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**Is Justify an
Eclipse Award
certainty?**

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A Triple Crown win should not be an automatic passport to Eclipse honors

Charles Hayward | August 28, 2018



Cover photo: Alyse Jacobs/NYRA.com

Justify had just under two lengths to spare over Gronkowski when winning the Belmont Stakes in June, with Hofburg (pink cap) a similar distance back in third. The win may have clinched the Triple Crown, but was it really enough to guarantee an Eclipse Award so early in the season? Photo: Annette Jasko/NYRA.com

It seemed so simple just three months ago. The Eclipse Award for Champion 3-year-old Male was virtually a done deal. Justify had just become the 13th horse to win the U.S. Triple Crown. He was an outstanding racehorse. There could not conceivably be another winner.

Suddenly, however, the picture is not so clear, and, strange as it may seem, maybe racing may be better served if the award went to another horse entirely.

Trained by Bob Baffert, the son of Scat Daddy had a brilliantly managed 3-year-old season - his only racing season - with a perfect 6 for 6 record. But, shortly after winning the Belmont, the horse



Catholic Boy and Javier Castellano hitting the line clear of Mendelssohn (purple cap) and Bravazo in the Travers Stakes at Saratoga. Photo: NYRA.com

developed a filling in one of his legs and he was retired to stud duty.

Sadly, his racing career lasted less than four months, starting with a maiden over seven furlongs at Santa Anita on February 18 and ending with that Belmont victory on June 9.

If you go back to last fall, when the 2018 3-year-olds were in most cases just getting their careers going, the early consensus was this was going to be a strong crop.

One of the brightest and earliest stars was Bolt d'Oro, originally trained Mick Ruis but now with Steve Asmussen. He won two Graded stakes at two and finished a third to Good Magic when favorite in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Del Mar in November. At three, Bolt d'Oro won the G2 San Felipe and finished second to Justify in the Santa Anita Derby. But he finished up the track in the Kentucky Derby and was well off the board in the Metropolitan Mile against older horses.

As is often the case, trainer Todd Pletcher had a strong contingent

of 3-year-olds in the prep races for the Kentucky Derby. Audible won the Holly Bull and the Florida Derby before running third at Churchill Downs. Pletcher had three other horses with success in the run-up to the Derby:

- Vino Rosso, who won the Wood Memorial impressively and subsequently finished ninth in the Derby. He has not won since
- Noble Indy, who took the Louisiana Derby and subsequently finished 17th in the Derby. He has been unplaced in two subsequent races.
- Magnum Moon, who was undefeated in four races leading up to the Derby, including the G1 Arkansas Derby, but had serious traffic problems in the Derby and was retired after the race.

The most highly regarded horse at the end of the 2-year-old season was Good Magic, trained by Chad

Brown and winner of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile. This season, he won the G2 Blue Grass Stakes at Keeneland before running strong races in the Derby, finishing second to Justify, and the Preakness, where he was fourth to Justify, beaten less than a length. Good Magic then went on to win the G1 Haskell international at Monmouth Park, which made him the heavy favorite for the Travers last Saturday. There, though, he ran ninth of 11, soundly beaten by Catholic Boy.

Disappointing crop

It appears that the consensus among bettors is that this 3-year-old crop, which showed so much early promise, has played out to be disappointing.

In the Kentucky Derby, Justify ran a strong race in the pouring rain over a very sloppy racetrack to beat Good Magic and Audible 2½ and 4 lengths.

In the Preakness, the track was again very sloppy, but the finish was



Enthusiastic connections greet Catholic Boy after his Travers victory. Photo: Chelsea Durand/NYRA.com

quite different. The D. Wayne Lukas-trained Bravazo, who went off at 15/1, closed seven lengths from fifth at the top of the stretch to be beaten a half a length on the wire. The 25/1 chance Tenfold, trained by Steve Asmussen, was just beaten a neck by Bravazo in third. Good Magic at 7/2 was a neck behind Tenfold in fourth. Justify may have dodged a Triple Crown bullet or two to win the second leg of the Triple Crown.

It appeared as though things might be a little easier for Justify, the 4/5 the post-time favorite, in the Belmont. Remarkably, one of the leading contenders was a Chad Brown horse, named for the New England Patriot all-star tight end, Gronkowski, who had run exclusively on synthetic surfaces in the UK and had never raced on a dirt track and had never raced beyond a mile.

In the end, Justify went to the front and never looked back. That said, Gronkowski closed from over

15 lengths back with a moderate pace up front to finish second, beaten less than two lengths, a similar distance ahead of the 5/1 second favorite Hofburg, trained by Bill Mott.

Make no mistake, Bob Baffert and Justify did everything they had to do to win the Triple Crown. However, in my view, a Triple Crown win, as rare as they are, does not mean an Eclipse award comes along automatically as part of the package.

I became further convinced of that when watching Catholic Boy, trained by Jonathan Thomas, win the Travers by four lengths at Saratoga on Saturday.

This performance was arguably as impressive as any by Justify during the Triple Crown.

