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TRC

OUT ON HIS OWN!

With a decade of TRC Global Rankings data now available, there's no doubt who the world's dominant trainer of the era has been



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Aidan O'Brien: The master of Ballydoyle has spent 146 as World Number One in the TRC Global Rankings. Photo: focusonracing.com

Cover photo: focusonracing.com

Why this man is out on his own as the *world's top trainer* of the last decade

James Willoughby | May 29, 2020

We have zero doubt that Aidan O'Brien is the greatest trainer of the TRC Global Rankings era. As our rankings have now completed their first decade, we are choosing to summarise the history of each category by means of the data. And there is no more obvious conclusion than the Irish trainer being the tops.

While many racing fans would instantly concur with the expression that O'Brien's career justifies the belief that he has no peers, we have reached the same conclusion by quantitative methods.

TRC Global Rankings constructs a massive network of comparisons between every trainer in the world using the results of Group and Graded races, considering the head-to-head match-ups between their horses as evidence of their impact on the sport.

To repeat: we have found no more effective mathematical device for predicting future results than paired comparisons between competitors, weighted according to the sustainability of the relationships which they describe.

In the rankings of November 5, 2017, O'Brien had won so many of these key match-ups that his Performance Index rose to 1098.

This isn't some abstract figure, but it translates to what is known as an odds ratio, an objective measure of competitive strength. We cannot go anywhere close to saying these figures

are training skill, because any attempt to infer that from a trainer's results is confounded by the different quality of their horses.

You could say that a trainer's true skill is his or her ability to assemble a coterie of powerful owners and persuade each one of them continuously that their best interests are being served.

O'Brien is a phenomenon. At his peak TRC Performance Index, he had saddled 148 Group winners in the rolling 3-year-window we use to measure a trainer's impact. No fewer than 66 of these came at G1 level, with 30 in G2s and 52 in G3s.

As [last week's article on jockeys](#) chose to say of O'Brien's No 1 jockey Ryan Moore, we have severe doubts these numbers will ever be eclipsed. Perhaps O'Brien's most notable TRC-related statistic is the staggering 146 weeks at World Number One.

Only six trainers have ever reached World Number One, as opposed to eight jockeys, as detailed last time. Moreover, it is easy to infer from the table that only eight trainers have ever occupied the top three slots.

Charlie Appleby, the Godolphin trainer, is the current World Number One. Over the last three years, he has proved beyond all doubt he can make the magic happen for Sheikh Mohammed's operation.

Chad Brown, Todd Pletcher and Bob Baffert have dominated U.S. racing during the TRC era. It is surprising that Baffert has never made the top spot, but nobody has a better hand of Classic aspirants in 2020 than the California-based handler, even though one of his most important prospects, Nadal, has just been retired through injury. Nevertheless, it is Chad Brown, on the opposite coast, who is more likely to send out Group winners right now, according to our numbers.

Winx's trainer, Chris Waller, is the clear Australian Number One in the table. He has been eclipsed by another Godolphin trainer, James Cummings, over the last year, but Bart's grandson still has some way to go to match Waller's peak rating of 1060.

Trainer	Country	Weeks rank=1	Top rank	Peak date	Max Index	Min Index	Latest Index
Aidan O'Brien	Ireland	146	1	05/11/2017	1098	1024	1024
John Gosden	Great Britain	11	1	20/10/2019	1074	1001	1049
Chad Brown	USA	23	1	03/11/2019	1072	993	1049
Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	28	1	15/09/2019	1070	926	1060
Todd Pletcher	USA	78	1	05/01/2014	1063	958	958
Bob Baffert	USA	0	2	27/08/2017	1062	1019	1020
Chris Waller	Australia	48	1	11/10/2015	1060	1003	1012
Darren Weir	Australia	0	3	27/05/2018	1046	945	971
Saeed bin Suroor	UAE	0	5	26/10/2014	1030	986	986
James Cummings	Australia	0	5	20/10/2019	1028	908	1020
Gai Waterhouse & Adrian Bott	Australia	0	5	27/04/2014	1025	965	977
Andre Fabre	France	0	5	13/10/2019	1024	987	995
Noriyuki Hori	Japan	0	7	02/07/2017	1020	921	925
Peter Snowden	Australia	0	6	05/01/2014	1019	907	907
Peter moody	Australia	0	6	06/04/2014	1017	911	913
William Mott	USA	0	8	02/11/2014	1015	962	971
J O'Shea	Australia	0	7	23/10/2016	1015	906	908
Steven Asmussen	USA	0	8	01/12/2019	1014	963	999
Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	0	8	07/10/2018	1014	968	991
Yasutoshi Ikee	Japan	0	7	10/12/2017	1013	943	943



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The magnificent foal crop of 1970: Could we ever see the like again?

