

Sunday 8 October 2017

## HARD MERCHANDIZE GETS THE NOD IN TIGHT FINISH TO HAWKE'S BAY GUINEAS



*A half-head, a nose and a neck separate the first four as they pass the post in yesterday's Hawke's Bay Guineas. The winner Hard Merchandize is one off the rail, runner-up Bostonian is nearest the camera, third-placed Jimmy Lincoln is between them with fourth home Griffin on the inner.*

**A**wapuni three-year-old **Hard Merchandize (NZ)** (Burgundy) upset the appiecart at Hastings yesterday when he led all the way to take out the Group Two Sacred Falls Hawke's Bay Guineas.

The winner of the Listed Castletown Stakes as a two-year-old, Hard Merchandize was overlooked by punters as their pre-race attention centred on four well-supported runners from the Tony Pike stable, including Haussmann (NZ) (Pour

Moi), who was installed as a warm favourite.

Relishing the softer underfoot conditions, Hard Merchandize sprang straight to the lead to dictate a muddling tempo during the early stages of the event. Rider Cameron Lammas stacked the field up approaching the home bend before asking the Gary Vile-trained runner to sprint hard as they straightened. The response was immediate as the gelding snuck a small break on his immediate chasers,

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# BELARDO (IRE)

*Lope de Vega - Danaskaya by Danehill*

- ◆ G1 Dewhurst Stakes winner at 2YO
- ◆ G1 Lockinge Stakes winner at 4YO
- ◆ G1 performer at 2, 3 & 4
- ◆ Timeform Rating 126 when retired

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(Continued from page 1)

headed by Jimmy Lincoln (NZ) (Jimmy Choux), Bostonian (NZ) (Jimmy Choux) and Griffin (NZ) (Iffraaj), who had stalked him throughout.

It soon became apparent these four had the race to themselves with the backmarkers, including the Pike trio of Hausmann, Felton Road (NZ) (Pins) and Aim Smart (Smart Missile), making no impression. Hard Merchandize fought for all he was worth as he repelled a late lunge from the previously unbeaten Bostonian to hold the barest of winning margins at the line, with Jimmy Lincoln just a breath away in third.

Lammas, who had enjoyed success as the regular rider of the Vile trained Auckland Cup placegetter Jackstar (NZ) (Zed), admitted he was confident before the race.

"I was very confident he was going to go a good race as he won the Castletown Stakes as a two-year-old," he said.

"He's got gate speed, he got a nice soft lead and kept fighting nicely.

"I rode a good horse for GV in Jackstar and I had told him he had to find me another one, so I think I've found him."

Vile was full of positives for the effort of his charge who had finished an unlucky fourth in his first run of this campaign.

"We had a small girth on him last time and he went to buck so the boy did well to stay on him," he commented on

the first-up performance. "We had to do something today from a horror draw so I said to Cameron to ride him where he lands.

"He went to the front and dictated and he's just a gutsy little horse."

Although playing his cards close to his chest Vile advised it was unlikely his charge would be seen in the Group One Two Thousand Guineas at Riccarton next month, preferring to seek a richer target early next year.

"He's a Karaka Millions horse so that's where he will be heading," he said. "We'll see how it pans out but I think he is a better horse with some cut in the ground."

Vile was referring to the Listed Karaka Millions 3YO Classic, to be run at Ellerslie in late January and carrying a million dollar prize pool for the first time in 2018.

<b>Race</b>	<b>Hawke's Bay Guineas Gr.2 1400m</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Hard Merchandize (NZ) 2014</b>
<b>Owners</b>	<b>J Aldrich, M A Evans, D M Gilshnan, J King, A R &amp; M Osborne, G Towers, G R Vile, A J Vincent and S J Whitehead</b>
<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Gary Vile (Awapuni)</b>
<b>Breeding</b>	<b>by Burgundy out of Pride and Passion (Aus) by Encosta de Lago (Aus)</b>
<b>Breeder</b>	<b>C R Grace</b>
<b>Sales</b>	<b>2016 National Yearling Sale, Select Session; V: Little Avondale Stud, P: G R Vile; \$38,000</b>



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# HASTINGS LOSES HALF THE CARD WHEN ALL-DAY DRIZZLE MAKES TRACK UNSAFE

Yesterday's Livamol Classic raceday, the biggest meeting on New Zealand's spring racing calendar, was abandoned midway through proceedings when constant rain caused the Hastings track to become unsafe for further racing following the running of the Group Two Sacred Falls Hawke's Bay Guineas.