Catholic Boy's body of work is unique, and impressive. His overall record is six wins in ten starts. Four of those wins have come on the turf, with three Graded stakes wins (the G3 With Anticipation, the G3

Penine Ridge and the G1 Belmont Derby), and two on dirt, both Graded stakes (the G2 Remsen and the G1 Travers). In fact, his performances against horses who ran against Justify compares favorably - horses including Bravazo, Vino Rosso, Tenfold, Gronkowski and Good Magic. Take a look for yourself.

A key point is that there is still a lot of important racing ahead of us this year - and that must mean something when we're looking to dish out Eclipse awards.

Catholic Boy, of course, will need to continue to perform at a high level for Eclipse consideration. Good Magic could also be in the mix if he can regroup from his Travers loss and rebound with a major G1 victory this fall.

A four-month racing career can certainly win a Triple Crown, but a longer, more productive career may be better for the industry as a whole, and perhaps more deserving when it comes to handing out Eclipse awards.

What this magnificent Thoroughbred has achieved could have a lasting impact on the breed

Chris Smith | August 31, 2018



Owner-breeder Bjorn Nielsen with Stradivarius after the 4-year-old won the final leg of the WH Stayers' Million at York. Photo: Healy Racing/Racingfotos.com

The Welcome to Yorkshire Ebor Festival at York last week certainly lived up to its billing as one of the great race meetings of the European year.

Three outstanding Group 1s produced major performances:

- Roaring Lion went clear at the head of the ten-furlong turf pecking order when smoothly dispatching probably the strongest field assembled anywhere in 2018 in the Juddmonte International.
- Sea Of Class was so impressive in the Darley Yorkshire Oaks that most bookmakers have promoted her ahead of Enable, Cracksman and everything else to favoritism for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.
- Alpha Delphini and Mabs Cross - two barely considered outsiders - turned the formbook inside out when crossing the line hardly a nose apart in a blistering renewal of the Coolmore Nunthorpe when the race was supposed to be a showdown between sprint superstars Blue Point and Battaash.



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When insurance brokers Weatherbys Hamilton announced the Million back in January, they described stayers as “the real Trojans of the turf”.

So what was the outstanding moment at an outstanding festival? Which performance is the one the sport should cherish for years, decades even, to come? Which horse achieved something that has the potential to leave a lasting mark on the development of the Thoroughbred?

Well it was none of the above.

The irony is that the G2 Weatherbys Hamilton Lonsdale Cup was not only not the big race of the day on Friday but that it was merely the second event on the Nunthorpe undercard, a backing singer for a headline act synonymous with the long-term trend in the sport that

this particular Lonsdale had been tasked with confronting.

The victory of Stradivarius in the Lonsdale was remarkable not just because it meant he won the inaugural Weatherbys Hamilton Stayers’ Million, a prize designed ultimately to encourage owners, trainers and breeders to think a little bit more about stamina and a little bit less about speed, to try to jam a foot in the door that has been closing gradually on the development of the staying racehorse.

When insurance brokers Weatherbys Hamilton announced the Million back in January, they

described stayers as “the real Trojans of the turf”.

They added, “Their battles over nearly two miles or more have made magnificent spectacles and live long in the memory. Many feel that it is imperative for the health and diversity of the European Thoroughbred that these bloodlines are perpetuated and cherished. It is hoped that the WH Stayers’ Million will help rekindle the fortunes of the stayer.”

It looked a laudable attempt, but surely it was too tough an ask, too unrealistic. What kind of ‘Trojan of the turf’ could there be who could win major a stamina test in May



Presentation time: Frankie Dettori and the £1 million with, from left, Weatherbys Hamilton CEO Charles Hamilton, WH chairman Roger Weatherby (who is also Senior Steward of the Jockey Club), and Stradivarius' groom, Surinder Parmar, and trainer, John Gosden. Photo: Weatherbys Hamilton

(one of four exacting Group races had to be won even to qualify for a crack at the Million), an even more major one in June (the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot), another hugely severe examination in July (the Goodwood Cup) and yet another one just three and a half weeks later (the Lonsdale)? How close to impossible was that?

Remember, before the WH Million was even thought of, no horse had ever won this same combination of races in a lifetime, let alone a single year. In the past, a 'stayers' triple crown' had been acknowledged involving the Gold Cup, the Goodwood Cup and the Doncaster Cup in September, another three weeks of recovery time after the Ebor Festival. This was won in 1995 by the Mark Johnston-trained powerhouse Double Trigger, but he had not been required to win a qualifying race. Previously, it had been achieved two years running (1979-80) by the phenomenal

Henry Cecil-trained Le Moss, but again he didn't have to win anything beforehand.

Back in January, the worry was that any momentum the concept generated would wither into nothing as soon as the Million became unwinable. Which could easily be after Royal Ascot.

And then along came Stradivarius.

He won the G2 Yorkshire Cup comfortably enough over a mile and threequarters in May, prevailed in the Gold Cup over two and a half miles after a gruelling, sustained battle with the excellent French stayer Vazirabad and the similarly excellent Irish (now German) one Torcedor, was pushed to the same limits by Torcedor again over two miles at Goodwood and went to York with another two miles (plus half a furlong extra for good measure) and eight opponents between him and the £1 million bonus.

