

# RACING POST BLOODSTOCK

IT IS just as well Cracksman can't read, otherwise the son of Frankel might feel the weight of expectation on him as there has been on his sire, grandsire and great grandsire in years gone by.

There is no denying there is growing buzz about Darley's four-time Group 1 winner now too, as his first crop of runners have not only hit the track but left a red-hot trail in their wake.

Cracksman has sired eight individual winners from fewer than 20 runners, five of them in Britain including the unbeaten Dance In The Grass. A chestnut who followed in the footsteps of Inspiral in landing the Star Stakes at Sandown last month, she now looks a bargain having sold from Willie Carson's Minster Stud to Mark and Charlie Johnston for 57,000gns at Tattersalls Book 1.

Sam Bullard, director of stallions at Darley, says: "We obviously had huge hope that Cracksman was going to be a good stallion otherwise we wouldn't have bought into him in the first place, but for his two-year-olds to have been as precocious as they've shown is a bonus.

"And particularly when we've got so many trainers with bigger strings telling us they've got really nice ones to come. I hope and expect there will be some later two-year-olds coming out and going into next year with a [Timeform] 'p' next to them, as I'm sure the three-year-olds will be better.

"As they appear to have a great attitude for the game, I'm sure the time will help."

Cracksman needs little introduction as the best son of the reigning champion sire Frankel, and as the winner of two Champion Stakes, the Coronation Cup and Prix Ganay. For good measure he was crowned European champion at three and four, as well as joint-world champion with the great Winx in 2018.

Bullard says: "I think he got better with age and took time to mature. The Gosden team did a great job to get him to the racecourse at two, where he won his only start, beating the great Stradivarius.

"This was a combination of good training and having a talented horse, but they didn't push him too hard and he clearly got better as his career went on."

Cracksman very much has the pedigree to complement his race record, hailing from owner-breeder Anthony Oppenheimer's top-class family of 1,000 Guineas and Sussex Stakes winner On The House and the wonderful Rebecca Sharp.

His first crop of yearlings proved popular at the sales, with the top-priced individual

# 'As with Dubawi, Cracksman could be proving judges all wrong again'

## The Bloodstock Big Read

Darley's Sam Bullard talks to Kitty Trice about Cracksman's fine start at stud



being Madly Truly, a half-sister to stakes winner and Group-placed Fearby who brought the hammer down at 410,000gns at Tattersalls Book 1, albeit with hints of reservation about how precocious his progeny would be.

It was a situation Bullard and his team were all too familiar with, having encountered a similar scenario with Dubawi's early crops. Some 15 years later and now the sire of luminaries such as Ghaiyyath, Too Darn Hot, New Bay, Coroebus and Space Blues among his 52 individual Group 1 winners, it would be easy to forget those initial misgivings.

"He could be proving all the big judges wrong again," says Bullard.

"Dubawi was not as popular at the start of his stud career as he is now; the market did not support him in the early years. He went to Ireland for his third season, and we couldn't get 70 mares to him. But look at him now!

"It has been a similar situation with Cracksman. You can only feel sorry for Willie and all the other breeders who had supported him. I'm now delighted when they get compensation as the progeny win."

On the sire's standout daughter Dance In The Grass, he says: "She comes from a yard where they're not afraid of running them, but they'd been very keen on her early on so she'd obviously been

showing them plenty at home.

"I think they're talking bigger targets at the backend, but that's the job of a great team at Mark Johnston Racing to decide. Hopefully for us she will step forward again."

When it came to advertising Cracksman, Darley did something highly unusual in making public his Plusvital Speed Gene Test designation of C:C - the type most suited to running over five furlongs to a mile.

Cracksman never competed over less than a mile himself but must have inherited from his ancestors a 'C' copy of their genetic marker - speed, in other words.

Bullard says: "We had never done it before but I don't think anyone expected him to have that designation. Here we had a horse who went to stud and is built like a middle-distance horse; the press, when he won two Champion Stakes in the wet at Ascot, slightly suggested his wins were due to the ground and the distance.

"Having had that reputation before going to stud, when we realised he was a C:C - he's out of a Pivotal mare, out of a Green Desert mare, there is a load of speed on the dam's side - for the horse's own benefit we thought it was worth putting the record straight.

"I don't believe the speed gene should be confused with precocity, they are two different things. He's like his father Frankel, a long horse

with a long stride - Sir Henry [Cecil] always said he had a very long stride. To have a very long stride, you've probably got to have a slightly long back."

It was not totally surprising Cracksman came to Dalham Hall upon his retirement, having joined Sheikh Mohammed's operation a few years after another outstanding Oppenheimer performer in 2015 Derby and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe hero Golden Horn's arrival in the Darley ranks.

While Golden Horn has recently departed for pastures new at Overbury Stud, having been sold privately to Jayne McGivern of Dash Grange Stud, Cracksman has continued to thrive in his new vocation, covering high-class books of mares.

Bullard says: "We're fortunate to have an excellent relationship with Mr Oppenheimer and his Hascombe and Valiant Stud team through Golden Horn and, although the latter didn't go through as the stallion we hoped he would, there was huge demand to stand Cracksman at the time. And, at the end of the day, Mr Oppenheimer was keen that he should stand at Dalham.

"There were a lot of people trying to get hold of Cracksman. I think Mr Oppenheimer likes the fact that when he's in Newmarket he can pop over and see him. "Also, I hope, and like to

think, he was happy with the job the team had done with Golden Horn."

Bullard, who says that a first-season stallion at Darley will not cover more than 150 mares, is confident Cracksman can see out the traditional, always rather dreaded, third or fourth book lull after a bright start.

He says: "When he came to stud he stood at a competitive fee [of £25,000] and had a good book. We're not into covering 200-plus mares anyway, so that was never an option, but he's covered over 100 mares in his first two seasons.

"It dropped off a bit in seasons three and four, but the way this season's going it's not going to be a problem over the next couple of years.

"We sold breeding rights in him, so there are loyal supporters, and it's something we want to do more of. We've said from a long way back that success with one of our stallions means breeders are having success.

"We try not to go over 150 mares with a first-season horse, and if a horse is fit and fertile, which Cracksman is, we will then push that to 160, while in Ireland we've pushed that a bit further on occasions in the past.