Rated a Good 3 surface at the start of the day, steady drizzle saw the Hastings track downgraded to a Dead 4 after the first race and then again to a Dead 6 prior to the Guineas, the fifth race on the day's programme.

Concerns for the safety of riders and their mounts were immediately apparent after Guineas runner-up Bostonian was observed to slip badly when pulling up shortly after contesting a dramatic finish to the three-year-old feature.

Chief Stipendiary Steward John Oatham outlined the reasons for the abandonment.

"The film footage clearly showed that Mark Du Plessis' mount (Bostonian) slipped quite badly when pulling up so the

riders had concern about that part of the track," he said.

"The track had been ground-hogged at the start of the day after some light rain this morning. However, as the day progressed, the horses cut into the surface and were down to a firmer part of the track again.

"We re-inspected with the riders but it was clear there was not a lot of confidence that they could ride competitively into that bend.

"Accordingly, in the interests of safety for both horse and rider, we didn't believe we had any other option but to abandon the meeting.

"It is bitterly disappointing for everyone concerned but safety must come first."

Hawke's Bay Racing Incorporated and New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing will now hold discussions as to the immediate future for the remaining five races carded on the day including the Group One Livamol Classic and the Group Three Red Badge Spring Sprint.



Mark Du Plessis, whose mount Bostonian slipping after the post drew attention to the state of the Hastings track, explains what happened to trainer Tony Pike (left) as owner David Archer looks on.





# MAIN STAGE SET TO STAR IN VRC DERBY

Recent maiden graduate **Main Stage (NZ)** (Reliable Man) has leapt to the top of Victoria Derby betting after his last-to-first victory at yesterday's Flemington meeting, the Trent Busuttin and Natalie Young-trained three-year-old shortening from \$10 to \$6 following his win in the 1800 metre Listed UCI Stakes.

Ridden by Michael Walker, Main Stage – a drifter from his opening \$5.50 quote to \$8.50 fourth favourite – scored by a neck from the \$5.50 second favourite Cliff's Edge (Canford Cliffs), a three-race winner, with outsider Johnny Vinko (NZ) (Savabeel), a stablemate of the winner, 1¾ lengths away third.

"We love chasing those Derbies," Young said. "I thought it was going to be too hard for him today but I'm super proud of the horse."

Main Stage is part-owned by a group from the Richmond Football Club, including Brownlow medal winning Kiwi Dusty Martin.

Young said Main Stage would head to the 2000 metre Caulfield Classic on October 21 before the Derby two weeks later.

"Today's only the quarter-final, we've still got the semi-final and grand final to go yet but this horse keeps improving after every run," she said.

The Busuttin and Young team considered bypassing yesterday's race after Main Stage's second placing to



Main Stage bursts away from his rivals and into Victorian Derby favouritism in the three-year-old staying test at yesterday's Flemington meeting.

Tavistock Abbey (NZ) (Tavistock) in the Victoria Derby Trial, on the same track and over the same distance, last month.

"The last two times we've won Derbies, we've gone in at the sixth run, so we thought it worked out well they put in the Derby trial and this race," Young said.

"Things went pear-shaped at the start but Michael didn't panic and knew the horse he was on."

Young said Johnny Vinko, who went into the race with seconds in each of his two starts, was also on a path towards the Victoria Derby.

