



OTI GAZETTE

The official newsletter of OTI RACING



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Magic Millions - The Power of Marketing

Despite predictions that results would be significantly down on recent years, the recent Gold Coast Magic Millions Yearling Sale achieved comparatively good results. Despite the gross revenue declining around 10%, averages and median results were on par with 2024.

The relative pessimism before the sale, even by Magic Millions' management itself, was based on the current state of Australia's economy and the increased difficulty trainers and syndicators were having in selling yearlings. Many purchases from the 2024 sales had not been settled and fewer major international buyers were expected to attend.

What the tipsters didn't factor in was the marketing genius of Gerry Harvey and Katie Page, the owners of Magic Millions, and some of their consignors, especially Coolmore.

Harvey, Page and their team have developed a product that outperforms all others in racing. Not only is there a strong bond between the sale of yearlings and the Magic Millions Racing Carnival, but there is a plethora of additional activity that provides entertainment for all who have the remotest interest in the sport. Their efforts are further supported by pervasive and positive print and television media coverage.

Some may claim that Harvey and Page's media power at Magic Millions is a result of their advertising spending power with Harvey Norman. If so, so what? Magic Millions still must deliver a product that benefits its buyers, consignors and the general public – and it does that in spades. There is no doubt that marketing clout is one of the reasons why Tourism Queensland strongly supports the Carnival – and, in the process, helps reinforce the attractiveness of the racing and sales on the Gold Coast.

The marketing genius does not rest with the Magic Millions organisation alone. Coolmore excelled in presenting the produce of its new breeding star, Home Affairs. Known as an organisation that looks to grow stallions, Coolmore presented Home Affairs' yearling progeny for the first time.

A very good horse as a three-year-old, Coolmore took Home Affairs to Europe in the hope of building his profile. While that didn't work, it did not stop the company from embarking on an aggressive campaign with his first crop of yearlings. It worked and the progeny averaged an incredible \$383,000 at his first yearling sale (unproven as a stallion), the result that far outweighed Home Affairs' pedigree or racing credentials.

The performance of Coolmore and Magic Millions gives us all a glimpse of what racing could achieve in adopting cohesive and aggressive policies in marketing our sport. Racing has so much to offer that sits 'on the shelf'.

WEEKEND RUNNERS & RECENT WINNERS



OTI Weekend Preview

We had a most exciting week with **West Of Africa** winning the Listed Magic Millions Cup and **Perfumist** making it four straight victories, and we now head into the long weekend hoping the winning continues! While light on for black-type action, there's still plenty to watch, kicking off on Friday night at The Valley and the Gold Coast with two of our stayers. We take a talented pair to Adelaide, where **Danxia** is looking to stamp himself as an autumn contender, **Chimed** is hunting a country cup and **Regal Lion** is out to return to the winner's stall in the Listed Australia Day Cup.

Watch the weekend preview with Shayne & Campbell [HERE](#) to hear about their respective chances.

RECENT WINNERS



WEST OF AFRICA

1400m **Listed Magic Millions Cup**, Gold Coast
Trained by Annabel Neasham & Rob Archibald



PERFUMIST

1400m F&M BM78, Randwick
Trained by Bjorn Baker



PRO AUSSIE

1400m 4yo+ Maiden, Sale
Trained by Ben, JD & Will Hoyes



EMPHASIZE

1717m Maiden, Sale
Trained by Natalie Young & Trent Busuttin



PERFUMIST

1500m F&M BM78, Rosehill
Trained by Bjorn Baker



TIERRA

1600m Maiden, Stony Creek
Trained by Ciaron Maher



PERFUMIST

1550m F&M BM72, Canterbury Park
Trained by Bjorn Baker



PICK 'N' MIX

1200m Maiden, Cranbourne
Trained by Tony & Calvin McEvoy



DEAKIN

2000m BM78, Pakenham
Trained by Phillip Stokes

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN BUICK

Martin Buick - Bloodstock Consultant

Given your family's involvement in racing, were you surrounded by horses from a young age?

Mum and Dad trained in Germany and also Norway, so horses became a way of life from a young age.

Did you always want to be involved in the horse racing industry?

It took until my early 20's before I decided to really give the industry a go. I was always passionate about the industry and went to the races a lot but couldn't see how I would make it a career. I decided to go to a university that was a 14-hour return trip from Newmarket in order to put my head down and focus on studies, but that didn't go to plan and I found myself on the train to Newmarket at every opportunity. That's when I realised that racing was for me and I started on the career path.



What would you say is the most challenging and most rewarding part of your job as a bloodstock consultant?

The most rewarding part is definitely when a plan comes together and the horse you bought rewards the faith the client invested in you. Getting beaten on the track or in a deal can be frustrating but in this game you lose more often than you win and you just have to carry on and stay positive. I'm working on that!