No wonder the strain was beginning to tell. "I wouldn't say he

was at his sparkling best today," trainer John Gosden said after the race. Indeed, the son of Sea The Stars looked in trouble three furlongs out before knuckling down under Frankie Dettori to grind out a victory over Count Octave.

The race - both before and after - received good, solid publicity, but it was confined largely to the specialist media, and even there it never properly challenged the Nunthorpe for top billing. No-one broke ranks. They all knew it was a big deal, but few of them recognised that it was a really, really, really big deal.

Whereas it used to be the case that Derby winners would naturally go on to contest Ascot Gold Cups, it is now ingrained in all of us to think of stayers as second-raters, as failed classic contenders, as animals with little or no value to the breeding industry.

We should think again.



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It is extremely gratifying that Stradivarius' success in the first year of the Weatherbys Hamilton Stayers' Million has been such a huge boost for the stayers

Stradivarius is a magnificent Thoroughbred, a sublime achievement by owner-breeder Bjorn Nielson. His WH Million is as notable as the four Gold Cups of Yeats, the back-to-back Arcs of Treve, the five King Georges of Kauto Star, even the Triple Crowns of Justify and American Pharoah.

As for turning the tide on the issue of breeding for stamina, of course, it is merely the first pebble in the pond. But the ripples are now strong. Now we know it can be done. Now owners, trainers and breeders know there's a £1 million

bonus out there that might actually be winnable. It may be barely perceptible, but perhaps the stature of the stayer has risen a notch.

Thankfully the initiative will continue. Charlies Hamilton, the Weatherbys Hamilton CEO, said, "Changing the behaviour of the marketplace doesn't happen overnight. It is extremely gratifying that Stradivarius' success in the first year of the Weatherbys Hamilton Stayers' Million has been such a huge boost for the stayers, but to put them back to where they belong is going to require staying

power from everyone who shares that ambition.

"Given the fantastic reception that the Million has had from the industry and the public, we have every intention of continuing with the WH Stayers' Million in 2019 and beyond, but we want time to reflect on whether there are any embellishments that we can make before announcing our plans."

Bjorn Nielsen has indicated that his 'Trojan of the turf' will stay in training as a 5-year-old, probably to contest the same races. That should keep those ripples spreading.

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The uplifting story of this young stallion's remarkable return from death's door

Michele MacDonald | August 17, 2018



Lord Nelson at Spendthrift Farm now: "He always handled himself so well, and he always gave you a good feeling about things," says general manager Ned Toffey. Photo: Michele MacDonald

In the dark days of January in 2017, when temperatures flirted with freezing and several snowstorms wrapped Lexington, Kentucky, in a numbing embrace, a chestnut horse was standing in the Spendthrift Farm quarantine barn with his front feet in ice, waging a tense war to survive.

As the fiery plague of laminitis continued an onslaught that began in his right front foot, the ice was a first line of defense, but the battle was exacting an increasing cost to the horse's spirit.

These were the moments, with winter wind gusting ominously outside, that Wayne Howard feared the worst.

Spendthrift's stallion manager will never forget those nights and days when he and the horse, multiple Grade



Exciting prospect: "He's got the looks, he's got the pedigree, and he more than demonstrated the ability," says Spendthrift general manager Ned Toffey. "What else could you ask for?" Photo: Michele MacDonald

1 winner Lord Nelson, grimly grappled with the lurking demons of death.

"This was the most trying time for 'Nelson' and me," Howard said. "We're icing both his feet around the clock — on average, he was spending 14 to 16 hours a day standing in ice tubs. Every time he stood up, we would ice them for three to four hours at a time.

"The stress of the constant icing and the pain from laminitis finally started to take its toll on Nelson — he was over it. Although he was responding to this treatment, it was not enough," Howard continued. "And he was telling us so."

While horsemen always feel a spark of the miraculous in any horse's recovery from the clutches of laminitis, some cases are graver than others. Lord Nelson had experienced rotation of the coffin bone down into the sole of his foot, the stage that can lead to euthanasia if the stricken animal

cannot endure the pain incurred by standing.

His survival thus can be counted as a huge victory against the disease. But this story is not one merely of survival.

Lord Nelson has gone on to thrive in a normal life as a breeding stallion, defying expectations in his initial season at stud this year.

The now 6-year-old son of Pulpit recovered so well that he was originally set to cover about 80 mares, as long as his health remained strong following the crisis and follow-up care.

He became so robust, with the continuing supervision of the Spendthrift staff and Dr. Scott Morrison, an equine podiatrist with Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital, that he was able to serve 127 mares and maintain a normal routine alongside his new neighbors in the stallion barn, top sires Malibu Moon and Into Mischief.

"He's a remarkable horse, I think, to pull through the laminitis the way he did," declared Spendthrift general manager Ned Toffey. "He was fortunate to have the best of care. But at the end of the day, you can't do it without the horse, and this is a horse who has just incredible fortitude. He's mentally really, really tough. He has a wonderful disposition and he's just very, very intelligent, and he was a great patient."

