

Realistic Kiwi fees are set to please

Earlier this month, expat Kiwi Mike O'Donnell of Fairhill Farm (NSW) produced statistics that highlighted the uphill battle Australian breeders face to turn a profit in the yearling arena based on the current levels of stallion service fees.

Across the Tasman, it would appear New Zealand stud masters have maintained a more realistic approach when setting service fees, recognising the impact that global economic uncertainty has on the industry and the challenges facing the commercial breeder.

While it is true that New Zealand racing trails a long way behind Australia in terms of financial returns to racehorse owners, it must be remembered that New Zealand operates off a lower cost structure and exports more than a third of its annual foal crop.

With season 2010/11 drawing to a close, New Zealand-bred horses have again enjoyed a strong season in Australia, winning 21 of the 67 Group 1 races to date, despite accounting for just over five percent of the Australian racehorse population.

They are seen at their best predominantly over staying and middle distances, as highlighted by the New Zealand-bred clean sweep of this month's Queensland classics (which included a trifecta in the Queensland Derby won by Shootoff).

Looking at New Zealand's advertised service fees for 2011, value is evident across all echelons.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

by **ANDREW BIRCH** of **NEW ZEALAND THOROUGHBRED MARKETING**

Cambridge Stud stallion Zabeel commands the highest service price by some margin, at a very realistic \$NZ100,000. The son of Sir Tristram has sired 42 individual Group 1 winners and can be accessed for less than \$A80,000.

The Waikato Stud duo of O'Reilly (\$NZ50,000) and Pins (\$NZ40,000) continue to supply top-class winners around the globe. O'Reilly is the sire of Australian Guineas and Australian Derby winning filly Shamrock, while Pins is the leading sire in Hong Kong, having produced triple Group 1 winner Ambitious Dragon.

For a middle-market outlay, breeders gain access to proved stallions of the quality of Pentire (\$NZ30,000), Stravinsky (\$NZ25,000), Savabeel (\$NZ20,000), Thorn Park (\$NZ20,000) or Keeper (\$NZ17,500), all of whom would be standing at considerably more in Australia.

New stallions to stud in New Zealand this year include English Guineas winner Makfi (\$NZ27,500), European triple Group 1 winners Rip Van Winkle (\$NZ25,000) and Paco Boy (\$NZ12,500), Oasis Dream's Group 1 performer Showcasing (\$NZ7500); and Street Cry's newest sire sons, Shocking (\$NZ12,000) and Per Incanto (\$NZ4000).

For as little as \$NZ6000, New Zealand breeders have access to Australian Derby winner Nom du Jeu. The striking son of champion sire Montjeu is out of Group 1 winner Prized Gem

and must be one of the best value-for-money young sire prospects available.

Sir Patrick Hogan of Cambridge Stud commented: "I've been in the business a long time and New Zealand stud masters have always set their fees to allow the breeder to get a margin in the sales ring.

"We recognise the importance of the breeder and understand they must have an opportunity to make a profit."

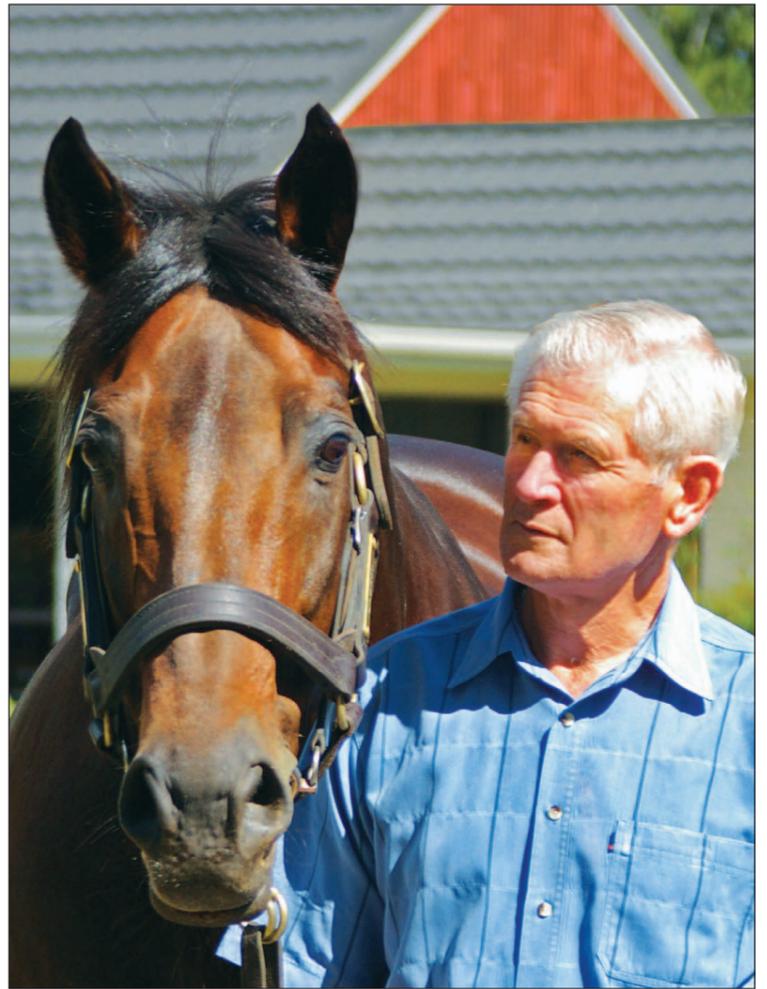
"In Australia, too many breeders don't value their mares commercially and have a tendency to over-mate them," Sir Patrick added.