"Welfare is hugely important and book sizes should be controlled to a greater extent. A book of 150 gives a stallion every chance to be successful."

### Golden new pastures

While Golden Horn could not be deemed a bad stallion, the European champion of 2015 has not sired the top-class performers expected of him and the recent decision was taken to sell him to McGivern, for whom he will stand in a dual-purpose capacity at Overbury.

Bullard, with a note of poignancy in his voice, says: "I've been very determined that we never start losing faith in a horse until he's had his three-year-old runners. Once he's had those then you have to start getting realistic; Golden Horn still sadly needs a really classy Flat horse and so it was time to move on.

"It was a huge decision to make. Mr Oppenheimer is an important client and Golden Horn is a beautiful horse who I adore. I've always had a very soft spot for him, but the fact is that with any horse we stand here the team have got to be convinced that if we persuade a breeder to use him then we've got to believe we're doing the right thing.

"We're not going to be selling horses we don't believe in and, from a Flat perspective, the time had come. We have very close associations with Overbury through Kayf Tara and Jack Hobbs and others, and are genuinely delighted he's gone there in a dual-purpose role."

The welfare of stallions who stand, or have stood, under Darley's umbrella is important to Bullard, a member of the Thoroughbred Breeders

*'We've got so many trainers with bigger strings telling us they've got really nice ones to come'*



## Cracksman's cracking start to life at stud



Profile	
<b>Sire</b> Frankel	<b>Dam</b> Rhadegunda
<b>Damsire</b> Pivotal	<b>Standing</b> Dalham Hall Stud

Stud fees			
<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
£25,000	£25,000	£17,500	£17,500

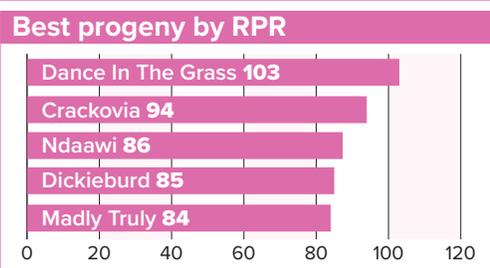
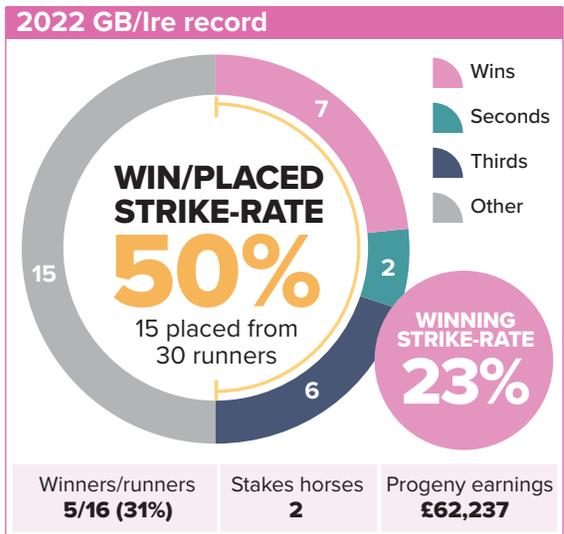
**Race record**

**Earnings** £2,793,064

**Best RPR** 131

**WINNING STRIKE-RATE** 73%

**Group 1 wins**  
2017 Champion Stakes,  
2018 Prix Ganay, Coronation  
Cup & Champion Stakes



Association's board who believes the industry has to be conscious of the pitfalls of overproduction.

"We've all got to get behind this welfare aspect, racing's a sport we adore, live for and earn our livings from and it's given us a great life, but these issues are for real," he says.

"We've all got to take on board that if you're covering and then producing thousands of foals you may not be helping.

"The TBA board has just done a welfare study to help the welfare board at the BHA to come up with guidelines. They are sensible and focus on the long-term welfare of breeding these horses."

### Yearling excitement with new boys

A pressing matter for Darley are the forthcoming yearling sales in Britain and Ireland, auctions at which the first crops of European champion juvenile and Sussex Stakes winner Too Darn Hot, Derby hero Masar and superstar sprinter Blue Point will be represented.

While undoubtedly occasions tinged with apprehension, Bullard is confident the trio will all be positively represented and have what it takes to continue the dynastical reigns of their sires, Darley stallions past and present Dubawi, New Approach and the late Shamardal.

He says: "People love Masar and he's seriously exciting. Sadly his excellent two-year-old form is what probably proved significant to his stallion potential, rather than winning the Derby, but that's the market.

"He was a classic example of a horse in a Guineas who proved the race to be a great

Derby trial, and his Epsom success was a golden one for us, a homebred trained by Charlie [Appleby].

"Blue Point is a son of arguably our second greatest ever stallion in Shamardal, and with sons of Shamardal like Lope De Vega doing very well, the world is his oyster.

"Too Darn Hot had highly sought after foals, and what we have seen through their development gives us great hope his yearlings will be in demand."

While Cracksman is a stage ahead of his younger studmates, he is certainly leading the way as the first son of Frankel to stand at Darley, or in Europe. He will not be the last, however, with 2021 Derby hero Adayar a likely candidate to join the roster.

Bullard says: "We've got a Derby winner at Moulton Paddocks by Frankel in Adayar and we'd be very happy to have him when the time comes."

### Destiny awaits for Dubawi

Bullard needs little persuading when it comes to opening up about record-breaking stallion Dubawi.

Darley's director of stallions says of the now 20-year-old: "He's a fantastic horse to have for so many reasons, one of them being that so many of the best mares in the world can come to him.

"I'm biased but there's no doubt in my mind he's the best stallion in the world at the moment, there's nothing that can come near him."

Dubawi has been leading the way in both the British/Irish and European sire standings in a bid for an elusive first crown – one Frankel beat him to last year

and long-time rival Galileo in the years preceding that – and it should be an exciting title race, with Sea The Stars joining Frankel and Galileo in the chasing pack.

So successful a sire has Dubawi become that it is easy to forget he was a brilliant racehorse too, an Irish 2,000 Guineas hero who also won the Prix Jacques le Marois and struck at the top level as a two-year-old.

