



THE AUSTRALIAN Bloodhorse Review

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FRONT COVER: Unbeaten 2YO JOHANNESBURG (Hennessy-Myth by Ogygian) has been described by trainer Aidan O'Brien and jockey Michael Kinnane as the best juvenile ever to be turned out by Ballydoyle. His explosive acceleration has marked him as something special, with his five victories culminating in the Independent Waterford Wedgewood Phoenix S. and the Prix Morny, both Gr.1.

Coolmore has been shuttling his sire Hennessy to their Australian base at Jerry's Plains in the Hunter Valley and he returns again in 2001. Hennessy was a Gr.1 winning 2YO himself, clearly one of the best representatives of Storm Cat (by Storm Bird), champion USA sire and the dominant stallion influence in America on the cusp of the millenium.

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116A Windsor St, Richmond NSW 2753
PO Box 286, Richmond NSW 2753

Phone (02) 4588 5355 - Fax (02) 4588 5478 - E-Mail abreview@zeta.org.au
Established 1982 by Brian Russell

PUBLISHER

Andrew Reichard

EDITOR

David Bay

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Graeme Kelly

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Margaret Ross

FEATURE WRITERS

Mike Davis, Brian Russell, Peter Tonkes, Jeff Sagar

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Raelene Wood (02) 9876 5096

Fax (02) 9876 1063 E-Mail rae6@bigpond.com.au

NEW SOUTH WALES ADVERTISING

Andrew Reichard Ph (02) 4588 5355

Fax (02) 4588 5478 - AH (02) 4576 1980

QUEENSLAND ADVERTISING

Raelene Wood (02) 9876 5096

Fax (02) 9876 1063 E-Mail rae6@bigpond.com.au

VICTORIA & SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Graeme Kelly (03) 5794 2965

Fax (03) 5794 2924

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Raelene Wood (02) 9876 5096

Fax (02) 9876 1063 E-Mail rae6@bigpond.com.au

TASMANIA

Alison Archer Ph (03) 6397 3582

Fax (03) 6397 3582

OFFICE MANAGER

Jan Drinkwater

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Lorraine Holler

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Margaret Reichard

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Steve Hart (02) 4352 2867

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Paul Fewer (02) 9997 3719

Martin King, Sportpix (02) 9427 3904

Bruno Cannatelli (03) 9793 5945

Bronwen Healy Photography (02) 6246 4554

Equine Images - markgatt@iprimus.com.au

Jenny Barnes 0412 208 011

Libby May-Steers 0412 614 809

PRODUCTION

Fiona Scope

Nikki Howard

ADDITIONAL TYPESETTING

Robinson's Typesetting Services (02)4587 8683

Desk Top Solutions (02) 4573 1177

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

Les Young, Alan Porter, Jane Henning,

Paul Carazzo

STAKES RESULTS

Jennifer Churchill

DATA MANAGER

Ellen McIntyre

RESEARCH

Wendy Thompson, Taia de Burca

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Louis Mihalyka

Starting from scratch in any industry is a tough call, but none more so than the world of the thoroughbred. Louis Mihalyka was not born into a racing family and had virtually no contacts in the industry when he joined his first syndicate. Nonetheless, as GRAEME KELLY reports in this profile, Louis has managed to establish a thriving business combining his accountancy skills, racehorse syndication, pedigree analysis and stallion bookings via his company Laurel Oak Bloodstock.

ONE point patently obvious about Louis Mihalyka is that he is enjoying his life and his lifestyle in the thoroughbred industry. A qualified accountant, he went into the racehorse syndication business in 1985 without having a great deal of experience. Since then he has extended his operation to cover administering accounts for racing people; managing their horses; making stallion bookings, and being the Australasian agent for Brain Scientific Pedigree Analysis.

These activities enabled him to carve out a successful niche in his chosen profession. It is quite a feat, especially when the quote of the late Robert Holmes a'Court - "if you can survive in racing you will survive anywhere" - is taken into consideration.

Louis is justifiably proud of his achievements.

"I haven't worked for anybody else for the past 16 years," he said. "There are probably some people, but I don't know of anyone else in the racing industry, who have actually started from scratch on their own without having had previous experience working for someone else."

"People who are bloodstock agents worked with bigger companies, people with studs worked on a major stud beforehand, and trainers work with another trainer to gain experience."

"However I was just bright eyed and bushy tailed when I decided to get into the racing industry, and now all these years later we are still here. Logically I should have stopped after about five years, but I didn't want to let go without knowing I'd given it my best shot."

"Now I'm very happy about the way everything is going. Although much of my work is administrative these days, I still manage to go to the races and that's what I enjoy most of all."

Yet, quite remarkably, Louis came from a suburban environment where there was absolutely no background or connection with racing. He was born in Sydney of traditional Hungarian parents, which led to a problem when he began his schooling.

"When I went to school as a five year-old I'd only learned the mother tongue and I couldn't speak English," Louis said.

Displaying his aptitude, he quickly overcame that problem. After completing his education at North Sydney Boys' High School he secured a place at the University of NSW where he undertook an accountancy degree.

"At that stage I was doing a mixture of full-time and part-time work. Right through that period I had a connection with the accounting firm of Fell and Starkey; then subsequently Ernst and Whinney, who became Ernst and Young."

"I really enjoyed those early accounting days because it was great fun being out in the big wide world, meeting people."

By then Louis had developed his interest in the thoroughbred.

"I don't know how that originally came about. It might have been through the Melbourne Cup or from the people around me, but by my mid-teens I was following the horses."