Jay Hovdey | May 11, 2020

Was there something in the air? The water? Was it written in the stars, or was it sly old Mother Nature at work, putting her thumb on the wheel of genetic roulette, just because she could?

Whatever the answer, the fact remains: the North American foal crop of 1970 produced a uniquely intoxicating vintage of Thoroughbred racehorse, arguably the greatest in the history of the game, and its 50th anniversary should be celebrated with gratitude for the everlasting legacy of its impact.

There will be arguments, of course. Measured strictly by the number of foals who went on to Hall of Fame careers, the 1966 North American crop of 20,228 was a mother lode that spawned Ack Ack, Majestic Prince, Arts And Letters, Shuvee, Gallant Bloom, and Ta Wee. The 1954 crop of 9,064 led by the powerhouse Hall of Fame trio of Bold Ruler, Round Table, and Gallant Man always receives proper reverence, as does the 1964 crop of 17,434 that included Damascus, Dr Fager, and Fort Marcy, all important far beyond their campaigns as Horses of the Year.

But for sheer breadth and depth of accomplishment, spanning both the years and the globe, there never has been a North American foal crop to match the cream of the 24,361 that arrived in the spring of 1970. From coast to coast, little ones were hitting the ground with destiny attached and limits unbound. If we'd known then what we knew in just a few short years, there would have been fireworks over the palace accompanying certain births as if they were proclamations of royal succession.

The first to arrive, on January 28, 1970, was Mr Prospector, two-time track record-setter and top-rated sprinter who went on to sire 182 stakes winners. After him came a procession:

- **March 13, 1970** – Linda's Chief, a fearless racehorse, major stakes winner at 2 and 3 in New York, California, and Illinois.
- **March 23, 1970** – Stop the Music, the pride of Greentree Stable, who carried his heritage at the top of the game for three seasons.
- **March 25, 1970** – Dahlia, international superstar, a winner of major stakes in England, Ireland, France, and America.
- **March 30, 1970** – Secretariat, Horse of the Year at age 2, first Triple Crown winner in 25 years, magazine cover boy.

The calendar page turned, and the band played on:

- **April 9, 1970** – Sham, winner of the Santa Anita Derby, fated to become Secretariat's noble foil.
- **April 11, 1970** – Café Prince, who found his calling over fences to be a two-time Eclipse Award champion.
- **April 19, 1970** – Desert Vixen, Florida born and bred, freakishly fast, two-time national champion.
- **April 19, 1970** – Ancient Title,

California's own, who raced for seven seasons, winning major events from 7 to 10 furlongs.

- **April 22, 1970** – La Prevoyante, Canada's gift, winner of all 12 starts at age 2 to be in the running for Horse of the Year.
- **April 30, 1970** – Forego, the gentle giant, a three-time Horse of the Year and winner of a record eight Eclipse Awards.

And finally, on May 24, 1970, there was Allez France, last but not least, especially in her adopted France, where she was a national hero.

Of that rare dozen, seven were elected to the Hall of Fame in Saratoga: Secretariat, Forego, Dahlia, Desert Vixen, La Prevoyante, Ancient Title, and Café Prince. A more fascinating through-line, however, is their timeless connection to one of Thoroughbred racing's most venerated institutions.

Forego, Sham, and Dahlia all were foaled at Kentucky's Claiborne Farm, located in the Lexington suburb of Paris, while both Secretariat and Mr Prospector became long-standing Claiborne stallions. This should come as no surprise since the farm had been a force in the Thoroughbred breeding world since its founder, Arthur B Hancock Sr, bred 1923 Preakness winner Virgil and imported the European stallions Sir Gallahad and Blenheim. Management of the farm passed to Arthur B Hancock Jr,

and then to Seth Hancock, son of Arthur Jr, upon the death of his father in 1972.

During the magical spring of 1970, Seth Hancock was otherwise occupied in his junior year of college when Dahlia, Sham, and Forego were newborn Claiborne foals. Before too long, however, he was back at the farm continuing a more practical education.

Dahlia was owned by Claiborne client Nelson Bunker Hunt. As such, she was not among the farm population with which Hancock was intimately familiar. The others, however, summon lasting memories.

"Forego was a big monster of a horse as a yearling," Hancock said. "He was kind of a clumsy fellow, which you would figure he'd be, 'cause he was so damn big."

