

Sunday 17 July 2016

A RETURN TO TRENTHAM'S WINTER GOING PUTS WEE BISKIT BACK IN WINNING FORM



Wee Biskit shows her economical jumping style on her way to winning the Wellington Hurdles.

Matthew Cropp's confidence in the fearless fencer **Wee Biskit (NZ)** (Zed) was repaid at Trentham yesterday when, with a commanding performance, the Waverley rider and the Ken Duncan-trained mare successfully defended their title in the Anuka Smoker Wellington Hurdles.

"This has been the plan all the way through and she ran

a super race when she finished off well in the Hawke's Bay Hurdles on a good track," Cropp said.

Third at Hastings, Wee Biskit revelled in the heavy going and the extra distance at Trentham, where she settled in her customary position at the tail-end of the field.

She picked up ground down the back straight for the final

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S

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CONTACT

Mark Chittick
m +64 21 433 252
e mark@waikatostud.co.nz

Gareth Downey
m +64 21 433 073
e gareth@waikatostud.co.nz
www.waikatostud.com





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(Continued from page 1)

time with a sustained run that had her in front two flights from home and she then powered away to win easily.

"Ken told me to let her move when she felt comfortable about it and she's blitzed them again," Cropp said. "I'm so grateful to Ken and his family for letting me stick with her."

The seven-year-old mare's success realised a long-held dream for Duncan, who combines thoroughbred interests with his Hunterville farming operation.

"To go back-to-back was our ambition and we're thrilled to get it done," he said.

"She's very tidy over her jumps and that's why we've resisted putting her over the bigger fences. She's very, very

special to us – she's become a family pet."

Seven lengths in arrears of Wee Biskit at the line was Mahanadi (NZ) (Tiger Hill), who has now placed in the event three years in a row, ahead of the 2014 winner Just Got Home (NZ) (Storming Home).

Race	WRC Wellington Hurdle 3400m
Winner	Wee Biskit (NZ) 2008
Owners	Mrs J M & Ken Duncan
Trainer	Ken Duncan (Hunterville)
Breeding	by Zed out of Nancy Hope by Lord Ballina (Aus)
Breeder	S D & Mrs S M Little



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ERIC THE VIKING **MAKES MATTHEW'S DAY**



There's a way to travel yet but Eric The Viking and Matthew Cropp have the look of winners about them as they take a mid-race fence.

Veteran jumper **Eric The Viking (NZ)** (Viking Ruler) yesterday returned to his best form at Trentham to complete a dream day for his rider, the rising 11-year-old taking top honours in the Grant Plumbing Wellington Steeplechase in the hands of Matthew Cropp, who had earlier combined with Wee Biskit for an outstanding win in the Wellington Hurdles.

"I cannot believe this day has actually happened," the Waverley-based jockey said. "I'm actually having to pause and really think about this. It hasn't sunk in."

The 24-year-old was having his first ride on Eric The Viking, who jumped fluently throughout to close in on the

front-runners with 800 metres to run.

"I thought I would be patient as I've seen that this horse can finish his races off," Cropp said. "And he did."

The chestnut cleared the final fence in front and crossed the line with a five length advantage on Crash Bandicoot (NZ) (Casual Lies) with last year's runner-up The Oysterman (NZ) (Yamanin Vital) in third spot ahead of Wise Men Say (NZ) (Yamanin Vital).

Eric The Viking was at odds of 17-1 after some indifferent lead-up form, although Tauherenikau trainer and part-owner Aaron Bidlake was confident of significant improvement following the gelding's unplaced effort in the Hawke's Bay Steeplechase.

"He had a few little issues going

into Hastings and I said to a few people after that race that he wouldn't get beaten again this season," he said.

On that supremely confident note, Bidlake and Eric The Viking will head south to Riccarton for another attempt on the Grand National Steeplechase, a race they won in 2014 after also claiming the Koral Steeplechase on the opening day of the carnival.

