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TRC



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When jockey Umberto Rispoli locked himself in a restroom to hide from an angry trainer

Also inside: What were really the best races of 2020? / Here's hoping poor Arrogate leaves his mark on the breed / The best ten racehorses owned by Hamdan Al Maktoum / What They're Thinking: Cristian Demuro



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Darley

The day an angry trainer chased young Umberto Rispoli through the jockeys' room shouting *'I'm going to kill you'*

Daniel Ross | March 21, 2021

The scene appears like something out of a screwball comedy from yesteryear, heavy on the slapstick.



Where? A provincial Italian racetrack in Varese, north of Milan. Who? A young apprentice called Umberto Rispoli, still wet behind the ears, and a trainer called Alduino Botti with a temper hotter than Mount Vesuvius. When? Oh, about 14 years ago, give or take.

The young Rispoli, no more than 18 at the time, had barely squeaked out a victory on a horse that should have won easy. In a rush of blood to the noggin, he had torn up Botti's riding instructions, went hard and fast and passed the post with a rubber-legged horse — afterwards, however, regret set in. Fast.

A gazelle with a cheetah on his tail, Rispoli flees through the jock's room, an irate trainer in hot pursuit. "I'm going to kill you! I'm going to kill you!" Just then, the young apprentice spies a restroom, locks himself inside. In an act of questionable efficacy, the cheetah gives the cornered gazelle an ultimatum: Open the door or he'll kill him.

"But if I open the door you're going to kill me, so I'm not going to open the door," Rispoli responds, with admirable logic, given the circumstances.

After a time, all goes quiet. Rispoli pokes his head out the restroom cubicle. All clear. With furtive glances over each shoulder, the apprentice tiptoes back to his spot in the jock's room to prepare for the next race, where he's ambushed and cornered by the trainer — "like Rocky or Ivan Drago" — who'd been lying in wait.

The gazelle tried to beat the angry cheetah back with humor. "Alduino, you're hurting me!" he laughs. "Stop it!" Eventually, the cheetah retreats. And while the story doesn't end there, we'll hit the pause button to let the reader catch up on a few housekeeping necessities before embarking on part two.

Rispoli, now 32, happily relayed this anecdote — with all the theatrical *gioia di vivere* of a handsomely paid after-dinner speaker, it should be noted — one recent afternoon outside a coffee shop in Monrovia, a quaint little town in the same humbling shadow of the San Gabriel Mountains as nearby Santa Anita racetrack, home for Rispoli, wife Kimberley and son Hayden for more than a year now.

The reason for the retelling wasn't to elicit sympathy — a lop-sided Dickensian tale akin to *Oliver* versus *Fagin*, *David Copperfield* versus *Mr Murdstone*.

Rather, he wore it like a badge of honor to illustrate bruising lessons that would shape

a riding career that has taken him around the world — France, England, Australia, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong — and delivered success and frustration in equal dose.

His current stint in America, however, has landed firmly in the former camp. He's quickly made a name for himself as a turf rider par excellence in Southern California, notching a growing list of Graded stakes victories showcasing shrewdness and not a little panache.

Notorious province

That's not to say he's too shabby on the dirt, either. Indeed, at the time of talking, Rispoli was sitting second in the wins column in the jockeys' standings at the current Santa Anita meet, though a recent three-day whip suspension had taken the luster off that achievement somewhat. (More on that in a bit . . .)

But first, let's stick with those formative years. "It's all about where you come from," Rispoli said — a sentiment he would repeat several times throughout the interview. And growing up in the Scampia suburb of Naples, it's easy to see where any pluck and moxie was instilled.

"I shared the playground with friends, some of whom are now underground, some in jail," he said of Scampia, a notorious

province on the outskirts of the city riven by crime and gang activity, immortalized by the television series *Gomorra*.

"I remember seeing someone overdosed on the stairs when I got back from school," he said of the hulking, white-walled tenement building he lived in. "Growing up somewhere like that, you have two options: You can choose what they do. Or you could have the different option, going to school or go into sports."

Indeed at 14, his schooling done, Rispoli followed in his father's footsteps away from the Scampia suburbs and into the saddle, first at the Arc de Triomphe-winning stable of Luigi Camici (he of Tony Bin fame), and then, after a stint at the Italian racing school in Pisa, the stable of the aforementioned Alduino Botti, in partnership with his brother, Giuseppe.

Agile apprentice

Which brings us back to our opening anecdote, and the day after the ill-judged ride at Varese.

Rispoli responds to a summons to the office, unperturbed. "I thought, 'well, he'd hit me yesterday, he's not going to give me anything else today.'" But the minute the young apprentice walks through the door, the trainer "jumped out and grabbed me and said, 'second round.'"

Luckily, the office window is trellised with bars — the agile apprentice clammers to the top, thumbs his nose at the trainer below.

Umberto Rispoli: "I'm the kind of person who's probably too straightforward," he says. "I like to put my head on the pillow and have no regrets." Photo: Hong Kong Jockey Club



“Come down!” the trainer demands.

“No, no,” says the apprentice. “I’m going to stay here all the morning. You’re not going to touch me.”

“Come down!”

“You make me a coffee and I’ll come down.”

“It was a relationship like dad and son,” said Rispoli, in explanation. And a fruitful relationship at that.

With the Botti family behind him, Rispoli’s career would erupt faster and brighter than a Zambelli firework. He became Italy’s champion jockey in 2009 (topping Gianfranco Dettori’s former record of winners in a season), before taking the crown home again the following year.

Next up came a stint in France — a successful enough time with G1 victories on the likes of Molly Malone in the 2012 Prix du Cadran for Mikel Delzangles and The Monarch for Roger Varian in the 2015 Criterium International. But always there was the gnaw of bigger riches, greater accolades.

“I’ve always had ambition,” he said. “Since I was a kid, my dream was to be one of the best jockeys around the world.”

And, if that meant packing his bags once more, so be it. Next came Hong Kong, where Rispoli had ridden the winner of the 2012 QEII aboard Rulership. But, once again, what successes he enjoyed during these years were ultimately tempered with frustration, this time a result of bad injury, beginning with a fall near the end of 2016 that mangled his knee.