– AAP TURF

<b>Race</b>	<b>VRC UCI S. L 1800m</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Main Stage (NZ) 2014</b>
<b>Owners</b>	<b>M Powell, J Crichton, C Hall, D Moylan, R Horrocks, B &amp; Mrs G Fitz-Gibbon, S Jennings, K Rust, Dr B La Ferlita, S Kneebone, D &amp; Mrs S Juratowitch, T Scales, Petejul88, C C Pony Club, Dusty Boys, D &amp; L Alford, Burnstone Racing and Canterbury Road Racing</b>
<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Trent Busuttin &amp; Natalie Young (Cranbourne)</b>
<b>Breeding</b>	<b>by Reliable Man (GB) out of Kiri by Prized (USA)</b>
<b>Breeder</b>	<b>Greenwich Stud Pty Ltd</b>
<b>Sales</b>	<b>2016 Ready to Run Sale; V: Kilmore Farm, P: Patella Bloodstock &amp; Busuttin Racing; \$150,000</b>





# BREAKS GO PURE PRIDE'S WAY AT LAST



Pure Pride gets a well-deserved win in the final event on yesterday's Flemington card.

Lightly raced five-year-old **Pure Pride (NZ)** (Shocking), second in the Group Two Blazer Stakes at the corresponding meeting a year ago but balloted out of this season's edition, recorded an impressive consolation win in the Listed Paris Lane Handicap at Flemington yesterday.

At \$15 almost friendless in the betting, Pure Pride was a decisive winner as she burst clear late to score a two-length win from Wyndspelle (NZ) (Iffraaj) with Saint Valorem (Ad Valorem) a length away third.

Jockey Stephen Baster said Pure Pride's record should be better than the two wins from sixteen starts it now stands at.

"Murray and the owners have suffered with this mare over the years and today I thought it was going to be the same," Baster said.

"But she got the split a furlong out and exploded."

Seymour trainer Murray Johnson said the mare was

deserving of breaking through for a city success.

"I don't have many horses to be running in these races, so it's awesome," he said.

The ex-Kiwi galloper Wyndspelle, a favoured runner in last season's Group One New Zealand Derby after a win in the Group Two Waikato Guineas, ran up to his last-start Caulfield second with a strong finish from the tail of the field turning in.

– AAP TURF

<b>Race</b>	<b>VRC Paris Lane H. L 1400m</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Pure Pride (NZ) 2012</b>
<b>Owners</b>	<b>Mrs S J Murray &amp; Murray Thoroughbreds Pty Ltd (Mgr: P A S Murray)</b>
<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Murray Johnson (Seymour)</b>
<b>Breeding</b>	<b>by Shocking (Aus) out of Mamasan by Shinko King (Ire)</b>
<b>Breeder</b>	<b>Murray Thoroughbreds Pty Ltd</b>





# SIR PLUSH CARRIES PUNTERS THROUGH

An avalanche of money for **Sir Plush (NZ)** (Pins) proved spot on after the Bjorn Baker-trained galloper was never headed in the 1400 metre Bowerman's Office Furniture Handicap at Randwick yesterday.

Backing up seven days after a dominant 3¾ length win at Rosehill, Sir Plush was crunched from \$3 into \$2.25 on course before holding the veteran topweight Mighty Lucky (Casino Prince) at bay by three-quarters of a length.

Rider Jason Collett, who now boasts four wins and three placings from eight rides on the five-year-old, said he knew on Tuesday morning his mount would be hard to beat again

but was given a brief fright pre-race. "He charged towards the rail and then quickly turned which threw me off balance a bit," the expat-Kiwi said.

"His usual strapper wasn't there today so that might have had something to do with it but when I galloped him on Tuesday he was flying so we were pretty confident today."

Now eight runs into a campaign that started in June, Sir Plush has earned more than \$200,000 for connections but Baker is reluctant to send the horse for a spell just yet.

"He's had a long preparation but he's just getting better and better," Baker said.

"There's no form like winning form."

New Zealand gelding All Our Roads (NZ) (Road to Rock), who raced as All Roads in his homeland, winning the Group Two Japan NZ International Trophy at Tauranga last March, made his Australian debut for the Chris Waller stable, finished a long neck behind Mighty Lucky in third.