Race	WRC Wellington Steeplechase 5500m
Winner	Eric The Viking (NZ) 2005
Owners	A B & N J Bidlake, L Boere, B G Krivan and S W E Searle
Trainer	Aaron Bidlake (Tauherenikau)
Breeding	by Viking Ruler (Aus) out of Shrule Grove by Lord Ballina (Aus)
Breeder	K J Nally





CHAMPAGNE FLOWS THROUGH ESTEBAN

A late-season surge of form by **Esteban (NZ)** (Encosta De Lago) has trainer John Sargent revising plans for the well-bred gelding.

The three-year-old's mother is a daughter of dual Group One winner Champagne (NZ) (Zabeel), who was runner-up in the 1998 Melbourne Cup.

It seems Esteban has inherited her staying prowess, putting together three consecutive wins over 2000 metres, including yesterday's Schweppes Handicap at Rosehill.

As impressive as those wins are, the margins are even more so, with the gelding winning those three races by a combined 21 lengths.

"It's all in the blood and it's coming out now," expat-Kiwi Sargent said. "We'll have to have a good look at what we do with him now.

"His mother is a daughter of Champagne. We got him at a ready-to-run sale in New Zealand and Champagne's owner, Bob Emery, has stayed in him with a share."

Sent out the \$4.60 favourite on the back of his two lead-in wins on Newcastle's Beaumont course, Esteban took the lead as soon as Rory Hutchings could get him there and relaxed in front.

The further he went, the more he stretched out and his winning margin over Rock My Lady (Road To Rock) was 6¾ lengths.

"I think he must like being on his own," Sargent said. "He doesn't want any other horses around him.

"He won well up at Newcastle but to win by that margin again shows he has something.

"I think the going played a part," Sargent added. "But he can go on top of the ground as well. It's not too bad out there today.

"And I think the blinkers definitely made a big difference and he is constantly maturing, learning more every time he goes to the races."

Completing the ex-Kiwi connection was rider Rory Hutchings, a gun apprentice on both sides of the Tasman and a recent graduate to the senior ranks.

"To lead, roll and accelerate is a rare thing for a stayer," he said.

"He'll keep going through the grades. He's a very nice horse and will be winning a nice race, I think."

– AAP TURF & racenet.com.au

Race	ATC Schweppes H. 2000m
Winner	Esteban (NZ) 2012
Owners	R A Emery, D A Morrell, Mrs C McRae-Williamson, G R Williamson, Mrs E M Morrell, Segenhoe Thoroughbreds Australia (Mgr: K W Maloney) and J'ville Tab Syndicate (Mgr: S J Moffatt)
Trainer	John Sargent (Randwick)
Breeding	by Encosta de Lago (Aus) out of Nadege by Giant's Causeway (USA)
Breeder	R A Emery
Sales	2014 Ready to Run Sale; V: Regal Farm, P: Segenhoe Thoroughbreds; \$180,000



Close to home at Rosehill and Rory Hutchings sits up as Esteban completes his no-doubter.



LA STALLIONS 2016



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REKA'S PARLIAMENTARY WIN A BON VOYAGE PRESENT FOR MAURITIUS-BOUND DARRYL

Darryl Bradley boosted his travel fund for an upcoming overseas riding stint with a feature flat success at Trentham yesterday, the Feilding-based jockey guiding **Reka (NZ)** (Storm Creek) to victory in the Lone Star Petone Parliamentary Handicap for Te Awamutu owner-trainer Richard Sherwin.

"I'm going to Mauritius and will be flying out on Tuesday week," Bradley said. "I've been there before, fourteen years ago, and I got a phone call last week to see if I wanted to go back.

"Their season ends in early December so all going well I plan to stay there until then."

Bradley expected a bold showing from Reka after riding him at Trentham on two prior occasions.

"I was third on him in the Parliamentary last year and more recently I rode him into second behind Bel Sorriso," he said.