Forego turned his size and scope into performance art

Forego was owned by Martha Gerry, a longtime Claiborne client.

"Mrs Gerry told me that my father said to her one time, 'Martha, he'll either be a very good horse, or he won't be worth a dime,'" Hancock said. "If it all comes together, he had a chance."

Forego turned his size and scope into performance art. After Secretariat departed the stage at the end of 1973 and retired to Claiborne, Forego picked up the torch and carried it to Horse of the Year honors for the next three years.

"I remember Sham real well, because we all really liked him," Hancock continued. "He was out of Sequoia, one of our mares, so obviously we paid particular attention to him. He wasn't flashy in any form or fashion, in kind of a plain brown wrapper, though he was plenty big enough, and a very athletic yearling."

As a racehorse for Sigmund Sommer, Sham was a shooting star. He gave chase to Secretariat in the Kentucky Derby – running the second fastest time in the history of the race – and again in the Preakness. But the Belmont was a bridge too far. As Secretariat was cementing his claim as the best of the 1970 crop, winning off by 31 lengths, Sham was finished barely a mile into the race and emerged with a career-ending injury.

'A lot of people thought the game was fine the way it was'

In 2015, Hancock turned over the reins of Claiborne Farm to his son, Walker, but he keeps his hands on the horses and his counsel available. After a lifetime immersed

in the challenge of breeding good Thoroughbreds, Hancock has a right to wonder what kind of racing world the Claiborne foals of 2020 – sons and daughters of Runhappy, Blame, and War Front – will be born into.

Hancock is hopeful that legislation before Congress to set up a national drug testing and enforcement body for horse racing will pass, and the sooner the better. As far as he is concerned, the recent FBI investigations and drug-related indictments of such marquee trainers as Jason Servis and Jorge Navarro is a dark cloud over the game that can have a silver lining.

"What the FBI has done is given the bill a lot of impetus," Hancock noted, "because a lot of people were in total denial, who thought the game was fine the way it was."

Hancock also sees the recent decision of the Jockey Club to limit stallions born after 2020 to books of no more than 140 mares as a step in the right direction. As far as he is concerned, there is a reason the crop of 1970 has not been surpassed.

'We've done everything we can to kill racing, but it ain't dead yet'

"Does the fact that some of our best stallions are breeding 200 mares contribute to that at all? It's got to," Hancock said. "A scientist might say it only takes one sperm to fertilize the egg. But it stands to reason if an ejaculate has a

thousand sperm, there's a helluva a lot better chance of one of those being the one that gets Dahlia or Secretariat than if an ejaculate only has a hundred sperm.

"That sounds like stupid country boy logic, and I know that," Hancock said. "But I believe it. You don't have foal crops with horses like that 1970 crop anymore. Horses are not the same as they were. But maybe if we limit these books to 140, maybe we'll get back to that."

"There's one thing I will say about racing," Hancock added. "We've done everything we can to kill it, and it ain't dead yet. So it must have a lot of goodness to it. If we ever get it right and get it cleaned up once and for all to get the public's trust back, I think it's got a chance to regain a lot of its lost lustre."

The 1970 foal crop in the U.S. would have been outstanding even without the supreme champion that was Secretariat. Photo: Sports Illustrated



THE WAIT IS NEARLY OVER

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Breeze 22nd June, sale 25th June

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SANDS OF MALI
£75,000 ASCOT 2017

1st Gr.1 British Champions Sprint Stakes
Career earnings - £726,220

VALDERMORO
50,000GNS CRAVEN 2019
1st Gr.3 Acomb Stakes

DONJUAN TRIUMPHANT
30,000GNS CRAVEN 2015
1st Gr.1 British Champions Sprint Stakes
Career earnings - £805,013

GOFFS UK & ARQANA BREEZE UP
Breeze 28th June, sale 1st July

A'ALI
£135,000 GOFFS UK 2019

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The rookie trainer trying to rebuild a horse who almost won the Derby

Steve Dennis | May 27, 2020

Runner-up. There is about that word something more than just a simple indication of defeat.

Aaron Peterson with U.S. Army Ranger at his Ballarat farm in Victoria. "What made him a good horse once is still in him," he says. Photo: Rebecca Groen

There can be a hint of comedy about finishing last. Someone has to, after all. Last. Aw, shucks. Finish eighth, and you can't complain. Beaten fair and square. You shrug and move on. Fourth, even. Third, too - look, it wasn't meant to be. But to be runner-up carries the implication that, if some small thing had been different, some marginal moment going the other way, then the result - the world - would have been different too. And in this way one eats one's heart out in the small hours.

