

Sunday 13 November 2016

RACHA RISES TO GROUP ONE CHALLENGE WITH IMPECCABLE DISPLAY ON LA DIOSA



La Diosa and Racha Cuneen are clear of the rest in yesterday's stunning Thousand Guineas win.

Weight of expectation at Riccarton didn't faze Racha Cuneen, who yesterday successfully rose to the biggest challenge of his career.

The 24-year-old was entrusted with the ride on the Group One gavelhouse.com New Zealand One Thousand Guineas favourite **La Diosa (NZ)** (So You Think) and he repaid the confidence shown in him with a faultless display to guide the southern filly to victory.

"She's an amazing filly and I'm very grateful to be given the opportunity by Mandy and Matt Brown and the connections," Cuneen said.

Cuneen had ridden La Diosa in her three previous starts, including Listed wins in the Canterbury Belle Stakes and the Barneswood Farm Stakes, and he gave another polished display aboard the daughter of the New Zealand-bred multiple Group One winner So You Think.

La Diosa settled in the final pairing before she scouted wide near the turn and then finished relentlessly for the fourth win of her six-start career.

"The plan was always to get back and run over the top of them," Cuneen said. "We hit the front early and she got a bit lost. But all credit to the filly – she's a great horse."

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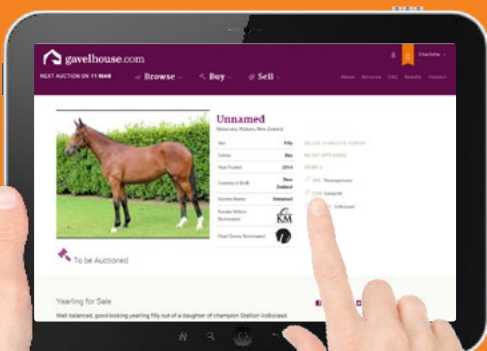


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La Diosa then unceremoniously dumped Cuneen after the winning post – “You have to take the highs and lows!” he said.

The filly not only provided Cuneen with his first Group One winner but also the first for her Canterbury trainers, who weren’t altogether sure how La Diosa would cope with the Dead 4 track.

“We didn’t know how she would handle it,” Matt Brown said. “She had to be good to win and she is very good, she just likes to get back and relax.

“Racha hasn’t done anything wrong on her and he rode her brilliantly.”

La Diosa won by a length and a half from Bella Gioia (NZ) (Swiss Ace) with Sweepstake (NZ) (Per Incanto) third ahead of Midnight Gossip (NZ) (Showcasing).

Race	CJC New Zealand One Thousand Guineas Gr.1 1600m
Winner	La Diosa (NZ) 2013
Owners	Calder Bloodstock Ltd, G L Currie, Bruce Honeybone & Deborah Martin, M L Gibson, P B C Sipos and T W Archer Trust
Trainer	Mandy & Matt Brown (Ngapuke)
Breeding	by So You Think out of Star Affair by Star Way (GB)
Breeder	T W Archer Trust



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KELLY ON TOP IN SISTER-ACT CUP FINISH

There was no love lost between Kelly McCulloch and Rosie Myers at the end of a testing Group Three New Zealand Cup at Riccarton yesterday, the sisters fighting out a desperate finish in the Christchurch Casino-sponsored marathon with the older sibling gaining the upper hand on the line aboard **Pump Up The Volume (NZ)** (Savabeel) by half a head.

Trained by part-owner Ralph Manning, the genuine stayer came wide on the home turn then finished doggedly to take the major prize from Myers' mount Perfect Start (NZ) (Perfectly Ready).

"He got a bit lost out there on his own and I thought Rosie may have nabbed me," McCulloch said.

"The key to these two mile races is to put them to sleep and he had

no trouble. He's a great horse and a pleasure to ride."

Pump Up The Volume relaxed well toward the back of the field before improving 800 metres from home when the heavily supported Nymph Monte (NZ) (Tavistock) also made his move.

"I got on the back of the favourite and I knew I was going better than him," McCulloch said.

It was the 33-year-old's third Cup victory, having won aboard Hoorang (NZ) (Zerpour) in 2008 and with Mungo Jerry (NZ) (Don Eduardo) in 2014.

