



"THE BANDITO" BEATS THE ODDS AGAIN



THE BANDITO (Pins/Reputedly) gets that beautiful big head of his in front of the frame again (photos courtesy Race Images PN)

You may recall last newsletter I wrote about The Bandito saying 'He may not be a champion...but he's a champion horse!' Well he showed again at Awapuni last Saturday the fighting qualities that make him a stable favourite when he won the **Listed Bramco Granite & Marble Flying Handicap 1400m** at Awapuni last Saturday.

From the outside gate jockey Samantha Collett gave him a 12 out of 10 ride easing him forward down the back straight to eventually get to his "happy place" in front. Still running at a good clip he settled into a nice rhythm around the bend before she asked him the question. And didn't he respond?

Yes he only had 53kgs on his back, and yes he's a 7 year old gelding who some TV commentators said shouldn't have won; but he did all the donkey work in front from the widest gate and with Samantha urging him on down the straight he fought like only he does to the line to get some well-deserved Black Type.

Congratulations must also go to his owner, Heath Newton. Heath hails from Wagga Wagga in Australia and fair to say he has raced a few over the years. Win, lose, place or draw he's loved being involved with "Smurf" and allowed me to do my job with the view to "always do what's best for the horse"...and this has been very much appreciated.

"We'll enjoy a good bottle of Hawke's Bay red next time you're over Heath".

2018 READY TO RUN PURCHASES BOTH WIN ON DEBUT



SERENA showed a lot of heart to get up at Wairoa



ON SHOW displayed a nice turn of foot winning 1st up

It's not often you can go to a Ready To Run sale and almost immediately take them to the races and win on debut; but to do it with two different horses out of the same sale has been a real bonus for everyone who got involved with these two fillies.

ON SHOW (Showcasing/Bondi Beauty and **SERENA** (Swiss Ace/Beach Road) appealed to me for completely different reasons leading up to the sale. **On Show** initially reminded me of The Tailor's Niece who is also by Showcasing and who I had won with earlier in the season. Her pedigree looked strong and the video of her breeze up showed some promise. **Serena** on the other hand had a tall rangy look that said "three year old" and a breeze up that only looked good in the last 50 metres or so. They were both correct in their legs and walking action and that's high on my scale when I'm looking at horses.

Normally with Ready To Run purchases I tend to turn them out when they arrive at the stable, but on this occasion I thought I'd give them a week in training just to accustom themselves to the environment. After the week they were both thriving so I thought we'd carry on until they told us otherwise. Well they kept on training, kept on thriving and before you know it they'd had jumpouts, trialed and were ready to race.

First cab off the rank was **Serena** at Wairoa. She'd had some encouraging gallops in training but I thought this would just be a good opportunity to kick her off on race day and teach her something. Instructions to Samantha Collett were to take her back, relax her in the running and have her running home nicely. She flew the gates and it looked at one stage as if she was going to lead, but Sammy took a nice hold and she relaxed immediately lobbing along at the tail of the field. As the pace quickened she clicked her up at the 400m mark and before you know it she was outside the leaders and challenging. After a dogged fight down the straight she edged ahead in the shadow of the winning post and owners pick up their maiden, and somewhat unexpected win. Everyone happy!

On Show was meant to start at Wairoa but an average track gallop on nomination morning told me she wasn't quite right and we'd have to wait a week or so. Fast forward to Wellington on February 9th and we've drawn the outside barrier in an eight horse field. Riding was Holly Andrew, who hadn't long been back from a serious shoulder injury which side-lined her for over 12 months. We talked pre-race and plan was to go forward from this gate and lead or sit outside leader as the crossing at Trentham can be tricky for two year olds having their first look.

Turned out I needn't have worried. Casey, as she's known in the stable looked like a seasoned professional throughout. Jumped, led, arrow straight across the crossing and kept up a strong gallop to the line winning by a length in a smart time of 60.42 seconds given the Slow 7 track. Special mention to Holly Andrew....it was her first winner back since returning from injury and she did a great job carrying out the plan to perfection. She's had more than her share of injury and adversity over the past 6 years, but she's tough, loves the job and has a brilliant attitude.

"HEART OF STONE"....HAS ANYTHING BUT



Perhaps aptly named given the way she dished it up to them at Woodville; she's anything but in the stables at home...hanging out the box in the morning waiting for a little love and a pat. But on the track this three year old Swiss Ace filly showed no mercy fresh up as she demolished the opposition in her maiden win.

As I legged Chris Johnson up all I remember saying to him was "hang on". She pinged the gates, he had her travelling beautifully all the way and won by 4 ¼ lengths easing down in a remarkable winning time for a maiden horse of 1.09.18 for the 1200m, the last 600 in 33.99. To run this time off the front after setting a hot pace tells me she has a career in front of her.

She hails from Westbury Stud who stand Swiss Ace and she's raced by Gerry Harveys NZ Thoroughbred Holdings. As most of you will know I've had some enjoyable successes with Swiss Ace's progeny this year with Miss Labasa, Serena and this filly flying the flag...and another in the paddock waiting to be broken in. Good brains, speed and heart go a long way to making a successful racehorse and he's stamped all three of these with those qualities.

HUGO THE BOSS DOMINATES AT TAUHERENIKAU AGAIN



Tauherenikau has proven to be a very happy hunting ground for Hugo and his syndicate. Winning his first race there as a two year old he's now 3 wins from 4 starts on this track...the other run a 2nd placing. He just loves the place, and there's good reason. When you arrive, the horses are put in their boxes to relax after the journey. These are about 500m from the tie-ups and an hour before start time they have a relaxing walk through native bush to them. The tie ups are individually walled, giving the horses their own space, they look out over the tree lined back parade ring and are away from the hustle bustle of race day. Heck....even I love it there.

But once Hugo's saddled and out on the course....he's all business now. As most of you will know, that hasn't always been the case. He's spent more time in the Stipendiary Stewards report after each race than any horse I've had before or since.

But as we all know, with age comes maturity 🍌 and there's no doubt it's taken a while for his brain to catch up with his ability. He's having a great run as a five year old and provided the track is good at Hastings he'll be having his last start for the season before getting some well deserved R & R. Special thanks to the "Best Dressed "Syndicate members...it's been a great ride this year and I think there's more to come.

A hearty welcome to the stable to new owners, Ron Saunders (Bucky), Tom Lane & Len Phillips (Ripnroll), John Vaughan & Richard Otto (Rocco), Rochelle McLaren (Manhattan Girl), Rob Kent & Vicki McLean (Spydapus) and the Platinum Choux Syndicate (Chouxmaka). And a big welcome back to Geoff & Jenny West with their Swiss Ace filly out of Augusta National and also to Waikato Stud (Onthenose)

Lastly, I'm in the process of finalising the paperwork on a syndicate for an outstanding Proisir yearling filly. She is a cracking type and I'll be in touch again over the next week or two with details! STAY TUNED.

All the best and I'll see you in the winner's circle.

JB

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