Displaying the mettle that would define him

Lord Nelson's struggle for life began in early November, 2016, when an infection caused by a cut in his right front leg flared, causing him to be scratched from the Breeders' Cup Sprint, for which he was the early second choice. With four consecutive wins under his girth at the time, the last three in Grade 1 races, he had been on a trajectory to capture the Eclipse Award as America's top sprinter.



Lord Nelson (Rafael Bejarano, nearside) has a neck to spare over Texas Red in the G2 San Vicente Stakes at Santa Anita in February 2015. Benoit photo

Bred in 2012 by Clearsky Farms, the Lexington nursery where eventual champion Arrogate was born the following spring, Lord Nelson was sold for \$340,000 to John Fort of Peachtree Stable at the Keeneland September yearling sale.

Victorious in his debut at Del Mar in July 2014, defeating nine rivals including eventual Graded stakes winner and frequent G1 contender Calculator, Lord Nelson returned to be overwhelmed by American Pharoah in the G1 Frontrunner Stakes on dirt at Santa Anita Park.

But stakes wins soon followed, and, after turning three, Lord Nelson displayed some of the mettle that would ultimately define him when he rallied after a slow start and defeated Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner Texas Red by a neck in the San Vicente Stakes.

Later that year, following a third in the G1 Malibu Stakes, won by free-running champion Runhappy, Lord Nelson was acquired by Spendthrift

from Fort. Spendthrift owner B. Wayne Hughes opted to leave the colt, who he described as so good-looking that "he could win a beauty contest", with trainer Bob Baffert rather than immediately stand him at stud.

The dividends secured with that roll of the dice proved to be an undefeated campaign in 2016 that featured the G1 Triple Bend, Bing Crosby and Santa Anita Sprint Championship Stakes triumphs.

A gritty runner who often won his races narrowly, battling to the finish, Lord Nelson reeled off some blazing times, such as his seven-furlong Triple Bend in 1:21.04 and his six-furlong Bing Crosby in 1:07.65, with the latter a daylight victory by four lengths.

Baffert praised Lord Nelson as a horse who "tries so hard", a characteristic that would become even more essential when he arrived at Spendthrift fighting the infection that that led to his withdrawal from

the Breeders' Cup and the end of his racing career. His record stood at seven wins in 13 starts with earnings of \$958,271.

'Such a severe onset'

As Howard recalls, Lord Nelson was sore in both front legs when he came to the farm but had not shown any changes in radiographs of his feet.

During the ensuing weeks, he was limited to some light walking exercise, about one lap of a small paddock and a few hours in a pen, where he could graze and move around a bit to stimulate healing circulation in his forelegs without provoking any damage in his feet.

Then, after Lord Nelson experienced what Howard described as a slight soreness in his right front foot, laminitis catapulted him into the life-and-death struggle and hours in ice.

"Usually with laminitis, the quicker you can jump on it, the better. In



Lord Nelson and Rafael Bejarano winning the G1 Triple Bend Stakes from Subtle Indian at Santa Anita in June 2016. Benoit photo

Lord Nelson's case, it was such a severe onset," Toffey said. "Any time you can get on it and essentially get that horse's feet in ice, the better shot you're going to have moving forward. We put [horses diagnosed with laminitis] in ice for about three days, straight. If you've got to have somebody sit up with them all night, then that's what you've got to do. If you can do that, you've got a much better chance of stopping it."

On January 20, last year, Spendthrift announced that Lord Nelson would miss the entire 2017 breeding season.

"We understand the seriousness of this disease," Toffey said in a news release. "Mr. Hughes is committed to always doing what's best for the horse, and that means Lord Nelson will be withheld from breeding mares this season. Our team has notified all of the breeders from his full book, and our focus is now 100 percent on bringing him back to good health."

As a highly accomplished son of

Pulpit — a sires of sires such as Tapit, Sky Mesa and Lucky Pulpit — out of a daughter of Argentine champion and American G1 winner Miss Linda, Lord Nelson was a valuable prospect for Spendthrift, "one of the most exciting prospects we've brought here," Toffey said.

Yet even more than his credentials, his intelligent tenacity earned the respect of those who worked alongside him to save his life so that he and the farm could realize his potential as a stallion.

"One of the challenges with laminitis is the horse being able to give themselves a break — get off their feet, but not giving up and staying down," Toffey said. "When he needed to give himself a break, he gave himself a break and got off his feet."

Lord Nelson did everything right in taking care of himself, continuing to show interest in his feed after his rests, even while at the peak of pain, and thus never allowing himself to further weaken.

"When he was up, he was always eating well," Toffey said. "You could count on one hand the number of times you felt that maybe his eye wasn't [bright]."

"But there certainly were times we felt that this was nip and tuck," he added. "This was a long, drawn-out process, and we were getting to a point where we were pretty concerned."

Spendthrift opted to call on Morrison to do a tenotomy on both of Lord Nelson's front legs. The procedure cuts the deep digital flexor tendon in the mid-cannon bone region to alleviate pain by decreasing the pull the tendon normally exerts through its connection to the coffin bone.

Obviously, once a tenotomy — performed under local anesthesia while the patient stands — is done, a horse will be limited in physical activity although, optimally, still able to carry on for breeding. The almost immediate relief from pain can jump-start recovery, and that's what the Spendthrift staff hoped to achieve.