Then, of course, there is also the distinction of being a son of the sensational Dubai Millennium, who fulfilled his destiny by winning the 2000 Dubai World Cup by six lengths eased-down in a still race-record time. Devastatingly, he was to leave just the one crop after succumbing to grass sickness aged five.

Bullard says: "We started the stallion operation 22 years ago and the ultimate goal was to have the best stallions for tomorrow, and Dubawi has ticked that box for us.

"The Dubai Millennium

connection is great too. For him to have got us to where we are is incredible, and we owe him so much."

While he will continue to face stiff competition from the likes of Frankel and Sea The Stars, Bullard is optimistic Dubawi can retain his status for years to come.

"Frankel is a fantastic stallion and will be around for a long time, but with the mares Dubawi has been receiving for the last five years he's not going to be knocked off his perch anytime soon," he says.

"He's got some incredible racehorses coming through and incredible mares in foal to him. He's in a very strong position, with some great sons coming in behind him.

"He's in great shape and has covered a big book this year. We'll reduce his numbers next year as he's 20 and I think it would be wrong to keep asking him to cover 150 mares or so. We'll respect his age but he'll keep on covering the very best."

### First-season sires with runners today in GB & Ireland

Sire	Progeny	Race
Expert Eye	Sunny Orange.....	York 4.45
Harry Angel	Bonny Angel.....	Leicester 6.45
Harry Angel	Hardy Angel.....	York 2.25
Harry Angel	In The Storm.....	Leicester 6.15
Harry Angel	Redemption Time.....	York 2.25
Havana Grey	Havana By The Sea.....	York 2.25
Havana Grey	Lady Hollywood.....	York 1.50
Havana Grey	Metahorse.....	York 2.25
Havana Grey	Shouldvebeenaring.....	York 2.25
James Garfield	Maria Branwell.....	York 1.50
Kessaar	Queen Of Uplands.....	Leicester 6.45
Kessaar	Shine's Ambition.....	York 4.45
Massaat	Girlswannahavefun.....	Leicester 6.45
Massaat	Mallorie Parkes.....	Leicester 5.15
Massaat	Spider Murphy.....	Leicester 5.15
Sioux Nation	Indian Dream.....	York 4.45
Sioux Nation	Kinta.....	York 1.50
Sioux Nation	Matilda Picotte.....	York 1.50
Tasleet	Spireite Boy.....	Leicester 5.15
Tasleet	Tabsheer.....	Leicester 6.15
US Navy Flag	Kaasib.....	York 2.25
US Navy Flag	Nibras Rainbow.....	York 2.25
Unfortunately	Rock Of England.....	York 4.45
Washington DC	J J Stingleton.....	Leicester 6.15
Washington DC	Washington Heights.....	York 2.25

# 'The team put their own cash in and called their families'

By Scott Burton  
France correspondent

ARQANA'S August Sale might not ordinarily be the place to search for affairs of the heart or David getting one back against Goliath.

Nor does a purchase price of €280,000 as a foal really qualify Domaine de l'Etang's Kingman colt as a bargain buy, for all that his sale to Japanese maestro Yoshito Yahagi for a cool €560,000 was one of the pinhooking success stories of the week in Deauville.

But Etang only consigned two yearlings at the sale, while the story might never have come to such a glorious conclusion had Elise Drouet and her team not shown such belief in the colt, allied to a determination not to let him slip from their grasp when circumstances dictated he go to market last autumn.

Drouet admits that the enormity of it all has not really sunk in.

"It's the result of a lot of work, of family working together, of teamwork and the support of people that trust in us," she said.

From the family of Waldgeist, the Kingman colt is a half-brother to a pair of black-type winners in Waldbiene and Urwald.

Drouet said: "He was born on the farm and the moment he fell on to the straw, I just loved him.

"He had to go to be sold to dissolve a partnership and I was determined to buy him. So we found a new associate, then a second and a third and little by little we got to the point where we could bid for him. The people who work for us all put into the horse.

"We relied on a lot of people who trusted us and one new investor who was buying into his very first thoroughbred."

While €280,000 was more than Drouet expected to pay to ensure the foal would turn to a yearling on their land, she had exhausted every avenue in putting together the new partnership that now all share in the success of his sale to race in Japan.

"The team put their own cash in and called their family and friends," said Drouet. "Everyone took a little share.

"He was more expensive

than I expected but that's the sales for you. It was a lot but we had really raised this horse. We bought the mare carrying him and there was real history behind this horse.

"And for everyone who took a piece it has been interesting to see him develop from that foal into the yearling that sold so well."

Drouet spent 20 years with Haras des Capucines before striking out on her own and the Etang operation is one which thrives on family and friends, with her husband and daughter both closely involved.

Even Clement Simonel, the stud groom who led the team's two yearlings into the heat and dust of the Arqana ring had taken a 2.5 per cent share to help keep this particular dream alive.

Admitting that pinhooking was a real passion for her, Drouet said: "With this colt the pressure has been building for a long time before he got to the ring, for several months in fact.

"But we knew we had a good-looking horse with a great physique, plus he had perfect x-rays and scopes. On top of that he has a pretty exceptional pedigree, albeit the competition is strong. He deserved to make that."

Etang's second 'coup de coeur' in the catalogue – a Ten Sovereigns filly out of a full sister to Kool Kompany and a €30,000 purchase at Goffs for "the cheeky look in her eye and her walk" – will be staying with the Etang team for a while yet after being bought back for €20,000.

Not that the excitement of Sunday and Monday are anything other than the beginning of a hectic sales season.

Drouet said: "We have two yearlings going to the September Sale, another eight in October and 15 jumps-bred horses as well.

"It's only the start of the selling year and for the most part they are either Flat-bred pinhooks or else our homebred jumping stock."

If the story of Sunday's lot 183 is anything to go by, there will be plenty more to hear from Domaine de l'Etang as they continue to compete with the giants of the Normandy breeding business.

IT'S rare for bookmakers' odds to form part of the bloodstock landscape, but one thing that does spark interest is the first-season sires title race. Sky Bet and Paddy Power's markets are settled on the number of winners in Britain and Ireland up to December 31, and, with the first two-year-old races not too far away now, it's time to get stuck in and take a look at the stallions in the hunt for honours.