Telling are the ten-league strides he took to return, knee be damned.

The prognosis was 6-8 months off. After the operation, which Rispoli watched performed live under just local anesthetic on a TV monitor — “One of the greatest experiences of my life,” he said, with macabre delight — he was back on an Equicizer within two months, and on a horse’s back roughly three months later.

Mental aptitude

To win a race, that took infinitely longer. “I couldn’t buy a ride — when people saw me, they were running away.” And, just as he got his career back going again, he smashed his collarbone and broke multiple ribs not 16 months later from a barrier trial fall.

Rispoli has been candid about the pressures of riding in Hong Kong, telling the South China Morning Post before he left that

he had wanted to remain there for another five or six years, “but unfortunately the only thing I could not find in this place is loyalty.”

As Rispoli puts it now, “Riding in Hong Kong, you have two options: You grow stronger or you get weaker.”

What helps Rispoli’s mental aptitude is that he’s clearly a student of the game, and something of an amateur historian, too.

He binges like others do Netflix series recordings of big races. Arcs. Derbies. Kentucky Derbys. Breeders’ Cups. He tosses out like pizza toppings the names of riders who he’s studied down the years: Piggott, Carson, Stevens, Asmussen, Gomez.

Before he came to the United States, he said he watched races from more than 50 different U.S. tracks. “How long is the stretch, if they have a chute, if they don’t have a chute, how big is the track,” he said. “I like to know, because that’s my job.”

Sharp decline of Italian racing

Not surprisingly, he’s similarly versed in the pedigreed history of Italian racing, and brings up the names of Nearco, Tesio, Ribot, Rakti and Falbrav to illustrate the sharp decline of the Italian racing industry in recent years, a trend that has seen the number of Italian breeders and the foal crop fall precipitously — a development that many see as hinging around the government assuming control of the industry some ten years ago.

“It’s sad,” Rispoli said. Indeed, as of 2019, no G1s have been run in the country. But the jockey, you might have noticed, doesn’t mince words. “I’m very direct,” he said. “I’m the kind of person who’s probably too straightforward. I like to put my head on the pillow and have no regrets.”

And he said that, as an apprentice, he had tried to poke and cajole his colleagues to strike and picket the regime change in Italy. “I said, ‘if we don’t face this problem now, in ten years, everything is going to be gone.’”

You can spot that same rabble-rousing spirit behind his antipathy towards the strict new whip rules in California, whereby jocks can use the crop no more than six times in a race — and no more than twice in succession without giving the horse the opportunity to respond — always in the underhand position.

A few days prior to the interview, the California stewards handed Rispoli a three-day ban which, when placed alongside an aborted trip to Riyadh for the Saudi Cup

meeting, means that his proximity to the head of the jock’s standings at Santa Anita has a yawning look to it. (Indeed, as of publication, he had dropped to third in the table, 27 wins behind leader Flavien Prat)

Unforgiving circuit

A gut-punch? Sure. But it’s more the lack of what Rispoli sees as uniformity with which the California stewards dole out punishments that rankles the most, he said. That, and the way in which whip rules change from state to state. “We are doing exactly the same job all around the country,” he said. “Rules should be the same for everybody.”

While stewards aren’t exactly known for a maternal warmth and cozy congeniality, sometimes the SoCal circuit as a whole can be just as unforgiving.

“It’s not for everyone — there have been other successful jockeys come from Europe that have had a hard time getting into the winner’s circle here,” said Dan Blacker, trainer of Hit The Road, on whom Rispoli recently landed the G3 Thunder Road Stakes. “But Umberto has not found it an issue. Obviously, he fits it very well.”

Confidence is one reason for the quick assimilation, along with an inherent ability to put the horse “into the right spot”, Blacker added. “I’m fortunate to have him ride a few of mine, and he just seems to make the right decisions.”

Nice addition

Michael McCarthy agrees. “He’s been a nice addition to the Southern California jockey colony,” said the trainer, for whom Rispoli has won a handful of good prizes, including three Graded stakes aboard Smooth Like Strait.

“He also seems to be very good with people — the people on the front side, help on the backside. Those are the sorts of things I thought Gary Stevens was very good at,” said McCarthy.

It’s not just people. “I know when we got beat a nose in the [2020 G1] Hollywood Derby [on Smooth Like Strait], I thought it was telling that he jumped off the horse, grabbed his tack, and before he walked away from the horse, gave him a pat on the head. Thank you,” McCarthy said. “He has a passion for the equine athlete itself.”

Nature versus nurture. Innate versus environment. Sometimes it’s all about where you come from.

But not always.

"ONE OF THE BEST-LOOKING YEARLINGS I SAW IN 2015.
HE'S LEBRON JAMES."

-Mike Ryan

LOOK FOR HIS FIRST YEARLINGS THIS SUMMER.

PREAKNESS-G1 WINNER

CLOUD COMPUTING

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What were really the best races of 2020?

World's best: Almond Eye wins November's Japan Cup from Triple Crown winners Contrail (second left) and Daring Tact (second right) with 2019 Japan Cup runner-up Curren Bouquetd'or (third left) in fourth and 2019 Hong Kong Vase hero Glory Vase fifth. Photo: Japan Racing Association

Chris Smith and James Willoughby | April 04, 2021

The Japan Cup last November was the best race in the world in 2020, according to the new TRC Computer Race Ratings. That is one of many notable differences in our list, published below, compared with the equivalent rankings from the IFHA (International Federation of Horseracing Authorities).

The mile-and-a-half Tokyo showpiece was won by the now-retired Almond Eye from Triple Crown winners Contrail and Daring Tact and ten other Graded-race winners, five of them successful in G1s (including one in a top-flight race in France and another in one in Hong Kong).

Right behind it as the second-best race of the year is another Tokyo contest won by Almond Eye - the two-furlong-shorter

Tenno Sho (Autumn) run just four weeks before the Japan Cup. The mare won that from three-time G1 winners Fierement and Chrono Genesis and four others with G1s to their name.