Perfect Start also settled at the tail-end but, unlike her sister, Myers came between runners on the Wayne Hillis-trained outsider and that nearly proved a winning move for the 29-year-old.

Imperium (NZ) (Encosta de Lago) ran on gallantly to take third money from Gentil Tonton (Yeats) with the hot-pot Nymph Monte next home. Under pressure before the turn, the odds-on favourite boxed on well on a track wetter than he prefers.

Race	CJC New Zealand Cup Gr.3 3200m
Winner	Pump Up the Volume (NZ) 2008
Owners	A B Coombe & R R Manning
Trainer	Ralph Manning (Cambridge)
Breeding	by Savabeel (Aus) out of Nat the Brat by Racing is Fun (USA)
Breeder	Waikato Stud 2001 Ltd
Sales	2009 National Broodmare & Mixed Sale; V: Waikato Stud Ltd, P: New Zealand Bloodstock Ltd; \$14,000



Pump Up The Volume (#3) stretches his neck for Kelly McCulloch as they nab Perfect Start on the line to win the New Zealand Cup.





ABIDEWITHME'S TAURANGA WIN STEPPING STONE TO SUMMER GROUP ONE CAMPAIGN

n-form mare **Abidewithme (NZ)** (Redoute's Choice) has served notice that she could yet sign off her career with a perfect result.

The well-bred seven-year-old is in foal to Tavistock and the style of her Group Two victory in yesterday's Preston Rowe Paterson Tauranga Stakes strongly suggested that she can win at the highest level.

"That was really pleasing and hopefully we will be able to

Race	BOP RC Tauranga S. Gr.2 1600m
Winner	Abidewithme (NZ) 2009
Owners	Sir Patrick & Lady Hogan
Trainer	Stephen Autridge & Jamie Richards (Matamata)
Breeding	by Redoute's Choice (Aus) out of Crimson by Zabeel
Breeder	Sir Patrick & Lady Hogan

get a Group One with her," said Jamie Richards, who trains in partnership with Stephen Autridge.

Raced by her breeders Sir Patrick and Lady Hogan, the mare will have three upcoming opportunities to complete her CV. She has two previous Group One placings to her credit, both in the New Zealand Thoroughbred Breeders' Stakes.

"She'll go to the Captain Cook Stakes next and then on to the Zabeel Classic on Boxing Day," Richards said.

"Sir Patrick has worked it out and the Herbie Dyke will be her last race before she goes to the breeding paddock."

Abidewithme settled at the tail of the field under Michael McNab before she produced a sizzling finish to beat El Pescado (NZ) (El Hermano) and Julinsky Prince (NZ) (Darci Brahma).



"She's the biggest and strongest she's ever been and obviously she's in really good form," Richards said.

"Back to weight-for-age helped her today but we weren't that confident with hardly anything coming from the back so she's done a great job."

Abidewithme (green colours) gets up on the outside of El Pescado to win the weight-for-age mile at Tauranga.





PROM QUEEN IN DAZZLING DISPLAY

Speed merchant **Prom Queen (NZ)** (Super Easy) made winning look super easy when she bolted away with the Listed Welcome Stakes at Riccarton and record a memorable first success for the newest member of a training partnership.

The precocious youngster was far too slick for her rivals in yesterday's Barneswood Farm-sponsored feature and even had the temerity to finish the race in the worst of the ground near the fence.

In winning, Prom Queen delivered a maiden training success for Kenny and Lisa Rae's daughter Krystal Williams-Tuhoro, who recently joined her parents in partnership.

"It's been in the pipeline since the beginning of the season," Lisa Rae said. "Her licence came through late in the week."

Prom Queen had also credited her sire Super Easy with his first winner when she was successful on debut on the course last month. Now the star filly has provided the Hallmark Stud-based stallion with his maiden black type victory.

She was ridden by Alysha Collett, who has been aboard the youngster in both of her victories and two lead-up trial wins.

"I'm waiting for a bit of competition, I think she's the real deal," she said. "She did that easily."

Prom Queen was quickly into stride to hit the front and she shook off the well-fancied Gilhoolie (NZ) (Guillotine) early in the run home. Despite veering across to the rail, she still had a length and three-quarters to spare at the post.

