

Sunday 31 January 2021

MELODY BELLE EQUALS THE MIGHTY SUNLINE WITH TRENTHAM VICTORY



Melody Belle makes it Group One win number 13 with a comfortable victory at Trentham (Race Images – Peter Rubery)

Dual New Zealand Horse of the Year **Melody Belle (NZ)** (Commands) has equalled the record of the mighty mare Sunline after completing her 13th career Group One win when taking out the Gr.1 Harcourts Thorndon Mile (1600m) at Trentham.

The Jamie Richards-trained mare was having her first start since finishing a game third in the Gr.1 McKinnon Stakes (2000m) during the Melbourne spring carnival in November but was confidently expected to dispose of her seven rivals after a sparkling run at the Matamata

trials earlier in the month.

With regular rider Opie Bosson in the saddle, the six-year-old mare travelled kindly in midfield throughout before moving into contention at the point of the home turn.

Bosson had her idling along nicely

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as she effortlessly slipped into top gear and took command of the race out in the middle of the track. Despite being hotly challenged by eventual placegetters Sinarahma (NZ) (Darci Brahma) and Deerfield (NZ) (Falkirk), Melody Belle had too much class as she cruised home by just over a length at the post.

Richards was all smiles as the appreciative on-course crowd welcomed his charge back to the birdcage with a standing ovation.

"She didn't win by a big space, but she still got the job done relatively comfortably," he said.

"The good thing is we know she still has some improvement to come with her fitness.

"I can remember Sunline racing and the race she won in Hong Kong more so than anything else.

"To equal her record is wonderful as she was the mare of the world and while we've done it mainly in New Zealand, it is still very good to equal it.

"I'm very proud of her as she has done so much for my career and has flown the flag for all of us,

"She's a competitor who loves doing her job, so I can't thank her and everyone involved with her enough."

Purchased by David Ellis (CNZM) for \$57,500 out of the Haunui Farm draft during the 2016 National Yearling Sale, Melody Belle is raced by the Fortuna Melody Belle Syndicate that is



Opie Bosson brings Melody Belle back to the Trentham birdcage in front of an adoring crowd (Race Images – Peter Rubery)

managed by John Galvin.

An emotional Bosson had to fight back tears as he described his feelings about one of his favourite horses.

"I got a bit of a shock at the barriers when I was talking to Shaun McKay on The Mitigator, who I thought would make the pace, but he said he was going to ride him back," Bosson said.

"I wasn't quite sure what to do then although she jumped well and there wasn't a lot of speed early, so she got some cover and relaxed beautifully for me.

"She is just unbelievable and is just so special to me."

Melody Belle has now won 18 of her 36 starts, 13 of those at Group One level and more than \$4.1m in

prizemoney, with Bosson aboard for nine of those career wins and six Group Ones.

The race was marred when second favourite Rock On Wood went amiss at the 700m and was pulled up.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	WRC Thorndon Mile Gr.1 1600m
Winner	Melody Belle (NZ) 2014
Owners	Fortuna Melody Belle Syndicate (Mgr: John Galvin)
Trainer	Jamie Richards (Matamata)
Breeding	by Commands out of Meleka Belle by Iffraaj
Breeder	Mrs N M Leicester
Sales	2016 National Yearling Sale – Premier V: Haunui Farm \$57,500 P: Mr DC Ellis





FORCE OF WILL TOO STRONG IN DESERT GOLD STAKES

Matamata visitor **Force Of Will (NZ)** (Power) carried on her winning way when she proved too strong for her rivals in the Gr.3 New Zealand Bloodstock Desert Gold Stakes (1600m) on Saturday.

The Lance O'Sullivan and Andrew Scott-trained filly travelled south to Trentham off the back of consecutive wins at Tauranga, including an eye-catching performance against the older horses over 1400m at her last start.

Stepped up to the mile against her own age and sex this time, the Power filly travelled sweetly in midfield for rider Craig Grylls before being angled into the centre of the track to make her run.

