



Cape Thoroughbred Sales will be conducting the Cape Premier Yearling Sale Jan. 26-27 in advance of the R2.5-million G1 J & B Met S. at nearby Kenilworth Racecourse Jan. 28. The TDN's Marie Kizenko posed a few questions to Robin Bruss, the auction company's CEO.

Quarantine restrictions have complicated the export of South African horses. What are the current problems, and are there hopes of easing the restrictions?

Quarantine issues are frustrating because protocol negotiation is inexorably slow, and although we are confident that African Horse Sickness (AHS) (which affects 0.1% of the population of horses and only in summer/autumn) poses little risk to the outside horse world, we feel unfairly disadvantaged in not having freedom to race and trade internationally as easily as other countries do. It has held back our market and isolated us.



Robin Bruss

One positive of this is that South African racing is a melting

pot of locally bred horses competing against blue-blooded yearling imports from South America and Australasia, and therefore the standard of competition has remained strong. Another positive is that the bloodlines are independently developed giving us a unique product dissimilar to so many countries that shuttle stallions and whose catalogues all start to look the same. Our champion sire Jet Master is as good a sire than can be found anywhere. The negative is that our market has progressed on local values rather than international and our horses accordingly trade for less than they would normally do internationally.

Our horses pose no danger--we have never exported African Horse Sickness--but only the intrepid or adventurous, such as Barry Irwin's Team Valor, will endure the lengthy export protocol with the knowledge that it provides two good things: quality and value along with its dollop of frustration and need for patience!

In the case of imports into the U.S., the protocol was set in 1958 and requires no pre-travel quarantine, but rather 60-days post-arrival quarantine in New York. Since scientific advance has progressed a very long way since 1958, it is very overdue for this protocol to be updated. AHS has a 10-day incubation period, and the PCR Assay Test for it takes four hours to run and obtain the result, so it should be quick. But the 60-day quarantine is what's currently legislated, and that requires political intervention in order to change it.

Photographs courtesy Cape Thoroughbred Sales unless otherwise noted

We hope that the American bloodstock industry will support our efforts to have this change made in 2012. Direct shipments with say, a 14-day quarantine period, will permit a tremendous trade in bloodstock, the shuttling of stallions, the upgrading of broodmares by South African breeders, and the export sales of some of our good, sound, tough, hardy colts and fillies to come and race in U.S.

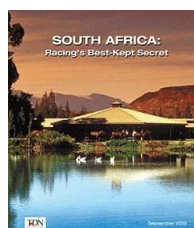
South African-breds have made their presence felt at the Dubai Racing Carnival, but quarantine protocol was tightened. South African President Jacob Zuma visted the U.A.E. late last year in hopes of easing equine traffic between the two countries. Was there any resolution?

President Zuma's recent visit to the UAE resulted in Sheikh Mohammed agreeing to consider permitting South African horses to come directly to Dubai--a seven-hour flight--rather than the current scenario of 21 days in Cape Town, 90 days on the island of Mauritius (four hours by air outside of Africa), and 30 days in Europe before being allowed into UAE. The Dubai lab recently accepted our PCR Assay test, and we hope that will make a big difference. South Africans love racing in Dubai--our horses adapt exceptionally well to the conditions, and we have an excellent record of success.

Cont. p16



Off and running at Kenilworth...



Eclipse Award-winning writer Bill Finley put together an in-depth look at racing in South Africa for the TDN Magazine in 2010. [Click here](#) for another look



According to a report by the National Horseracing Authority of South Africa, there are approximately 3,200 foals registered each year in South Africa. Given the difficulties imposed by the quarantine restrictions and the relatively small number exported, horses bred in South Africa have performed exceptionally well on the international stage. To what can this be attributed? Are there significant differences in how horses are raised, broken and trained in South Africa?

South Africa has a very strict medication policy--Lasix and Bute for example, are prohibited. Most of our racing is on turf, although there is a sand track and a dirt track. As we have sunshine for almost the whole year, tracks are firm, and soundness is imperative. Horses have been bred for toughness and soundness for generations. With relatively low yearling values, our horses are not pushed early nor unduly fattened for sale. It has led both environmentally and genetically to a tough and durable breed, and it's become apparent that these traits are very much in demand in other countries.

The G1 L'Ormarins Queen's Plate, won last Saturday by Gimmethegreenlight (Aus) (More Than Ready), is part of the Breeders' Cup Challenge "Win and You're In" for the GI BC Mile this year at Santa Anita. How many South African stallions are currently nominated to the Breeders' Cup, and how did this initiative come about?

It started when South African golfing icon, Gary Player, attended the 2010 Breeders Cup to see Zenyatta run her last race. He initiated the idea that South African horses should become involved if this was to be a truly world championship. Josh Christian of the Breeders' Cup has been in South Africa and found instant support, and all the major stallions are subscribed. It's important to us that South Africa finds its way to greater participation internationally, and the Breeders' Cup is a great showcase. It's been more than a decade since the owners of Spook Express (SAf) (Comic Blush) put up \$200,000 to supplement in the 2001 GI BC F/M Turf and ran second to the French mare Banks Hill (GB) (Danehill). By qualifying the stallions, this avenue will now be open. If we can solve the pesky flight and quarantine issues, then I envisage Breeders Cup as a wonderful target for our top horses. [Click here](#) to see a list of international stallions nominated to the Breeders' Cup



Boschendal

What led to the formation of Cape Thoroughbred Sales? How do you think the 2011 sale was received, both by buyers and consignors?

