



## Lerena needs time to succeed — it won't be easy!



*Gavin Lerena, Hayley Turner, Kenichi Ikezoe and Emma-Jayne Wilson in Shergar Cup pint-pulling mode.*

I don't quite get it. The most reasonable SA tweet I saw about Gavin Lerena's first day or two in the saddle in England expressed the hope that "those Poms" would give him good rides. It could have been more diplomatic about the people who will help him, but the sentiment itself is fair enough.

Less reasonable was the observation that Charles Hills (with whom Gavin Lerena is based) might not be a good trainer because he had put the SA star on a "time-waster" horse first time.

Sheikh Hamdan (Shadwell, in the top handful of the world's professional owners) and Racing Manager Angus Gold, a regular visitor to South Africa who would know of the jockey, may or may not have seen that description of their backward three-year-old running early season for the second time in his

life (probably needing education and a professional assessment). They will have authorised Charles to put Gavin Lerena up instead of their retained riders whether by prior arrangement or case by case.

The Hills dynasty is of legend. Barry (retired) trained all manner of Classic and other Group 1 winners. Of his four sons, one - trainer John - sadly passed away too young, two (twins) are retired jockeys, one having been Shadwell's main retainer for many years. Charles, the present Master of Faringdon Place, has held that status for six years.

His best horse to date is the Shadwell Champion Sprinter Muhaarar and now £30,000 (R500k +) stallion, winner of four Group 1 sprints all at 3. Charles trains for Susan and Paul Roy and the Thompsons of Cheveley Park among (to page 2)

## DAVID ALLAN

a long list of top end owners. Faringdon Place is a powerful stable.



*Charles Hills had Muharaar in top form for the Champions Sprint.*

The Hills yard's owners have in the past few days had Frankie Dettori, current champion Jim Crowley, and previous champion Silvestre de Sousa wearing their silks. Jock them off? No chance. But already Gavin Lerena has had four rides for Faringdon Place in three days, placing twice. Maybe he will become the rider of choice after a time?

Amanda Perrett also put him up – on a winner. Mrs Perrett has held the license at Coombelands on the gorgeous Sussex Downs since 1996 when she took over from her father, Dancing Brave's trainer Guy Harwood. She already has Gavin Lerena jockeyed up twice at Goodwood next week.

Let's also bear in mind that it is the owner who employs the jockey, not the trainer. A jockey is paid around £135 (R2,350) per ride by the owner who is billed directly by Weatherbys, not via the trainer.

Some owners have retained riders. Some have arrangements. A stable jockey will have been appointed by a trainer after agreement from all his or her owners. Some owners work out with their trainer before the season who will be used individually or from a chosen pool.

With seven days a week and multiple meetings per day round the country, race declarations 48 hours beforehand and 90+ jockeys technically available for each meeting, some being "available" at all meetings until a book of rides develops, the liaison process is in-depth to say the least.

Jockeys agents are the best form experts. They follow entries exactly and liaise with regular trainers as to who might be needed where. They build the books of rides around that likely destination – assuming the horse at the kernel of the plan is actually fit to be declared or the ground does not change thus altering plans completely at short notice.

The top agents who have half a dozen jockeys each can mix and match. "Sorry, so and so is not going to Leicester, he must ride at Newbury for his retainer, but I've got so and so who can go to Leicester - how about him (or her)?" That's how it works.

Why did Michael Roberts become Champion Jockey? Because the late Graham Rock dropped everything else to "agent him" full time getting him hundreds of carefully researched rides. A major plan came together. By then, the excellent rider was well established from his time being based with Alec Stewart – for full seasons. Michael even rode a winner for us – a maiden at Ascot.



*Michael Roberts on Mtoto.*

Coming to the UK is not like going to Hong Kong for a fixed period. There (firstly) there are only two racecourses with relatively minor quirks which don't take much learning and (secondly) the jockey doesn't go unless there is a form of contract to ride in place. As I understand it, Gavin Lerena is engaged by Chelsea Thoroughbreds who have 19 horses. He and his agent must take him well beyond that welcome basis.

Like it or not, the level of responsibility carried by a jockey is great therefore the appointment of a newcomer will not be made without some prior knowledge or evidence that he can deal **(to page 3)**

Bloodstock Expertise - at home & abroad -

SA +27(0)21 828 9288 | SA mobile +27(0)72 740 9061  
UK +44(0)1252 646611 | UK mobile +44(0)7774 697640  
davidallan@allanbloodlines.com | www.allanbloodlines.com



## DAVID ALLAN

with quirky courses like Goodwood or Epsom. Of course he can deal in a talent and ability sense, but has he familiarised? That's how they will think. Also pace is so different between UK and SA but this jockey himself has accurately spelled out that difference, so he is seen to be on the ball.



*“Stevie Wonder” - Steve Cauthen on 1,000 Guineas winner Oh So Sharp.*

I asked three experienced trainers (at Newmarket yesterday) if they knew that Gavin Lerena is in UK. One said No but was interested to hear because some SA jockeys have been very good. These are busy people who won't see every notice in the Racing Post and there had been no occasion, I guess, for the jockey's agent to have called this particular trainer. Anyway he's only been riding for three days, dear tweeters!

One trainer said he had read about an SA jockey joining Charlie Hills. One knew all about him but wouldn't be changing jockey arrangements when much work had been done preparing for the season with Ascot soon enough. That being said, owners/trainers with no loyalty issues because their favourite has to ride elsewhere, will become more amenable after only a short time, I am sure.

Steve Cauthen – the all conquering Triple Crown winning USA rider - was surely the best overseas jockey to ride in the UK. He moved from the USA lock stock and barrel – to live until he retired. Coincidentally, he was attached to Barry Hills and rode winners immediately but it took a season or two before he was in real demand, then he never looked back.

Just as Smart Call may do something super to show how good it can be, so may Gavin Lerena catch on and do the same. In our own small way, we shall try to oil the wheels. Meanwhile, SA tweeters who wanted him on a top horse immediately, let's – in racing parlance – give him a chance to settle! - tt.

**ADVERTISING WITH TURF TALK IS EASY, AND COMES AT REASONABLE (AND NEGOTIABLE) RATES**  
Phone Jo on 083 399 6353

KLAWERVLEI  STUD

**betting WORLD**

HORSERACING & SPORTS BETTING



MARES, WEANLINGS  
& FILLIES FOR STUD  
SELECT SALE 2017

FRIDAY · 16 JUNE 2017 · 17:30  
HIGHLANDS STUD  
ROBERTSON

**Catalogue  
Now Online**

THE ONLY SELECT MARES, WEANLINGS  
& FILLIES FOR STUD SALE IN SOUTH AFRICA



**HIGHLANDS STUD**

Part of Ridgmont

  
Kuda

WWW.KUDA.CO.ZA