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'The turning point for Lord Nelson'

"I'm not sure there was a day where many of us didn't have in the back of our minds that we may get to that point [when euthanasia would be a consideration]," Toffey said. "By the time we did the tenotomy, we felt like our backs were against the wall and if we didn't do this that we may well lose him.

"You always know that's a possibility. Any time you get a laminitis, it's a devastating condition. I think any of us who have been in the horse business for a while have dealt with it. If you manage a horse farm, you're going to lose some horses to laminitis. I don't think anyone who manages horses ever takes that situation lightly. As soon as you get into using that word, laminitis, you know that it is life-threatening," he added.

The tenotomies proved to be, as Howard reflected, "the turning point for Lord Nelson and his recovery.

"You could see in his eye that he was feeling better and was more comfortable even before actual signs of improvement in his weight-bearing and laminae," he said.

"From the time we did that procedure, there was just a slow, steady improvement in the horse," Toffey observed. "That, combined with all the other good care, seemed to be what allowed his coffin bones to stabilize and for him to start on an upward cycle of growing more hoof and growing more sole depth and gradually getting more comfortable."

'You agonize over every subtle change'

The months that followed the tenotomies were filled with small steps. As the other Spendthrift stallions fulfilled their duties in the breeding shed in 2017, Lord Nelson had to be patient during a lengthy process of healing and adapting

that included numerous fittings of special shoes featuring a heavy rubber pad designed to relieve pressure on his tender soles.

"It took pretty much every bit of that time for us to get where we were comfortable with him to be able to show him to breeders in the fall," Toffey said. "You agonize over every subtle change. The guys in our stallion department, and Wayne Howard in particular, were in tune with all those subtle changes.

"This horse always handled himself so well, and he always gave you a good feeling about things," Toffey continued. "It was easy to be optimistic about him, and the number of days we weren't were pretty few and far between."

When Lord Nelson was occasionally allowed to come out of the barn last fall to visit with breeders interested in his progress, his coat was shiny and his eyes alert, but he walked slowly, almost tentatively.

Howard and his crew took their time while easing Lord Nelson back into a more normal routine. Long hours were spent hand-grazing the horse within in the confines of one of the smallest of the Spendthrift stallion paddocks so that he would be become accustomed to consuming grass and the overall environment to which he would be introduced.

Lord Nelson: “What a heart he has, and he is so intelligent. Without a doubt, that is what saved him,” says Spendthrift stallion manager Wayne Howard. Lord Nelson: “What a heart he has, and he is so intelligent. Without a doubt, that is what saved him,” says Spendthrift stallion manager Wayne Howard

“We let him get used to the paddock to try to smooth that transition. But, at some point, you have to unhook the lead shank and cross your fingers and say a little prayer,” Toffey said, recalling the trepidation before Lord Nelson was turned out for the first time. “But again, he handled that so well. Once we got him to that point, the setbacks have been very, very minor. He’s done remarkably well.

“Before [the 2018] breeding season came around, he would have about a 100-yard walk from his stall to his paddock every day,” Toffey said. “He’s essentially — other than wearing very expensive shoes — been on a normal routine since before the start of breeding season this year. That’s where being so good-natured mentally has helped him, even after being locked in a stall for so long. He did a little running when he first went out, but, again, he was smart about taking care of himself.”

In trying to address every situation to safeguard the horse, Spendthrift added about eight inches of shredded rubber to the floor of its breeding shed so that when Lord Nelson began covering mares, he would have a softer landing for his front feet than the already cushiony rubberized brick pavers that had been employed.

Before the breeding season officially began, Lord Nelson was introduced to his first test mare in what was a critical juncture for Spendthrift. Yet, continuing along the extraordinary arc of his life, Lord Nelson handled the assignment “like he had been doing it for years — very professional and on his first jump,” Howard said.

“All the hard work by everyone paid off. It was great to see him finally breeding.”



Lord Nelson: “What a heart he has, and he is so intelligent. Without a doubt, that is what saved him,” says Spendthrift stallion manager Wayne Howard

‘I couldn’t be more optimistic about his future’

As the season unfolded, Spendthrift attempted to spread out mares for Lord Nelson, who stood for a \$25,000 fee but was not included in the farm’s Share the Upside program due to the initial uncertainty about his condition, so that he would not be too stressed on any one day.

“We had initially talked about having 80 seasons we would sell, and we would breed some number of mares ourselves. If we felt like 80 was all he could handle, then we wouldn’t breed any, and if we felt like he could handle more, we had a group of mares picked out to go to him,” Toffey said.

Lord Nelson was able to handle the breeding activity so well, while maintaining his condition superbly, that Spendthrift was able to accommodate breeder demand and add more outside mares to his

book while also assigning 16 of its own mares to the stallion. Howard described Lord Nelson’s initial season as “a complete success”.

“I think certainly there were probably some people that had reservations about everything that he had been through, but by and large breeders supported him. This was a horse that a lot of people were really, really excited about breeding to,” Toffey said. “The way he has handled things, and continues to handle things, knock on wood, I couldn’t be more optimistic about his future.