### Sioux Nation

**Stands** Coolmore Stud

**2022 stud fee** €10,000

**First-crop juveniles** 159

**Best odds** 4-6 (Sky Bet)

A precocious and speedily bred son of the much-missed Scat Daddy, the Coolmore resident has been installed as hot favourite for this year's first-season sires title, with Paddy Power offering only 4-9.

The Fethard Bloodstock-bred seven-year-old broke his maiden at the third attempt in May of his juvenile year, running out a three-and-a-half-length winner at Cork, before comfortably winning the Group 2 Norfolk Stakes at Royal Ascot.

His next start saw him land Group 1 honours in the Phoenix Stakes at the Curragh, where he beat the likes of subsequent multiple Group 1 winners US Navy Flag and Romanised.

Having won the Group 3 Lacken Stakes and finished third in the Flying Five at three, Sioux Nation was retired to Coolmore for the 2019 breeding season at a fee of €12,500.

He has 159 juveniles to represent him this term – which of course goes a long way towards explaining his position at the head of the market – while his first yearlings sold for up to €270,000 and for an average of 35,043gns last year at auction. Sioux Nation will stand this season for €10,000.

**Stud sales pitch:** "Royal Ascot and Group 1-winning two-year-old by Scat Daddy – just like No Nay Never. No Nay Never and Scat Daddy were champion first-crop sires! Did Norfolk-Phoenix Stakes double like grandsire Johannesburg"

*'His Group 1-winning son is now poised to make his own impact with 113 two-year-olds set to hit the track'*

# A 50-1 fancy against Coolmore's odds-on jolly as two worlds collide

## The Bloodstock Big Read



**Kitty Trice** assesses the runners and riders in the 2022 first-season sires race

### Havana Grey

**Whitsbury Manor Stud**  
£6,000; 113; 9-4 (Paddy Power)  
With the best and quickest son of a sire whose two-year-olds were in red-hot form in 2021, Whitsbury Manor Stud has every reason for optimism as Havana Grey's first juveniles hit the track this term.

By Havana Gold, who was crowned the leading British-based sire of two-year-olds in 2021 after getting 32 individual winners, Group 1 winner Havana Grey is now poised to make his own impact with 113 juveniles to call on.

Bred by Mickley Stud and Lady Lonsdale, Havana Grey was a 42,000gns purchase as a foal from Tattersalls by Crimbourne Stud, before being picked up by BBA Ireland for €70,000 at Arqana's August Yearling Sale.

Sent into training with Karl Burke, Havana Grey debuted in April of his juvenile year, finishing second at Nottingham, before winning his next two starts, including the National Stakes at Sandown. A runner in the Norfolk Stakes, he was to land the Dragon Stakes and Molecomb before seconds in the Prix Morny and Flying Childers.

At three he won the Sapphire Stakes before crowning his career in the Flying Five.

He was retired to Whitsbury Manor for a fee of £8,000, while his first yearlings sold for up to £110,000 and at an average of 27,706gns. He should be in the running for the title, as his position as second-favourite suggests.

**Stud sales pitch:** "The fastest horse from the Galileo sire line, he blends the toughness of Galileo with the speed of Dark Angel. From the family of Al Bahathri and Forever Together. Group 1 winner at three, Group winner at two"



### Saxon Warrior

**Coolmore**  
€20,000; 111; 8-1 (SB)  
There is plenty of talk about Coolmore's Classic-winning son of Deep Impact, and with 111 two-year-olds ready to be unleashed this term it would be a huge shock if he did not make a splash.

Saxon Warrior himself did not debut until the summer of his two-year-old year, but he went unbeaten in three starts, including in the Beresford Stakes, which he won well by two and a half lengths, and Group 1 Racing Post Trophy, in which he held off Roaring Lion by a neck.

A sole win at three, albeit in arguably the most significant stallion-making race there is, the 2,000 Guineas, over a field that included Masar as well as Roaring Lion, did not really do Saxon Warrior justice.

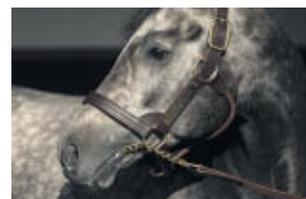
He consistently performed well in defeat, including when running Roaring Lion to a neck in both the Eclipse and Irish Champion Stakes, the latter proving to be his final start.

He stood his first season at Coolmore in 2019 and now stands for a fee of €20,000. His first yearlings proved particularly popular, selling for up to ¥190,000,000 (£1.2m/€1.44m) in Japan and

€540,000 and 325,000gns in Ireland and Britain.

It is fitting that the great and closely matched racecourse rivals Saxon Warrior and Roaring Lion are upsides in the market, and whoever comes out on top makes for a nice little subplot.

**Stud sales pitch:** "Unbeaten Group 1 winner at two and a brilliant Guineas winner at three. By Japanese supersire Deep Impact (champion sire in Japan 2012-2019) out of unbeaten European champion two-year-old filly Maybe (by Galileo)"



### Roaring Lion

**Tweenhills**  
n/a; 105; 9-1 (PP)  
The class of 2022 will be the sole crop of juveniles to race for the late and much-lamented Roaring Lion, who succumbed to colic in August 2019.

Roaring Lion covered an excellent book of 132 mares in his only season at Tweenhills Stud, with up to 105 foals set to hit the track over the coming months.

All eyes will be on them and there will be plenty with both emotional and financial attachment who will be hoping they can do their sire proud.

The American-bred son of Kitten's Joy was picked up by David Redvers for \$160,000 from the Keeneland September Yearling Sale and proved to be a bargain.

He won his first three starts at two, including the Royal Lodge Stakes, but was still green when beaten a neck by

Saxon Warrior in the Racing Post Trophy.

He stepped up considerably from his first two starts at three, which included finishing fifth behind Saxon Warrior in the 2,000 Guineas, to win the Dante, finish third in the Derby and then embark on a Group 1-winning spree in the Eclipse, Juddmonte International, Irish Champion Stakes and QEII.