No wonder the 9-time G1 winner ended the year as #1 in the TRC Global Horse Rankings, a position she is likely to hold for another few weeks until the 180-day rule kicks in (the computer drops individuals from our published rankings if they have not competed in Group/Graded events for 180 days).

TRC's 20 best races of 2020 worldwide

The inaugural running of the G1 Saudi Cup emerged as the third-best race of

the year. It is not included in the IFHA list, which ranks only G1s. However, as is the case with a number of races, including The Everest at Randwick and the Hong Kong Derby at Sha Tin, we rate it a G1, based on the quality of the field.

The Japan Cup is third in the IFHA top 100, behind the Juddmonte International at York (won by Ghaiyyath) and the Irish Champion Stakes at Leopardstown (won by Magical, from Ghaiyyath). TRC Computer Race Rankings has those two races at fourth and joint-seventh respectively.

The IFHA puts the Tenno Sho (Autumn) as joint 4th with the Breeders' Cup Turf, which means it is rated a better race than the Breeders' Cup Classic (joint 14th). The TRC algorithm can place the BC Turf no higher than 28th, but we have the BC Classic fifth.

IFHA's top 20 races of 2020

The IFHA race ratings are based on the Longines World's Best Racehorses classification, taken from assessments



Rank	RaceDate	Runners	RaceName	Course	Category	RaceRating	FirstThree
1	29/11/2020	15	Japan Cup	Tokyo JPN	12T	124.35	Almond Eye JPN 127, Contrail JPN 121, Daring Tact JPN 121
2	01/11/2020	12	Tenno Sho	Tokyo JPN	10T	123.77	Almond Eye JPN 127, Fierement JPN 123, Chrono Genesis JPN 123
3	29/02/2020	14	Saudi Cup	Riyadh KSA	8D	123.63	Maximum Security USA 127, Midnight Bliss USA 124, Benbatl GBR 117
4	19/08/2020	5	Juddmonte International Stakes	York GBR	10.5T	123.12	Ghaiyyath IRE 110, Magical IRE 118, Lord North IRE 115
5	07/11/2020	10	Longines Breeders' Cup Classic	Keeneland USA	10D	123.05	Authentic USA 127, Improbable USA 121, Global Campaign USA 119
6	06/09/2020	15	Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve	Churchill Downs USA	10D	123.02	Authentic USA 127, Tiz The Low USA 123, Mr. Big News USA 119
7	31/05/2020	18	Tokyo Yushun	Tokyo JPN	12T	122.78	Contrail JPN 128, Salios JPN 119, Weltreisende JPN 116
7	12/09/2020	6	Irish Champion Stakes	Leopardstown IRE	10T	122.78	Magical IRE 125, Ghaiyyath IRE 121, Armory IRE 117
9	19/04/2020	18	Satsuki Sho	Nakayama JPN	10T	122.64	Contrail JPN 128, Salios JPN 125, Galore Creek JPN 116
10	05/07/2020	7	Coral-Eclipse	Sandown GBR	10T	122.62	Ghaiyyath IRE 126, Enable GBR 115, Japan GBR 115
11	22/11/2020	17	Mile Championship	Hanshin JPN	8T	122.30	Gran Alegria JPN 126, Indy Champ JPN 120, Admire Mars JPN 119
12	13/12/2020	10	Longines Hong Kong Mile	Sha Tin HKD	8T	122.23	Golden Sixty AUS 127, Southern Legend AUS 117, Admire Mars JPN 117
13	27/09/2020	18	Kobe Shimbun Hai	Chukyo JPN	11T	122.15	Contrail JPN 125, Weltreisende JPN 119, Robertson Quay JPN 119
14	07/06/2020	14	Yasuda Kinen	Tokyo JPN	8T	121.20	Gran Alegria JPN 126, Almond Eye JPN 115, Indy Champ JPN 118
15	17/05/2020	16	Victoria Mile	Tokyo JPN	8T	121.18	Almond Eye JPN 127, Sound Chiara JPN 117, Normcore JPN 117
16	25/07/2020	3	King George VI And Queen Elizabeth Qipco Stakes	Ascot GBR	12T	121.00	Enable GBR 129, Sovereign IRE 118, Japan GBR 108
17	05/06/2020	7	Hurworth Bloodstock Coronation Cup Stakes	Newmarket GBR	12T	120.50	Ghaiyyath IRE 126, Anthony Van Dyck IRE 116, Stradivarius IRE 110
18	12/07/2020	11	Qatar Prix Jean Prat	Deauville FRA	7T	120.45	Pinatubo IRE 125, Lope Y Fernandez IRE 120, Pas Malotru GBR 111
19	04/10/2020	11	Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe	Longchamp FRA	12T	120.37	Sottsass FRA 123, In Swoop IRE 121, Persian King IRE 115
20	06/09/2020	6	Prix du Moulin de Longchamp	Longchamp FRA	8T	120.33	Persian King IRE 126, Pinatubo IRE 118, Circus Maximus IRE 103

The Top 20 races of 2020 according to TRC Computer Race Rankings. Click on the image to expand it in another window

by handicappers representing member jurisdictions.

TRC Computer Race Ratings are drawn from thousands and thousands of form lines connecting horses around the world. You may not think there can be many if any links between, say, a mile race in Australia and a ten-furlong event in Ireland or a seven-furlong contest on dirt in North America, but there is invariably a spider's web of connections that make comparisons relatively simple - to a computer.

You can use as many human experts as you can find, but there is no way they can remotely begin to trace so many links manually, and it is a tribute to the IFHA's team that they produce such diligent work year-in, year-out.

The TRC algorithm is totally objective, totally devoid of bias. It takes zero consideration of the identity of the race or its prize fund. It doesn't matter if it's the Arc, the Kentucky Derby, the Melbourne Cup or a G3 at Baden Baden, each is just another horserace to the computer.