"At the 250 she wanted to go back to the fence and she



Prom Queen dashes away with the Welcome Stakes, giving Alysha Collett her most prestigious win on a successful day.

was going that well that I let her drift back in," Collett said.

Kiwi Ida (Squamosa) finished runner-up again after also chasing the winner home at her previous appearance while the local hope Sensei (Dream Ahead) ran third ahead of Gilhoolie.

Rae said Prom Queen could now head to Trentham for the Group Two Wakefield Challenge Stakes on December 3.

Race	CJC Welcome S. L 1000m
Winner	Prom Queen (NZ) 2014
Owners	K I Rae, G R Smith, R L Hancox, R H Bishop, H & S Whitehead, F O Hansen and D P McHugh
Trainer	Ken & Lisa Rae & Krystal Williams-Tuhoro (Ruakaka)
Breeding	by Super Easy out of Finishing School (Aus) by Royal Academy (USA)
Breeder	P Sells and Windsor Park Stud Ltd





BLOODSTREAM AIMS HIGH AFTER FIVE-FOR

Tentative plans have been made to take one of New Zealand's most promising stayers across the Tasman.

Riccarton trainer Terri Rae is keen on next year's Queensland winter festival for **Bloodstream (NZ)** (Duelled), whose development may first be furthered with a trip to the North Island.

"He's just getting better and better," stable foreman Ryan Thistoll said. "Terri's got the Manawatu Cup in mind for him and maybe later on the Brisbane carnival."

Bloodstream stretched his winning sequence to five at Riccarton yesterday, gaining his second success

of the meeting, when he thumped his Rating 85 rivals in The Recruitment Network Premier Handicap.

The five-year-old settled behind the pace on the fence and when an inside gap presented itself before the turn he was off and gone.

"He took me into the race," rider Alysha Collett said. "I was going to be patient, but he said go!"

Bloodstream strode to the front at the top of the straight then powered clear to claim the 2500 metre event by a widening five lengths. Show MacCool (NZ) (Flying Spur) finished second ahead of La Nouvelle Vague (NZ) (St Reims) with fourth-placed Francis Drake (NZ) (Tavistock) the first

northerner home.

Collett had ridden the horse in three of his previous wins with Danielle Johnson successfully pinch-hitting seven days earlier.

"With every start he just keeps improving and today it was very easy," Collett said.

Race	CJC Recruitment Network H. 2500m
Winner	Bloodstream (NZ) 2011
Owners	M J Brereton, J Campbell, M K Connors, Miss T Rae & M R Shepherd
Trainer	Terri Rae (Riccarton)
Breeding	by Duelled (Aus) out of Lucia by Dream Well (Fr)
Breeder	C J Nicoll



Horses certainly ran for Alysha Collett yesterday, Bloodstream's five-length win the first of three for the northern jockey.





VOLPE AIMING TO MAKE UP **FOR LOST TIME**

Exciting summer prospect **Volpe Veloce** (Foxwedge) ensured that not all the focus on the females was at yesterday's Riccarton meeting.

With her second consecutive success at Tauranga, the quality filly stretched her unbeaten sequence to four when she produced a commanding performance to triumph in the Mainfreight Transport Tauranga 3YO.

Race	BOP RC Mainfreight Transport S. 1400m
Winner	Volpe Veloce (Aus) 2013
Owners	D & C Adams, H Allender, K Anderson, M Chubb, P Dixon, R Featherstone, G Mackin, G Richardson, K & L Robinson, M Skilling, P Spiers, B Wong and K Woodmass
Trainer	Graham Richardson (Matamata)
Breeding	by Foxwedge (Aus) out of Bardego (Aus) by Barathea (Ire)
Breeder	Mr N Vass
Sales	2015 National Yearling Sale, Premier Session; V: Lyndhurst Farm, P: richardsonracing.co.nz; \$240,000

Had things gone her way earlier in the season, Volpe Veloce would have been down south for the Group One New Zealand One Thousand Guineas, but missed runs and heavily rain-affected tracks counted her out of classic contention.

"That's just the way it goes sometimes," trainer Graham Richardson said. "Now, we just want to get as many points as possible in the Filly of the Year series."