The structure of Keeneland was the inspiration for CTS, a commercial company, run by a Board of the top commercial breeders in the country, but with company shares held in trust for the industry. In this way, profits can be ploughed back into projects that stimulate the commercial market. Yearling sales have been held since 1905 and from 1975 to the present; the Thoroughbred Breeders Association has run its own sales. A consortium of the major commercial breeders felt that a cooperative system was an inefficient structure in the modern era, and that a commercial entity with a reach into financial structuring and greater growth initiatives would be more effective.

In addition, the plan of centralising sales in the beautiful city of Cape Town, in the Western Cape where 80% of yearlings are bred, made greater practical sense. The inaugural Cape Premier Yearling Sale 2011 was run by a task team under the banner of the TBA. This year, the breeders consortium set up CTS to operate the sale for its account and the key members of the task team, which I headed up, were recruited to operate the new company and Cape Premier Yearling Sale 2012.



The first sale was a resounding success, stunning in its originality and lauded by so many of the internationals who attended, including Charlie Gordon-Watson, Anthony Stroud, and Grant Pritchard-Gordon, and of course Barry Irwin, who was a big buyer, and who has found enduring success in South Africa and internationally with South African-bred horses.

Sellers loved the convenience, the atmosphere and the prices. Buyers loved the venue, Cape Town, the parties and the value for money. South African sales are more than business--we try to embrace music and song, parties, gorgeous women, and the fun of the chase and the challenge that is an auction sale.

As dollars and pounds sterling stretch far in our exchange rate, even a small buyer feels like a millionaire! (The median price last year was \$32,500; the top price \$305,000, which is R2.5 million in local currency).



Cape Town Convention Centre, site of the Cape Premier Yearling Sale



How many yearlings are typically offered at auction in South Africa? In general, are horses campaigned by their breeders, or sold at some point?

We received a massive entry, which was a resounding endorsement by Cape breeders, and have accordingly split the sale into two books. Book 1 (Jan. 26-27) is the Select Sale, which comprises the top 350 yearlings in the country. This sale will be held in the Cape Town International Convention Centre in the city centre. As an indoor sale, it's logistically challenging, taking five empty halls, and in 48 hours creating a 350-stall facility complete with sales ring and auditorium. It is, however, a wonderfully convenient venue for buyers, surrounded by major hotels and the beauty of the city of Cape Town.

Book 2, comprising 400 yearlings, is being held Mar. 2-5 at Kenilworth Racecourse. Portable stalls will be placed in the leafy picnic area adjacent to the parade ring, and the sales auditorium will be in an 'A' Frame air-conditioned tent with glass doors. It's located in the city suburbs, and also greatly convenient to buyers. This sale is being held under the aegis of the TBA, who have given their blessing in exchange for a commission split.

I would say that these are the top two sales in South Africa. Around 1,700 yearlings are offered for sale at the various venues in any given year.

Auction sales have always been part of the culture of South African breeding and so, unlike South America, there are few breeding farms which conduct large racing teams.

The U.S. has seen a growing trend in syndicates/partnerships as racehorse owners, including Team Valor and Peachtree Stable, which respectively won the Kentucky Derby and Oaks in 2011. Has this also been the case in South Africa?

No, there are only 70 sets of silks registered to syndicates, compared to 3,500 owners. I think the reason is that training costs in South Africa are very low--for example, they range from US\$500-1,500 per month, with the average around \$1,000. This is substantially below the costs in other major racing countries. Racing is very affordable to individual owners in South Africa. Our racing is beamed by satellite to over 50 countries and the races are on web streaming, so it's possible to follow your horse long distance, whether in California or Cape Town!

LEADING SOUTH AFRICAN-BRED RUNNERS PURCHASED AT PUBLIC AUCTION

SAF-Bred	Sire	Runs	Wins	Earnings (R)	Price (R)
Jay Peg	Camden Park	20	11	40,154,089	130,000
J J the Jet Plane	Jet Master	24	14	18,314,021	70,000
River Jetez	Jet Master	34	11	17,242,755	230,000
Irridescence	Caesour	19	8	11,442,750	600,000
Pocket Power	Jet Master	43	20	9,946,033	190,000
Mother Russia	Windrush	27	13	5,054,638	160,000
Pierre Jourdan	Parade Leader	17	9	4,475,675	60,000

www.capethoroughbredsales.com



Jay Peg (SAf) (Camden Park), winner of the 2008 G1 Dubai Duty Free and South Africa's leading money winner. His first yearlings will sell at the Cape Premier Sale.
Horsephotos

Racing was designed as sport and entertainment, and it's easy to be focused on the business of trading and the business of betting as if that's all there is to it. Keeneland offers a purer racing product, where the sport and elegance are reminiscent of a bygone era. Cape Town aims to offer the Cape experience--epic scenery and great beauty, glorious sun-drenched beaches, panoramic mountain vistas and leafy green winelands, wrapped in a laid-back lifestyle by day and party time at night. There can be few better ways to conduct business!



Drakenstein Stud



J J the Jet Plane (SAf) (Jet Master {SAf}), winner of the '10 G1 Hong Kong Sprint and '11 G2 Al Quoz Sprint
Horsephotos