How the TRC Computer Race Rating is calculated

Every number we produce that involves the TRC Global Rankings is geared to prediction. There is no other way to optimize ratings than to see how they work out in future races. Humans have no shot to perform such an optimization, but computers are ideally suited for the task.

Computers should be the future of handicapping. There is little doubt about that.

To produce the RaceRating shown in the table, we use a weighted average of the ratings produced by the first five finishers in the race, plus the weighted average of their best career ratings - taking into account the difference between the race being rated and the date of the horse's best effort; this makes sense because the less recent is a horse's best effort, the more uncertainty exists as to whether the horse can produce it.

Why do we do it this way when the IFHA use a much simpler method? Once again, it is down to predictive power. If you assign

the winner of each race the RaceRating we have calculated using the above method, then rate horses down the field a lesser number according to how far they were beaten, it yields the most number of future winners.

When the field-size is less than five runners, we use slightly different weights to calculate the strength of the race. This has the effect of reducing the RaceRating in races with small fields, such as Enable's win in the three-runner G1 King George at Ascot.

One of the many advantages of computing race ratings using the TRC method is that ratings are constantly revised and updated each week, according to how the form is working out. And any change to the way we rate races can instantly be measured for its efficacy by calculating the number of future winners it produces.

Human handicappers simply do not have this information.



RANK	RACE	Distance	Cat	Track	Age	F&M	Rating
1	Juddmonte International Stakes	G1 2080 1 1/4	T I	YORK	GB 3+		125.25
2	Irish Champion Stakes	G1 2000 1 1/4	T I	LEOPARDSTOWN	IRE 3+		124.75
3	Japan Cup In Association with LONGINES	G1 2400	T L	TOKYO	JPN 3+		124.50
4=	LONGINES Breeders' Cup Turf	G1 2400 1 1/2	T L	KEENELAND	USA 3+		123.75
4=	Tenno Sho (Autumn)	G1 2000	T I	TOKYO	JPN 3+		123.75
6	Coral-Eclipse	G1 2000 1 1/4	T I	SANDOWN PARK	GB 3+		123.50
7=	Yasuda Kinen	G1 1600	T M	TOKYO	JPN 3+		123.25
7=	Prix du Haras de Fresnay-le-Buffard - Jacques Le Marois	G1 1600	T M	DEAUVILLE	FR 3+		123.25
9	QIPCO Champion Stakes	G1 2000 1 1/4	T I	ASCOT	GB 3+		123.00
10	Arima Kinen (The Grand Prix)	G1 2500	T L	NAKAYAMA	JPN 3+		122.75
11=	Hurworth Bloodstock Coronation Cup	G1 2400 1 1/2	T L	NEWMARKET	GB 4+		122.25
11=	Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe	G1 2400	T L	PARIS-LONGCHAMP	FR 3+		122.25
13	Tattersalls Gold Cup	G1 2000 1 1/4	T I	CURRAGH	IRE 4+		121.75
14=	LONGINES Breeders' Cup Classic	G1 2000 1 1/4	D I	KEENELAND	USA 3+		121.50
14=	Prix du Moulin de Longchamp	G1 1600	T M	PARIS-LONGCHAMP	FR 3+		121.50
16=	Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve	G1 2000 1 1/4	D I	CHURCHILL DOWNS	USA 3yo		121.25
16=	LONGINES Hong Kong Cup	G1 2000	T I	SHA TIN	HK 3+		121.25
16=	Qatar Sussex Stakes	G1 1600 1	T M	GOODWOOD	GB 3+		121.25
19	Preakness Stakes	G1 1900 1 1/8	D I	PIMLICO	USA 3yo		121.00
20	Prince of Wales's Stakes	G1 2000 1 1/4	T I	ASCOT	GB 4+		120.75

The legacy continues

Frankel reached his 13th Gr.1 winner from 46% fewer runners than Galileo had

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Here's hoping poor Arrogate leaves his mark on the breed

Nancy Sexton | March 28, 2021



Arrogate: Breeders keen to tap into American racing greatness responded by nominating some of their best mares to Arrogate. Photo: Michele MacDonald

Four years ago this weekend, we saw one of the most spectacular performances in the Dubai World Cup, when Arrogate produced a spectacular come-from-behind effort to overhaul Gun Runner. Sadly, the Juddmonte Farms colt died last year, having produced just two crops. Here Nancy Sexton looks at the prospects for his first 2-year-olds, who are due to emerge on the racetrack later this season.

As the sun set on the 2018 breeding season at Juddmonte Farms' Kentucky division, the operation could bask in the satisfaction of having successfully launched the stallion career of one of the most iconic American racehorses in living memory.

Arrogate, the richest North American racehorse of all time, had brought Juddmonte Farm's Kentucky stallion arm back to the forefront of the American scene. He had been a rare yearling purchase by Prince Khalid Abdullah's operation, and, despite initially requiring patience from connections, had risen through the ranks with such ease for Bob Baffert that by the end of his 3-year-old season, he was evoking comparisons with some of the sport's past greats.

The catalyst had been a near 14-length victory in the Travers Stakes, in which he stopped the clock in 1.59.36 - the fastest ever 1m2f run at Saratoga. From there, he claimed the scalp of California Chrome to win the Breeders' Cup Classic and landed another big payday in the Pegasus World Cup before travelling to Dubai, where he overcame a desperate start to win the Dubai World Cup.

Arrogate wasn't at his best upon his return to America, when the highlight of three subsequent runs was a placed effort in the Pacific Classic at Del Mar. But that didn't detract from an overall brilliance of a career that had netted over \$17.4 million in earnings and enthralled the sport in the process.

The crops left behind

Breeders keen to tap into American racing greatness responded by nominating some of their best mares

to Arrogate when he retired at a fee of \$75,000. Juddmonte allocated a proportion of its own band, some of whom had been sourced specifically for the job. The end result was a first book that consisted of 63 Graded stakes winners or producers, including 30 at G1 level.

Here was a horse poised to underpin Juddmonte's future Kentucky for the foreseeable future and beyond. But, as stock people are reminded on a regular basis, life is fragile and fate determined that Juddmonte would be robbed of its champion only three seasons into his stud career.