Bradley settled Reka in behind the pace and in a driving finish they got the better of a brave Second Innings (NZ) (Yamanin Vital) to win by a neck with the favourite and topweight Bel Sorriso (NZ) (Keeper) back in third.

"He loves this sort of ground and the win was well-deserved," he said.

With 1749 New Zealand winners to his credit, 97 of them at Group or Listed level, Bradley has been a leader in his profession for more than two decades.

He won the jockeys' premiership in the 1998/99 season with 133 winners and also broke the century mark in the 2003/04 term with 106.



Veteran horse Reka and veteran jockey Darryl Bradley come out on top after a hard slog in yesterday's Parliamentary at Trentham.

Bradley has ridden 47 winners this season, with his victory on outsider El Soldado (NZ) (Colombia) in the Group One Auckland Cup his 2015/16 highlight.

Race	WRC Lone Star Parliamentary H. 2200m
Winner	Reka (NZ) 2008
Owners	Richard & Irene Sherwin
Trainer	Richard Sherwin (Te Awamutu)
Breeding	by Storm Creek (USA) out of Memphis Blues by Blues Traveller (Ire)
Breeder	Karaka Group Ltd
Sales	2009 Spring Bloodstock Sale; V: Twin Pines Ltd, P: Mr C K R Dawson; \$2000 2011 National Weanling, Broodmare & Mixed Sale; V: Claymore Group, P: Mr W R Sherwin; \$700





GROUP RACING **BECKONS FOR TE RAPA PAIR**

Southern Icon (Big Brown) and Gwynethanne (NZ) (Handsome Ransom) will chase Group features at opposite ends of the country next month following their successes at Te Rapa yesterday.

The former coasted away with the Group 1 Turf Bar 1200 to confirm a tilt at the Group Two Foxbridge Plate on August 13.

"We have to try and win that to qualify for a start in the Makfi," part-owner and trainer Alan Tait said.

Southern Icon won three consecutive races at the end of his last campaign and resumed in style with a bold performance that left no excuses for his rivals.

The four-year-old was in behind the leader Aaja Nachle (NZ) (Fast 'N'

Famous) before he strode to the front a long way from home and cruised in by four lengths.

"He took a sit early but he is the sort of horse you can't fight so I let him roll along and he did it easily," rider Mark Hills said.

Meanwhile, Gwynethanne has put herself into contention for the Group Three Winter Cup at Riccarton on August 6 following her clear-cut victory in the BNZ Partners Open 1600.

"She will probably go to stud next season and I said if she won this race then we would pay a late entry to the cup," trainer Karen Zimmerman said. "That could be her swansong."

The winner of seven races and runner-up in the 2014 Group Two Travis Stakes, Gwynethanne sat at the

tail-end of the field under rider Kelly McCullough, who said she got the perfect drag into the race.

"She had no speed early but I managed to get on the back of Designated Driver around the turn and she finished off very well," she said.

Gwynethanne had a length to spare on Biologist (Danehill Dancer) at the post with the genuine Elusive Gold (NZ) (Elusive City) claiming third money.

Race	Waikato RC Group 1 Turf Bar H. 1200m
Winner	Southern Icon (Aus) 2011
Owners	M A Collinson and Mrs G F Tait
Trainer	Alan Tait (Matamata)
Breeding	by Big Brown (USA) out of Cataclopse (Aus) by Catbird (Aus)
Breeder	Dartbrook Downs Thoroughbred

Race	Waikato RC BNZ Partners H. 1600m
Winner	Gwynethanne (NZ) 2009
Owners	K N Buckman, W A Flipp, Mrs E A & J E Hancock, L H Jones, L P McIntosh, L Pettit, Poppyz Palz Syndicate, K F Suddaby, J M Thurston and Est late G B Arber
Trainer	Karen Zimmerman (Otaki)
Breeding	by Handsome Ransom (Aus) out of Pop Your Buttons by Howbaddouwantit (USA)
Breeder	L H Jones



Mark Hills can take it easy as Southern Icon ices the first part of his spring campaign with a win in yesterday's open sprint at Te Rapa.