– racenet.com.au

<b>Race</b>	<b>ATC Bowermans Office Furniture H. 1400m</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Sir Plush (NZ) 2012</b>
<b>Owners</b>	<b>M W Macleod &amp; Mrs D E Macleod</b>
<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Bjorn Baker (Warwick Farm)</b>
<b>Breeding</b>	<b>by Pins (Aus) out of Luxurious Lady (USA) by Theatrical (Ire)</b>
<b>Breeder</b>	<b>Amadi Park Ltd</b>



Never in danger of defeat, Sir Plush crosses the line an easy winner of the open 1400 metre event at Randwick.





Sunday 8 October 2017

# HAPPY HOMECOMING FOR BULLRUSH

A change of environment has paid dividends for the royally bred **Bullrush (NZ)** (O'Reilly) who yesterday notched his first victory on New Zealand soil with a commanding all-the-way win at Hastings.

The Waikato Stud bred and raced half-brother to the Group Two Cal Isuzu Stakes winner Sports Illustrated (NZ) (Fast 'N' Famous) made his way back to local shores earlier in the year

<b>Race</b>	<b>Hawkes Bay Hawaiian Airlines H. 1200m</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Bullrush (NZ) 2011</b>
<b>Owners</b>	<b>Waikato Stud Ltd</b>
<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Moira &amp; Kieran Murdoch (Pukekohe)</b>
<b>Breeding</b>	<b>by O'Reilly out of Pin Up by Pins (Aus)</b>
<b>Breeder</b>	<b>G J Chittick</b>

after commencing his racing career in Sydney.

Unbeaten in his first five starts from the Rosehill stable of John, Michael and Wayne Hawkes, the six-year-old placed just once in five subsequent outings and hadn't raced since finishing fifth in the Listed Abell Stakes at Moonee Valley last March.

The change of scenery to the beach-training operation of Moira and Kieran Murdoch has revitalised the statuesque gelding and it showed as he charged out of the barriers to take control of the rating 85 1200 metre contest from the jump.

Rider Leith Innes set a moderate tempo and it was obvious a long way from home that the combination would take some catching. Despite

being chased hard by outsider Morse Code (NZ) (Pins), Bullrush had enough petrol in the tank to score by half a length in 1:11.20 on the Dead 4 surface.

Waikato Stud principal Mark Chittick was a happy man as he fielded questions after the race about the horse who is raced by the staff of the Matamata nursery.

"We've had a lot of fun with this horse and it's really cool as we have all the staff involved, who race him with us," he explained.

"There's a few of us here today, although it's a busy time of the year as we had eight foals last night, so it's great to get a result like that."

Chittick admitted the horse had proved to be a head scratcher after showing so much promise earlier in his career.

"He put the wins in a row earlier on but whatever it was he just seemed to switch off," he said.

"We knew he had the ability so we thought we'd bring him home, give him to Moira and do a bit of work on the beach – just something different.

"Who knows what the future will bring but at least now we know he has some options and he has won a nice race.

"If he can show what he did in Australia in those early days we will have a lot of fun with him."

*First start back in his homeland, Bullrush kicks off with a decisive win in the Rating 85 sprint at Hastings.*





# Roster 2017



## NEW IN 2017

**TIVACI** High Chaparral - Breccia  
BRILLIANT G1 SPRINTER/MILER  
\$20,000 +GST LFG

**SAVABEEL** Zabeel - Savannah Success  
AWARD SWEEPING G1 SIRE  
\$100,000 +GST LFG

**SACRED FALLS** O'Reilly - Iguazu's Girl  
4X G1 WINNING, DUAL DONCASTER CHAMP  
\$30,000 +GST LFG

**OCEAN PARK** Thorn Park - Sayyida  
5X G1 WINNING, COX PLATE HERO  
\$30,000 +GST LFG

**PINS** Snippets - No Finer  
INTERNATIONAL G1 SIRE  
\$25,000 +GST LFG

**ROCK N POP** Fastnet Rock - Popsy  
FASTNET ROCK'S BEST BRED G1 SIRE SON  
\$9,000 +GST LFG

**RIOS** Hussonet - Gussy Godiva  
REGALLY BRED G1 PRODUCER  
\$4,000 +GST LFG

*Tivaci*



# AT LEAST THE DAY **STARTED WELL . . .**



*Age Of Fire does enough to defeat the filly Hot Fuss in Riccarton's Guineas Trial.*

A day that started in spectacular fashion for Te Akau Racing ended in disarray with the abandonment of racing at Hastings.