In June last year, Arrogate succumbed to an illness that had left him unable to stand. Left behind was a crop of around 110 yearlings and another of 115 foals.

As the breeze-up season gets into full swing and with the early season 2-year-old races just around the corner, this should have been a time of excitement for Arrogate's supporters. Instead, any notable landmark as his runners take to the track over the next few months will be tinged with sadness - and with a group of such well-connected representatives to run for him, he naturally possesses a real chance of developing into a successful stallion and perhaps even becoming the one capable of extending the legacy of his sire Unbridled's Song, hitherto a disappointing sire of sires.

Juddmonte itself has 22 juveniles by Arrogate - ten colts and 12 fillies - with which to go to war with this year.

The colts include Levanter, a three-parts brother to champion Close Hatches (a daughter of First Defence, an earlier Juddmonte-based son of Unbridled's Song), Artorius, a colt out of

two-time G1 winner Paulassilverlining, and Calloway Peak, a son of the G2 winner and G1-placed Filimbi.

Among the fillies is Mount Ararat, a half-sister to G1 winner Emollient and the Classic-placed Hofburg.

They complement a collection of Arrogate youngsters bred by outside interests that include those out of the brilliant Songbird (a filly) and Kentucky Oaks heroine Plum Pretty (a colt), both of whom were bred by Mandy Pope's Whisper Hill Farm.

The Cleary family's Clearsky Farm, which bred Arrogate out of the Distorted Humor mare Bubbler, are appropriately the breeders of a filly out of G1 winner Justwhistledixie, whose earlier foals include G1 winner and successful sire New Year's Day alongside G2 winner Mohaymen. Another breeder of significance, John and Leslie Malone's Bridlewood Farm, bred an Arrogate half-sister to multiple G1 winner Lotapa out of its mare Concinuous.

G Watts Humphrey also has a filly, named Preempt, out of his homebred G1 winner Centre Court while Samantha Siegel's Jay Em Ess Stable has a filly named By The Gate out of her homebred G1 winner By The Moon.

Wide variety of mares

Bonne Chance Farm sent its G1 producer Lucas Street, the dam of Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Sprint heroine Wavell Avenue (herself the dam of top Japanese 2yo Grenadier Guards), and were rewarded with a filly who made \$460,000 to agent Mike Ryan at last year's Keeneland September Sale.

Arrogate's top-priced yearling was a half-brother to G1 winner Weep No More, who was sold by breeder Hinkle Farms

“This filly has trained like a good horse from day one,” says Mark Roberts of Hidden Brook’s Florida division. “Physically she is powerful, well-made filly. She should show herself very well both on and off the track. I am very excited about her.”

for \$750,000 at Keeneland to Yugi Hasegawa; now named Poison Arrow, he is in training in Japan.

The half-siblings to G1 winners Whitmore (colt named Arrogates Spirit), Ria Antonia (colt named Barzzley), Wicked Strong (filly named Gate Closure) and Force The Pass (colt named Affable Monarch) are also among Arrogate’s loaded first crop.

“In year one we were focused on getting him a wide variety of mares,” explains Leif Aaron, nominations manager of Juddmonte Farms in Kentucky. “The theory was that maybe we would be able to see what worked best with him. There were also times when Dr Chandler [President of Juddmonte Farms] would remind me that many breeders knew their mares better than I ever would, so to listen to them.

“We ended up with five Eclipse Award-winning breeders using Arrogate in year one.”

He adds: “The biggest stand out to me is that almost all the Arrogate foals have a similar demeanour. I think in humans the term we use is ‘Type A’. They are active, always ready to go on to the next thing and somewhat impatient. Physically, most have very good bone.

“I think at this point it is fair to say that a lot of them resemble his broodmare sire Distorted Humor, which is very encouraging considering how potent his genes have been in recent years.”

Although the Juddmonte name is synonymous with success in Europe, its Arrogate 2-year-olds are due to remain in the U.S., as befits the

profile of their sire. However, the idea of campaigning a handful in Europe has not been entirely ‘ruled out for the future’, said Aaron.

Even so, Europe is set to gain a fleeting sight of Arrogate’s progeny, notably in the form of Arrogan, a colt bred by Haras de Colleville’s Guy Pariente out of the G3-placed Kenriya who is in training with Adrien Fouassier in France.

The Tattersalls Craven Breeze-Up Sale in mid-April also offers an opportunity to tap into the line via Lot 11, a colt out of Coaching Club American Oaks winner Funny Moon offered by Star Bloodstock. Working in tandem with Byron Rogers, Star pinhooked the youngster for \$100,000 out of last year’s Keeneland September Sale.

“We were looking for an Arrogate,” recalls Star Bloodstock’s Matt Eves of the colt, who is a half-brother to four winners including the highly tried This Tea. “While he’s not generally the physical profile we look for, being a tall, elegant, middle-distance type, we’d had success with American Pharoah the year before and so he was a stallion that myself and Byron Rogers thought might fit if we found the right type to suit.

“We got lucky to find this lad and get him bought as he was a Book 4 horse that fell through the cracks a little. While he’s out of a mare that got 1m2f, he’s built more like a sprinter-miler with plenty of depth and strength to him, and he’s got that loose European walk also.

“He did a very good bit of work for us [last] week at the Curragh, enough to indicate he’s well above average in ability.”

Eye-catching group

More immediately, attention turns to the octet catalogued to the Fasig-Tipton Gulfstream Sale in Florida on March 31.

As to be expected, they are an eye-catching group that includes a half-brother to G1-winning 2yo Mani Bhavan (lot 5; from White Lilac), a filly out of Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf heroine She Be Wild (19; from Sequel Bloodstock), a half-brother to G2 winner Neck ‘N Neck (78; from SBM Training & Sales) and a half-brother to G1 winner Denman’s Call (158; from Wavertree Stables).

Hopes run high at Hidden Brook for the prospects of their filly out of Mahkama. A half-sister to Dubai listed winner Yulong Warrior, the grey is catalogued to sell at Fasig-Tipton as lot 159.

