



CATCHING UP WITH VERSATILE BLOODSTOCK OPERATOR DAVID ALLAN

David Allan is based in both the UK and South Africa where Allan Bloodlines is a breeding and racing manager and consultant. He is responsible for importing over 100 mares and fillies to SA as well as managing broodmare bands in the Cape – including 15 mares of his own as an SATBA member – and consulting for farms. Regularly buying for racing and pinhooking, David bought a 2015 Grade 1 winning juvenile as a yearling and runs syndicates and racing groups as well as managing horses in training for individual clients. David also manages and promotes seven South African stallions.

Marie Chin caught up with him recently.

MC: David - how are you doing with your new Hintlesham Racing Group in Cape Town? Any Grade 1 winners in there as well?

DA: All the 2 year olds "could be anything" and one is CTS US\$ Million qualified so who knows? The 3 year old won soon after we launched so it's going really well for the people who are "in". That underlines one of our user-friendly features. If coming into a yearling, there can be a very long wait before you can see your baby backed and learning. Our way you come in when already running or not far off.

MC: How does it work?

DA: 4 nicely bred fillies in Calendar 2016 up to May 2017. Nothing to pay up front and guaranteed fixed monthly costs – no risk of nasty vet bills! A 3yo winner and 3x2yos – one due to run maybe before you publish! People are in for 8% up to 25%, paying a fixed monthly amount and earning their share of any win and place money. The origination, pre-training and



Lauderdale bought by Allan Bloodlines as a yearling and again later as a filly out of training – winning the Gr1 Thekwini Stakes at Greyville

early race training has already been paid for. So it is akin to a late-starting lease but the lessor doesn't keep a big chunk of the stake money just a small handling fee. And we offer a bonus of a share in net sales proceeds (if a horse is sold) as a mark of appreciation, even though people have not bought equity.

MC: **And what sort of people are coming in?**

DA: In this group we have people from South Africa, UK, Ireland and France so far. There is room for one or two more percentages which can be held by individuals or couples or friends or companies.

MC: **Are you happy with those developments?**

DA: Yes and No. With the people participating – more than happy and very appreciative – they would make a brilliant multi-national dinner party. But it is difficult to get the message across in South Africa outside racing people. We ourselves are very well known for looking after first time participants and have

had some in SA who love it. But not many.

With racing operated largely by gaming organisations, there is a funding benefit that some other countries do not enjoy. But it makes it inevitable that the betting is the main impression most non-racing South Africans have. But the racing opportunity is so much more: the horses themselves, the sporting event, days out, stable visits, socialising, and the thrill of shouting your horse home whether on course or live on-line. Imagine football TV pundits discussing the odds on winning, losing, first scorer etc. Of course horseracing's fabric has a major betting element which is a big part of its colourful attraction but it could still be reported to a sporting nation like South Africa as a fascinating complex sport. Some journalists and Tellytrack presenters get that but have little time and their audience is limited.

MC: **But surely racing really is dominated by betting?**

DA: In Japan in the 80s racing's reputation had been dodgy



Left Above: Promising 2016 double winner Adorada bred and raced in an Allan-managed project

Left Below: Hintlesham Racing's first winner in the new programme Secret Plan

Below: Elusive Fort high flying young stallion managed by Allan Bloodlines



for years. Japan Cup Day saw the betting turnover of half a season in some countries. But outside racing...you wouldn't want your daughter to marry one. Then, with two masterstrokes, all that changed. Racing's appeal as a sport went countrywide and an enlightened subsidy of good mare imports was offered. No rock bands on course like UK no fashion shows. Now Japan has national hero horses whose races stop the traffic and routinely breeds some of the highest rated thoroughbreds in the world. There is still just as much betting .

MC: So what now?

DA: Aside from several extremely important major players – mirrored in other countries – the number of buyers of racehorses is limited by recession and by the outreach of the sport in South Africa. What concerns me most are two things: the lack of a next generation in all departments – owning, breeding and farming, training, sales work, admin. There are just a few notable young exceptions. Then with a fairly static gene pool, a thinned out and stretched sales programme, recession, an EU ban and a dramatically weak currency, there is also very little international interaction of the sort that fuels vibrancy. The result is that some excellent racing facilities and generally good bloodstock production are relatively unfulfilled when it could all be wonderful.

MC: What sort of international interaction do you mean?

DA: Young people in the industry learn by working round the world on farms, at sales, in training centres. That is largely missing in both directions. Sales companies in Newmarket

and Kildare remark to me about the rarity of SA visitors or of buying by consultants for South Africa. They have three dozen nationalities attending some sales buying at all levels. Although they don't have South Africa strongly on their radar, they mention it me because I have known them for donkeys' years and am known to have a South African flag on my hat. We still work hard to "mine for nuggets" for South Africa and even with budgets limited by the rand we have some success in buying only good black type up top. People see that happening also we have a good non-South African readership of our SA-content e-newsletters which lead people to chat to me about SA.

MC: Do you think we can do something about all this?

DA: We must. What is good about racing and breeding in South Africa is a very long list of good things in a magical country.

MC: Are you trying?

DA: Yes I have made some proposals with regard to image, outreach as a sport and a career, as well as international public relations but I have no formal accreditation other than as a breeder and colour holder. There are so many entities and organisations that consensus is difficult to achieve. Sometimes I have been baulked by authority seeing me as a "foreign agent" but I don't feel quite as foreign as all that and I am not the sort of agent that they mean. On the much happier other hand, many great friends, colleagues, partners and clients with whom I deal in the course of my business in South Africa do not think like that at all. Experience of both home and abroad is generally useful. I am certainly not giving up.