“He ticks so many of the boxes of the things we like to see. I’m delighted that we’ve been able to breed — from almost a selfish standpoint — a significant number of our own mares to him because I just think he’s a wonderful stallion prospect. He’s got the looks, he’s got the pedigree, and he more than demonstrated the ability. What else could you ask for?”

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Oasis Dream

Sire of **PRETTY POLLYANNA (TF 118)**
(Prix Morny Gr.1 & Duchess Of Cambridge Stakes Gr.2)



‘Striding out more assuredly’

On a recent sunny summer day, Lord Nelson emerged from the Spendthrift stallion barn to meet visitors while displaying a muscled physique, a curious expression and shining coat and eyes. He no longer shuffles cautiously, but strides out more assuredly, particularly on the farm's lush grass.

When he is turned out, he enjoys the freedom and the fresh air, but remains prudent, even while those nearby are thundering across their paddocks.

“He canters when he notices Into Mischief next to him galloping around, but even now has the smarts to know that galloping is not a speed he should participate in,” said Howard.

After all the “little victories and defeats ... the ebb and flow of emotions,” as Toffey put it, over the 14 months involved in saving Lord Nelson so he could pass along his

courage to another generation, the people who stood beside him could not be more impressed with his character. There is a deep fondness between them, a near reverence for how he fought to gain more days in this world.

“He’s just smart and tough. It’s hard to overestimate how important those qualities are,” Toffey said. “Yet, and maybe this is an old Joe Palmer line, your kids could lead him on a silk string. His personality is really exceptional.”

‘Running out of carrots was not an option’

Howard said, “Lord Nelson was an amazing patient. He took care of himself, never doing any more than he thought he could do without hurting himself. I cannot believe how his attitude was. He was so kind considering all the treatments, bandages, constant

medications and being in a stall for so many months.

“What a heart he has, and he is so intelligent. Without a doubt, that is what saved him: he knew when he should lay down and rest. He is a very smart horse, kind, but no pushover — he’s still all man,” Howard continued before adding another small insight into their relationship.

“He did become very dependent on receiving a carrot before and after any particular treatment. Running out of carrots was not an option,” he said.

In these days, the transformation is complete. Hope for survival has evolved into the promise of what may be awaiting in the future.

“If he stamps his foals with his heart, intelligence and athleticism, we will be hearing a lot more about Lord Nelson,” Howard said.

Stallions on parade: when do you ever get to see such an impressive array as this?

Kristen Manning | September 02, 2018, 2018



One of the best known of the stallions on show was new sire Highland Reel on his first shuttle down under. "We are privileged to be standing this horse in Victoria," said Swettenham Stud's Adam Sangster. All photos by Kristen Manning

There were renowned international stars at the beginning of their stallion careers - like Highland Reel, Frosted, Toronado and Brazen Beau. There were Melbourne Cup winners like Amercain and Fiorente. There were established sires like Bel Esprit (father of Black Caviar), Sepoy and Warrior's Reward. No wonder the fans flocked to see them. Kristen Manning was among those who enjoyed the glorious back-to-back stallion parades at Sun Stud, Spendthrift Australia, Swettenham Stud and Darley Victoria. She provides the words - and the pictures.



Fiorente: the 2013 Melbourne Cup winner was a crowd favourite at the Sun Stud stallion parade

There may still be a definite chill in the Victorian air, but, with the arrival of the season's first foals there is a taste of spring about, and breeders across the state were in optimistic mood heading to the various stallion parades last week.

One of the year's most popular events is Sun Stud's annual Friday afternoon get-together, compered by racecaller Bryan Martin. It was well attended by broodmare owners, trainers and racing fans, who admired the Kerrie-based farm's strong roster of ten well credentialled stallions.

Leading the way was the 19-years-young Bel Esprit, the dual G1 winner best known as the sire of unbeaten superstar Black Caviar. Back from a stint in Queensland, the dappled bay was in fine order and, judging by his proud strut around the parade ring, he thought the show was put on just for him.

Not to be outdone, 6-year-old listed winner Ready For Victory,

son of outstanding shuttler More Than Ready from the family of local champ Rubiton, also put on a show, though he did stand still long enough for a quick snapshot of his handsome head.

Bel Esprit's son Moshe, a full-brother to Black Caviar, is no wallflower either, another happy to show off to onlookers.

There is always a certain aura surrounding winners of Australia's most iconic race, the Melbourne Cup, and there were plenty of oohs and aahs as classy 11-year-old Fiorente, the 2013 winner, made his way around the parade ring.

Also always popular is the reliable Magnus, G1 sprinting son of Flying Spur and the fast G2 winner Scandinavia, grandam of Black Caviar. Popular with breeders and trainers in the sales ring and on the track, he has been well represented by 15 stakes winners, including the G1 gallopers Malaguerra, Magnifisio and Great Shot.

One of Victoria's most promising young stallions, Fighting Sun, by the late Northern Meteor out of the Australasian Oaks winner Irish Darling, had the cameras snapping with his scope and strength always impressing.

Flashy chestnuts always catch the eye and Australian Guineas winner Palentino - who has let down nicely as he prepares for his second season at stud - is no exception.

