft three-quarter length victory on Mr Dujardin. Majestic Empress had to settle for third place another neck away.

Currently caught in a close tussle with last year’s champion jockey Vlad Duric and his runner-up Michael Rodd, Noh (tied with Duric on 11 winners but second on a countback for seconds) said the brazen ride might have tested some nerves, but he said he was on top of things right through.

“Leslie told me to just let him relax at the back and that’s exactly what I did,” said Noh.

“I was still last coming to the home turn, but I knew what I had under me. I knew he would run by himself once I get him going.”

Khoo, himself a former top jockey, took his hat off to Noh for his flawless display, even if he did have some butterflies two furlongs out.

“I have to admit I panicked a bit before the home turn. It was the plan to settle and relax him at the back, but he was a little too far and at the top of the straight, he had not moved yet!” said Khoo.

“But the boy was smart enough to know what he was doing. Once he took the horse out for daylight, he finished very strongly.”

Khoo said he was seriously considering plotting a path towards the Singapore Derby (1800m) on July 21 for Wonderful Paint, who has now taken his stats to four wins from eight runs for prizemoney closing in on the S\$100,000 mark for the Paint Stable.

-STC

Race	STC Kranji Stakes C 2000m
Winner	Wonderful Paint (NZ) 2014
Owners	Paint Stable
Trainer	Leslie Khoo (Singapore)
Breeding	by Darci Brahma out of The Grey Storm by Red Ransom (USA)
Breeder	L Williams
Sales	2016 National Yearling Sales- Select Sale; V: Sanderston Park, P: Mr SY Chew; \$20,000



OLYMPIC LEGEND **TRAINING EMINENT**



Sir Mark Todd has taken over the training of Eminent who is currently in quarantine with plans to travel to Australia to chase Group success (racingfotos.com)

Sir Mark Todd, New Zealand's greatest Olympic eventer, has taken on a new challenge and is training regally-bred racehorse **Eminent** and plans to run the five-year-old son of Frankel at Group One level in Sydney in autumn.

Eminent, a Group Two winner for UK trainer Martyn Meade, is owned by New Zealand Bloodstock principal Sir Peter Vela, who has owned a number of event horses with Todd.

"Sir Peter and [bloodstock agent] Hubie de Burgh bought Martyn Meade out of the horse with the idea of sending him to stud in New Zealand – he's got a great pedigree and is a Group Two winner," Todd told horseandhound.co.uk.

"They sent him to me to do something with before going to New Zealand, and then I got a phone call, saying they were thinking of taking him to Australia to run in a couple of

races before retiring. 'And we want you to do it!' they said.

"I had a think about it – and I can never resist a challenge! I've had to take out my training licence in a hurry. The plan is to run him in two Group Ones over 2000m in Sydney – the Ranvet Stakes on March 23 and the Queen Elizabeth Stakes on April 13, although he does have an entry in the Doncaster Mile (Gr.1, 1600m) as well as an insurance."

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OLYMPIC LEGEND TRAINING EMINENT

(Continued from page 13)

By outstanding racehorse and emerging sire Frankel, Eminent is a son of the Group One placed Kingmambo mare You'll Be Mine.

The winner of the Gr.3 Craven Stakes (1600m) at three, Eminent finished fourth in the Gr.1 Derby (2400m) and later won the Gr.2 Prix Guillaume d'Ornano (2000m) at Deauville before finishing third in the Gr.1 Irish Champion Stakes (2000m).

Last season the entire's form dipped and he was unplaced in all of his four runs, three of them at Group One level.

"He's a lovely horse – on the ball, and he is still an entire of course, but he has a great nature," said Todd, who has done all the riding work apart from the fast galloping work on the horse himself.

"I played around with a bit of flatwork when he first came and popped him over a few fences – letting him be a horse, not just a racehorse. He'd probably be a nice event horse, although I don't think that is what his owners have in mind!

"He has worked on the gallops here at Badgerstown [Todd's yard in Wiltshire] and I have also taken him to other gallops to work alongside other horses. The snow and the equine flu virus have upset our plans a bit and we've had to resort to plans B, C and D, but he is now in quarantine in Newmarket and he flies to Australia on 28 February."

"The plan is that I will be over there

for six weeks if all goes well," Todd said. "If everything goes right and he is able to reproduce his best form, I think he could be competitive. Beating Winx in the Queen Elizabeth would be a pretty tall order – but you've got to be in it to win it." Sir Peter is one of the great sporting owners of the world – he embraced it when I started eventing again and has never been afraid to think out of the box. What other owner would give me a chance to do this?"

Todd is no stranger to training thoroughbred racehorses, having successfully taken up the profession after the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

His biggest successes came when training Bramble Rose to win the Gr.1

New Zealand Oaks in 2003 and Willy Smith to win the Gr.1 Wellington Cup (3200m) in 2007, but he hung up his stop watch shortly after the Cup victory.

"I've toyed with the idea of getting back into training," Todd said. "But I don't think it is something I want to do full-time. My wife Carolyn and I would like to have a few horses of our own, and maybe it will develop a bit, but I am not giving up eventing just yet.

"It is a great privilege to be allowed to train Eminent, and winning a Group One for Sir Peter would be wonderful."

– NZ Racing Desk and Horse and Hound

