

PEDIGREE THOUGHTS

CWC

CLIVE WEBB-CARTER BLOODSTOCK SERVICES

March 2011 – Issue 21

ROBERTO/SHARPEN UP

As we near the start of the turf season in Britain and Ireland, France has already run a few Listed races on the turf such as the Prix Policeman (L) at Cagnes-sur-Mer meeting on Saturday. This 2150 metre event was won by Catherine Wills' home-bred three-year-old colt, Inscrutable, who is by the Kris S sire, Arch, and out of a Diesis (Sharpen Up) daughter, Intangible. Inscrutable became the 27th stakes winner bred on the Roberto/Sharpen Up cross that has produced seven Gr 1 winners which include Windsharp (who is the dam of Johar, the sire of Keertana—mentioned later), Dynaforce, Mister Baileys, Lucarno and Auction This Day. A reason why Catherine Wills perhaps sent Inscrutable to Arch could be due to that she is in fact a half-sister to Dynever, who is a son of successful Roberto horse, Dynaformer.

This Roberto/Sharpen Up cross is very much a turf cross as of the 27 stakes winners bred on the cross only three, which includes the 2003 Breeders' Cup Juvenile (Gr 1) winner Action This Day, have either won on dirt or on one of the all-weather surfaces. This is not too surprising as both the Roberto (Hail To Reason) and Sharpen Up (Atan) sire lines being very much turf influences. With many of these stakes winners bred in the US you wonder whether this cross occurred due to Sharpen Up line mares being matched with the right Roberto line sires due to their turf qualities.

With so much Sharpen Up blood in Britain and Ireland it is a real pity that the Roberto line has died away in Europe. I hope that there is another opportunity to stand in top quality sire from the Roberto line in Europe in the not too distant future, as not only will it suit the Sharpen Up line but also many of the other lines that are available here.

STORM CAT MARES

Leading sires are often very influential broodmare-sires and this is very much the case with Storm Cat. This son of Storm

Bird's daughters having produced 112 stakes winners which include 13 at Gr 1 level. Storm Cat mares have produced four stakes winner already in 2011. Two of these stakes winners, which are both at graded level, are by Mr Prospector line sires. At the Dubai Carnival, Debraas (Seeking The Gold) won the Al Fahidi Fort (Gr 2) on 17th February and then three days later, Keertana (Johar), won The Very One Handicap (Gr 3). The cross of a Mr Prospector line sire with a Storm Cat daughter has produced 52 stakes winners, which includes Gr 1 winners Speightstown (Gone West), Buddha (Unbridled's Song), Magnificent Song (Unbridled's Song) and Sidney's Candy (Cady Ride), which equals nearly half of all Storm Cat's broodmare stakes winners.

The success of this cross is not surprising as both lines are very popular in the US so have had the numbers behind the cross but also both Mr Prospector and Storm Cat are bred on similar lines. Mr Prospector is a grandson of Native Dancer and out of a Nasrullah (Nearco) line mare. While Storm Cat is grandson of Northern Dancer, who is bred on the reverse Nearco/Native Dancer cross to Mr Prospector, and also out of a Nasrullah mare. With also a duplication of the Bull Dog/Blue Larkspur cross it is hardly remarkable that this Mr Prospector/Storm Cat cross has proved to be so successful.

The other two stakes winners out of Storm Cat mares were the Holy Bull Stakes (Gr 3) winner Dialed In (Mineshaft) and the Japanese stakes winner Meteorologist (Golden Missile). What is also remarkable about both these stakes winners is that they are both by sons of A P Indy (Seattle Slew). The A P Indy sire-line has also been very successful with Storm Cat daughters as 16 stakes winners have been bred on the cross of which Sky Mesa (Pulpit) is a Gr 1 winner.

NORTHERN AFLEET

Although Giant's Causeway, who needs no introductions, is carrying on where he

left off in 2010, at the head of the US general sire list (prizemoney), Northern Afleet (Afleet) is another sire who has made a very strong start to 2011. Northern Afleet has produced no fewer than six stakes winners this year which includes the Gulfstream Park Turf Stakes (Gr 1) winner, Teaks North. Northern Afleet, might not be familiar to us all in Europe, was a three times stakes winner from 7 to 9 furlongs. A maiden winner at two Northern Afleet, who was Gr 1-placed at three, did not reach his best until he was four, when winning the San Fernando Breeders' Cup Stakes (Gr 2), San Carlos Handicap (Gr 2) and the San Diego Handicap (Gr 3). A son of the Mr Prospector son, Afleet, Northern Afleet was retired to stud in 1999 to Double Diamond Farm in Florida for a fee of \$5,000. From a crop of 38 foals, Northern Afleet could not have made a better start to his stud career as this first crop included eight stakes winners (21%). Not only did this first crop include Afleet Alex, who won both the Belmont (Gr 1) and Preakness (Gr 1), but also Gr 2 winner Saint Afleet. With this early success it is hardly surprising Northern Afleet was relocated to Taylor Made in 2005.

Since then Northern Afleet, who stands for a reasonable 2011 fee of \$12,500, has sired 25 stakes winners of which five are Gr 1 winners. These Gr 1 winners also include Evening Jewel, who is one of her sires' SW's this year having won a Sunshine Millions series race (R) at Santa Anita Park, Negligee and Big City Man.

This branch of the Mr Prospector sire line looks to have a bright future as Afleet Alex, who retired to Gainesway for the 2006 season, was runner-up in the 2010 leading second-crop sires table, having produced 11 stakes winners from his first two crops. With ten of these stakes winners, including the Travers Stakes (Gr 1) winner, Afleet Express and the 2009 Hopeful Stakes (Gr 1) winner, Dublin coming from his first crop (of 135 foals - & 7%), Afleet Alex looks certainly to be taking after his sire. **CWC**

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