Grylls unleashed her at the 200m and she drove clear to score from a brave Victorem (NZ) (Shooting To Win) who fought hard after leading into the home straight, with Passione (NZ) (Proisir) close up in third.

Bred and raced by Sir Owen Glenn under his Go Bloodstock Australia banner, Force of Will has now won three of her four starts, with O'Sullivan contemplating how far she might go in this campaign.

"I'm thrilled for Sir Owen as I think he has got himself a very promising filly," O'Sullivan said.

"It is a great result as the black type she picks up from the win cements her value when Sir Owen retires her to his broodmare band.

"We were stepping into the unknown a little with her as we weren't sure she could get the trip, especially on a track where it is a tough mile.

"Her last two runs suggested she was looking for more ground and after what we've seen today, she might be able to get further still."

O'Sullivan was also delighted with the ride by Grylls who was bringing up a double after winning on the John Bary-trained On Show earlier on the card.

"Kozzi Asano had ridden her in her two previous wins, but given it was a stakes race, we just opted for a little more experience today," O'Sullivan said.

"We have had a lot of luck with Craig and he produced another no panic ride for us."

O'Sullivan and Scott were both absent from the track after

spending nine energy sapping days travelling back and forth from the National Yearling Sale at Karaka.

"Both Scotty and I were pretty weary after having spent so much time up at Karaka," he said.

"We sent her down with our stable employee Ellen Osbourne, who does a great job for us and she has done that again today.

"I've actually got the place to myself at home this afternoon with just the dog for company, so it was just the two of us cheering her on.

"When she won, the dog gave me a high five and we celebrated in style."

Force Of Will is the third foal of Savabeel mare Sade and comes from an extended family that stretches back to Gr.1 Melbourne Cup winner (3200m) Brew, the son of multiple Group One winner Horlicks. – **NZ Racing Desk**

Race	WRC Desert Gold Stakes Gr.3 1600m
Winner	Force Of Will (NZ) 2017
Owners	Go Bloodstock Australia Pty Ltd
Trainer	Lance O'Sullivan & Andrew Scott (Matamata)
Breeding	by Power out of Sade by Savabeel
Breeder	Go Bloodstock Australia Pty Ltd



Lightly raced filly Force of Will takes out the Gr.3 New Zealand Bloodstock Desert Gold Stakes (1600m) at Trentham (Race Images – Peter Rubery)



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SHARROCK GETS PRIZED TROPHY WITH WAISAKE

Race favourite **Waisake (NZ)** (Zed) completed a plan that was eight months in the making when he stormed home to take out the Gr.3 NZ Campus of Innovation & Sport Wellington Cup (3200m) at Trentham on Saturday.

Trainer Allan Sharrock had told plenty of people over the past two years he felt the son of Zed was a true two miler in the making and was keen to formulate a plan that had the famous Trentham staying contest as the

ultimate prize.

That plan began to take shape when Waisake was successful over 2000m during the Hastings Spring carnival last year, with Sharrock carefully plotting a path to have his charge at peak for his Trentham assignment.

Making full use of an inside barrier, rider Sam Collett had Waisake travelling easily throughout before beginning to creep into contention with 800m to run.

Collett diligently followed instructions to angle off the fence to

make her run wider out in the home straight but was still giving rank outsider Bluey's Chance (NZ) (Remind) a big start with 300m left to run.

Collett didn't panic as she wound her mount up for one final sprint and he delivered in style to collar Bluey's Chance with 50m to run and ease clear by half a length, with Te Rapa visitor Justamaiz (NZ) (Guillotine) storming home from near last to snatch third from Swords Drawn (Camelot).

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Sam Collett brings Waisake with a storming run to take out the Gr.3 NZ Campus of Sport & Innovation Wellington Cup (3200m) at Trentham (Race Images – Grant Matthew)





SHARROCK GETS PRIZED TROPHY WITH WAISAKE

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Sharrock cut a satisfied figure as he accepted congratulations after the victory.

"It's taken eight months, but we've ticked it off," Sharrock said.

"I knew I had him right, but the ride was a little tough early as I wanted him off the fence.