Roaring Lion stood his sole season at stud at a fee of £40,000 before losing his battle with colic in New Zealand, and his offspring sold well last year as yearlings, going for up to 450,000gns.

Let us hope he can follow in the footsteps of Mozart and Dubai Millennium by leaving his mark despite an-all-too-brief stud career.

**Stud sales pitch:** "Four-time Group 1 winner at a mile to ten and a half furlongs, world champion three-year-old. By sire of sires Kitten's Joy out of Grade-1 placed Vionnet"



### Expert Eye

**Banstead Manor Stud**  
£10,000; 97; 12-1 (PP)  
A high-class juvenile who went on to become one of the leading milers of his generation, Expert Eye is with the right operation to support him with his first runners this year.

The Juddmonte homebred was quick to announce himself as an exciting prospect when winning cosily on his debut at Newbury, before an impressive display in the Vintage Stakes at Goodwood.

At three, the son of

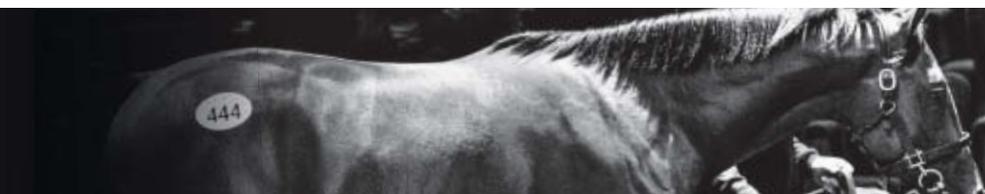
*'Standing for a fee of £12,500 this year, the eight-year-old has 103 juveniles to call upon for the first-season sires title, for which Sky Bet and Paddy Power take a different stance, with the former 8-1 but the latter 14s'*

Acclamation went on to win the Jersey and City of York Stakes, either side of placings in the Sussex Stakes and Prix du Moulin.

He repaid connections' faith in spades when winning the Breeders' Cup Mile on his final start, gaining that crucial top-level success thanks to a sharp turn of foot, before taking up stallion duties at Banstead Manor Stud in 2019.

At £10,000, his fee is now half that at which he started out in 2019, but his yearlings sold for up to 290,000gns in 2021. He is by a proven sire of sires and it would be a surprise if he did not feature early on with his runners, even if his odds look about right.

**Stud sales pitch:** "Group 1 Breeders' Cup Mile winner by Acclamation, a sire of top-class two-year-olds and sire of top-class two-year-old sires Dark Angel and Mehmas. The only son of Acclamation to win a Group 1 over a mile"



EDWARD WHITAKER (RACINGPOST.COM/PHOTOS)

**Cracksman:** "the best by Frankel, the best since him – and the best descendant of Galileo after him"



### Harry Angel

Dalham Hall Stud  
£12,500; 103; 14-1 (PP)

A blisteringly fast son of Dark Angel, Harry Angel cost a relatively cheap £44,000 from the Goffs UK Premier Yearling Sale when selling to Clive Cox from Ballyphilip Stud.

A half-brother to Mill Reef Stakes winner Pierre Lapin, Harry Angel shed his maiden status in that very same Newbury Group 2 on what was only his second start. He also landed the Sandy Lane Stakes by over four lengths before a close second to Caravaggio in the Commonwealth Cup.

His two career highlights came when sauntering away from top-class fields in the July Cup and Haydock Sprint Cup, beating elite rivals such as Limato, Brando, Caravaggio, Tasleet, The Tin Man and Blue Point.

Harry Angel also landed the Duke of York Stakes and was second in the British Champions Sprint Stakes before his retirement to Dalham Hall.

Standing for a fee of £12,500 this year, the eight-year-old has 103 juveniles to call upon in the battle for the first-season sires title, for which Sky Bet and Paddy Power take a different stance, with the former 8-1 but the latter 14s.

**Stud sales pitch:** "World champion sprinter at three, when he was stunning in the July Cup and beat Blue Point in the Sprint Cup. Broke his maiden in the Mill Reef, won the Duke of York and set a track record in the Sandy Lane"

### Cracksman

Dalham Hall Stud  
£17,500; 120; 33-1 (PP)

The best son of newly minted British, Irish and European champion sire Frankel, Cracksman has a quality first book set to represent him and rates an intriguing prospect for Darley.

Anthony Oppenheimer's homebred has a healthy 120 two-year-olds to go to war with this season, though their sire did not debut until the autumn of his campaign – beating a certain Stradivarius – and may not get early sorts, hence the generous-looking prices.

Cracksman won the Derby Trial at Epsom on his seasonal reappearance at three before two fine efforts, when clearly green physically and mentally, in the two Derbys, finishing a length third at Epsom and beaten just a neck at the Curragh when runner-up to Capri.

Cracksman did not look back after that, winning the Great Voltigeur, Prix Niel and Champion Stakes, the last-named in awesome style from a field that included Poet's Word, Highland Reel and Brametot.

He returned at four to easily win the Prix Ganay and then dug deep to take the Coronation Cup. The curtain came down when he roared to a second Champion Stakes victory over Crystal Ocean.

Duly crowned European champion and joint-world champion with Winx, Cracksman was retired to Dalham Hall for 2019. His first

yearlings were in demand, selling for up to 410,000gns in 2021.

**Stud sales pitch:** "The best by Frankel, the best since him – and the best descendant of Galileo after him. European champion at three and world champion at four after two dominant displays in the Group 1 Champion Stakes"



### Kessaar

Tally-Ho Stud  
€5,000; 77; 50-1 (PP, SB)

As a son of the eminent sire of sires Kodiak, and standing at a stud that knows all about launching first-season stallions, Kessaar is a very interesting proposition.

He was a high-class performer in his sole season on the track, winning on his third start after a close second on his debut, and going on to win the Sirenia Stakes.

That was followed by his career highlight when pulling nearly three lengths clear in the Group 2 Mill Reef Stakes. He was fourth in the Criterium International as he bowed out at the end of his juvenile campaign.

Now standing at Tally-Ho Stud for a fee of €5,000, the six-year-old has 77 first-crop juveniles to represent him over the coming months. Given the start Ardad and Kodi Bear have made in their second careers,

it would be no surprise to see him follow suit and belie his 50-1 odds.

