

# New boys on the block

## - the new sires from 10 years ago

BY BEE PEARS

In previous articles I've looked at good fillies and mares from 10 or 20 years ago, and how their fortunes turned out as broodmares. This month I switch to the boys and see how the stallions who stood for the first time in New Zealand 10 years ago (in the 2004/05 season) have performed as sires and broodmare sires to date.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. It gives us the ability to sigh knowingly when we see names like I Am A Fool or Red River Hanover. But breeders 10 years ago saw these super-bred and well-performed sires in quite another light. They were the exciting new boys on the block.

Clearly, it is just as difficult for good male racehorses to convert success on the track to success in the breeding barn as it is for good females. Of course with most sires you can observe dozens of their progeny each season, whereas a broodmare puts all her eggs in one basket each time. Most breeders will quickly switch from sire to sire, but remain faithful to their mares or maternal families for years. But in terms of success, the adage "many are called, few are chosen" is true for both sires and broodmares. And that is why success in many different guises needs to be recognised and applauded. None of it comes easily.

### Seven sires

The new sires for the 2004/05 season in New Zealand were: Red River Hanover, I Am A Fool and McArdle (all standing for \$6000), Totally Western (\$2750), Cammibest (\$2500), Julius Caesar (\$2000), and Danny B (\$475).

If this was a race, I would summarise it by saying McArdle ground out a win in true staying style, although tiring towards the end (1<sup>st</sup>). Julius Caesar got a nice drag through from the second row and stuck on (2<sup>nd</sup>). Cammibest looked full of running four back on the rail but never got enough room in the straight (3<sup>rd</sup>). Red River Hanover used his gate speed to get to the front but pulled his head off and faded badly with 800m to go. I Am A Fool paraded a picture, but never got into the race after missing away at the start. Totally Western drew awkwardly, was taken back and soon pulled out of the race. Danny B never improved from the rear of the field.

Let's meet those sires again with fresh eyes, and in that order.

### McArdle

One of the "commercial" three, McArdle, has survived by carving out a niche for himself as a consistent sire of starters/winners rather than as a sire of standouts. For example last season he had 130 starters for 68 winners, which is a ratio of over 50%. For most of his crops of racing age, the foals to winners ratio is 50-60%.

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He has more than 700 live foals to his name, although the number of mares he gets has dropped off dramatically from the 2010/11 season.

He arrived in the 2004/05 season with two immense advantages – he was a son of Falcon Seelster whom New Zealand breeders and trainers held in such high regard, and he was a top performing (almost \$2.5 million in stakes) racehorse in his own right. It was reassuring to see that unlike many new sires McArdle was a proven racehorse as a 2yo, 3yo and 4yo.

I recall he arrived later in the season and served 83 mares (for 58 live foals), and among that crop was his outstanding son Tintin In America, now also standing at Nevele R, and some other good young performers like Aslan and Crown Bromac (raced in Australia).

Eridanus and Five Star Anvil stepped up to the mark in his next crop as eyecatching 2yos, and the 2yo filly Nevermind Franco made the finals of the series races and got a 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 2yo Harness Jewels Diamond. Le Sol was easily the standout 2yo of McArdle's third crop, winning the Kindergarten Stakes, and getting seconds in the Sales Series and Sires Stakes Finals in 2010.

However there just weren't enough really top performing racehorses each season to keep McArdle at the top shelf of pacing sires in the past three or four years when Bettor's Delight, Mach Three, Art Major and American Ideal have pulled in 100 to 200 mares each and are making the most of the opportunity, while McArdle's fluctuating fertility of around 65% to 75% has also let him down.

McArdle has had a few perception issues to fight as well – his fillies have been much less in demand than his colts, although Elusive Chick has been brilliant, as has Nike Franco, Marquess De Posh, Itznosurprisesthere, Ask McArdle and Forte Denario. He needed a few new top racehorses of both sexes showing up each year, but instead it was mainly the really good ones who kept performing well. His American reputation has followed a similar path, with a few brilliant ones like McWicked and Happy Dreamer, but mostly consistent money earners at a lower level.

Like his sire, McArdle will make his mark as a broodmare sire. At the time of writing (still in the 2014 foaling season) there are 76 live foals in New Zealand from McArdle mares, 56 of racing age, for 19 qualifiers and 10 winners. That's a good start, especially when some of them have shown plenty of talent like Zenable (from Zenardle), Holy Grail (from Roanne) and Tas Man Bromac (from Tasmacmanian). His broodmares are being sent to good quality sires.