"She saved all the ground though and got off at the right time.

"The other two had gone (clear) but she hadn't really got at him until the furlong (200m) and he is resolute, a really nice staying horse.

"There's nothing better than setting them for a race and then pulling it off.

"That's why we stay in the game, to try and achieve that.

"He's a lightly raced horse that will get better with age, so hopefully I will as well."

The victory was Collett's third over the two-mile journey after taking out the last two Gr.1 Auckland Cups (3200m) with Glory Days and Roger That respectively and is quietly gaining a reputation as the two-mile Queen.

"To be quite fair my part in the win is quite small compared to the months and months it takes to get these horses ready for a race like this," Collett said.

"All credit to the Sharrock team to get him here and with a lovely light weight.

"It worked out well, but he had to tough it out and left it to the last few strides to get the win.

"It wasn't where I was supposed to be (on the rail) but I had to just ride my

race and to measure how much gas your horse has.

"He was travelling a little bit too good for how I would have liked, then hit a flat spot at the 1000m, so he was brave to muster his way through it and it is a tribute to his fitness he finished off so well.

"I was only confident in the last 50m, but it shows he is a genuine staying horse."

Purchased for just \$28,000 by Sharrock from the Ainsley Downs Stud draft during the Festival sale at Karaka in 2016, Waisake has now won six of his 23 starts for a large group of owners including Sharrock and takes his prizemoney earnings in excess of \$220,000.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	Wellington Cup Gr.3 3200m
Winner	Waisake (NZ) 2014
Owners	L R Butler, Mrs J M & K A Horner, Mrs A & N J Maindonald, B & Mrs E Menzies, P V Mullin, B C & Mrs M C Schumacher & S A Sharrock
Trainer	Allan Sharrock (New Plymouth)
Breeding	by Zed out of Kincia by Kinjite
Breeder	Miss L E Jameson
Sales	2016 National Yearling Sale – Festival V: Ainsley Downs Stud \$28,000 P: Mr SA Sharrock

AUDIO



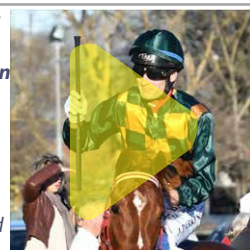
Andrew Bensley speaks with Fortuna Syndications' **John Galvin** about Melody Belle's win in the Gr.1 Harcourts Thorndon Mile (1600m) at Trentham on Saturday.

Andrew Bensley speaks with co-trainer **Lance O'Sullivan** after Force Of Will's victory in the Gr.3 New Zealand Bloodstock Gold Stakes (1600m).



Andrew Bensley speaks with **Allan Sharrock** about Waisake's win in the Gr.3 NZ Campus Of Innovation & Sport Wellington Cup (3200m).

Andrew Bensley speaks with jockey **Jonathan Parkes** whose mount, Boston Strong Boy, was declared a non-runner after Parkes had to navigate his way around a track intruder down the home straight at Trentham on Saturday



ALL ABOUT MAGIC TAKES TIMARU STAKES

Consistent mare **All About Magic (NZ)** (Showcasing) got her just rewards when she came with a sustained finish from near last to capture the Listed Speight's Timaru Stakes (1400m) at Riccarton on Saturday.

The Showcasing four-year-old had often been the bridesmaid at stakes level throughout her two and three-year-old campaigns having placed on four separate occasions at black-type level, after taking out the Listed Champagne Stakes (1200m) back in May 2019.

Trainers Michael and Matthew Pitman have made no secret about the high esteem they have for their charge who was having her second start back from a brief let up over the Christmas period.

Rider Sam Wynne followed her instructions to the letter as she allowed All About Magic to find her feet in the early running before charging home in the straight to nab race favourite Belle Fascino (NZ) (Per Incanto) in the shadows of the post.

"She really showed a good turn of foot and true determination today," Wynne said.

"That's what won her the race as Belle Fascino was hard to run down but my mare dug deep and really wanted the win.

"I spoke to Dianne (Pitman) last night and she pointed out I had to be a little more patient early in the race and she would be able to finish off like that.