Your brother William is a very successful jockey, as was your father in Denmark Scandinavia, did you aspire to become a bloodstock consultant or was a jockey career on the cards as well?

Being a jockey was never on the cards! If I had a penny every time someone asked me that question I reckon I could've been a major owner with OTI but the truth is I can't ride! To be honest I never really had my sights set on where I wanted to end up in the industry. I feel like the career path in racing is less linear than perhaps other professions and you just have to work hard and meet the right people at the right time. The opportunity to become a bloodstock consultant presented itself after more than 6 years working as assistant racing manager for the Niarchos family in London when Hubie approached me in the first COVID year. My wife Tara and I were ready to try something new and left London for Ireland.

You have maintained a good relationship to racing in your home country, Norway. How does it compare to racing in Ireland/UK or even Australia?

I keep close tabs on everything going on in the Scandinavian racing industry and have bought some nice horses to go out there. The industry in Norway is small, with only 1 racecourse and doesn't really compare, the track is under snow and ice for 5 months in the winter and it's a real labour of love but the horses punch above the grade and have done well in Dubai and in Europe. In fact, there was a Norwegian trained winner at the Dubai Carnival last weekend. Where the Scandinavian industry compares is that it's been a precursor with some of the issues that have later manifested themselves in Europe and Australia, such as gambling affordability checks and the sale of prime equine real estate. Both have been disastrous and should act as a wakeup call.

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN BUICK

You've worked with one of the legends of the bloodstock world, Hubie de Burgh. What are the key lessons you've learned from Hubie? Otherwise, who has been the biggest influence and mentor on your career so far?

One of the most important lessons has been to play the long game in the business. Relationships take a while to cultivate and sometimes patience rather than perseverance can be the best approach. I admire the way Hubie has maintained longstanding relationships spanning decades and I think clients of de Burgh Equine benefit enormously from accessing the network Hubie has built up. Alan Cooper, Racing Manager to the Niarchos Family, is another big influence on my career. He gave me the job as Assistant Racing Manager when I had just returned from a stint working for Arrowfield and Archie Alexander in Australia and the job elevated me to a new level. The family had nine individual Group 1 winners during my time there and I gained vital exposure to international racing and breeding.

You recently attended the Magic Millions Gold Coast Sales. What are the sales like compared to Europe and could Australia take on any improvements, or vice versa?

It was great being back on the Gold Coast. It was interesting to see how the staff there hustled to help vendors with selling their passed in lots. It can be a lonely place to be for a vendor and I think the European sales companies could do more to assist them.

Which horse in Australia do you think is one to look out for in 2025?

He's not exactly a dark horse but I'm going with Switzerland. He could be heading to Royal Ascot this summer and it would be great if he came. International runners add colour to the meeting and I admire the owners and trainers that go outside of their comfort zone with their horses.

Given the opportunity, what would be the first thing you'd change in the thoroughbred industry in Australia and the UK/Ireland?

Prize money in UK/IRE needs to improve and I'm not going to dwell on solutions... I wouldn't last very long in racing politics! Aside from that I would look into ways of building communal stables where trainers can rent boxes on a horse-by-horse basis. Like the American backstretch model where a trainer can get going with the minimal of fuss and financial outlay. Buying or renting yards is expensive and a lot of trainers in the UK or Ireland rely on a backer to finance the business. Margins are tight enough as it is with the poor prize money on offer and servicing mortgages adds to the pressures.

In Australia, it would be great to see the NSW & VIC racing jurisdictions working more in tandem. You have a phenomenal product here but the concentration of top races over the same weekend can make it hard to keep up with at times.



Visit Living Legends - an experience to remember.

Click [here](#) to access their website.

OTI WELFARE UPDATE



Recently retired 11yo **Amade** has found his new home at Twin Hills Stud, where he will enjoy his life off the track looking after younger horses.

He will start his nanny duties in a few months, alongside other OTI retirees Knightlaila, Land Of Heroes and Casterton.

Happy retirement old boy!

OTI'S MORNING AT LIVING LEGENDS

Morning at Living Legends with OTI

While our prime aim at OTI is to give owners success and enjoyment at the race track, sometimes the 'off-the-track' experience can be equally pleasurable.

Such as a case for a visit to Living Legends at Woodside Historic Park, just past Melbourne Airport. Last Sunday, 60 owners, their kids, and grandkids visited the facility to enjoy the company of some of our past champions. Few experiences are more enjoyable than giving lovely animals a pat or a rub, feeding them carrots and watching them nuzzle up to the kids.

Andrew Clark and his team at Living Legends do a magnificent job of both looking after these champions, and providing an exceptional experience for those who want to visit them.