“This filly has trained like a good horse from day one,” says Mark Roberts of Hidden Brook’s Florida division. “Physically she is powerful, well-made filly. She should show herself very well both on and off the track. I am very excited about her.”

Susan Montanye of SBM Training & Sales is also high on her colt, recently tweeting, “It’s really a shame this sire passed away - I think they’re runners. He’s the only one I have and boy is he special.”

Chances are we will not see the best of Arrogate’s progeny until later in the year and beyond as they grow into their frames. But through sheer brilliance, management and support, he must possess an excellent chance of leaving behind a print of some significance on the breed. Let’s hope that proves to be the case.



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The best ten racehorses owned by Hamdan Al Maktoum

Nicholas Godfrey | March 24, 2021



From sprinters to stayers, turf to dirt, America to Australia, homebreds to big-money buys, Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum's blue and white silks have been carried with distinction by a litany of top-class horses. Following news of the sheikh's death, Nicholas Godfrey picks his top ten of the great owner's horses down the years.

1. Nashwan

Pedigree: foaled 1986, Blushing Groom - Height Of Fashion
Trainer: Dick Hern (GB)
Jockey: Willie Carson

G1 wins (4): 2000 Guineas (1989), Derby (1989), Eclipse Stakes (1989), King George (1989)

Nashwan was a superb racehorse, maybe second only to Dancing Brave in Europe in the last 25 years of the 20th Century. A powerfully built homebred, he won six of his seven career starts and ripped through the Classic generation of 1989 with an unprecedented four-timer, completing the Guineas/Derby double with a brilliant turn of foot on both occasions before slamming a top-class by five lengths in the Eclipse Stakes. If those victories advertised a superlative talent, then the King George was more about courage as he got the better of Cacoethes in a fearsome battle.

He ran only once more, forfeiting his unbeaten record on soft ground in the Prix Niel; he was retired to stud soon after, his progeny headed by dual King George winner Swain and Arc hero Bago.

A magnificent racehorse:
Nashwan 'ripped through the
Classic generation of 1989 with an
unprecedented four-timer'

2. Dayjur

Pedigree: Foaled 1987, Danzig - Gold Beauty
Trainer: Dick Hern (GB)
Jockey: Willie Carson

G1 wins (3): Nunthorpe Stakes (1990), Ladbrokes Sprint Cup (Haydock, 1990), Prix de l'Abbaye (1990)

Britain's greatest sprinter of the last half-century, freakishly gifted Dayjur was all about speed, pure and simple. Bought for \$1.65m at Keeneland, he blitzed his way through the European sprint division as a 3-year-old in 1990 with a series of blistering efforts (6-length win in King's Stand at Royal Ascot, track record in Nunthorpe, eased down at 1/10 in the Prix de l'Abbaye) before earning a lasting place in racing folklore when he was beaten in notorious circumstance after jumped the shadow of the Belmont Park grandstand on dirt in the Breeders' Cup Sprint. An unforgettable legacy.

3. Invasor

Pedigree: Foaled 2002, Candy Stripes - Quendom
Trainer: Kiaran McLaughlin (USA)
Jockey: Fernando Jara

G1 wins (5): Pimlico Special (2006), Suburban Handicap (2006), Whitney Handicap (2006), Donn Handicap (2007), Dubai World Cup (2007) – plus Uruguayan Triple Crown (2005)

Living proof of the adage that a good horse can come from almost anywhere, Argentine-bred Invasor was bought out of Uruguay, where he won the three legs of the triple crown by a cumulative 18 lengths and was later to be treated as a national hero after export. A stalking type with a powerful finish, he went on to become U.S. Horse of the Year in 2006, when his season climaxed by running down Preakness winner Bernardini in the Breeders' Cup Classic to become official world

champion according to the World Thoroughbred Racehorse Rankings. Invasor wasn't done there: he outduelled Premium Tap to win the Dubai World Cup in 1m59.50, the second fastest time in the race's history after Dubai Millennium. Subsequently retired through injury, he won 11 of his 12 career starts and was inducted into the U.S. Hall of Fame in 2013.

4. Sakhee

Pedigree: Foaled 1997, Bahri - Thawakib
Trainer: John Dunlop/Saeed Bin Suroor (GB)
Jockey: Richard Hills/Frankie Dettori

G1 wins (2) Juddmonte International (2001), Arc de Triomphe (2001)

Perhaps a controversial selection, given that Sakhee's greatest achievements came in the Godolphin blue as a 4-year-old after surgery for a bone chip in a knee. However, the son of star miler Bahri was a Shadwell homebred who became one of those confusing beasts, a horse owned by Sheikh Hamdan as part of Godolphin (though the record books said simply 'Godolphin' after earlier mistakes on that score, notably with Lammtarra).

Sakhee most definitely was Godolphin in the end, but not until after he'd won a couple of Derby trials and been beaten only a length by Sinndar at Epsom in Sheikh Hamdan's blue and white for original trainer John Dunlop. None of this, mind you, could have prepared us for what was to come at 4 after the transfer: a smashing 7-length win in the Juddmonte International, a 6-length verdict in the Arc and a narrow defeat to the ultra-tough Tiznow in an epic battle on dirt for the Breeders' Cup Classic at Belmont Park. Still don't think he was a proper Sheikh Hamdan horse? Okay, guess which stud he retired to. You got it.

5. Salsabil

Pedigree: Foaled 1987, Sadler's Wells - Flame Of Tara
Trainer: John Dunlop (GB)
Jockey: Willie Carson

G1 wins (5): Prix Marcel Boussac (1989), 1000 Guineas (1990), Oaks (1990), Irish Derby (1990), Prix Vermeille (1990)

One of the earliest champions sired by the legendary Sadler's Wells, Salsabil was a brilliant middle-distance filly who left an indelible mark on the 1990 season with a trio of memorable Classic victories. She completed the Guineas/Oaks double in England, outbattling Heart Of Joy at Newmarket before a dominant 5-length soft-ground victory at Epsom, but her finest hour came at the Curragh as she became the first female to win the Irish Derby since 1900, beating a field including the Epsom 1-2 Quest For Fame and Blue Stag and subsequent King George winner Belmez.

