

WEEKLY WRAP



French 2000 Guineas presentation | Emma Berry

by Emma Berry

Deauville's brief sojourn as the home of the French Guineas has come to an end and the return of the country's first two Classics to their rightful home at Longchamp will be rued in some quarters. From the rout of The Gurkha (Ire) (Galileo {Ire}) in last year's G1 Poule d'Essai des Poulains to Sunday's tooth-and-nail tussle between **Brametot (Ire)** (Rajsaman {Fr}) and **Le Brivido (Fr)** (Siyouni {Fr}), there has been much to enjoy in uncomplicated races run over a straight mile.

Hard-luck stories are a fact of racing, but a number of trainers have expressed a desire for France Galop to attempt to lessen the potential for calamity by keeping the 'Poules' in Normandy. John Gosden was frank in his assessment of the problem during a press morning at his stables last month.

He said, "If you stand at the mile start at Longchamp, you shake your head that they can run a Classic race from there. If you're drawn above six you're history, as you have to stay straight. It's a desperate start, so we all had a vote in the bar at Deauville that we'd like to keep the Poules there forever because it's such a lovely straight track. Unfortunately, France Galop weren't too amused as they are building a new grandstand at Longchamp, but the mile start at Longchamp is a dreadful problem."

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EARLY SEASON MOMENTUM FOR MANOR HOUSE

By Kelsey Riley

For the team at Manor House Stables in Cheshire, there is perhaps no greater thrill in the game than winning races at their local Chester Racecourse. There was plenty of cause for celebration, then, when 2-year-old **Dragons Tail (Ire)** (Dragon Pulse {Ire}) broke his maiden at the meeting last Thursday for trainer Tom Dascombe and a partnership put together by Manor House co-owner Michael Owen.

Dragons Tail was bought as a yearling (lot 176) for €30,000 out of the Tattersalls Ireland September Yearling Sale by agent Ed Sackville, who said, "The guys up in Chester kind of have the mentality--not literally--but it's nearly the mentality that they'd rather win the Chester Derby trial than the actual Derby itself. They'd rather win the Agnes [Conditions S.] than [Royal Ascot's G2] Coventry. We're very lucky, we've got a very loyal base of local owners up there and they are passionate about anything to do with Chester." [Cont. p4](#)

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There is more to the Manor House story, however, than winning races at Chester. Dragons Tail is the team's second juvenile winner this month, with **Frozen Angel (Ire)** (Dark Angel {Ire}) having won at Ascot on May 3. In a two-part [TDN interview](#) in October, Owen spoke of his ambitions to improve the quality of the stock at Manor House. At €30,000, Dragons Tail was in the typical price range for the stable, while Frozen Angel ([lot 127](#)) was a larger gamble at £165,000 out of the Goffs UK Premier Yearling Sale last August.

"We were delighted with [Frozen Angel] because he cost £165,000 as a yearling," Sackville said. "We don't really get the opportunity to buy horses at that kind of price mark; we're usually averaging more around 50,000. It's great when we do get the chance to be able to buy a more high-end yearling. It's nice to think that we can do a good job."

Timeform figures show that, through last Friday, Frozen Angel is the highest-rated 2-year-old to have run in Europe during the early part of the season, with a figure of 102p. Dragons Tail received a mark of 92p, which puts him among the top five 2-year-old colts. Sackville said he recognizes that those positions will be difficult to maintain as the season goes on, but hopes that of the roughly 70 2-year-olds at Manor House, more may emerge in a similar mold to Frozen Angel and Dragons Tail.

Manor House Stables opened for business in 2007 under the ownership of former star footballer Michael Owen and Betfair co-founder Andrew Black, with Dascombe at the reins on the training end. The team's focus has historically been on early 2-year-olds, but the business plan has shifted somewhat over the last couple years. While they maintain a syndicate for precocious juveniles, the buying team made an effort last year to add some later maturing types to the roster.

"Certainly it's been the game plan for the yearlings we bought," Sackville said. "We bought yearlings by stallions such as New Approach, Sea the Stars, Nathaniel and Camelot. We bought yearlings by stallions like that with the view to try and have horses which can go on to be 3-year-old prospects as well as 2-year-olds."



Ed Sackville & Tom Dascombe at Tattersalls Ireland | [Racingfotos.com](#)

Looking back at Manor House's success, it isn't a surprise that they would want to cultivate that type of horse; the stable's best-ever horse was Owen's homebred **Brown Panther (GB)** (Shirocco {Ger}), winner of the 2011 King George V S. at Royal Ascot who went on to add the G1 Irish St Leger, G2 Dubai Gold Cup, G2 Goodwood Cup and a pair of Group 3s.

"Tom is more than capable of training that type of horse," Sackville said. "Let's not forget the best horse he's ever had was Brown Panther. We definitely have had the idea to buy more later-maturing horses and Tom is very good with that kind of horse."

Next on the agenda for Frozen Angel and Dragons Tail will be Royal Ascot, and Sackville noted the Royal meeting is also the target for the Dascombe-trained **Formidable Kitt (GB)** (Invincible Spirit {Ire}), who races as a homebred for Andrew Black's Chasemore Farm. Formidable Kitt is a daughter of Black's 2012 G2 Queen Mary S. winner Ceiling Kitty (GB) (Red Clubs {Ire}) and broke her maiden at first asking at Newmarket on Apr. 19.



Frozen Angel beat a dual winner at Ascot | [Racing Post](#)

"She's won her only start at Newmarket and has a Timeform of 87p, which puts her in the top five fillies," Sackville said. The agent also nominated **Rock Of Estonia (Ire)** (Rock Of Gibraltar {Ire}) as a 2-year-old to watch for Royal Ascot. The colt was a 90,000gns yearling purchase by Sackville's business partner, Alastair Donald, and has won both starts to date for trainer Charlie Hills.

As for the team at Manor House, they will be hoping their formula that has led to early season success will continue to reap rewards throughout the year.

"Tom had his best year last year and we want to try and do well on the back of that," Sackville said. "We have more numbers so we're hoping for the best."

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