There is only one Epsom Derby, and only one chance to win it. Blink under the cold, steady gaze of history and you'll miss it. Most sporting occasions offer the possibility of redemption for the defeated; there's always next year, next time. But not the Derby. The race takes roughly two and a half minutes to play out and the difference between winning and finishing second is as absolute as the difference between black and white.



Of course, there are exceptions. The great champion Dancing Brave was not defined by his second placing at Epsom, neither was El Gran Senor, nor yet Ballymoss, Rheingold, Sakhee and Hawk Wing. But the old saw holds up in most years: no-one remembers who comes second.

After all, do you remember U.S. Army Ranger?

Four years ago, U.S. Army Ranger was the favourite to win the Derby. Of all the 3-year-old colts that year, he was considered the 'one most likely'. He had everything going for him. He had run twice and won twice; he was the first choice among five runners trained by the peerless Aidan O'Brien, booked for graduation summa cum laude from the Ballydoyle academy.

He was a son of the perennial champion sire Galileo, himself winner of the Derby. His dam, Moonstone, won the Irish Oaks. Her sire Dalakhani won the French Derby, as did his sire Darshaan before him. Darshaan was by Derby winner Shirley Heights, son of another Derby winner in Mill Reef. It was the family business. What else could this dark bay colt with a wild splash of white on his face be but a Derby winner too?

What else indeed? We would have the chance to find out, for U.S. Army Ranger

could finish only runner-up to Harzand, beaten a length and a half. Well, that's racing. He would be winning again soon, no doubt. But almost four years have passed, and he hasn't.

After the Derby, his form dropped away as quickly and irrevocably as if it had been pushed out of a window on the 13th floor - comfortably vanquished in lesser contests, totally eclipsed in top-rank affairs, not good enough even among the hurdlers and handicappers in the eccentrically long-distance Queen Alexandra Stakes at Royal Ascot.

U.S. Army Ranger fell headlong, changed trainers, changed owners, changed hemispheres, changed from a colt to a gelding, none of these alterations arresting his descent. Perhaps there was more than a grain of truth in the recent tweet from leading pundit Jim McGrath, which declared that he was 'probably the most ungenuine horse Aidan has trained'.

But, just as the impact of rock bottom seemed inevitable, the ground almost rising up to meet him, a soft landing appeared in the unlikely form of Aaron Peterson, a rookie trainer with four horses on a farm in the Australian racecourse town of Ballarat, 70 miles north-west of Melbourne.

Half a second away: U.S. Army Ranger (dark blue) just can't quite get to Harzand in the 2016 Derby. Fellow Ballydoyle trainee Idaho (centre) finished third. Photo: Frank Sorge/Racingfotos.com

Looking for a nice horse

"I was looking for another horse," says Peterson, 38, son of former jockey and trainer Allan Peterson. "I grew up in the jockeys' room with Dad, was his assistant for several years, did a bit of pre-training for [major owner] Lloyd Williams. Been around horses all my life.

"I always wanted to be a trainer in my own right one day. Then I met Rebecca, who's now my fiancée, and moved to Ballarat for love. We've got a little farm around the corner from the racecourse, work the horses on the track, we're improving our facilities bit by bit.

"So, as I say, I was looking for a horse. I sent Lloyd Williams and his son Nick a message asking whether they might have any horses on the market, and they did, and one of them was U.S. Army Ranger. I paid AU\$27,000 for him last December."

That's about US\$18,000, about £14,000, about €16,000. It's not a lot for a Derby runner-up.

Galileo's stud fee is private, but that sort of money wouldn't buy you a dirty look from the great stallion, let alone anything more intimate. But for a 7-year-old gelding who hadn't won for more than three years, who had lost 17 races in a row, it seems like a fair price. Peterson didn't look his gift horse in the mouth; there was nothing wrong with that part of him. The problems lay elsewhere.

"Yeah, obviously he has problems," says Peterson, who had his first runners in 2017 and his first winner in June 2018. "We discovered he has a kissing spine, where the vertebrae touch and cause great discomfort. He also has issues with his pelvis.

"We're treating his spine. He's doing a lot of dressage work. We're trying to change his action, the way he moves his body, trying to strengthen his back. It's an ongoing process. You think he's right, then he'll take a bad step and you're back to square one. But he's getting there."

After so long in the wilderness, U.S. Army Ranger could have been forgiven for a distinct lack of enthusiasm. Yet, when Peterson worked him one bright Ballarat morning, he found that the flesh might have been weak but the spirit was still willing.

