

The David Allan Column

A Franco-South African Alliance



*AIM TO PLEASE – Winner of the Group 3 Prix Bertrand de Tarragon at Maisons-Laffitte 21st September 2016
By Excellent Art out of an Anabaa Blue mare. Owned by Mr J Vasicek, bred by Haras D’Ecouvres with Elizabeth Doumen at the filly’s head, trained by François Doumen speaking to the filly, ridden by Gérard Mossé.*

WRITING last week about the otherworldly effort by Fred Winter and Mandarin at Auteuil inevitably brought to mind an extraordinary French training achievement over the jumps not only in winning that Grade 1 Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris five times but also multiple successes on the other side of “La Manche”. For millions, this means a one-word answer “Doumen”. But to write about those achievements would occupy several Turf Talk newsletters.

That job will be done soon in a Profile of trainer François Doumen whose National Hunt and bang up to date flat careers are regularly punctuated by brilliant success. Perhaps we can serialise it and make the movie.

I am already composing lines about the Aintree crowd chanting the name of The Fellow, one of the

famous Three Musketeers (not of Dumas but of Doumen), and about Nupsala (ridden by Doumen Junior) beating Dessie by 15 lengths and about the magnificent hurdler Baracouda, not to mention the tough Hong Kong star Jim and Tonic and more recent Newmarket and Woodbine Group 1 winner, Siyouma.

François may not be able to resist defaulting to the anti-Les Rosbifs posture of the French, but his ever so slight smile when so doing betrays affectionate knowledge of his esteem amongst British racegoers and of the sheer power of his achievements in England. And he did train for **(CONT P2)**

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Phone Jo on 083399 6353

Editorial contributions:

editor@turftalk.co.za

DAVID ALLAN

H.M Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, one of the most passionate of all National Hunt owners.



Elizabeth Doumen, educated in the Last Outpost.

A pioneer in campaigning horses overseas, M. Doumen is indeed a cosmopolitan, as is his wife, Elizabeth, born in the old Transvaal, the daughter of a Turffontein Steward and niece of a trainer, a graduate of the University of Natal and as cosmopolitan a South African as one could possibly meet.

After a few years in South Africa in the 70s, the young couple moved to France to take over the family training yard. Elizabeth rapidly “learned” life in France where her multi-lingual capabilities as a wordsmith – she was a prominent design magazine editor - and her London drama school experience carried her through.

Whilst of course deeply involved in the racing successes, Elizabeth is the boss when it comes to the Doumen’s stud farm HarasD’Ecouves near the town of Boucé in Normandy. Breeding there since the early 1990s, the Doumens have produced in addition to globe-trotting Jim and Tonic, many group winners including Rajpoute, Kasbah Bliss, Top Trip and (pictured on page 1) Aim to Please.

Since 2011, the stud under Elizabeth’s direction started to sell its produce instead of training them all, and accelerated the process by bringing in David Twomey to commercialise the farm. Meanwhile, the Doumens, who retain a base in the Southern Suburbs, sent a very high earning Mark of Esteem mare to breed in the Cape. Mieux-Mieuxand, her 2016 Duke of Marmalade foal boards at Barbara Sanne’s Oldlands Stud in the Hemel ‘n Aarde Valley.

Such activities could be the seeds of new Franco-South African cooperation in bloodstock. Not only is HarasD’Ecouves exactly where you would want a boarding farm to be but also it is fully equipped with a South African owner who is a prominent player in the French bloodstock game and a member of the establishment. Elizabeth was appointed Ambassador for Horse Welfare in a newly formed department in the French racing authority.

Buy a mare in Newmarket or Deauville? Board in France and breed to the French premiums using French, UK or Irish stallions? Generate overseas currency? All of that can be done.....just call....



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website: www.allanbloodlines.com





Inglis Lot 68: Snitzel colt: "A very good brain!"

Snitzel colt tops Inglis Day One

A son of Snitzel (Redoute's Choice) was the star of Sunday's opening session of the Inglis Melbourne Premier Yearling Sale, selling for \$620,000 to Hong Kong-based Little Hung (yes, that's correct) and Bahen Bloodstock.

Yesterday's session-topper, who is the fourth most expensive yearling to sell in Melbourne Premier history, was Catalogued as Lot 68 by Millford Thoroughbreds on behalf of breeder Cressfield Stud. He is the second foal out of the winning Zabeel mare Mightier.

Snitzel is already proven with the family as the sire of the late two-time Group Two winner Time For War, who is out of Mightier's winning sister Lady Zabelia. Further back it is also the family of champion Hong Kong miler Lucky Owners and multiple Gr1 winners Mosheen (Fastnet Rock) and Might And Power (Zabeel).

"He is a lovely, good moving colt. He is well balanced and, most importantly, he had a very good brain and he handled the sale very well," said Justin Bahen.

"I'm the talent scout and he's the cheque book," Bahen said about Little Hung, who is emerging as a serious buying force in Japan, Ireland and Australia.. "I give him an indication of where I think the horse will be in the marketplace and I leave the bidding to him. I don't kick him in the shins.

"We have had a bit of luck with the same stallion (having bought Ducimus here last year) and I think Snitzel is such a good stallion."

- From ANZ Bloodstock News.

*South Africans bought four lots on the first day. More on [our website](#).



Cape Yearling Sale
16 March, Mistico
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The Vasco's Tavern and Pub Team: Bryn Ressel (second left), Ross Cowing, Dean Berry and Graeme Smith, pictured at Kenilworth on Saturday with Tellytrack's Grant Knowles (left)

Vasco's put heads together to make race day work

IN watching the coverage given to sponsors Vasco Da Gama Tavern and Pub for Saturday's Prawn Festival and Gr3 Prix Du Cap at Kenilworth we were impressed by the efforts of the organisers and the good coverage given by Tellytrack.

Ross Cowing of Vasco's agreed that this was a plan come together for the partners who include himself, bossman Bryn Ressel, Dean Berry and South Africa's former cricket captain and star batsman Graeme Smith, who own several businesses together.

Cowing told Turf Talk: "We all float between our business every day, Graeme too. He is not just a celebrity clip-on for us, he works very hard as a partner. We put our heads together, we applied our minds and we tried to make this a very special race day, which it turned out to be."

"We had some help from SA Breweries for example, one of our suppliers at Vasco's. They delivered 100 extra benches for the racegoers to sit

down and enjoy their beer and prawns. Steve Karam from Phumelela Sales was like gold and Nick Gordon from It's A Rush also helped us a great deal.



Mmm... Delish....!

"Our day came about almost as a process of evolution. There were ideas thrown around, we did some reciprocal deals and all worked out well. We are proud of what was achieved," said Cowing.