## Julius Caesar

Ask Michael Jonathon, or Extreme Three, or Chill Factor....When you are the less performed brother to an outstanding racehorse and sire, it only helps to a limited extent and for a limited time. Julius Caesar is the full brother to Christian Cullen (and Kate's First). With only four race starts (for two seconds) as a 2yo, he came with potential rather than credentials as a sire, but he had shown enough ability that the option to stand him after his pelvic injury was not a silly one.

During his siring career in New Zealand (he was exported to Australia in 2010) he had good opportunity, serving 723 mares but only 474 live foals. However 42 of those have never been registered. Whether his poor fertility rate is a result of his injury I don't know.

He had no pretensions to match his brother in the high end of the commercial market. At his lower service fee, he was aimed fair and square at the breeder/owner who wanted to take a punt with a

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mare on the basis of the Christian Cullen connection, but wasn't expecting miracles and maybe a sale to Australia later if it showed ability.

And that is the path many of them followed, with some of his better performed progeny being Gaius Caesar (32 wins, \$496,046 and still racing), Our Chain of Command (19 wins, \$267,909), and Silver Ranger who raced and won here from 2yo to 5yo before being exported to Australia in 2011 where he is still racing and winning (127 starts, 23 wins and \$127,937 to date). Attitude Adjuster (12 wins, \$62,000), Napoleon Dynamite (10 wins), Recklaw's Chance (10 wins, died), and Brutus (13 wins) are among many others who have paid their way well here or in Australia. Two brothers from Onedin Spur also followed the Australian route - I am Mr Brightside (10 wins from just 25 starts and a 1:51.6 mile rate) and Just Read My Mind (13 wins), as did Margaret's Last's sons Julius Bardon (11 wins, 1.52.6) and Emperor Montana (21 wins, 1.52.8).

Overall, his New Zealand statistics show a live foal to winner ratio of about 26%. Since he moved to Australia, Julius Caesar has had 198 foals, with consistently good bookings each year. His oldest crop there are 3yos.

There are 15 live New Zealand-bred foals in from Julius Caesar mares, 11 of racing age, for one starter.

## **Cammibest**

Cammibest came here with a Harold J (son of Lady Scotland) double up close in his pedigree which should have suited many of our mares, but like many of the Cam Fella line sires available here before him (Cameleon, Cam's Trickster, Camtastic) he left the Cam Fella durability rather than speed. It was always going to be an up-hill battle to get the speedy mares he needed.

He had only 18 live foals in his two years at stud here, and only 5 of those were female (none have been bred from). However he left 8 winners from his 18 foals (44%), which signals a potential we might have missed. Two of those were Chocolatto who has accumulated 12 wins and \$98,095, mainly in Australia; similarly Motoringwiththebest (12 wins) and Definitely Maybe (9 wins). Commander Steel got 2 wins from 15 starts before going amiss, and has 5 yearlings and 2yos to his name as a sire, and Motoringwiththebest did a good job.

After moving to stand in Australia, Cammibest has continued to sire low numbers but some nice ones amongst them. The best to date is Pub Blitz (\$337,575, 21 wins and 1:52.9), and the mares Shes All Lady (12 wins) and Cha Ching Chaching (14 wins), the 3yo fillies Bee A Miracle (2 wins from 3 starts) and Mathilda Diventa (4 wins from 11 starts), the geldings Harrywilldo (16 wins), Damitsam (9 wins) and the 3yo Jack Malone (2 wins, 2 places from 6 starts).

## **Red River Hanover**

In 2004 there was very little reason not to like Red River Hanover. He was one of Rich N Elegant's highly talented progeny. He got 153 mares in his first New Zealand season, with 127 live foals born the following year.

The first four years at stud here were good ones for Red River Hanover, with over 400 live foals resulting, which is enough for a sire to make his name. He was a tall, dark and handsome horse with a pedigree that looked a likely match for our mares, and breeders were hopeful he would contribute

early speed with No Nukes and Albatross in his sire line and Direct Scooter in his maternal line, as well as the glorious Golden Miss maternal influence.

We couldn't have been more wrong. Very few of his progeny even started racing until they were 3yos if not 4yos, and the reason was as much their temperament as their size. By the 2007/08 breeding season his numbers dropped to just 43 mares, with only 30 live foals as a result, and he was soon exported to Australia where his brothers Rustler Hanover and Righteous Hanover were already standing. In both countries, indeed both hemispheres, their Western Ideal half-brother Rocknroll Hanover soon took over breeders' interest.

That's not to say Red River Hanover was a complete flop as a sire. His best performer is the tough dual-gaited Mister Zion (\$392,507 to date) who races in Australia. He started off as a good 3yo pacer and later switched to being a very good trotter. Code Red raced as a 2yo and went on to win 6 races here and another 6 in Australia, with total earnings of over \$132,000. Deimos, Hollywood Bromac, Nickel Plated Tabman, Twin Rivers, and Western Union are some of the Red River Hanovers who were sold to Australia and have done very well as older horses.