"He's still got it. What made him a good horse once is still in him. He covers the ground beautifully, there's a big engine there, and he has the zest for racing.

"If he comes back to half of what he was, he'll do well down here. Mind you, he's showing it in training but it hasn't come together for him on the track yet. It's a learning curve for him and me."

U.S. Army Ranger made his debut for Peterson in a minor contest at Mornington racecourse, south of Melbourne, in March, and finished last of ten. "It was a good run, he was only beaten seven lengths, and he wasn't quite ready to go the full 2,000 metres."

Two weeks later he finished down the field at Caulfield - "He lost a shoe" - and a week after that was well beaten at little Stawell, a country track west of Ballarat. The evidence of these three outings, all at a mile and a quarter, is not hugely encouraging, but Peterson is not discouraged.

"That third run was too quick after the previous effort. I'm still learning about him, we're still trying to improve him physically, and he's very hard to place off his rating [78].



We ran him in blinkers last time, he's a bit too fierce right now, tries to run through his bridle.

"On what he shows in the morning, he has the ability for the metropolitan tracks, but I need to see it happen on raceday before making any plans. Rebecca and I are working on him all the time and there might be a race for him at Ballarat [soon]. He'll stay further and he could be just the type for those country cup races, y'know."

Future assured

Let's go back to Harzand, who won the Derby that U.S. Army Ranger was favourite to win. Harzand won the Irish Derby on his next start, then ran poorly twice before being retired to Gilttown Stud, in Ireland, where he stands at €8,000. He will have his first runners this year. He'll always be a Derby winner, his status inviolate, he'll always have that cachet, that insulation against the cold wind of change. He's a made man. Nothing can touch him now.

The horse he beat at Epsom is half a world away, in a different world, still grafting for a living. It is probably just as well that U.S. Army Ranger does not, in the small hours, with the Southern Cross twinkling down upon him, reflect on the randomness

Half a world away: U.S. Army Ranger, runner-up in the 2016 Epsom Derby, with Rebecca Groen in Australia

of the events that have brought him to where he is now. But, if he doesn't think about the past, he certainly doesn't have to worry about the future.

"Y'know, he'd make a good hurdler," adds Peterson. "He has the perfect profile, he jumps really well. That's a possibility if it doesn't go right on the flat.

"And, if it doesn't work out at all, he'll be fine. Rebecca works at rehoming racehorses with Racing Victoria, so we'll re-educate him and find him a good home. He's a good-looking horse, a very flashy mover, would make someone a lovely eventer. He'll have a good life."

U.S. Army Ranger was runner-up in the Derby, beaten a length and a half. That's about 12 feet. At a full gallop, that takes around 0.3sec.

If he had covered the mile and a half at Epsom just half a second faster . . . but he didn't. He was runner-up. And that has made all the difference.

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Ground-breaker: *the man who tore up the rulebook to strike gold on the other side of the world*

Minty Farquhar | May 15, 2020



Racing history was made down under last Saturday, when Russian Camelot became the first Northern Hemisphere-bred 3-year-old to land an Australian Derby (and there have been 852 of them since 1855). The son of Epsom Derby winner Camelot was foaled on March 29, 2017, making him a huge 172 days younger than runner-up Dalasan, and 144 days younger than any other runner.

The victory was not only sweet for connections in Australia, but also for Jeremy Brummitt, the man responsible for persuading trainer Danny O'Brien to look beyond the European horses-in-training market and consider the Tattersalls October Yearling Sale as a viable source of Australian G1 winners.

Great British Racing International spoke with Brummitt in the wake of his purchase's historic victory to find out more about his thinking behind the audacious plan and his hunger to prove that it was no fluke.

Jeremy Brummitt: his vision for the largely untapped potential of the European yearling market for Australian buyers has not gone unrecognised. Photo: Bridget Kirkwood

Jeremy Brummitt's résumé is not lacking in variety. Now a bloodstock consultant for a number of loyal clients who rely on his expertise at the sales, Brummitt has zig-zagged his way across the racing and bloodstock industry, bringing together lessons learnt from time spent in a diverse range of roles.

He has done stints as assistant trainer, both at home to Robert Baker and in America to both David Whiteley and Rick Violette; he has earned his stripes in stud life under the auspices of Taylor Made Farms, Britton House Stud, Tartan Farms, Bob McCreery and Neville Dent; he even relied on his professional gambling abilities for one 5-year period.