The well-known tangerine and blue colours captured three of the first six races at Riccarton including the Inglewood Stud Guineas Trial with **Age Of Fire** (Fastnet Rock) as they built towards a possible Group One triumph at Hastings with Livamol Classic contenders Gingernuts (NZ) (Iffraaj) and Chance To Dance (Teofilo).

Trainer Stephen Autridge, who prepares the Te Akau team in partnership with Jamie Richards, was putting a brave face on the situation as discussions about the options available to Gingernuts began to take place.

"It's certainly not ideal as it puts us in a very tricky

situation with Gingernuts and his Caulfield Cup bid," he said.

"At this stage we are booked on a flight to Australia on Wednesday but would be heading over after missing a vital race. We're not sure if they are going to re-run the race but if it wasn't Sunday or Monday then it's not an option for him.

"It would also mean he would have to travel to Australia, race on the Saturday and then back-up seven days later for the Cup. It's not something we've done with him before and I just don't know if it is a viable option.

"All we can do is sit down with David Ellis and the owners and work out what our options are once we know what the future of the Livamol Classic is, so hopefully we will have a plan in place in the next 24 hours."

*Continued on page 11*





# AT LEAST THE DAY **STARTED WELL . . .**

*(Continued from page 10)*

Despite the Hastings disappointment, Autridge was delighted with the team's Riccarton performance that saw them ultimately capture four wins on the ten-race card.

"We were confident of our chances but you need that luck on your shoulder to get a result like that," he said.

"We have a big opinion of Avantage, who won the two-year-old race, as she has been very good in everything she has done so far. She will definitely take improvement from the run but she's on target for her main assignment which is the Listed two-year-old race during the New Zealand Cup Carnival.

"I was also pleased with Age Of Fire as he was ridden a little upside down due to the size of the field in the Guineas Trial.

"I think he's better when settled back a little more and hopefully he can show that next time up."

Age Of Fire holds a nomination for the Group One Two Thousand Guineas at Riccarton on 11 November while Nobby Bussell Memorial winner **Avantage** (Fastnet Rock) will contest the Listed Welcome Stakes a week later, on the last day of the New Zealand Cup Carnival.

<i>Race</i>	<b>CJC Inglewood Stud Guineas Trial 1400m</b>
<i>Winner</i>	<b>Age Of Fire (Aus) 2014</b>
<i>Owners</i>	<b>Te Akau 2016 Sydney Breeding Syndicate No.2 (Mgr: D C Ellis)</b>
<i>Trainer</i>	<b>Stephen Autridge &amp; Jamie Richards (Matamata)</b>
<i>Breeding</i>	<b>by Fastnet Rock (Aus) out of Dragon's Tail (Aus) by Galileo (Ire)</b>
<i>Breeder</i>	<b>Roncon</b>

<i>Race</i>	<b>CJC Nobby Bussell Memorial 2YO S. 800m</b>
<i>Winner</i>	<b>Avantage (Aus) 2015</b>
<i>Owners</i>	<b>Te Akau Avantage Syndicate (Mgr: K W Fenton-Ellis MNZM)</b>
<i>Trainer</i>	<b>Stephen Autridge &amp; Jamie Richards (Matamata)</b>
<i>Breeding</i>	<b>by Fastnet Rock (Aus) out of Asavant by Zabeel</b>
<i>Breeder</i>	<b>W Calder</b>
<i>Sales</i>	<b>2017 National Yearling Sale, Premier Session; V: The Oaks Stud, P: D C Ellis; \$210,000</b>





# CHANGE IN TRAINING TACTICS GETS TORGERSEN BACK TO WINNING WAYS

Former Sydney stakes horse **Torgersen (NZ)** (Pins) responded to some new training tactics to score his first win in nearly two years at the Gold Coast yesterday.

