

Fulfilling a dream

– the 1995 Sires Stakes 3yo Fillies Final

BY BEE PEARS

When this season's Sires Stakes 3yo Fillies Final is run, it will be 20 years since Dreamy Atom won her final on 13 January 1995 at Alexandra Park.

She was 5/7 in the betting, by no means the favourite after she had failed expectations in the Ladyship Mile the week previously. The honour of favouritism in the Sires Stakes went to Blazing Spirit, who came second in what was a very tight finish with two other overlooked runners Fear Me (6/6) and Esprit Lee (10/10). Following in order were Fancy Wishes, Flash Atom, That's A Franco, Love In Your Eyes, Stardust, Cluny, Ailsa Maude, Miss Mighty and Floria Tosca.

They were all good enough to make the final field of a top fillies race, but who went on to a successful career as a broodmare? Who is building a family of the future?

Twenty years on, we can get a better line on how their own foals and their grandsons and daughters are turning out on the track and in the breeding barn.

Dreamy Atom

The gold medal for "carrying on the line" goes to Dreamy Atom (Soky's Atom – Lumber Lie, breeder: V L Devery, Mrs D L Devery), who became the dam of the wonderful Western Dream, and has other daughters who are also creating branches with success. Her excellent racing career was an ideal foundation for a commercial broodmare, and she and the Deverys made the most of the opportunity, producing at least one outstanding foal (Western Dream), achieving a good ratio of starters and winners from foals, getting great prices for those they sold, and setting up some of her own daughters to carry on the line successfully.

Dreamy Atom had been an excellent 2yo, winning the 2yo Sires Stakes Fillies Final and taking out 2yo Pacing Filly of the Year, then carrying on to more success as a 3yo. She retired with a record of 21 starts, 6 wins and 4 places, and \$108,810.

Dreamy Atom has had 11 foals to date (8 fillies) and 8 of her 9 foals of racing age have been qualifiers or starters. Her high percentage of filly foals gives her the optimum chance of leaving more than one strong breeding branch.

Several of her daughters were successful on the racetrack and are breeding on well, including Happy Dreamer (by Son Of Afella) and Dream Royale (by Beach Towel) who raced in Australia for 22 wins and \$145,068, and already has three foals of racing age there, all by Mach Three, as well as an Art Major filly and a Rock N Roll Heaven colt (breeder: R J Watson). It's the Mach Three colt who is really

waving his hoof in the air. His name is Soho Lennon, and he has 7 wins from just 21 starts for the Gary Hall stable and is highly regarded by them.

Of course Dreamy Atom's best foal in stakes won and stakes-earning offspring is the outstanding Badlands Hanover mare Western Dream. This is a rare example of where a top filly goes on to produce a filly even better than herself – Western Dream took out both the 2yo and 3yo Pacer of the Year awards, as well as a rack of top fillies and mares races, a mile rate of 1.56.3 and stakes of \$336,361. She was retained by the Deverys for breeding. Her first foal is the very smart Western Cullen who was soon sold to Australia, ending up with 19 wins to date and almost half-a-million in stakes. Her second foal, a full sister called Cullen Time, sold at the 2011 sales for \$85,000 to Australia where she has had 29 starts for 3 wins and 10 places and is currently racing, but her future value as a broodmare is where the action will lie.

Western Dream is a relatively young broodmare, so there is plenty to look out for on the racetrack and at the sales in future – her next foal is a colt by Mach Three called Three Dreams, and the following filly by Christian Cullen called wasn't offered at the 2014 yearling sale, but a close relation was: a Bettor's Delight colt called Chase The Dream from Christian Dreamer, yet another daughter of Dreamy Atom, which sold for \$52,500 to Australian owners.

Dreamy Atom herself is still producing – the latest progeny are two fillies and a colt all by Bettor's Delight, and another Bettor's Delight due in December 2014.

Dreamy Atom's own maternal line is consistent but not outstanding. She is a great example of how one mare and some astute breeding can start to build a high performance breeding family for the future.

Esprit Lee

The silver medal goes to Esprit Lee (Vance Hanover – Minbar Lee, breeder: B J Simon, D C Good) who is the grandam of Isaiah. Esprit Lee carried on racing until she was a 6yo, then went on to have 8 foals (5 fillies) for 5 qualifiers/starters, for breeders Mrs G E Carey and T W Carey. They gave her every chance of success with top quality sires, and a couple of them (Christian Vance and Lee Cully) raced successfully in Australia. The Christian Cullen mare Lee Cully achieved 7 wins from 56 starts and was still racing at the start of this year but at smaller tracks, and my guess is that she will soon be in the breeding paddock.

It was Esprit Lee's first foal, E J Becks, which will ensure this line continues. E J Becks is, of course, the dam of Isaiah, a superstar colt. Her first two foals were good winners Cody Banks and (Sir) Bobby Lashley, and since Isaiah there's a Jereme's Jet filly sold to Australia at the sales for a paltry \$12,000 and qualified as a 2yo, a Grinfromeartoear colt who has just turned 2, and a brother to Isaiah who no doubt will be heading to the yearling sales.

E J Becks is owned by Alabar NZ who do the breeding, except for Miley Cyrus which was bred by the Careys and raced in Australia (4 wins from 14 starts) – so ironically the two fillies to date are both across 'the ditch'. However E J Becks is only 16, and there will be a few more opportunities for her to produce fillies for the future.

Blazing Spirit

The bronze medal goes to Blazing Spirit (Holmes Hanover – Pure Gavil, breeder: J A Bracegirdle). She comes from the family of Pure Steel, one of those Australian lines that produces tough, durable and consistent horses rather than flashy sprinters. Blazing Spirit bred by the Top Of The Line Syndicate, later by Croon Bloodstock and Tim Vince, and most recently by Alabar NZ. She has produced 12 foals to date, for 7 qualifiers/starters, but the best of them by far are her 1998 foal, the incredibly durable In The Pocket colt Top Speed (252 starts for 29 wins in Australia), and her 2010 filly Shestherealdeal, who has already had 6 wins from 24 starts for Tim Vince. She has three daughters already being bred to carry on her line – Lyn Hodgson's Fiery Spirit, Top Spirit for the Hockhams in Australia, Art Major daughter Art Ablaze that Adrienne Matthews has leased, and Shestherealdeal when she finishes racing.

The others

What about the others in that 1995 Sires Stakes field?

Fear Me may be relying on Studholme Bloodstock to work its magic with Quote Me, her most successful and youngest daughter who raced successfully in Australia and is back home in foal to Changeover and probably heading next to Art Major.

Of the others, Miss Mighty's best daughter is Miss Mac Anvil who won over \$100,000 in America, but the breeding star of the family is Miss Mighty's half-sister She's Mighty, dam of Likmesiah and Might Cullen. Stardust had 8 fillies from 11 foals and her Live Or Die daughter Starring Live looks to have some potential, leaving a nice mare Adda Rising Star (14 wins, \$145,374) in Australia. Others from the field were bred from, but with very mixed success to date.