Down from Sun Stud's Queensland base for the first time is the four-time stakes winner Love Conquers All, a horse with a definite stamp of his popular sire Mossman, who retired from stud duties only recently.

A couple of grandsons of Danehill's influential son Redoute's Choice rounded off the Sun Stud parade: Not A Single Doubt's G3 winner Squamosa and the newly retired G2 sprinter Thronum, by the record-breaking Snitzel.

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Palatino: the Australian Guineas winner got a little playful at the Sun Stud stallion parade



Thronum: the newly-retired G2-winning son of Snitzel cut a dignified presence at the Sun Stud parade

Hailing from the family of Street Cry and Shamardal, Thronum was a dignified parader, calmly taking in his surroundings as he stood still for admirers and photographers.

Happy having enjoyed the Sun Stud hospitality of good food and wine, much of the crowd then headed down the road to Spendthrift's Australian base, where the coats of their six young stallions shimmered in a timely burst of sunshine.

First on show was the G1 Spring Champion Stakes winner Hampton Court, whose first crop have just turned two. "We are happy with the

stables that his first foals have ended up in," said Spendthrift Australia's general manager, Garry Cuddy, "and we look forward to seeing them hit the track in the coming months."

There was plenty of crowd appreciation for Jimmy Creed, a horse who always catches the eye with his gleaming coat. Described by Cuddy as "one of the most exciting young stallions in North America", he has "phenomenal stats - 13 percent stakes winners to winners and 16 percent black-type horses to runners".

Lightly raced G3 winner Swear, by Redoute's Choice, still had a racy look

about him last year but has come on beautifully after one year at stud. "He was our best supported first season sire and we are looking forward to seeing his first foals this spring," Cuddy said.

With his size and power there is no missing Warrior's Reward, whose success in the United States has caught local attention. "With 65 percent winners-to-runners across five crops of racing age, there is a pretty good chance that this guy will get you a winner," said Cuddy, adding, "He is having his best year in the Northern Hemisphere with seven individual stakes winners."

"We have plenty to look forward to with 130 2-year-olds getting ready to hit the track," he said.



Hampton Court: the G1 winner attracted plenty of attention at the Spendthrift Australia stallion parade. His first crop have just turned two

There are plenty of fans of Golden Slipper hero Sebring around and Victorians are happy to have one his sons at stud, especially as the G2 winner Gold Standard has such a look of his sire.

“He is the image of Sebring,” Cuddy said, also noting that Gold Standard has plenty of family strength, with his dam being the tough dual G3 winner Coniston Gem. “Gold Standard offers breeders a very good opportunity to breed to a quality horse at an affordable fee.”

On the subject of sons of popular stallions, there was also Overshare, G3-winning son of I Am Invincible (whose fee has shot up from \$11,000 in his debut season to \$192,500 this year) from the immediate family of Japanese stars Cesario, Epiphaneia and Leontes.

“He is a multiple stakes winner at 1,200m from family boasting five champions within three generations. And, with looks to die for, Overshare has everything that we have been told breeders look for.”

Racing people across the country

spent Saturday being spellbound by the mighty Winx and she was, of course, a major topic of conversation as Victorian breeders headed to Swettenham Stud on Sunday morning.

Many present were fans of dual G1 winning shuttler Toronado, who has made such an encouraging start to his stud career in the north with his first locally bred 2-year-olds making their way to leading stables, having been very well received at the major sales.

Looking even more imposing than 12 months ago, Toronado continues to excite Swettenham’s Adam Sangster, who has long been a fan of his sire, High Chaparral. “We have plenty to look forward to with 130 2-year-olds getting ready to hit the track,” he said.

Sangster is also optimistic about the future of Melbourne Cup hero American, who always wows onlookers; as impressive at stud as he was at the races, where so many were captivated by his strength and beauty.

Very happy with the first foals by

G1sprinter Rebel Dane on the ground, Sangster welcomed the big group of that horse’s owners who made the trek to Swettenham to see their favourite horse.

Rueing the small issue carried by Puissance de Lune when he was among the favourites in the 2013 W.S Cox Plate, Sangster discussed the popular grey’s first crop of 2-year-olds, noting that they are in a number of successful stables, including the horse’s own trainer, Darren Weir.

Sangster admits to having a favourite on the roster and, as proud breeder of the dual G1-winning sprinter/miler Trust In A Gust, he is entitled to be fond of the chestnut, who seems to get more handsome each year.

“We are privileged to be standing this horse in Victoria,” Sangster said of the globe-trotting seven-time G1 winner Highland Reel, Europe’s all-time leading money-winner, whose family is so well known in



Jimmy Creed: “one of the most exciting young stallions in North America”, according to Spendthrift Australia’s general manager, Garry Cuddy. No wonder he’s smiling!



Warrior's Reward: with his size and power, he was among the most imposing on the Spendthrift Australia parade



Americain: the 2012 Melbourne Cup winner, a picture of strength and beauty at the Swettenham Stud stallion parade

Australia with his locally bred G1-placed dam Hveger being a daughter of the great matriarch Circles Of Gold, AJC Oaks-winning dam of Elvstroem and Haradasun.

