

Holding all the 'ACES'

WHO SAID THAT 'LIGHTNING' CANNOT STRIKE TWICE – SURELY NOT SOMEONE WHO HAS RACING IN THEIR BLOOD?

WORDS: SHARON HUNT (EXECUTIVE OFFICER – NSWROA) PICTURE: LISA GRIMM (TURFSTARS)

John Cordina leads in Ace High after his victory in the Group 1 ATC Spring Champion Stakes at Royal Randwick



While hope is always a common denominator, once the years start to pass without that elusive Group 1 success you had tasted previously, you may begin to think that it will never happen again.

This is not the case for NSWROA member John Cordina. It would be fair to say that John has had his fair share of 'luck' when it comes to the racing industry.

Incredibly, he is one of those fortunate owners who has tasted Group 1 success with his very first horse, Fairway, who subsequently took out the coveted awards of Australian Champion 3YO of the Year (defeating Redoute's Choice and Testa Rossa) and the NSW Champion 3YO of the Year in 2000.

So how did this all come about?

The Cordina family was involved with the trotting industry for decades before John joined in a Harry Lawton syndicate to buy a horse with his cousin, John Camilleri (a fellow NSWROA member) and three mates George Tsekouras, Ronald Coles and Anthony Gow-Gates (also a NSWROA member).

The horse they bought was Fairway and the rest, as they say in the classics, is history.

Fairway (Danzero-Our Caddy (NZ)) faced the starter 23 times for 10 wins, 2 second placings and 3 thirds for some \$2,615,290 in prizemoney.

Fairway's 10 wins included three at Group 1 level in the AJC Spring Champion Stakes, the STC Canterbury Guineas and the AJC Derby.

He also recorded 4 wins at Group 2 level in the STC Peter Pan Stakes, the STC Gloaming Stakes, the AJC Hobartville Stakes and the VRC Turnbull Stakes (now a Group 1 race) and a Listed Race success in the GRC Gosford Classic. A wonderful horse indeed!

John subsequently acquired many horses after this initial success with the best of them being Gallant Tess, Centennial Park (NZ), Praecido (NZ) (2nd in the VRC Derby), Stripper (Group 3 winner), Diamond Jim (a winner on 8 occasions), Rock Hero (bred from Gallant Tess and who had 2

wins including the Listed AJC Dulcify Quality), All Too Soon (also bred from Gallant Tess who is a recent Randwick winner heading to the Oaks in the autumn) and Ace High.

Gallant Tess (Galileo (Ire)-Dragoncello (USA)) had multiple Group 2 successes (AJC Breeders' Classic and AJC Chelmsford Stakes), a Listed Race win (AJC Fernhill Handicap) as well as numerous black type placings.

However, a Group 1 win eluded her – her best results at the elite level were third placings in the AJC George Main Stakes (to Mentality), AJC Epsom Handicap (behind Theseo), AJC Chipping Norton Stakes (Tuesday Joy) and the STC Coolmore Classic (Typhoon Tracey).

Centennial Park (Thorn Park-Trephina) won \$1,018,250 in career prizemoney with his best results being wins in the Group 2 STC Expressway Stakes, Group 3 VRC AAMI Business Insurance Stakes, the Listed STC Darby Munro Quality and the Listed VRC Super Saturday Handicap.

But what about the current star Ace High who has left John 'holding all the aces'.

Ace High (High Chaparral (Ire)-Come Sunday) has faced the starter just 12 times for four wins and a second placing and \$1,408,375 in prizemoney.

He is a dual Group 1 winner having saluted in the ATC Spring Champion Stakes and the VRC Victoria Derby as well as a Group 3 success in the ATC Gloaming Stakes.

What an exciting galloper he is with a sheer tenacity to fight until the end. I can only imagine the anticipation surrounding this horse with his autumn carnival quest next year.

Presently, John has half a dozen horses racing with the best obviously being Ace High. He also has over a dozen mares at stud with half at Kitchwin Hills in New South Wales and the other half at Lauriston Park in Victoria where Rock Hero is standing.

Receiving advice, no matter what the area, is always a precious commodity and John is quick to acknowledge the assistance he has received when asked who had influenced him the most.

"On the racing side of things, I have relied largely on David Payne for his advice on yearling purchases as most of my horses are with him. On the breeding side Mick Malone has been influential."

And the most memorable moment he has had on a racecourse?

John said there had been many including:

- Fairway winning the AJC Derby
- Fairway going head to head with Sunline down the Flemington straight before winning the Turnbull Stakes by a head; and, of course,
- Ace High winning the VRC Derby last November.

And John's advice to newcomers to the industry: "Only invest in ownership an amount you can afford to lose!

"It is a very tough game and you should not have false expectations. A syndicate is the best option for first time entrants."

So why not give it a go – racehorse ownership has something for all!

If you are interested in participating in the wonderful world of thoroughbred racing, why not become a member of the NSW Racehorse Owners Association.

Applications are now open for the 2018 membership year. For further information visit our website www.nswroa.com.au or telephone the NSWROA office on (02) 9299 4299.

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