Today, alongside his bloodstock consultancy business, he advises Heatherwold and Clearwater Studs in England and co-manages Enterprise Investment Scheme-turned-syndicate Quantum Leap Racing, which has successfully converted a number of blind investors into committed owners.

Brummitt's wide range of experience has cultivated in him a confidence and a fearlessness – that is not to say a recklessness, by any means – when it comes to going where few have gone before.

Perhaps this confidence and fearlessness have granted him the liberty to think outside of the box, something that has been highlighted in the racing press over the past seven days in the wake of Russian Camelot's victory in the G1 South Australian Derby last Saturday

The colt, who Brummitt purchased for 120,000 guineas on behalf of Australian trainer Danny O'Brien at Tattersalls October Yearling Sale Book 1 in 2018, became the first Northern Hemisphere-bred 3-year-old to land an Australian Classic. Given the age disadvantage, the feat has been heralded as extraordinary, and Brummitt's vision for the largely untapped potential of the European yearling market for Australian buyers has not gone unrecognised.

"I think it gives me a big edge," Brummitt says, reflecting on the long and winding road that led him to buying horses. "There's nothing wrong with an old-fashioned long apprenticeship, and I think I understand the likely issues facing every stage of the process. So, when I go to a sale, I understand that a vendor has had to do to show his horse in the best light, and I think I understand what a trainer is frightened of having to deal with and what he can deal with."



Brummitt is undaunted by the prospect of veering from the well-trodden path in the name of trying to break new ground.

"The world wouldn't progress without people trying something new," he remarks. "Vincent O'Brien sent Sir Ivor to Pisa for the winter before he won the Guineas, and he'd already been a champion trainer many times."

Despite 90 percent of his client base being domestic, Brummitt has his finger firmly on the pulse of the international bloodstock scene and is always on the lookout for opportunities that others may not see, let alone be prepared to take. Australia has been on his radar for a long time.

"I've always been keen on trying to produce horses for Australia because I thought there's been a weakness there for some time, and we tried hard, it took a long time for us to get it going actually. Gallic Chieftain and Lord Fandango were bought by OTI off us after we raced both of them up here and then sold them down there. That was the start of it all."

Granted, there is nothing ground-breaking in sourcing European horses-in-training who can go on to excel down under. The significant emphasis on breeding speed into Australian pedigrees over the past few decades has left many of the jurisdiction's bloodlines lacking in the stamina that is found in abundance in their British, Irish and French counterparts. Multiple G1 winner Hartnell and Melbourne Cup winners Fiorente and Green Moon are just three examples highlighted in this TRC article last October.

It was, however, a venture into the unknown when Brummitt arrived at Park Paddocks in October 2018 with O'Brien's

Russian Camelot when he was a yearling at Tattersalls October Yearling Sale Book 1 in 2018, when Jeremy Brummitt purchased him for 120,000 guineas on behalf of Danny O'Brien. Photo: Lee Ann Imboden

blessing to find an unraced colt that could begin his career in Australia and ultimately win the Melbourne Cup.

"I convinced Danny that it was best to go with untried stock and let him develop them himself," he explains. "I don't really do business with many tried horses. I focus on undamaged goods. So, we bought two horses two years ago and three last year, and we were just very lucky that the first one out of the box was Russian Camelot. Even allowing for the fact I think we've got superior bloodstock, you've got to get lucky to get a horse with the capacity to do this."

In referring more than once to the part that luck may have played in this particular story, Brummitt shows a down-to-earth humility. He also refers more than once to the praise that O'Brien (pictured overleaf) deserves for the way he has nurtured the horse since he first arrived in his care shortly after selling as a yearling.

"The success of Australians in staying races there is limited by both the pedigrees and the trainers," he suggests. "Danny's handling of this horse has been confident and exemplary and he's been prepared to do things in a different way. In fact, the most impressive thing about Danny's handling is not the fact that he was able to it, but that he was prepared to do it in a different way. Because not many people are prepared to try something different."



O'Brien, meanwhile, put on his own display of humility when telling the Racing Post, "We brought the horse across from England and brought the training manual too."

One gets the feeling that, in O'Brien, already a Melbourne Cup winner with 2019 hero Vow And Declare, Brummitt has found a like-minded soul, someone who is also willing to stray from the tried-and-tested formula in search of something bigger and better.

"I was very lucky when I partnered up with Danny because I got the right man. He's obviously a very talented trainer and adaptable," he says. "You've got to get the right trainer – you can't make enough of that. The horse is only half the equation. The man who's training it is the other half."