Highland Reel, whose G1 wins included the Breeders' Cup Turf, the Hong Kong Vase (twice) and the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes, is back in Australia for the first time since he ran third to Winx in the 2015 Cox Plate.

From Swettenham in the morning to Darley in the afternoon, the latter's parade at first threatened by a nasty winter squall, which fortunately soon disappeared, allowing the large crowd to emerge from the tents to take their place around the parade ring.

The recently retired Stradbroke Handicap winner Impending was first on display and the scopey son of Lonhro was admired by all. But it is a case of too late for those hoping to get a mare into his harem - the 'book full' sign went up early.

"We are delighted to have him in Victoria," enthused Darley Victoria's general manager, Andy Makiv, proud the high-class sprinter is a Darley homebred.

As is Exceed And Excel's dual Group winner Kuroshio, who was one of the biggest show-offs of the day, arching his neck as he pranced right around the ring.

New to Victoria having stood six seasons in New South Wales, four-time G1 winner Sepoy is another whose book is already closed, with Makiv noting, "local breeders have been flocking to him."

In such fine fettle at 18, Zabeel's unbeaten son, Reset, was quick off the mark when the handler's chain snapped - and he was off and running! Little cause for alarm, however, with Darley's expert staff quick to react and he was soon caught, happy with his little escapade.

With his dashing looks dual G1-winning sprinter Brazen Beau was a crowd favourite and he is well liked by

breeders, serving 392 mares over his first three seasons. And trainers love them too, the son of I Am Invincible performing extremely well at the sales.

G1 winner Holler has let down well since his first season last year. He is a horse Makiv describes as being "our best-value stallion".

The quality of mares served by Street Cry's two-times G1 winner Street Boss has increased in recent years, making this spring, said Makiv, "a great year to use him".

Another with a gleaming coat, the chestnut paraded proudly. Maybe he had an inkling of the exploits the day before of Street Cry's famous daughter.

Last by no means least at Darley was Frosted, whose first local foals are already impressing. A horse who just looks high class - which of course he was - the multiple G1 winner is the only son of Tapit at stud in Australia.



Toronado: the dual G1-winning son of High Chaparral provides a photo opportunity for the crowd at the Swettenham Stud stallion parade



Trust In A Gust: the dual G1 winning sprinter/miler is Adam Sangster's favourite on the Swettenham Stud roster



Holler: a few high spirits from Darley Victoria's "best-value stallion", according to general manager, Andy Makiv

TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



The Thoroughbred Racing Industry's ranking system

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TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



02 September 2018

Jockeys

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Ryan Moore	Great Britain	1121
2	Mike E Smith	USA	1075
3	Frankie Dettori	Great Britain	1058
4	Mirco Demuro	Japan	1054
5	Hugh Bowman	Australia	1052
6	William Buick	Great Britain	1048
7	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1044
8	Christophe-Patrice Lemaire	Japan	1035
8	Javier Castellano	USA	1035
10	Joel Rosario	USA	1028
11	Flavien Prat	USA	1021
12	James Doyle	Great Britain	1018
13	Joao Moreira	Australia	1017
14	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1016
15	Christophe Soumillon	France	1015

Trainers

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	A P O'Brien	Ireland	1082
2	Bob Baffert	USA	1073
3	Charlie Appleby	Great Britain	1067
4	Chad C Brown	USA	1065
5	John Gosden	Great Britain	1050
6	Darren Weir	Australia	1040
7	Sir Michael Stoute	Great Britain	1025
8	Saeed bin Suroor	Great Britain	1024
9	A Fabre	France	1021
10	Chris Waller	Australia	1017
11	A S Cruz	Hong Kong	1006
11	Mark Casse	USA	1006
13	J Size	Hong Kong	1005
14	Todd Pletcher	USA	1004
15	Jerry Hollendorfer	USA	1003

Owners

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Coolmore Partners	Ireland	1092
2	Godolphin	Australia	1068
3	Magic Bloodstock Et Al	Australia	1044
4	Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum	Great Britain	1038
5	Juddmonte Farms / Prince Khalid Abdulla	Great Britain	1033
6	WinStar Farm Et Al	USA	1028
7	China Horse Club Et Al	Australia	1022
8	H H Aga Khan	France	1014
8	Head of Plains Et Al	USA	1014
8	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	Japan	1014
11	Hajime Satomi	Japan	1013
12	Patrick Kwok Et Al	Hong Kong	1009
13	Al Shaqab Racing	France	1006
14	Stonestreet Stables	USA	1000
15	Hronis Racing LLC	USA	999

Sires

Rank	Name	Modal Country	Points
1	Dubawi	Great Britain	1075
2	Galileo	Ireland	1074
3	Scat Daddy	USA	1054
4	Frankel	Great Britain	1050
5	Deep Impact	Japan	1044
6	Kitten's Joy	USA	1030
6	Sea The Stars	Great Britain	1030
8	I Am Invincible	Australia	1028
9	Dark Angel	Great Britain	1027
9	Snitzel	Australia	1027
11	Curlin	USA	1026
11	Quality Road	USA	1026
13	Ghostzapper	USA	1022
14	Medaglia D'oro	USA	1020
15	Fastnet Rock	Australia	1017