**Stud sales pitch:** "Explosive winning performances marked him out as among very best of his generation. Sire Kodiak has made an outstanding start as a sire of sires; his first son to stand at Tally-Ho is a very exciting prospect for the future"

### 100-1 and bigger

Tasleet's first two-year-olds in training have reportedly been well received and Paddy Power's odds of 100-1 for the Nunnery Stud resident look on the generous side. A son of Showcasing from the family of Battaash, he was off the mark on his second start at two before developing into a high-class sprinter. He has 68 two-year-olds to run for him.

Mickley Stud's **Massaat**, another to race in Hamdan Al Maktoum's colours, won the Hungerford Stakes and finished second in the 2,000 Guineas. He has 70 foals and is also a 100-1 shot, as are Coolmore's July Cup and Dewhurst winner **US Navy Flag** and the same stud's Superlative Stakes winner **Gustav Klimt**, who is related to Invincible Spirit and Kodiak.

Coventry winner **Rajasinghe** can be backed at 200-1, while if you like the sound of winning a monkey for a quid, then you have Bearstone Stud's **Washington DC**, Mill Reef winner and Prix Maurice de Gheest second **James Garfield**, Sussex Stakes hero **Lightning Spear** and Prix Morny winner **Unfortunately** as options at 500-1.

### Where the value lies

Kessaar looks overpriced at 50-1, for two good reasons. First, he is a resident of Tally-Ho Stud, which has recently launched the careers of the likes of Mehmas and Cotai Glory, and second, as a fast and talented son of Kodiak, whose sire sons can do little wrong.

Looking more towards late summer, it will be very interesting to see what Cracksman's runners can do, along with Saxon Warrior's and the more middle-distance type of sires. It would also be remiss not to mention Tweenhills' bright hope Zoustar, who has had southern hemisphere winners and was not included in the betting.

Of those at shorter prices, Whitsbury Manor's Havana Grey looks to have the obvious ammunition to fire in plenty of winners. He is by a sire who is more than capable of producing juvenile winners and the grey will have received some of the best mares from his stud, which tends towards the speedier types.

**Kessaar** and **Havana Grey** are my two against the field.

# Shadwell colt star turn at sale-topping €125,000

## Report Goffs February Sale – day two

By Aising Crowe

BARODA STUD enjoyed a super second day of the Goffs February Sale, selling three of the seven most expensive weanlings including the session-topper, which was one of a number of youngsters David Cox's farm offered on behalf of Shadwell Stud.

The colt, by Darley's top-class Night Of Thunder, sire of two Group 1 winners in 2021, traces his lineage back to Whakilyric, the dam of Hernando and Johann Quatz. He is the fourth foal out of Afdhaad, a Nayef half-sister to the Group 3-winning fillies Arahma and Efaadah, and was the only lot to break the six-figure barrier yesterday when purchased by Abbeylands Farm for €125,000.

"He's a lovely colt by one of the best sires in Europe and it's great to be able to buy from Shadwell as they've been fantastic supporters of ours over the years," said Abbeylands' Frannie Woods. "We need a bit of luck with the pedigree but the reports on the Invincible Spirit two-year-old are positive."

For Shadwell, Baroda sold the only colt in the session by Sumbe's Le Havre, a son of the Canadian stakes winner Endless Light, by Pivotal and out of a half-sister to Grade 1 Yellow Ribbon Handicap winner Megahertz and the Group 3 Dahlia Stakes winner and Group 1-placed Heaven Sent. Bought by JRSA for €60,000, he is inbred 3x4 to Marie D'Argonne and Rahy.

Baroda also sold a colt from the first crop of Darley's European champion sprinter Blue Point for Shadwell, and the late-May foal has an exciting pedigree as his dam is a Zamindar half-sister to another champion sprinter in Muhaarar. Paul Harley went to €50,000 to secure the half-brother to three winners.

Whatever the Soldier's Call filly out of Saga Celebre does on the track, her residual value as a broodmare is assured. David Stack's Coolagown Stud

offered the filly from the first crop of the multiple Group 1-placed sprinter early in proceedings and the chestnut proved very popular.

With her pedigree, it is no wonder that she made €45,000 to Mags O'Toole, for she is a half-sister to the dam of last season's Middle Park and Prix Morny winner Perfect Power. Her second dam Saga D'Ouilly is a Linamix sister to Arc hero and sire Sagamix and Group 1 winner Sagacity. She is also a half-sister to Shastye, dam of the successive Grand Prix de Paris winners Japan and Mogul.

It is a beautiful page, and the successful agent also emphasised just how well the filly represented the first produce of Ballyhane Stud's exciting son of Showcasing.

O'Toole said: "She's a superb example of what the stallion is producing and he's getting really lovely stock. She has a great page and there are lots of options open to her."

David Evans clearly thinks a lot of Bastogne, the three-year-old son of Holy Roman Emperor he saddled to be fourth in the Listed Prix Saraca at Chantilly in October, for he has Bastogne's two-year-old Camacho sister at his Monmouthshire yard.

He now has the weanling Exceed And Excel colt out of Wavebreak, as Finn Kent purchased him from breeders Ballinafad Stud for €75,000 on behalf of the trainer.

Kent said: "I've bought him for David Evans to go into training eventually. He has Bastogne in partnership with my dad and he looks to be a lovely horse. David also has the two-year-old Camacho filly and she's going quite nicely. This colt is a very straightforward horse and an easy one to like."

It is not hard to see why Evans and Kent were keen on the colt, whose dam has a perfect record with her runners and is a Tiger Hill half-sister to the dam of Queen Elizabeth II Stakes winner and 2,000 Guineas runner-up King Of Change, who is standing his second season at Derrinstown Stud, and his Group 2-winning half-brother Century Dream.

**Lot-by-lot details, page 85**

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# 'Usain Bolt didn't run 100 metres every day, did he? Racing needs to embrace that'

**T**HE surroundings of Marston Stud could be a scene from the set of *The Duchess*, or some such period drama, but behind the picturesque house, stone stables and immaculate fields is no shortage of hard work, dedication and passion for all things equine.