Brummitt, who still cites buying 2011 St Leger winner Masked Marvel for Bjorn Nielsen (more recently, the owner of Stradivarius) as his career highlight, is not getting carried away with excitement over this most recent coup. Far from it, in fact, as he quickly points out that he does not consider the Russian Camelot story a truly successful one just yet.

"I don't believe we've got the job done. The job's in November, not in May, but we're a long way down the track. I don't think anybody, even if you're very self-confident, which I am, and you prepare very carefully, which we did, you don't expect to hit the goal first time. It's satisfying, but it doesn't prove anything doing it once, that's my view. You've got to keep doing it. I hope this comes off and goes all the way to fruition in November, but it still might be a fluke unless you can go back and do it again. It's my ambition to prove this isn't."

Time will tell whether Brummitt can unearth another yearling to emulate Russian

Camelot's Classic feat, but he is already looking forward to returning to Tattersalls come October to give it his best shot. Unfortunately for him, he suspects he may no longer be the only person around the ring looking for stock to take straight down to Australia.

"I think it's inevitable that more people will try this," he says. "The nature of the bloodstock business is people look over their shoulder and copy the most recent success, which explains why trainers have 20 horses one day and 250 the next year, and why stallions cover 30 mares and 150 the next. So I'm sure there will be a lot of people coming over to try and emulate it."

"I hope that Danny and I will repeat the feat and, what anyone else manages to do, I hope they're a neck and a head behind us, that's all," he adds, the chink of the glint in his eye practically audible down the phone line.

In the immediate future, the Russian Camelot team await a confirmed date for the Derby at Epsom, which has been the dream all along but which is now looking more like an impossible dream, given that the British Classic looks set to be run in July or August.

"Once we get a date, we will still look at the Derby, but the Melbourne Cup is an obvious race for him now," O'Brien reported earlier this week.

Regardless of whether Russian Camelot makes it across the world to contend the race or not, Brummitt remains delighted with Tuesday's announcement that the race is due to be run at its traditional Epsom home this year after the local Conservators of Epsom and Walton Downs approved the Jockey Club's proposals to restrict access

Russian Camelot: "The Melbourne Cup is an obvious race for him now," says Danny O'Brien. Photo: dannyobrienracing.com.au

to certain areas of the downs for 24 hours to allow for the race meeting to be staged.

"The reason it's the most important race in the world is it's without a doubt the most searching examination of a flat racehorse," Brummitt explains. "They have to run on a right lead up a hill, a left lead downhill, they have to stay a mile and a half, they've got to be quick enough to hold a position, when they're getting tired they've got to be balanced enough to race in a straight line against the camber."

"But, over and above all that, when they come out of the racecourse stable box it's at least an hour before they come out of the stalls and they've got to go all the way down the track in the middle of 100,000 people and roundabouts and funfairs."

"Endurance, temperament, constitution: all of those are examined in the Epsom Derby and are not examined to the same extent in any other race. There is no substitute."

Importantly, Brummitt also believes that the whole exercise has revealed that the world's most famous race remains just that.


"The fact that a group of Australians have recognised how important the attempt is, that is significant," he concludes.

Russian Camelot's victory certainly had an impact in the TRC Global Rankings this week. Trainer Danny O'Brien climbs 18 places to #67 (a gain of 5pts), sire Camelot is up six places to #45 (+3pts) and jockey John Allen rises nine places to #35 (+9pts).

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A close-up portrait of a young man, James Doyle, wearing a bright blue racing helmet and goggles. He is looking slightly to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is blurred, suggesting a racetrack setting.

James Doyle: "Royal Ascot has been a very lucky meeting for me." Photo: Dan Abraham/focusonracing.com

What They're Thinking
James Doyle: How can we expect owners to spend so much buying horses, then run them for so little?

Sally Ann Grassick | May 19, 2020

James Doyle has been firmly established as one of the world's elite jockeys for several seasons. Currently ranked at world #18, he rides predominately in Britain but is used in big races all over the world in his capacity as a retained rider for Godolphin. Doyle is the son of former British trainer Jacqueline Doyle and brother of G1-winning Sophie Doyle, who is the highest-ranked U.S.-based female jockey in the world at #255.

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

Frankie Dettori has to be the most important figure in racing around the world as he has promoted the sport globally like no other. His documentary will be a fascinating insight to the world of racing and the life of a top-class jockey. I am sure it will attract lots of new people to our sport.

What is your favourite racing venue and race?