PLUCK THAT **WINS AGAIN AT TE RAPA**

Murray Baker and Andrew Forsman have enjoyed a rewarding season with the progeny of the Group One Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner Pluck, the Cambridge trainers being successful with the More Than Ready stallion's first crop representatives Gasoline, Mongolian

Wolf and Pluck That, with the latter yesterday doubling his personal tally at Te Rapa.

"They're showing a fair bit, the Plucks, and doing everything right," Baker said. "They've got good temperaments and I hope they go on as three-year-olds."

The New Zealand-bred Pluck That, a \$20,000 Ready to Run Sale purchase last year, was sent out a short odds favourite in the NZB Insurance Pearl Series Race following his maiden win at Te Teko last month and his army of supporters were given an easy ride.

Jockey Matt Cameron was aggressive from a wide gate to sit outside the leader and they had the race in safe keeping 250 metres from home.

Pluck That, who was fourth on debut in the Listed Castletown Stakes behind the unbeaten Volpe Veloce

Race	Waikato RC New Zealand Bloodstock Insurance Pearl Series 2YO H. 1100m
Winner	Pluck That (NZ) 2013
Owners	D Piper, B Christopher, C Bryant, J Fox, J Mitchell, True Callas Ltd, D & B Kneebone, K Corby and The Karl Syndicate
Trainer	Murray Baker & Andrew Forsman (Cambridge)
Breeding	by Pluck (USA) out of Spirit of Karlu (Aus) by Dubawi (Ire)
Breeder	S Y S Yan
Sales	2015 Ready to Run Sale; V: Weowna Park Ltd, P: A C Forsman; \$20,000



(Foxwedge), surged clear to win by a widening four and a quarter lengths.

"He was a bit unlucky first time out and he's continued to improve," Baker said.

He will now consider a start in the Listed Ryder Stakes at Otaki in a fortnight's time.

"There will be some high-class two-year-olds in that and I feel he is more of a staying horse," Baker said, "but we'll see how he does."

Pacemaker Irish Mist (NZ) (Guillotine) backed up well from Ruakaka last Saturday to finish second ahead of Don't Be Cheeky (NZ) (Swiss Ace) and Desano (NZ) (Thano) came from last to be next home.

Pluck That is far too good for his juvenile rivals at Te Rapa.



STALLIONS 2016

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POUR MOI <i>(Montjeu - Gwynn by Darshaan)</i> RETURNING	\$17,500*
RIP VAN WINKLE <i>(Galileo - Looking Back by Stravinsky)</i>	\$12,500*

SHAMEXPRESS <i>(O'Reilly - Volkrose by Volksraad)</i>	\$12,500*
MONGOLIAN KHAN NEW <i>(Holy Roman Emperor - Centafit by Centaine)</i>	\$10,000*
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MARE'S SHORT BACK-UP **NO DRAWBACK**

Former Wanganui mare Karalli (NZ) (Elusive City), racing in Singapore as **Lim's Affection**, thrived on a short five-day back-up to punch out a brilliant win in the \$580,000 Kranji Stakes C race over 1600 metres on Friday night.

Trainer Steven Burridge decided to have another roll of the dice with the four-year-old after her fast-closing second in the last race on Sunday, a BM67 mile. The mare had pulled up well enough and, with no suitable races on the horizon, Burridge saw no reason to not have another crack.

The manner in which Lim's Affection pulled away after not getting off to the best of runs certainly vindicated the Australian.

From her inside draw, the original plan was to plot a ground-saving run in second on the rails, but the tightly bunched field saw young rider Salim Yusoff restrain her and Lim's Affection ended up in a sticky spot when her pacemaking stablemate High Blade (Salute The Sarge) strayed off the rails at the 800 metre mark.

When the race turned into a sprint home inside the last two furlongs it was Salim who pulled the trigger first, digging up his mount as they approached the home turn before she sprinted away to post a dominant two-length win.