John Thompson of Rich Hill Stud is eagerly awaiting the arrival of dual Group 1 winner Shocking, competitively priced at \$NZ12,000.

"Our service fees tend to be lower in New Zealand and we don't cover such big books of mares, so come sales time breeders are not competing against hundreds of other yearlings by the same sire," Thompson said.

"We're a trading nation and the majority of our breeders have an expectation of being able to make a profit, so setting services fees at realistic prices is very important. Our agistment rates are also lower than our Australian counterparts' and we have an unparalleled environment in which to raise a horse.

"There is not such an emphasis on having to breed an early foal in New Zealand, which I guess stems from our breeding program of producing



• Sir Patrick Hogan and the great Zabeel: "We recognise the importance of the breeder."

middle-distance horses and (the fact that) we have better conditions in November and December for newborn foals," Thompson added.

Another lure to Australian breeders considering sending their mares

to New Zealand is the benefit of a temporary-import GST exemption, which essentially means broodmares are able to remain in New Zealand for 24 months without the need for a GST payment.

New Zealand-based stallion Perfectly Ready has impressed with his first crop two-year-olds. The former top-class Australian sprinter is well placed to capitalise on his good start and become an even better second-season sire, as JOEL MARSHALL reports.

Ready to capitalise on a perfect start

He was a cracking looker, well bred and a well performed young racehorse. Now Perfectly Ready looks like turning all that into a worthy stud career.

The well credentialed entire is gearing up for season number five at at Nick and Anne-Marie King's Brighthill Farm in Hamilton (NZ).

And business should be good once more for the son of More Than Ready, who to date has covered generous books of at least 127 mares in his four seasons to date.

His biggest book (149) was served in 2008 and the resulting foals will turn two next season.

It promises to be an even bigger 12 months for Perfectly Ready should he capitalise on his already impressive start.

At last count he had achieved five individual winners, four of whom had performed at stakes level. His Australian-based maiden son Isle Be Ready has also earned black type.

The Bede Murray-trained gelding was narrowly denied a maiden victory when he resumed with a runner-up finish at Randwick (Kensington) earlier this month.

It didn't take long for the progeny of Perfectly Ready to get up and going. Isle Be Ready ran second in the listed Breeders' Plate on October 2, and by the end of that month he'd already landed two winners in New Zealand.

The Lisa Latta-trained Brackenwood got the ball rolling with a pair of 800m wins at Wanganui and Trentham at his first two starts before finishing third in the listed Murdoch Newell Stakes (1100m) at Pukekohe.

The Linda Laing-trained filly Precise narrowly beat Brackenwood home when second in the Murdoch Newell at start number two, following a debut success over 880m at Ellerslie.

Two more of the stallion's winners filled the placings in another

feature later in the season, fillies Beejay Belle (second) and Queen Boudicca (third) in the Group 2 Matamata Breeders' Stakes (1200m).

Beejay Belle had been a debut winner over 1200m at Pukekohe, Queen Boudicca a maiden winner over 1100m at Ellerslie.

Perhaps Perfectly Ready's most promising juvenile to step out, however, is the Andrew Scott-trained Ready Steady. A debut winner at Ellerslie over 1200m, the filly then ran on strongly for a close fourth in the Group 2 Wakefield Challenge Stakes (1200m).

It's no surprise to see the stock of Perfectly Ready hit their straps early. He himself was a readymade two-year-old, winning on debut at Moonee Valley in December 2004 and again on his return in the autumn in the Group 3 Blue Diamond Prelude.

He was then placed third in the Group 1 Blue Diamond Stakes before returning at three to run second in the Group 1 Manikato Stakes against the older sprinters. It took triple Group 1 winner Spark of Life to deny him, and he beat home fellow crack colt and now promising Australian stallion Snitzel.

After a trip to Dubai for the Golden Shaheen (he ran eighth), the Mick Price-trained colt had his moment in the sun when winning the Group 1 Goodwood in Adelaide.

As a spring four-year-old he was a Group 3 winner at Caulfield over 1400m and an unlucky fourth in the Group 1 Emirates Stakes over 1600m at Flemington in his swansong.

By one of the leading two-year-old sires in Australia in More Than Ready, Perfectly Ready is out of the Danehill mare Elle Duccio. His granddam is the dual Group 2 winner Delightful Belle, who in turn is out of the listed-winning Kiwi mare Kashmir Belle. Golden Slipper and Newmarket Handicap winner Belle du Jour is a prominent member of the family.

Perfectly Ready stands 2011 at Brighthill Farm for \$NZ12,000 (plus GST).



• Perfectly Ready winning the Group 3 Melbourne Racing Club Stakes (1400m) at Caulfield.