<b>Race</b>	<b>GCTC PFD Queensland H. 1400m</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Torgersen (NZ) 2012</b>
<b>Owners</b>	<b>P Ng, B L Mathieson, R Smith, I Bruce, F W Cook, Mrs C M Cook, K H Warriner, J T C Lake, D M Ackery, Mrs K Ackery, R Shrimpton &amp; Mrs C Shrimpton and Magic Bloodstock Racing (Mgr: P G Tighe)</b>
<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Chris Waller (Gold Coast)</b>
<b>Breeding</b>	<b>by Pins (Aus) out of Oh So Glam by O'Reilly</b>
<b>Breeder</b>	<b>G J Chittick</b>
<b>Sales</b>	<b>2014 National Yearling Sale, Premier Session; V: Waikato Stud Ltd, P: Chris Waller Racing; \$170,000</b>

Second favourite at \$6.50, Torgersen charged home to beat the early leader and \$1.55 favourite Dreams Aplenty (Dream Ahead) by a length in the 1400 metre PFD Queensland Handicap.

As a three-year-old Torgersen was placed in the Tulloch Stakes and Packer Plate in Sydney as well as finishing only 2½ lengths from the winner Hauraki (Reset) in last year's Group One Epsom Handicap.

However, he had not won since December 2015 and trainer Chris Waller decided to send him to his Gold Coast stable in a last-ditch bid to reignite his winning desire.

Waller's Queensland manager Paul Shailer said it had been a matter of getting Torgersen's mind back on racing.

"Obviously, at his best he would be hard to beat in races up here. But after he got beaten in a restricted race at Doomben

first-up we decided to try some different tactics," Shailer said.

"We have had him over the jumps and working off a pony. It seems to have done the trick."

– AAP TURF



*Torgersen recaptures some of his best form to down the odds-on favourite Dreams Aplenty at the Gold Coast meeting.*





# GUN RIDE GETS ATHENA HOME AT LAST

A brilliant ride from apprentice Amirul Ismadi saw Cliff Brown's mare **Athena (NZ)** (Nom Du Jeu) finally open her account at her eleventh start at Kranji on Friday night.

Remembered for her strong build as a two-year-old, the now four-year-old was rated as one of the leading juveniles last year, even running third to Lim's Racer (NZ) (Red Giant) in the Golden Horseshoe.

After a long spell, she returned more trimmed up but the winning post was still proving elusive.

Brown tipped her out for a couple of months and she returned to her strong physique. After two solid thirds,

the writing was on the wall for the "big girl" with the big white face, who made no mistake in the \$535,000 Maiden over 1400 metres.

Well handled by Stephen Gray's apprentice, Athena settled in an ideal spot before coming around heels at the 400 metre mark to launch her assault on straightening, striking the front

with favourite Sahaba (NZ) (Stravinsky) in hot pursuit. But there was no denying the mare her first win this time as she gamely held off New Sensation (Myboycharlie) by half a length with Sahaba right on the girth of the runner-up.

"Good on her," said Brown. "She deserved to win. Michael Rodd was supposed to ride her but when she got 59kg we decided to claim."

"The kid listened to the instructions and rode her very well."

Amirul confirmed he had executed Brown's battle plan to the letter.

"It was a very simple plan from Mr Brown. He told me not to dig her up as

she has early natural speed," he said.

"He told me to just put her where she was comfortable and be mindful of her as she has a high head carriage. She was too good in the end."

– Singapore Turf Club

<b>Race</b>	<b>Singapore TC Maiden S. 1400m</b>
<b>Winner</b>	<b>Athena (NZ) 2013</b>
<b>Owners</b>	<b>Olympian Stable</b>
<b>Trainer</b>	<b>Cliff Brown (Kranji)</b>
<b>Breeding</b>	<b>by Nom du Jeu out of Zingara by Howbaddouwantit (USA)</b>
<b>Breeder</b>	<b>Goodwood Stud Ltd</b>
<b>Sales</b>	<b>2014 National Weanling, Broodmare &amp; Mixed Sale; V: Goodwood Stud, P: J F &amp; K G Parsons; \$300</b>



Athena scores an overdue win at Kranji on Friday night.