However overall he nowhere near lived up to early expectations as a sire of speed. His New Zealand live foals to New Zealand winners ratio is about 25% which is not awful, but his winners list always lacked those standout 2yos and 3yos or group race winners that are so important for a sire's success.

As a broodmare sire in New Zealand he has only seven qualifiers and no winners from 20 progeny that are now 3yos and 4yos. One to watch is the 3yo Bettor's Delight filly Riviera Belle from the good mare River Belle.

Red River Hanover's record in Australia is similar – he had 222 live foals bred there for 101 starters and 50 winners. As a broodmare sire in Australia he has 56 foals for 5 winners to date. He died in Australia earlier this year, apparently from a snake bite.

His own great pedigree, performance and good looks were offset by temperament, size and weakness issues in many of his progeny. But no-one could have known that in 10 years ago.

## **I Am A Fool**

I Am A Fool was here one year, gone the next, and soon forgotten.

He is a son of Life Sign, that great sire who has struggled to leave a top ranking siring son to carry on his name. I Am A Fool was potentially "it", and was available for just one year, the 2004/05 season in New Zealand and Australia after being brought out here by Brett Pelling (who had trained him in America) and Peter Blanchard on behalf of owners Kentuckiana Farm. He stood at Michael House's Double E Stables.

I Am A Fool was a brilliant 2yo, winning 9 of his 15 starts (including the Breeders Crown) and being voted 2003 North American 2yo Colt Of The Year. His maternal line wasn't all that fashionable to New Zealand breeders, but both his dam and grandam were very consistent broodmares of quality horses.

He stood for \$6000 and was promoted well but served 91 mares in that 2004/05 season for only 43 foals born the next year – and less than a third of them were colts. At the 2007 yearling sales two of

his fillies sold for just \$16,000 at the Premier Sale in Christchurch, but at the Australian sale in the North Island, two colts and a filly sold well, averaging over \$42,000.

It wasn't enough to encourage the owners to return him to New Zealand, and as it turns out the two colts didn't race, but the filly was Shezagolddigger (renamed Hectic in Australia) who earned \$97,000 and got 14 wins, and now has two young filly foals by Rock N Roll Heaven and American Ideal for Benstud Standardbreds in Victoria. Interestingly, she's a half-sister to super Australian racehorses Baby Bling and Bling It On, from the Caprock mare Alldatglittersisgold who was exported to Australia in 2010.

Nine of I Am A Fool's 43 live New Zealand foals have been winners here (21%), but only 4 of them have won more than one race.

Six of his New Zealand bred mares have become broodmares, with 9 foals of racing age, and to date there has been just one starter and winner, Love Filly Dale from Rhonda Dale and she looks promising with 2 wins last season and kicking off this season with two fourths. Charlie Roberts has bred 1-win mare Kamwood Lady to American Ideal to get a filly called She's Ideal, with a double up to Three Diamonds. She is in training with Ray Green as a 2yo and could be worth watching out for.

I Am A Fool had only six Australian-bred foals for 3 winners, the best being the ultra-consistent Cowboy Cadillac (still racing as a 9yo, with 23 wins accumulated over many years) and I Pity The Fool (11 wins likewise accumulated over time) who is a half-brother to the champion Australian horse Beautide.

Like so many of Life Sign's sons, I Am A Fool was not been able to inject much speed, let alone early speed, into his foals. They tend to be late maturing horses, similar to the progeny of Life Sign's other sons who stood here - Peruvian Hanover, Island Fantasy and, to a lesser extent, Real Desire. The advantage of the latter is that some of his are really worth waiting for and can flag up their talent earlier.

## The others

**Totally Western** was available for two years here, and left 14 live foals for 3 winners (21%). After the first season he was moved to Australia, and stood just two years there. His biggest legacy is through his daughter La Joconde who was a very good racemare and is dam of the super Alta Orlando (\$173,486 from 8 starts to date).

Most readers will be familiar with the sad story of the sire **Danny B** who ended up in a situation of neglect, but was rescued and is now in good care. Danny B was a durable but not particularly fast son of Albatross who accumulated 55 wins from age 2 through to 13 on North American racetracks. His dam So Cozy was a very good filly as was her half-sister, but the main attraction for hobby breeders was probably his sire Albatross who had served us so well in the past with siring sons like Vance Hanover and Sokys Atom. However with just over 100 live foals in total, and very few from quality mares, Danny B managed just 9 starters and 4 winners.