OTI is a proud sponsor of Living Legends and morning's like this are invaluable for racing fans.



SNIPPETS

Juddmonte International is crowned world's best race of 2024

There were hundreds of spectacular races all around the globe last year but none were greater than the Juddmonte International at York, which on Tuesday was named as the Longines World's Best Horse Race for 2024.

This is the second time the Juddmonte International has been acclaimed as the World's Best Horse Race, as it first took the title in 2020, when Ghaiyyath beat Magical, Lord North and Kameko.

Past winners of the 10-furlong contest, which was first run in 1972 and carried a record prize fund of £1.25million last year, include great names such as Roberto, Dahlia, Sea The Stars and Frankel.

OTI's Docklands featured in the 2024 Group 1 Juddmonte (finished 7th), before he made his journey to Australia to compete in the G1 Cox Plate and G1 Champions Stakes.

The above is an excerpt from Andy Stephens' Racing TV article and can be read in full [here](#).

Jockey jumpout pay dispute continues in Victoria

The unholy dispute between the Victorian Jockeys' Association and the Australian Trainers' Association over jumpout payments is set to be brought to a head next week with plans for the parties to sit down with Racing Victoria CEO Aaron Morrison to look for a resolution.

But the language emanating from both sides of the debate indicates that Morrison's diplomacy will be tested to the limit, with the VJA's Matt Hyland of the strong opinion that the jockeys have made all the concessions they intend to while hearing nothing from the ATA.

The central issue from the VJA's perspective is that jockeys shouldn't have to ride in club-conducted jumpouts for free when they are getting paid \$110 to ride in Racing Victoria-sanctioned barrier trials.

The above is an excerpt from Bren O'Brien's article in The Straight and can be read in full [here](#).

QUIZ

NAME THE STALLION

Hint: Sire of MM winner West Of Africa



1. Which was the highest priced yearling at the 2025 Magic Millions Gold Coast Sale?
2. Which two OTI horses currently reside at Living Legends?
3. Which trainer did Alligator Blood join for his return to racing?

OTI RACING BALNARRING CUP

OTI is thrilled to once again sponsor the Balnarring Cup, a true highlight of the picnic racing season! Held on Australia Day, January 26, 2025, at the stunning Emu Plains Reserve on the Mornington Peninsula, this event offers a unique racing experience set in picturesque bushland. Whether you're a seasoned racing fan or attending for the first time, the atmosphere is perfect for all ages.

What makes the Balnarring Cup truly special is its family-friendly vibe. With fun activities for kids, food stalls, and live entertainment, it's more than just a race—it's a day out for the whole community. The event has become a tradition for families, offering a chance to enjoy the thrill of racing while soaking in the beautiful natural surroundings.

The track itself is one of the best picnic racing venues in Victoria, providing an intimate and exciting racing experience where spectators feel close to the action. The combination of a relaxed setting, high-energy races, and beautiful nature makes the Balnarring Cup an event unlike any other, attracting thousands of attendees each year.

A popular event that sells out every year, the Balnarring Cup promises an unforgettable day. We look forward to seeing those who are joining us for this great event on January 26, 2025.



INTRODUCING MAGIC MILLIONS GRADUATE

Smashing Yearling – Magic Millions Graduate



Purchased in partnership with **Phillip Stokes** at this year's **Magic Millions** Gold Coast Yearling Sale, this son of Brave Smash impressed on inspection with his big frame, deep girth and strong hindquarter. He is light on his feet, with enough length across his middle to suggest he will develop into a middle-distance type in time. Watch his parade with comments from Terry & Phillip Stokes [*here*](#).

Brave Smash has made an impressive start to his stud career, with progeny including recent **G1 winner** Kimochi and multiple stakes winner Brave Mead. The dam side of the gelding's page possesses strong European bloodlines. His dam, Loolwah (by the outstanding broodmare sire Pivotal), was a winner at two in Europe, suggesting the gelding should show precocity. His bloodlines are exceptional, with a second dam by Street Cry and a third dam by Sadler's Wells.

Phillip has worked extensively with the Brave Smash progeny and understands how to get the best out of them. This is evident in the recent performance of his boom 3yo Sweethearted, who won impressively earlier this month and will target stakes races in the autumn. Phillip saw plenty of similarities between the two horses, so joining him in the purchase was a straightforward decision.

For more information on the gelding, please contact oti@oti.com.au

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Home Affairs x Sunlight filly for \$3.2m, sold to Mitsu Nakauchida from Japan
2. Tom Melbourne and Gailo Chop
3. Chris Waller

NAME THE STALLION

Not A Single Doubt



West Of Africa wins Listed Magic Millions Cup