"The kid rode her well, although not quite the way we wanted," said Burridge. "We wanted him to settle behind the leader but he didn't panic

and made the right decision to go early.

"This mare bled a couple of times and at one stage made us wonder what to do with her, but she has come good and was very gutsy tonight.

"She is talented but, as with all bleeders, we don't know how many more races she can go for. We backed her up tonight because it was a suitable race and there were no other races for her in the near future."

Salim acknowledged that his three kilo claim had been a big advantage but added that the mare also won on merit and should visit the winner's circle a few more times.

"I've never ridden her before and the connections told me to settle her behind the lead and wait for the last 200 metres," said the apprentice after his only ride for the night.

"But things didn't quite work out and I had to get going early. I knew she was fit and I went home early to make the others catch us. She never weakened."

With her third win, Lim's Affection had brought her stakes earnings to a tick under the \$5150,000 mark for the in-form Lim's Stable.

– Singapore Turf Club

Race	Singapore TC Kranji S. 1600m
Winner	Lim's Affection (NZ) 2011
Owners	Lim's Stable
Trainer	Steven Burridge (Kranji)
Breeding	by Elusive City (USA) out of En Pointe (Aus) by Carnegie (Ire)
Breeder	D J Myers
Sales	2013 National Yearling Sale, Festival Sale; V: Haunui Farm, P: KT Myers; \$6000



Lim's Affection strides away to win at Kranji on Friday night.





DENTIST COPS THE KUDOS WHEN SPRINTER WINS AFTER EARLY TOOTH-AND-NAIL FIGHT

Bold frontrunner **Muscular Sprinter (NZ)** (Coats Choice) – sold to Singaporean interests after winning a mid-December Te Aroha trial that featured the first public appearance of Group One Queensland Oaks winner Provocative (NZ) (Zabeel) – defied a high-pressure journey from start to finish to cling to a slender advantage at the business end of Friday night’s \$575,000 Restricted Maiden race over 1400 metres at Kranji.

Tackled by Magic Paint (NZ) (Gorky Park) after jumping smartly to find the fence, Muscular Sprinter refused to

relinquish the lead and the pair slipped away to a four-length break down the back.

When the swoopers started to close the gap from the 400 metre mark, the battling pair, given their early exertions, seemed to have little chance of contesting the finish. And while Magic Paint did run out of gas, Muscular Sprinter was surprisingly not a spent force, even though he’d rolled off the fence at the top of the straight.

Camera Stellata (Eavesdropper) and two-year-old Funkadelic (Hussonet) got closest but a final rally saw the Kiwi-bred home, the margins a neck and a half length.

Third on debut over 1200 metres three weeks ago, Muscular Sprinter was expected to go close, but it was more his unyielding spirit inside the last 300 metres that won over his connections.

“This horse has got a lot of potential. I think he can handle more ground,” said trainer Leticia Dragon. “It was not an easy race but he showed plenty of courage to win.”

Apprentice Troy See said he went into the race with a

reasonable dose of confidence but by the 600 metre point it had worn thin. He also mentioned a little-known factor in the win.

“He’d had an issue with one of his right teeth. It was too long and made him lay out at his first race and we had to get it fixed.

“Tonight, he went straight, no problem at all. The equine dentist has certainly done a good job with him.”

– Singapore Turf Club

Race	Singapore TC Restricted Maiden S. 1400m
Winner	Muscular Sprinter (NZ) 2012
Owners	Muscular Stable
Trainer	Leticia Dragon (Kranji)
Breeding	by Coats Choice (Aus) out of Sweet Spot (Aus) by Royal Academy (USA)
Breeder	A W Jones and Mrs E W Morris
Sales	2014 National Yearling Sale, Festival Session; V: Berkley Stud, P: Beatson Stables; \$15,000



Muscular Sprinter (nearest camera) hangs on grimly to clear maidens at Kranji.