To that end, Volpe Veloce will make her next appearance at Awapuni on December 10.

"She's going to run in the Eulogy Stakes and then back up to Ellerslie, all going well, for the Eight Carat Classic," Richardson said.

Yesterday, Volpe Veloce was given another economical run behind the pace by regular partner Johnathan Parkes, who had her off the fence 600 metres from home.

They challenged three wide at the top of the straight and under an easy ride the filly coasted clear to win by two and a quarter lengths.



"I was a bit more relaxed than I was for her first-up run," Richardson said. "She was on the toe because she hadn't raced for so long. Johnathan said she pulled up today like she hasn't had a race."

Barcelo (NZ) (Alamosa) made the running but had no answer when Volpe Veloce came calling and Tiffany's Time (NZ) (Alamosa) was third. Last season's Karaka Million winner Xiong Feng (NZ) (Iffraaj) was the disappointment of the race, dropping out to finish sixth.

Johnathan Parkes is all determination but Volpe Veloce glances at the photographer with a "this is easy" look in her eye.



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COULD BE PEARLS **COULD BE ANYTHING**

Racing favourite **Could Be Pearls (NZ)** (Alamosa) lived up to his prohibitive five-to-one-on price at Kranji on Friday night but not without giving his backers a few anxious moments.

The first half of the \$575,000 Restricted Maiden race over 1400 metres went to script for the three-year-old as he enjoyed a smothered run behind a trio of runners but the first jitters surfaced when the pace dropped right off at the 800 metre mark, a move which seemed to break Could Be Pearls' stride a touch. Jockey Michael Rodd still had the hotpot under a good hold even as he appeared to bolt under him, although restricted by the lack of galloping room.

On straightening, Could Be Pearls was still ungainly in his action and looking hesitant to take a gap before Rodd's horsemanship kicked in. As the two leaders wobbled out a little, the gap widened and Rodd popped his mount through. Set free, Could Be Pearls let loose in the last 200 metres to record a 1¼-length victory from Leon (Domesday) with Winterfell (NZ) (Showcasing) another nose away.

Rodd said Could Be Pearls, who was having just his third outing, was like a complete rookie, but once he knows how to harness his true potential, he will turn into a smart individual.

"He felt like a first-year apprentice claiming four," he joked.

"He's not a natural racehorse yet. But it was a funny sort of race tonight as the pace was a bit uneven and he was running away from the horse in front of him. He had his head turned the other way and changed legs as well but once he shot through he was able to put the race to bed."

Winning trainer Cliff Brown said Could Be Pearls, who is raced by the same connections behind his stable star Debt Collector (NZ) (Thorn Park), was a horse for next year.

"He's a very nice horse, all new and still got a long way to go," said the Australian. "He was travelling okay until the speed came off. He was all over the place in the straight but got the job done.

"I'll give him a break and bring him back

next year. He's by Alamosa and he should be able to get a mile."

A deeper look at Could Be Pearls' pedigree would give Brown even greater optimism over the horse's potential. On his dam's side he traces back to Gay Poss (NZ) (Le Filou), an eleven-time winner who was Australia's champion staying three-year-old filly in the 1969/70 season with wins in the Group One Australian Oaks, Group Two Kewney Stakes and Group Three SAJC St Leger.

As a broodmare, Gay Poss is responsible for the wonderful 1974 Hermes mare My Tricia (NZ) whose offspring include the multiple Group One winner and successful sire Grosvenor (NZ) (Sir Tristram) as well as Could Be Pearls' Group-placed granddam Tricia Ann (NZ) (Zabeel).

– Singapore Turf Club

Race	Singapore TC Restricted Maiden S. 1400m
Winner	Could Be Pearls (NZ) 2013
Owners	Barree Stable
Trainer	Cliff Brown (Kranji)
Breeding	by Alamosa out of Miss Kitt Ann by Tale of the Cat (USA)
Breeder	Anzac Breeding Partnership Joint Venture
Sales	2015 National Yearling Sale, Premier Session; V: Wellfield Lodge, P: Cliff Brown Racing; \$80,000



The picture tells the story... Could Be Pearls all at sea and giving Michael Rodd a hard time while winning by a clear-cut margin.