Located in the village of Marston St Lawrence, near Banbury, Marston Stud gives a sense of history and purpose as you pull up, right from the 19th-century stables – straight out of *Black Beauty* with their cobbled stone floors – through to the splendid house and gravestones of champions past, such as Dublin Flyer and Well To Do.

As Racing Post photographer Edward Whitaker snaps away at the numerous inquisitive and welcoming broodmares in a field outside what is termed 'The Avenue', owner Natasha Halliday is no doubt thinking of the next horse to treat and what lies ahead this spring and summer.

Halliday, a former top-class three-day eventer, is also a fully insured equine osteopath and her continually developing centre of rehabilitation at the stud caters for racehorses and sport horses alike.

She is, understandably, acutely aware of the history of the place, being a granddaughter of founders John and Heather Sumner.

The photographs are done and the mares return to their grazing in the spring sunshine, while human attentions turn to a cup of tea and biscuits in the beautiful old house. We are welcomed by a friendly red Labrador and a rather more suspicious dachshund, while the elder tribesman, a black Labrador, snoozes contentedly under the kitchen table.

On the insight and work she can offer to the equine world, Halliday explains: "I competed

## The Bloodstock Big Read

Kitty Trice visits Marston Stud in Oxfordshire and hears the ideas of its owner, equine osteopath Natasha Halliday



at four-[now five-]star level and think I'm probably quite unique in that there aren't many who have evented at that level and have my racing level of training."

A concerted team effort is a vital part of the process given Halliday's visits to clients, along with working with leading vets for referrals. "We've built a really strong team here that I can rely on," she says. "It's very important to have that in staff who work for you. Attention to detail is crucial."

This was initially a National Hunt-oriented stud. Racing fans of a certain vintage will recall the gallant exploits of Whitbread and King George VI Chase winner Royal Marshall as well as 1972 Grand National hero Well To Do, while the Summers' distinctive green and yellow silks were also carried with aplomb by the classy Dublin Flyer, one of the most popular chasers of the 1990s.

Halliday says: "My grandfather bought this place in 1956 with my grandmother Heather and they had a massive passion for racing and breeding."

"Unfortunately Heather died before my parents got married and then my grandfather gave Captain Forster, who was their trainer, the choice of three horses he could have. The captain chose the one he thought would be least good and that was Well To Do, who went on to win the Grand National in 1972."

"I went racing quite a lot with my grandfather and I was very lucky to watch Dublin Flyer, who was one of the top-rated chasers in Britain and for

three seasons on the trot came first or second in every race. He ran in the Gold Cup twice; the sad thing was he was never right when he ran in it."

Halliday's parents, Richard and Joanna Wellesley, took over the operation and turned their attention to the Flat – with some highly noteworthy results. Names such as Maids Causeway, Spinning Queen and The Puzzler are among those to stand out as big-race winners, the first two landing the Coronation Stakes and Sun Chariot Stakes respectively.

Halliday says: "They started off with a couple of mares and then had partners who they would share the mares with. Neither Maids Causeway nor Spinning Queen sold at the sales but they ran them both and then sold them. Maids Causeway won the Coronation Stakes and was an incredible racehorse, and then Spinning Queen was sixth in the Guinness and won the Sun Chariot."

Fate cruelly intervened when Halliday's mother suffered a stroke, before a particularly emotional day when Spinning Queen won her first top-level race by nine lengths, defeating previous Group 1 winners in the 2006 Sun Chariot at Newmarket including Soviet Song, Alexander Goldrun and Red Evie.

Halliday says: "My mother didn't see her win the Sun Chariot, but that was an

*'If what I can do keeps them stronger and happier for longer, then that's got to be good'*

the road and keeping them sound."

Often when a stud comes to the end of the road in terms of what was invariably its mainstay pursuit, it is the end of the road for the family connected with it.

But happily in the case of Marston, it is not estate agents that Halliday has traipsing round the place, rather four-legged inquisitors.

There's a lot of the stud too, as she has around 300 acres of old pasture for the stud's now primary role of rehabilitation and spelling.

Halliday explains that the tranquil location allows spellers to come and enjoy the equine equivalent of a spa break, saying: "It's so quiet that having horses here for a summer or winter holiday is no problem."

"We've got some concrete pads with shelter on so they can be out most of the time and then shut in during windy and wet days, but it's about letting them have that downtime, where they can come and be horses."

As to what goes on day-to-day at the stud, Halliday adds with no small bit of passion and determination in her voice that there are no shortcuts when it comes to keeping these equine athletes on the straight and narrow.

"That was my driving force for establishing Marston Stud when my husband Tom and I moved from Shropshire 12 months ago," she says.

"It is difficult to persuade trainers that by not galloping horses the horse will improve. They don't need to gallop day in, day out. Usain Bolt didn't run 100 metres every day, did he? He cross-trained and the racing world needs to embrace that by including cross-training in their routine – horses would be fitter and stronger."

"Ultimately I want people to be saying about this place,

amazing day as we all went to Newmarket and the other horses in the race had 15 Group 1 wins between them and Spinning Queen hadn't won a Group 1 at that stage. She hosed up by nine lengths and it was one of those things where you felt someone was looking down on you."

"Barry Hills trained Spinning Queen and my parents had horses in training with him for a long time. After that they had one in training with Jessie Harrington for a couple of years. Now they've got one National Hunt mare left and her first foal is about to hit the track."

It is now up to Halliday to steer the Marston Stud ship, with the attention these days on rehabilitation rather than breeding. Although she boards a number of mares from clients such as Tweenhills, she insists she is not in a position to challenge the big boys and would rather focus on her first love.

"I do love breeding too but, realistically, to be in it to win it and have the sales-toppers, you're looking at spending a million and a half or two on three mares and then putting them in foal to the likes of Frankel and Dubawi," she says. "You've got to hope for three years that they all get in foal and that none of the foals die. It's a numbers game and I'm not in a position to do that, but I have this here and my interest is keeping horses on



Natasha Halliday with the mares at Marston Stud near Banbury, which she owns with husband Tom

"Right, we'll go there for two weeks after Ascot or Kempton for treatment before returning to training."

