

Fledgling Thoroughbred Enterprise Takes Flight in Victoria

Tim Breadmore is experiencing the highs and lows of overseeing his stud's first commercial yearling sales draft. Yesterday it was inspection day and we were standing under freezing Melbourne skies chatting about the 360 winners he had educated – one of them, Roman Thunder, having won the previous evening at Moonee Valley - whilst Clarrie Connors analyzed the Paringa Park sales draft alongside us. Today the first lot is passed in on a rare perfect morning.

“Not a good start,” Tim says philosophically on his way back to the stables (the accompanying strapper looking disconsolate in his wake). But for a farm whose highest priced lot prior to prior to February was for an End Sweep weanling sold at the June 2004 sale, the efforts of this fledgling enterprise in recent years will, in the next few hours, bear fruit.

There are two versions of Tim's reaction when lot 213 - the bay colt by Encosta de Lago ex La Baronne – is led from the ring later that afternoon.

The first version is suitably media-friendly; something his marketing and PR manager would be proud of: “I was delighted. It was a great result for the fifth foal of a mare and it was a terrific way to launch Paringa Park.”

There's a pause.

“I know it sounds weird but I was a little disappointed actually!” He laughs at his frank admission. “We had \$120k on him when he left home, 30 people looked at him twice, 30 looked three times, and 4 looked four times. Ok I admit it - you start to think he is the only horse on the sales ground that anyone wants!”

It's sentiment that more than one vendor will no doubt empathize with; equally unsurprising that an hour later that twinge of post-sale regret has faded to be replaced by a smile that reflects the \$210,000 price tag, the fact that the colt has just secured the tenth highest price for the sale plus has gone to the leading stable of Paul Perry (trainer of international sprint champion Choisir and who, less than 6 weeks from today's interview, will lead in the winner of the 2005 Golden Slipper - Stratum).

“This is a landmark sale for more than just Paringa Park,” Tim says at the close of the day's trading. “It's also breaking new ground for the Victorian breeding industry. It has showed people that if you produce the right horses the buyers will pay the big money for them. There is an opportunity for the Melbourne Premier sale to really go on and establish itself as one of the big sales in Australia off the back of this”.

“We'll put through 6 Encostas next year – Victorian bred Encostas” he continues. “If it's another good year then the sale will take itself to another level.”

Tim should know – he is no stranger to horses – or indeed the bloodstock market, having broken in more than 900 thoroughbreds (including G1 winners Super Elegant, Miss Pennymoney and La Zagaletta) and having spent the better part of ten years working alongside them in countries spanning the United Kingdom, America, Canada, Malaysia and Australia. His career highlights are as numerous as the countries he’s called home and include: syndicating and placing the G1 winner Final Card at stud in 1995, developing a comprehensive international yearling sales database 1997-9, preparing the Crown Casino yearling sale proposal for Lloyd Williams in 1998, and securing Testa Rossa at Yallambee Stud on behalf of Peter Woodward. Significant bloodstock purchases made under Tim’s bloodstock banner MEC include the G1 winner Dance the Day Away for D Moody in 1992, champion racehorse and sire Snippets for Arrowfield Stud in 1997, and dams of the G1 winners Grandiose and Alishan, Angst, Ironhorse, King Marauding, Solvit, You Remember, River Dove, Regal Native, Pillinger and Spartacus.

Thoroughbreds have also played (not surprisingly perhaps) a role in the Breadmore family ancestry. His great grandfather bred and raced 1921 Melbourne Cup winner, Sister Olive. The Cup does not, alas, reside at Paringa Park. “Granddad hit pretty hard times and wasn’t spoken of a lot,” Breadmore confesses. It wasn’t until Tim had been immersed in racing for four years that the secret was revealed. “I guess Mum and Dad realized that the industry was in my blood so they figured they should tell me,” he says, adding “it would be nice to think the Cup is sitting on a mantle somewhere in Australia but I rather fear it may have gone with everything else”. His laughter is both spontaneous and infectious.

In 2001 the self-confessed perfectionist turned his eye to property. “I’d been in the bloodstock business for awhile, was in the pre-training game and had 40 mares under management – it made sense to combine them all under the one roof. I’ve got great all round exposure to all aspects of the business and understand the needs of vendors and purchasers having been on both sides of the fence and the clients are benefiting from that ... oh, and I make a pretty darn good Pimms as well!”

Paringa Park canvasses 900 acres on the river flats of the Goulburn River, 90 minutes North of Melbourne. It commenced operations just three years ago. Its first phase consisted of establishing an agistment facility. 40 kilometres of fencing was erected ranging from boxes and yards to a dozen 30 acre paddocks alongside the river. Phase 2 is currently underway and involves the housing of up to 600 horses (developments include a 20 box broodmare barn, stallion barn, covering barn, and quarantine area for walk-in mares visiting stallions each season.) There are also yearling runs and day yards under construction and general improvements to roads and irrigation systems.

Paringa Park doesn’t currently stand a stallion but a syndicate headed by Tim and his client Richard Pietrykowski recently purchased young Encosta de Lago entire Delzao for future stud duties. The colt has raced 27 times (to 6 April 2005) for six wins and eight placings, earning more than a million dollars in stakes money. In early April he ran second to Grand Armeé in the G1 Queen Elizabeth Stakes (2000m) at Randwick. His best win is considered the G2 Feehan Stakes at Moonee Valley in 2004 where he beat

home Makybe Diva in a photo finish. Paringa Park secured a 25% share in Delzao after his run in the Australian Cup last year. The remaining 75 per cent share in the stallion was purchased just last month.

The stud is home to a number of well bred mares including: My First Star (dam of Australasian champion G1 sprinter Isca, G3 winner Star Alight and listed winner Slapstick), Lucky Witch (dam of the G3 winner and G1 placed Spirit of Westbury and listed winners Lucky Diva and Duke of Westbury), Amanusa (dam of G2 winner and G1 placed Delzao), Fine Gem (dam of G3 winner Darbaas and listed winner Bundle of Thanks; the mare currently in foal to the same sire as world champion sprinter Silent Witness, El Moxie), French Twist (dam of Multiple G1 winner Paris Lane), listed winner Gogo Doll, and Honeymoon Suite (dam of G2 winner Flak Jacket).

Tim and his staff currently manage 120 horses on the property and admit that it is “very challenging but exciting.” They have had some early success too. From the property’s first crop of 14 foals, current three year olds include Count Ricardo (winner of G2 Sandown Classic and 3rd G1 VRC Derby), Lucky Diva (stakes winning filly of SA Stakes and winner of 4 races from 13 starts) and Soi Cowboy (4th in G1 VRC Derby, 2nd in LR Geelong Classic from only 4 starts).

2005 also saw the farm make its entrance in the commercial yearling market. “We have a quality farm with a lot of potential and I wanted to give it some exposure in the marketplace with our draft,” Tim says.

The stud secured a prime location at Oaklands and to capitalize on the position all stables were prominently marked, staff uniformed, and a hospitality marquee erected “that we even made the wooden flooring for”. The photographs used in the stud’s banners and brochures are stunning images of the property and the orange used as the main corporate colour was taken from a photograph of a sunset over the stud last year.

“It’s a branding exercise, make no mistake about it,” Tim responds when I query the heavy marketing angle that many more established properties still haven’t grasped. “Don’t do it unless you plan on doing it 110%.”

Its good advice and worth contemplating; which I do as I accept the offer of a freshly barbequed sausage sandwich and a glass of wine. No time for Pimms today!

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