



Mondays with DAVID ALLAN



THE Mistico Marquee was marshy, but wonderful all the same!

Changeable weather and changeable methods

THE winter chill could be felt in the shade on Kenilworth Racecourse on Saturday, but the direct sun was generously warm on a beautiful blue-sky day.

The end of it was marked with a nice win to celebrate and a stunning sunset in complete contrast to early that morning, driving in the Du Toitskloof Pass from Worcester in dense, cold cloud rendering the spectacular geological formations invisible. The weather was so different at each end of the Tunnel that it might have been each end of a long flight.

Two days beforehand, taking the same route, the weather on either side of the Tunnel had been identical. Torrential rain. What? Does that happen any more in the Cape? Well, quite. But rain it was, resulting in spectacular pencil thin waterfalls in the pass and the little river near the road more or less in flood.

At Mistico Equestrian Centre, The Cape Mare & Weanling Sale was therefore held on a marsh but the welcome arrival of so much rain outweighed any carping about wet feet. Mind you, it was a very odd experience to find the grass under the tables and

chairs *inside* the marquee to be in similarly marshy state. Sitting at a table near the edges resulted in a gradual upwards soaking of trousers, the hems of which were under water.

Developing trench foot is not something normally associated with attendance at a sale in South Africa, although as far as I know there were no casualties, but it did remind me of the very first JBBA Foal Sale in the Hidaka region of Hokkaido, northern Japan in 1998, largely the brainchild and vehicle of the Yoshida brothers at Shadai and Northern Farms.

Having a special connection with that country, my wife and I were able to take our Ireland partner to the sale, eyes wide. I say "Ireland" not "Irish" because she was South African, married into a major farm in Ireland.

This is not one of my "promotions" of Foal Sales. No other country in the world could – or would – put on this style of sale. **(to page 2)**



Raining in Du Toitskloof.

DAVID ALLAN (cont fm p1)

Foals were offered – all at foot. When bought, they then stayed at foot and were provided with keep and care until three months after weaning at no cost to the buyer. The purchase contract, in both Japanese and English, was elaborate, dealing with various eventualities and responsibilities during the keep period right down to cuts and bruises.

Inspections took place with customary Japanese precision. Half of the foals on offer were brought out with their dams and two handlers – the foals of course being head-collared on lead reins and immaculately mannered. They formed a very long line opposite all the buyers who assembled opposite - also in a very long line, but less straight. It looked like an old style Le Mans start.

On the sounding of a whistle, all the dams and foals turned to face the buyers. At that point, the buyers had an hour to inspect.

We mingled with the mothers and children and their handlers moving up and down the line, with the combinations walking on request. It was just like a very long line of stables at sales in lot order. Without the stables.

On another whistle, all horses and handlers turned 90 degrees left and walked off into the middle distance, to be replaced by the other half of the catalogue for the rest of the inspecting.

By now, you may be asking "*How on Earth can this remind him of the Cape Mare & Weanling Sale?*". (Especially the weanling part!). The answer is "Rain".

During the inspection morning in Hokkaido, showers were predicted. Half an hour before their arrival, dozens of Shadai staff, rushed about in amongst the visitors distributing disposable plastic

overshoes so that their guests would not get wet shoes, never mind wet feet.

Sure enough, the showers came. Manicured lawns on which we walked amongst the horses got wet. But our feet didn't.



Might Not Have Worked in the Marsh...

With customary Japanese certainty of events, all wet overshoes were then collected by the same squad of helpful staff in the knowledge that the showers had gone for good and the warm sun had by then dried the grass.

Did we buy? Not in that first year. The prices were in `phone numbers (including a lengthy area code) but we were under-bidder on a beautiful filly by Pentire out of a Northern Taste mare. But we had bought one or two of the families on show.

Incidentally, if you know about Pentire and Northern Taste, you would be very well qualified to apply for a position at the NHRA or TBA or within a Task Team of expert worker bees that should urgently be assembled, deployed, managed and motivated if only for a six months "blitz". The required mix in this Column's view is (i) two or three stud book experts (ii) a couple of crack hot secretaries to implement the work – there are plenty of freelancers (iii) a manager to motivate and protect that team in its urgent domestic and international work.

Returning to Mistico, the hardy participants were cheerfully undeterred by the conditions. AllanBloodlines struck early, buying successfully while dripping. On the other hand, we failed to sell a 4 times winning black type filly for an overseas investor in SA bloodstock who had raced her. No bid.

Tricky to explain, but we were in good company. Around one third of all those offered sold for R3,000 or had ZERO against their name.

It's a conundrum. Freeze and cut back now? Or some say work only with Book 1/NYS 1 level mares

DAVID ALLAN (cont)

(which if it could actually happen across the board would remove all possibility of middle and lower spending owners and trainers from being involved in horse racing). Of course the reasoning is understandable. Look at Ireland in 2009/10 not covering. But not covering in 2018 is making a statement of not wishing to sell in 2021 by when...who knows?

The vision for South African bloodstock breeding is surely – in addition to having rationalised exports to which we have never been closer in this era of bans – to be citizens of the global bloodstock world, rubbing shoulders internationally in the swim of mutual education.

The so-called mainstream bloodstock nations all influence and learn from each other. Nothing stays the same operationally, administratively, commercially. For better and sometimes for worse, we all adjust all of the time. Those foal sales in Japan look very different now because of international interaction and look how well that country does even in a perpetual state of recession.

How “we have always done it” is rarely right for today. - **tt**



NOTHING to end a stormy business week like a Gr1 winner! Onwer Braam Van Huyssteen is riding the choppy waves of big business and racing and he enjoyed the sensation of a major success at Scottsville on Saturday when Mighty High won the Gr1 Allan Robertson Championship.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



This comment appeared on AfricanBettingClan's Forum after the news broke that Samantha Dames was following Judy Davies out of the door of the NHRA Stud Book being unable to cope with the working environment any longer, and of the International Stud Book Committee reportedly taking a harder line as their viable contacts disappear.

Put the right people in charge!

OUR columnist David Allan has regularly pointed out the threat to South Africa's Part 1 status in international cataloguing alongside the escalating disappointment at the International Stud Book Committee of the lack of South African returns over years, the corruptions to other stud books and the possible consequences. He knows that the problem is also big domestically with regard to registrations. What takes a few minutes elsewhere can take months here. David's solution is to put the right people into a protected bubble – the stud book boffins like Judy and Samantha who should not have to be managers, internal politicians or international diplomats but would get their expert heads down and complete a major task – with top class secretaries in support and a manager over them who would create their working environment and liaise internationally and domestically while the work is done. This is a matter of a head honcho putting the right people in charge of the NHRA's work and making sure they can get it done. David himself has been suggested informally but we doubt that whoever has the power to appoint would bring in a foreigner, however committed to South Africa and however often other countries use overseas expertise, even on a short contract. -**tt**

This has the potential to be an absolute disaster and is shocking to say the least. Was this not very similar to what David Allan has been on about for months now? How people of the ilk of Samantha and Judy were allowed to walk away is still a mystery. I sincerely hope this ship can find its buoyancy as a matter of urgency. 4 months is not a lot of a time to catch up and save an industry. Seems the AHS export protocols are the least of our worries at this time.

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

