

The David Allan Column

## Less Dreaming, More Planning!



*Korean racing is rising internationally and offers a model for South Africa.*

LAST week, *Daydreaming Part 1* dealt with a potential influx of different bloodlines and with SA participation overseas whether selling, campaigning or even raiding.

In the space of a week, following the two on-top-of-each-other Cape Sales, it has become even more clear that there is no time for daydreaming. Actually it was “optimistic contingency planning”, but hey... Better, though, to be a Daydream Believer (leaving the Homecoming Queen out of it).

*Daydreaming Part 2* (Shuttle Stallions for example) can wait.

CTS has taken a most welcome step in canning its August 2 Year Old Sale and Joburg Ready to Run. Carping about how we got to that position in the first place is of no help or relevance to “now”.

It’s a good move, called for in these columns since and before publishing THOROUGHBRED THOUGHTS in July 2016, but undoubtedly implemented for the company’s own independent analytical reasons.

I remarked in a Breeding to Win interview last week that whatever happens must suit both the sales companies (and would then probably suit the market). I remain hopeful that pure business analysis and decision making – now that we do not have “our TBA” as a sales company – will get us to the right place.

If the BSA 2 Year Old Sale is thus strengthened, good. Perhaps the CTS March Sale (**cont on page 2**)

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can be strengthened in a comparable manner, getting back to being the strong replacement for the Vintage Sale that the Cape badly needs. By the way, both could be marketed internationally.

The ReadytoRun market is uncertain but not frightening. Whatever happens next, it will be on the basis of greatly reduced Summerhill numbers, immediately or soon, and on the formerly prolific Balmoral Stud having left South Africa entirely.



*Ready To Run: New approach likely.*

That's preparation capacity of 200 horses gone or diminished with no other professional able (or willing) to expand. Trainers can prepare anonymously, but that is no long term solution. For now, we can wish CTS well in concentrating on and consolidating – my favourite word – into their Cape ReadytoRun.

**CTS and BSA need buyers. They don't have an Irish Thoroughbred Marketing equivalent to bring 'em in. They don't have a layer of bloodstock agents to bring 'em in.**

A dreadful story of suicide underlines the disappearance of a major buying power and payer of training fees – and tells us that allegedly the money was illegally obtained in the first place therefore in a forward budgetary sense did not exist. This in public perception is deeply detrimental to the historic, attractive and largely admirable South African racing and breeding set-up.

Nearly thirty years ago Japan Racing reinvented itself to banish the taint of gangsterism, then appeal to the nation at large. Japan Breeding soon recognised how stale was its gene pool and reinvented that as well. Now? Several of the top racehorses in the world are Japanese bred, some achieving national sporting hero status. OK Japan is still something of a closed shop although less than before.



*Montjeu (nearest camera), edged out Japan's El Condor Pasa in the 1999 'Arc'.*

South Africa is not, so if you want an unfettered model, watch the rise of Korean racing, now shown internationally. In the 70s and 80s, Korea industrially was "Japan 15 years behind". There is no "behind" now. In bloodstock... getting there. Rising in the international cataloguing rankings in which South Africa holds on to Part 1, Korea buys yearlings internationally as well as second hand stallions – unlike Hong Kong and Singapore, Korea breeds.



*Kim Tae Hee, the female lead in Grand Prix, a feature film about Korea's first female jockey.*

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*Japan's brilliant Orfevre has earned more stakes than Arrogate!*

Meanwhile in South Africa what is happening to promote our industry and sport? Domestically, that is a big topic that we raise from time to time and wish could influence. But leave that for now. Today's daydream/planning point is headlined "International".

In South Africa, we see sales dates clashing with international bloodstock events. I dealt with the topic in my Monday Turf Talk Column of 13<sup>th</sup> February this year.

A Cape breeder noted the other day that while the division between sales companies polarises some strong buyers to one company and not the other, a clash with a top event in Europe may mean that such South African buyers will go to Europe instead of the South African sale.

**So it's lose-lose. When we desperately need buyers, we drive some away by polarisation and clashing; we seem unable to reach new ones; we rule out the few overseas who might make a difference; we preclude ourselves from marketing to those whom we might reach overseas by clashing with their events.**

My Cape breeder friend also said "The only thing left now is to wait for the export protocols". I see his point but – wrong. If we sit and wait while we wither on the vine, we cannot expect people with options to flood in uninvited. We must invite them in an enlightened manner. CPYS is successful in rarified spending and the creation of partnerships. Learn from some of it but translate it to a totally different budgetary level.

South Africa does not feature in the Top 15 Long Haul Desire Destinations (i.e. where would you like to go) in the UK. Perhaps these are daydreamers, not likely racehorse owners. But there are people in that country and other places in whose hearts and minds South Africa rests in some way be it – like me – from childhood studies, student awareness and the modern "Commonwealth", or the people who visit the Battlefields or Townships not so much the beaches and wineries (but them too!) or contribute to HIV work or are simply adventurous. Get to them now. Don't wait! - tt.

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