She was retired after a below-par Arc effort from an unfavourable draw, ending a glorious career with a seven-from-nine career record. Shadwell's Salsabil Stud is named in her honour; she also has a listed race named for her at Naas.

6. Battaash

Pedigree: Foaled 2014, Dark Angel - Anna Law
Trainer: Charlie Hills (GB)
Jockey: Jim Crowley

G1 wins (4): Prix de l'Abbaye (2017), Nunthorpe Stakes (2019, 2020), King's Stand Stakes (2020)

At #32 overall on the world list, Battaash rates the highest of Sheikh Hamdan's horses on the TRC Global Rankings (dating back to 2011). Add career longevity to his electric speed and the now 7-year-old more than deserves high estate here even allowing for some mercurial efforts. He doesn't get an inch over five furlongs and he's had his problems – some admittedly of his own making,



Lancade

winner 100. German
1.000 Guineas, Gr.2

Classic

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Winners

Miss Yoda

winner 162. Henkel-Preis der
Diana - German Oaks, Gr. 1



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Entries close: 23rd April

October Mixed Sales - 15th and 16th October

Entries close: 6th September

fond of getting het up in the prelims and prone to the odd stinker.

Gelded at two (plus two wind surgeries in later life), he remains next to unbeatable on his 'going' days. Witness, for example, career highlights making virtually in the 2107 Abbaye, or the 2019 Nunthorpe, where he overpowered his rivals two out to win by 2¾ lengths to break Dayjur's record for the race, or his amazing feats at Glorious Goodwood, where he's won the G2 King George Stakes four years on the trot.

According to whichever scale is favoured, Battaash was still the world's highest-rated sprinter in 2020, when he was unbeaten in three. Roll on 2021.

7. Nayef

Pedigree: Foaled 1998, Gulch - Height Of Fashion
Trainer: Marcus Tregoney (GB)
Jockey: Richard Hills

G1 wins (4): Champion Stakes (2001), Dubai Sheema Classic (2002), Juddmonte International (2002), Prince of Wales's Stakes (2003)

Not for nothing did trainer Marcus Tregoney describe Nayef as "a super racehorse, everybody's dream of a racehorse" – yet this splendid-looking colt's suffered for a period for the simple reason that he wasn't his half-brother, Nashwan, lacking that supreme performer's turn of foot. Hyped beyond all reason on the back of a 6-length win at Ascot on his final 2-year-old start, Nayef was a virtual non-factor in the Classics before redeeming himself stepped up to middle-distances.

This included the second half of his 3-year-old campaign, when he completed a four-timer with his first G1 success in the Champion Stakes just 20 days after a gruelling effort in the mud to win the Cumberland Lodge. Further G1 victories were to follow as he continued almost exclusively at the top level for two more seasons, among them a career-best as a 5-year-old in a clear-cut success over a field full of fellow G1 winners at Royal Ascot in the Prince of Wales's Stakes.

8. Taghrooda

Pedigree: Foaled 2011, Sea The Stars - Ezima
Trainer: John Gosden (GB)
Jockey: Paul Hanagan

G1 wins (2): Oaks (2014), King George (2014)

A fine filly, albeit during a brief career lasting only six races, the first four of which she won, including a decisive victory in the Oaks (leading a Hamdan 1-2 from Tarfasha) before a dazzling 3-length success at Ascot to become the seventh of her sex to win the King George. This homebred daughter of Sea The Stars looked a truly brilliant filly that day at Ascot as she stayed on strongly to score easily from Telescope.

Great things were expected but she wasn't right when outstayed at odds of 1/5 in the Yorkshire Oaks and was to be seen just once more, when beaten favourite in the Arc a shade over three lengths behind Treve – no disgrace, but this was a better effort than the bare result suggests as she raced without cover throughout from a wide draw. Taghrooda was retired to the paddocks with a career record of four out of six – and a nagging feeling that she could have achieved more.

9. Muhaarar

Pedigree: Foaled 2012, Oasis Dream - Tahrir
Trainer: Charlie Hills (GB)
Jockey: Paul Hanagan

G1 wins (4): Commonwealth Cup (2015), July Cup (2015), Prix Maurice de Gheest (2105), British Champions Sprint (2015)

An outstanding talent, Muhaarar is generally remembered as a sprinter but in truth he wasn't a pure speedball, being better suited by a stiff 6f and slightly further, when he overwhelmed top-class rivals on a regular basis with a devastating turn of foot in the closing stages. Stone last in the French Guineas, the son of top sprinter Oasis Dream was reborn when he cut back in distance

for a spectacular four-race G1 spree in 2015, starting with a highly impressive performance in the first running of the G1 Commonwealth Cup at Royal Ascot, where he thrashed subsequent G1 winner Limato.

Three more G1 wins followed, climaxing with a stunning course-and-distance display at Ascot in a 20-runner edition of the British Champions Sprint. "He has been a great privilege to train," said Charlie Hills, and it was easy to see why.

10. Jeune

Pedigree: Foaled 1989, Kalaglow - Youthful
Trainer: David Hayes (Australia)
Jockey: Wayne Harris

G1 wins (5): Underwood Stakes (1994), Melbourne Cup (1994), Queen Elizabeth Stakes (1995), CF Orr Stakes (1995) Craiglee Stakes (1995)

A muscular chestnut originally trained in Newmarket by Geoff Wragg, Jeune was a useful middle-distance performer in Britain, carrying the colours of Sir Robin McAlpine to victory at Royal Ascot in the Hardwicke Stakes. However, he really blossomed after joining Sheikh Hamdan's team, making the now familiar move to Australia – where European stamina is such a precious commodity – and duly became Horse of the Year in 1994-95, when, racing in pacifiers, he won top-level events at a range of trips from 7f up to the two miles of his Melbourne Cup success.

Jeune was the sheikh's second winner of the famous Flemington showpiece after At Talaq, another ex-European, in 1986, when he was trained by David Hayes's legendary father, Colin.