Royal Ascot is like no other: a fantastic stadium to showcase our Olympics. It really has it all. It has also been a very lucky track for me as I have won many of the major Group 1s that are staged there. I have some very good memories of that

meeting, especially in 2013, when I rode my first ever Royal Ascot winner on Al Kazeem in the Prince of Wales's Stakes. That also happened to be my first Group 1 winner in Britain, which would have been special enough but I then quickly followed that success with two more on the card. That was a pretty memorable treble.

What is your fondest memory in racing?

That is an easy question to answer: Cityscape winning the Dubai Duty Free at Meydan in 2012 (see video below). It was my first Group 1 winner, which also happened to be on the world stage. It was an amazing night that I will never forget. It gave me a true sense of fulfilment for all the hard work I had put in over the years and it kick-started my career to be a regular Group 1 jockey.

What is the biggest challenge that racing faces today?

It might be a boring answer but, in the UK, our biggest challenge has to be the prize money. How we can expect owners to purchase yearlings for upward of a million pounds and then be content to have the horse start off its racing career running for less than £5,000 is beyond me.

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

From a selfish point of view, if I could change one thing in racing it would be to increase the riding weights.

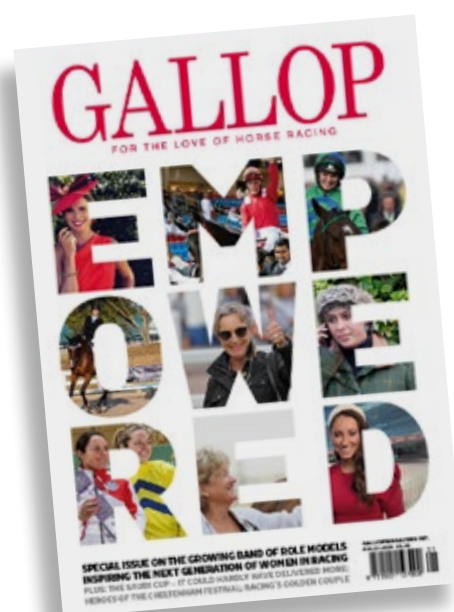
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31 May 2020

Jockeys

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Frankie Dettori	Great Britain	1080
2	Christophe Lemaire	Japan	1067
3	Ryan Moore	Great Britain	1062
4	Zac Purton	Hong Kong	1051
5	William Buick	Great Britain	1044
6	James McDonald	Australia	1043
7	Joel Rosario	USA	1038
8	Hugh Bowman	Australia	1037
9	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1033
10	Mike E Smith	USA	1027
11	Flavien Prat	USA	1025
12	Opie Bosson	Australia	1019
13	Mickael Barzalona	France	1016
14	Yuga Kawada	Japan	1015
15	Damian Lane	Australia	1012

Trainers

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	1059
2	Chad C Brown	USA	1049
3	John Gosden	Great Britain	1048
4	Aidan O'Brien	Great Britain	1023
5	James Cummings	Australia	1020
6	Bob Baffert	USA	1018
7	Chris Waller	Australia	1014
8	Brad H Cox	USA	1006
9	Jamie Richards	New Zealand	1003
10	Steven Asmussen	USA	999
11	Andre Fabre	France	994
12	Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	990
13	Ciaran Maher & David Eustace	Australia	989
14	John Moore	Hong Kong	987
15	Saeed bin Suroor	UAE	986

Owners

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Godolphin	Australia	1075
2	Coolmore Partners	Ireland	1035
3	Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum	Great Britain	1034
4	Silk Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1034
5	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	USA	1022
6	U Carrot Farm	Japan	1020
7	Peters Investments Et Al	Australia	1016
8	Madaket Stables Et Al	USA	1015
9	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1015
10	Danox Co Ltd	Japan	1008
11	White Birch Farm / Peter Brant Et Al	USA	1008
12	Phoenix Thoroughbreds Et Al	USA	1008
13	Magic Bloodstock Et Al	Australia	1002
14	Bernard Kantor Et Al	South Africa	999
15	Klaravich Stables Et Al	USA	999

Sires

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Dubawi	Great Britain	1065
2	Deep Impact	Japan	1039
3	Galileo	Ireland	1037
4	Lord Kanaloa	Japan	1037
5	Shamardal	Great Britain	1032
6	Sea The Stars	Great Britain	1028
7	Frankel	Great Britain	1026
8	Not A Single Doubt	Australia	1019
9	Pierro	Australia	1019
10	I Am Invincible	Australia	1018
11	Street Cry	Australia	1017
12	Lookin At Lucky	USA	1017
13	Scat Daddy	USA	1015
14	Medaglia D'oro	Australia	1014
15	Lope De Vega	Australia	1012