



Mondays with DAVID ALLAN



WINX wins the Winx!

Fillies competing internationally—or not

WINX (AUS) won her 26th race on Saturday at Randwick amidst scenes of great emotion. Owners and her trainer choked back tears (or in some cases didn't choke them back) brought on as much by the fact of winning a new Grade 1 race named The Winx Stakes as by the remarkable proof that at 7 she keeps rolling along. And maybe getting even better.

Winx, like Black Caviar but at an extraordinary variety of distances, has captured public imagination in Australia in a way that transcends the sport of horse racing. In some respects, racing there is in very good shape with a significant percentage of the adult population having an interest in a racehorse, and in others, there are high profile cases of impropriety that shake confidence in what is being achieved on the track in one or two locations.

None of the latter touches Winx and her connections, who in the broadest sense, number tens of thousands of people who will go to the track to see her or switch on the TV which they would only otherwise do for the Melbourne Cup.

The mare, as she now is and has been for a couple of years, is at the very least a domestic phenome-

non in a sports-keen nation that has, after all, taken a knock or two of late with cricketers of god-like status falling and/or being historically scrutinised like never before.

When the Australian press and TV refer to Winx as "the best racehorse in the world" the whole concept of international comparison is raised, and this mind here (of course) wanders to the topic raised in this column very recently: *South African fillies going one better than Iridescence and National Colour in UK.*

Winx may or may not be better than Europe's best. Topping the very specific Longines Rankings is one thing. Imagining competition between the best is another.

In these days of global ratings, she has **(to p2)**



ENABLE (Frankie Dettori) winning at York.

DAVID ALLAN (cont..)

run to 130 and 129 when 5 and 6 years of age. More often, in the 117-122 area probably because that is what was necessary to beat the fields she is up against. The fact that she keeps doing it at 7 (so far) so many times is incredible and of undoubted superstar achievement, reconfirmed time and again over a variety of distances. A Wondermare indeed. Coming back to 7 furlongs on Saturday was a significant question, yet she ran the widest of wide round the bend in that extended sprint and blitzed the field.

Last year in UK, Enable had a highest race rating of 129 (at 3). Comparisons with Winx were made, but distances were not an exact match at their optima and the topic fizzled out. Winx did not travel to UK. Enable has not reappeared yet at 4.

Yesterday, a smart-alec tweeter responded on Sunday to a tweet about "the best racehorse in the world" by saying that he had not realised that Alpha Centauri had gone to Australia. OK fine, but that situation is not conclusive either. If Alpha Centauri could be on her way to being another Goldikova (14 European and Breeders Cup Group 1s), who knows if she could continue doing it every year until 7. We almost certainly never shall know because every other such filly would stop and go to stud earlier. Winx, let us not forget, has won enormous sums of money along the way.

Alpha Centauri has run to 129 (at 3, with surely much improvement to come if not interrupted). Poet's Word, closer to Winx as a 5 year old (entire horse), has run twice consecutively to Racing Post 128 looking magnificent especially in the magnificent finish to the King George on 28th July.

Irridescence ran to a Racing Post race rating of 116 (11 years ago now) in finishing 2nd in the Group 1

Falmouth Stakes (won this year by Alpha Centauri) before finishing 2nd in the Beverley D (another "proper" Group 1) also with the same rating.

Smart Call's Met win was given a Racing Post race rating of 114. Then off she went to Newmarket, the long way round – and that, probably, is the whole point both negative for Smart Call and positive in the prospect of travelling quickly in the (near?) future.

Everything about Smart Call's campaign struck me as a sporting and (I am guessing) emotional effort. Between the Met and diving into a Group 2 at York, no small contest, she was off the track for 474 days comprised of "the long way round" plus having a mystery issue which eventually went away. I saw her during an excellent visit to Abington Place which is clearly South African soil now because we had a braai. In December frosts.



SMART Call wins the J&B Met.

Smart Call ran some excellent races in defeat in 2017, looking to be worth a Group 2 or Group 3 win if having the right chance.



James Doyle holds the King George Trophy after bringing Poet's Word home in one of the great finishes.

Smart Call's sire could surely sire at the very top being by Kingmambo out of Bank's Hill – the issue is in the mating, the resultant individual and a long list of circumstances.

I stick to my guns. If "exports" comes right, more SA fillies will try in UK and one of them will do the business – which includes Group 2 & 3. The Holy Grail is an aim but not an exhausting essential effort. Or, like Winx, they can stay at home and clean up. - **tt.**

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DAVID ALLAN (cont...)

It came right for her in a Group 3 recently when I am sure she must have got some hearty slaps on the neck for getting that Stakes win. Whether she would have improved from the Met if not travelling "the long way round" or without the mystery ailment, who knows but it was a valiant effort, all the more exposed for being the only one.

A very experienced SA horseman said to me yesterday that our (SA) winners will not be good enough in Europe because we don't have good enough stallions. There is some weight in that view because we can't afford in rand to bring in top top sires, while the form of domestic Grade 1 winners, he said, was questionable. But I take the view that Captain Al would surely have been a very good speed sire overseas. To name one.

I would refer here to this column's point last week <https://bit.ly/2N01OpV> about expanding our gene pool through well bred filly imports by top sires, given the overriding importance of the female line. If bred in South Africa from an entirely European family, the result will be "(SAF)" and the flag would be flown.



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