Bubbling under: Al Bahathri, Alhaarth, Almutawakel, Ashal, At Talaq, Bahri, Elmaamul, Erhaab, Frosted, Ghanaati, Haafhd, Hamas, Intikhab, Jazil, Lahib, Lahudood, Mohaather, Soft Falling Rain, Tamarkuz, Tamayuz, Unfuwain et al ...

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What They're Thinking Cristian Demuro: French racing is missing out big time because of sponsorship issues

Sally Ann Grassick | April 06, 2021

Cristian Demuro returns triumphant after victory in last year's Arc aboard Sottsass.
Photo: Dyga/focusonracing.com



Italian Cristian Demuro has quickly become one of the most in-demand riders in France after deciding to base himself there in 2014. The 28-year-old is a go-to choice for top conditioners like Francis-Henri Grafford and Jean-Claude Rouget, for whom he won the Arc last year on Sottsass. He has also won the Prix du Jockey Club twice - on Sottsass in 2019 and Brametot in 2017, both for Rouget.

At #63, Demuro is the third-highest-ranked Italian in the TRC Global Rankings (behind #1 Frankie Dettori and his Japan-based older brother Mirco, who is #50).

That also makes him the fourth-highest rider based in France, behind #7 and current champion Pierre-Charles Boudot, #20 Mickael Barzalona and ten-time champion Christophe Soumillon (#32).

Who do you think is the most important figure in the history of racing around the world?

For me, I think at the moment it would have to be Jean-Claude Rouget. He has been a huge influence and help to my career since I moved to France, and as a trainer he has won races all over the world. I think he is proving his importance in the world of racing through the success he has achieved.

He is a very good trainer in my opinion, particularly in the way he picks each yearling himself at the sales. I think his campaign with Sottsass last year is proof of his talent as a trainer. He was so patient with him throughout the year, biding his time and planning his campaign with the Arc as his main objective, and it paid off for us on the big day.

What is your fondest memory in racing?

Winning the Arc on Sottsass is by far the best moment of my career so far. For me, the Arc is the most important race in the world and that feeling when I crossed the winning line was incredible. I thought about everything that led up to that moment, all of the hard work that I had put in over the years to become the best jockey I could be. It is even more special for me as I left Italy six years ago and moved to France, where I almost had to start my career all over again.

I have had so much success in France since that move and have been lucky to win most of the French

Classics. The Arc was the last one that I had to tick off my list. It really was a dream come true for me.

What is your favourite racing venue and race?

I think the previous answer gives you a good idea that Longchamp is a very special place for me. It is a great racecourse to ride and the Arc was always an important race for me even before I won it last year. Tokyo is also a racecourse that I love riding at, and the Japan Cup is still on my list of races that I want to win.

What is the biggest challenge that racing faces today?

I think in France, sponsorship is a real issue. We don't have as many top-end sponsors as in football and other sports. I think we are missing out on much-needed publicity for horseracing in this country by not being associated with well-known brands.

If you could change one thing in racing, what would it be?

We need to invite potential sponsors to come and spend a day at the races. That is a good way to start their association with the sport. It is a wonderful sport with beautiful animals; in my opinion it is one of the best sports in the world, and I'm not just saying that because I am a jockey.

Racing is an amazing spectacle to watch and, if we can just show that to a bigger audience, then we can assure the future of our sport.



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25 April 2021

Horses

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Almond Eye JPN	JPN	2158
2	Golden Sixty AUS	HKO	2123
3	Mishriff IRE	KSA	2070
4	Tarnawa IRE	IRE	2069
5	Contrail JPN	JPN	2018
6	Authentic USA	USA	1987
7	Addeybb IRE	GBR	1986
8	Gran Alegria JPN	JPN	1979
9	Chrono Genesis JPN	JPN	1977
10	Magical IRE	IRE	1964
11	Nature Strip AUS	AUS	1913
12	Palace Pier GBR	GBR	1911
13	Verry Elleegant NZL	AUS	1902
14	Essential Quality USA	USA	1898
15	Tiz The Law USA	USA	1876

Jockeys

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Frankie Dettori	GBR	2014
2	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1933
3	Joel Rosario	USA	1859
4	Christophe Lemaire	JPN	1856
5	James McDonald	AUS	1807
6	William Buick	GBR	1762
7	Ryan Moore	GBR	1730
8	Flavien Prat	USA	1700
9	Pierre-Charles Boudot	FRA	1666
10	Florent Geroux	USA	1643
11	Yuga Kawada	JPN	1627
12	Luis Saez	USA	1587
13	Hugh Bowman	AUS	1546
14	Mike E Smith	USA	1493
15	Damian Lane	AUS	1485

Trainers

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Chad C Brown	USA	2909
2	John & Thady Gosden	GBR	2697
3	Chris Waller	AUS	2583
4	Aidan O'Brien	IRE	2456
5	Charlie Appleby	GBR	2394
6	Bob Baffert	USA	2356
7	Brad H Cox	USA	2345
8	James Cummings	AUS	1913
9	Jamie Richards	NZL	1873
10	Grant & Alana Williams	AUS	1708

Owners

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Godolphin	AUS	3267
2	Coolmore Partners	IRE	2581
3	Shadwell Estate Company	GBR	2353
4	Silk Racing Co Ltd	JPN	1893
5	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	JPN	1848
6	Peters Investments Et Al	AUS	1817
7	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	USA	1697
8	Madaket Stables Et Al	USA	1621
9	Klaravich Stables Et Al	USA	1621
10	Stanley Chan Ka Leung	HKO	1621

Sires

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Galileo IRE	IRE	2423
2	Deep Impact JPN	JPN	2305
3	Dubawi IRE	GBR	2256
4	Lord Kanaloa JPN	JPN	1682
5	Into Mischief USA	USA	1672
6	Shamardal USA	FRA	1664
7	Sea The Stars IRE	GBR	1621
8	Kingman GBR	GBR	1615
9	Teofilo IRE	AUS	1592
10	Street Cry IRE	AUS	1569