One yard from the racing world calling on Halliday's expert advice is that of up-and-coming trainers Ollie Greenall and Josh Guerriero, who have recently cemented their business partnership by taking out a joint-licence.

"I go to Stockton Hall every week to work on their horses," she says. "They realise it's not a luxury; it makes a difference to me being there."

"I have a select group of clients, but I'd rather that and provide a good level of care."

**H**ALLIDAY also regularly visits Tweenhills, saying: "I check their yearlings and foals before the sales. I treat them at least twice before they enter the sales ring and assess their walk. Post-sale, I work with Tim Rusbridge during pre-training."

She adds: "It's amazing how much difference the correct

biomechanics of the pelvis and back can improve a horse's walk and therefore its gallop. Some horses have bad feet and that can be due to the biomechanics affecting the hind limb movement. This leads to overloading of the front end and increases strain on the feet and legs."

Halliday certainly offers fascinating insight into what it is like treating a racehorse, in comparison to non-thoroughbreds such as sport horses and leisure animals. It is obvious this equine therapist is in awe of their athletic frames.

"I treat more racehorses than other disciplines," she says. "When you put a hand on the thoroughbred, it has a very different tone to the muscle, they generally respond much quicker to the treatment."

"Thoroughbreds have been bred for years for maximum oxygen capacity, so there is better oxygen profusion throughout the muscles. When I massage them the muscle tone is very elastic."

"I can tell straight away if a horse is struggling with its body by its muscle tone. When you massage and manipulate a racehorse, it comes together very quickly just because of the amazing elastic muscle tone."

The water treadmill, which

is put into action shortly after our arrival, is evidently a crucial part of Halliday's modus operandi.

She explains: "A water treadmill decelerates the speed at which a foot hits the floor; the belt and the water helps them move straight. If a horse moves its feet straight then it can move its body straight and they condition and develop the core muscles, and when the core is strong they can gallop and breathe."

"If they are not using their diaphragm correctly then they can't breathe properly." Halliday believes daily turnout, no matter how enclosed, can help aid a horse's recovery and is planning to add outside pens to some of the stables in order to give her patients more space to move around.

"We are adding an outdoor area to each of the avenue stables so the horses can choose where they want to be," she says.

"Post-op horses need to be confined but if you've got that outdoor space it gives them some more exercise and then you can start walking them by hand. It's just about not doing too many things at once and



seeing what works."

With her eventing background and ability to look beyond the norm when it comes to equine physical and mental wellbeing, Halliday can also offer interesting insight on how racing and equestrian disciplines such as eventing can help each other out.

"I think they're more aware that one can help the other; the eventers are getting good on their fitness now but I think the racing guys are starting to realise other equestrian sports are not that alien to them," she says.

"I think a lot of training methods within the disciplines are transferable, but it's going to take time."

"I'm not saying I can fix everything, but I can make a



Galileo filly Thoughts Of June (right) lands the Cheshire Oaks

## Thoughts Of June a record stakes winner for the late Galileo in Cheshire Oaks

By Kitty Trice

NEARLY a year has passed since Galileo's death but – as in life – Coolmore's sire phenomenon is still breaking records.

The latest was at Chester yesterday when Thoughts Of June's victory in the Weatherbys Bloodstock Pro Cheshire Oaks meant he surpassed the great Danehill's 347 individual stakes winners.

The son of Sadler's Wells had equalled the previous Coolmore legend's tally when another Moyglare Stud homebred, Kyprios, landed the Vintage Crop Stakes for Aidan O'Brien last month, but Thoughts Of June went past that when holding on from American Pharoah filly Above The Curve by a neck.

Galileo now needs no introduction, having sired an unprecedented 92 individual Group or Grade 1 winners, and is the first stallion to be responsible for five Cazoo Derby winners in New Approach (2008), Ruler Of The World (2013), Australia (2014), Anthony Van Dyck (2019) and Serpentine (2020).

Himself the winner of the Derby, the Irish Derby and the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes in a stellar three-year-old career 21 years ago, Galileo superseded his own sire having equalled Sadler's Wells's tally of top-flight winners in the 2018 Irish St Leger with Flag Of Honour, before moving ahead when Magical landed the British Champions Fillies & Mares Stakes that October.

Two years ago, he flew past the overall Group or Grade 1 mark that had been again held by Danehill, as Peaceful took the Irish 1,000 Guineas.

Thoughts Of June, who was shelving her maiden tag at the fourth attempt, is the third foal

out of the Discreet Cat mare Discreet Marq, whose significant wins included the Grade 1 Del Mar Oaks, Grade 2 Sands Points Stakes and Grade 3 Beauvay Stakes.

The 12-year-old was picked up by Moyglare for \$2,400,000 from Christophe Clement at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky November Sale in 2014 and is out of the stakes-winning Marquetry mare To Marquet, a half-sister to sprint stakes scorer Pretty Imposing. Discreet Marq ran a handful of times in the Moyglare silks, including when third to the brilliant Tepin in the Just A Game Stakes.

Galileo was also broodmare sire of the eye-catching runner-up, Joseph O'Brien's Above The Curve, who is out of an unraced sibling to Giant's Causeway and blue hen You'resothrilling.

The astonishing stallion made it stakes winner number 349 just over half an hour later when the progressive Changin-goftheguard made all the running in the Boodles Chester Vase. That was Galileo's 234th Group or Graded success.

Bred by Ben Sangster – also the breeder of another Derby prospect in the Vertem Futurity scorer and 2,000 Guineas third Luxembourg – and sporting the same colours of Georg Von Opel's Westerberg in a partnership with Coolmore, the colt is the third foal out of the Excellent Art mare Lady Lara, the winner of the Grade 2 Honey Fox Stakes during her racing days for Bill Mott.

Changin-goftheguard's brother was bought for €250,000 by BBA Ireland and Yulong Investments at last year's Goffs Orby Sale. The family includes Classic scorers Footstepsinthesand and Mahler under his fourth dam, the 1982 Nassau Stakes winner Dancing Rocks.

First-season sires with runners today in GB & Ireland

Sire	Progeny	Rate
Expert Eye	Explicit	Chester 4.15