"I was grateful for that advice and she deserved that as she had been so consistent as a three-year-old and hadn't managed to get a black type win, so to get one today was very special."

Wynne had been confident of a good showing despite All About Magic putting in a below par effort at Gore last weekend.

"The run last week at Gore was a tough one as she had to carry 60.5kgs on a heavy track," she said.

"Today she dropped to just 53kgs and just didn't know herself.



All About Magic gets the better of Belle Fascino to take out the Listed Speight's Timaru Stakes (1400m) at Riccarton (Race Images South)

"I was very hopeful before the race and just so happy afterwards.

"I was lucky to get the ride as I have been on Belle Fascino lately.

"I'm very proud of Belle although we beat her today, but it was just circumstances as I accepted the ride on All About Magic before I knew Belle Fascino was a late nomination.

"I'm so pleased to win the race but a little sad I beat one of my favourites."

A daughter of Montjeu mare Rosecroft, All About Magic's grand-dam is the Group One placed mare Soltanto and is from an extended family that includes Group One winners Solveig, Culminate, Captivate and Eileen Dubh. – **NZ Racing Desk**

Race	CJC Timaru Stakes L 1400m
Winner	All About Magic (NZ) 2016
Owners	S J Rathgen
Trainer	Michael and Matthew Pitman (Yaldhurst/Riccarton Park)
Breeding	by Showcasing out of Rosecroft by Montjeu
Breeder	S J Rathgen



WAR CRITIC ON SONG AT CAULFIELD

Progressive galloper **War Critic (NZ)** (Declaration of War) recorded his third victory when winning over 1800m at Caulfield on Saturday.

The New Zealand-bred four-year-old was pushed forward from his outside barrier by jockey Damian Lane, who was able to slot his charge just in behind the pace.

Pacemaker Legenda opened up several lengths on the field, but Lane kept his cool, and waited until turning for home before presenting his charge three-wide.

The gelding copped a check at the top of the straight, but he was able to continue his run and captured the lead with 150m to go and held on to win by 0.2 lengths.

Trainers Mathew Ellerton and Simon Zahra were pleased with the victory and made a special mention of Lane's ride.

"No doubt the ride won the race," Ellerton said. "He gave him a peach (of a ride). He looked to be in trouble in the first furlong and then he slotted in well and he got the run of the race.

"Thankfully the horse was good enough to get the job done after the good ride."

Ellerton said this is the first uninterrupted preparation for War Critic and he is now starting to show his potential, with two wins and a placing from four starts this time in.

"We have never had a good crack at them. He has always had a niggles here and there," Ellerton said.

"He got very sick when we gelded him.

"It's good to have a nice, faultless prep with him. He is a progressive sort of horse and it is

good to see him get the job done."

Ellerton believes his charge is still another preparation away from showing his best.

"He was 67 rated before today. He is probably a prep away, so we will chip around the edges with him and hopefully he can be a solid handicapper in preps to come," he said.

War Critic was purchased by his trainers for \$300,000 out of Valachi Downs' 2018 New Zealand Bloodstock Book 1 Yearling Sale draft.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	Neds Toolbox Handicap 1800m, Caulfield
Winner	War Critic (NZ) 2016
Owners	Mr J R Mugavin, EST P J Grimsey, Mrs D F Grimsey, Mr M J Bracchi, Mrs E M Bracchi, Mr J Kovacevic, Mr K W Franklin, Mr D W Franklin, Mr S J McCreesh, Mr A C Law, Mr P J Thompson, Mr W P Belt, Mrs G Belt, Mr C Manakis, Mr D T Barr, Mr M A Law
Trainer	Mathew Ellerton & Simon Zahra (Flemington)
Breeding	by Declaration of War out of Theatre Buff by Theatrical
Breeder	KJ Hickman
Sales	2018 National Yearling Sale – Book 1 V: Valachi Downs \$300,000 P: Ellerton Zahra Racing



War Critic winning at Caulfield on Saturday.
(Bruno Cannatelli)

