

TEN FURLONGS

DEDICATED TO HORSE RACING IN THE MIDDLE EAST

STARTED IN 2016

DATE: 06 DECEMBER 2022

TEN FURLONGS MAGAZINE
ISSUE 2 | VOLUME 6



THIS ISSUE

INTERVIEWS: DARREN BUNYAN | JEAN DE ROUALLE | THOMAS FOURCY |
OKBAH AASHOUR | REVIEW: BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL TROPHY (2022)

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While watching the latest racing in the GCC, I felt a complete shift of energy. After summer, it seems that racing is finally resetting, as the newest 2YO and 3YO come through to the tracks to prove their mettle against the more tried and tested lot.

The Bahrain International Trophy was a revelation with Saeed bin Suroor taking home two trophies.

Quality and quantity have returned to the UAE tracks with the capital's turf track hosting its biggest meeting of the season, highlighted by the Group One AED 5 million Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Jewel Crown.

In this issue, we speak to four trainers racing in the UAE about their plans for the season.

Enjoy Reading

*Pallavi
Shevade*

Editor's Note

EVEREST DIARIES MAGAZINE



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DUBAI, UAE

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THOMAS FOURCY PLANNING AHEAD FOR THE GCC RACING SEASON

"Horses make you who you are; our role is to shape them in a way that allows them to express the best of themselves."

An unstoppable force in Arabian horse training, Thomas Fourcy has made his mark on the sport of kings.

He led Hadi De Carrere to win the US\$2 million Arabian feature race in Riyadh on the Saudi Cup undercard while his other star 6YO, Lady Princess, won the Gr.1 Qatar International Stakes, the prestigious Gr.1 HH The Amir Sword, and the Jewel Crown.

Lady Princess' Success Story Thomas Fourcy's victory at Goodwood racecourse was especially memorable as Lady Princess defeated three Qatar Arabian World Cup winners, Ebraz, Tayf, and Hoggar de l'Ardus.

He has won over 2000 Group One races, with another forty wins in Group One and many more in Group and Listed Company.

Last season, the Frenchman saw his two runners finish first and second in the largest race meet in Abu Dhabi, the Jewel Crown.

In Group 1, his two runners—Lady Princess and Hoggar De L'Ardes—came home first and second in the \$1.36 million event.

"They were the two highest-rated horses on the field, and they were also winners of Group 1 prizes, so we were hopeful," Fourcy told the media.

With Jim Crowley on board, Lady Princess came home late to beat her stablemate under Maxime Guyon by three lengths.

Last season saw him prepare three runners, with the third being Hadi De Carrere, who ran third in the Dubai Kahayla Classic and saw Fourcy take \$4.3 million in race earnings for the season.

2022-2023 GCC Racing Season

"The winter objectives will be the same as last year, starting with Abu Dhabi with Lady Princess," Fourcy said.

This year, the 6-year-old has won four Group One races, including the Qatar International Stakes and the Qatar Arabian World Cup.

"The mare has recovered very well from the World Cup; she is in great shape."

"She is extraordinary, and travelling does not bother her." In February, she will go back to Doha for the Emir's Sword to try to win the Triple Crown.

Thomas Fourcy is proud of his stable star, Lady Princess, as he should be from her performances to date.

"She arrived in training as a new 3YO. She was at the Haras du Saubouas with Paul Basquin, who had bought her from Mr. Bellot on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Deymonaz.

"She had made a pleasant winning start and was spotted and bought on the same day by Mr. Gérard Larrieu on behalf of Sheail Bin Khalifa Al Kuwari.

"She is a small mare with great strength and, above all, a big heart. She has her own character, but she is quite easy to train.

"She is a classy mare. "As long as she is fit and healthy, she will give her best on the track."

The trainer will take the four-year-old Af Albahar-Manella runner Sahab, as well as No Tear Al Maury, to Doha for the derbies in December.

In Fourcy's stable, Hadi de Carrere is a crown jewel.

This season, Hoggar de l'Ardus and Lady Princess will race the Emir Sword at the end of February. Hadi de Carrere will prepare in France in January and then go to Saudi Arabia at the beginning of March and to Dubai at the end of March.

"Hadi De Carrere represents my training and Khalifa Bin Sheail Al Kuwari's.

"He showed great ability as a 3YO, and so we did not race him as a 4YO." We have preserved him for the big races. He confirmed his superior skills when he won the Obayia Classic in Riyadh.

"He is a horse with a lot of action; his toughness and willingness show that he is not bothered by the projections."

"He is a horse made for dirt; he will have the same programme as last year."

The stable can count on these stable stars after Group One winners Tayf and Khataab were retired following the Qatar Arabian World Cup last year.

Thomas Fourcy respects the quality of horses his stable has to contend with but knows their ability and, with his marquee training, understands that they can remain competitive.

"The other competitors in the races are quality horses, and some of them are surface specialists, but I have confidence in my horse."

Growing up on a farm in the north of France, Fourcy used to race ponies in the apple orchards with children from neighbouring farms, which was the beginning of his love for the animal.

"Unfortunately, my father died when I was ten years old, and my mother could not continue the farm on her own, so I had to choose a path."

"I loved horses and speed, so when I was 14 years old, my mother enrolled me in the AFASEC school, where I learned the jockey trade."

He recalls starting his apprenticeship with Mr. Deroualle, the master trainer.

"I was rather tall, so Mr. Deroualle recommended me to Guillaume Macaire, a jumping stable."

"I then joined Arnaud Chaille-Chaille's training as a jockey; this is where I discovered Arabian horses."

The biggest inspiration

"Above all, someone who changed the course of my professional life was Hassan Mousli, a breeder and owner of Arabian horses who encouraged me to become a trainer in 2013."

He will admit he has come a long way in his training journey, and that at the end of the day, the equine stars he gets to work with are a great motivator for the stable's success.

"I think my inspiration comes mainly from my horses." I was lucky enough to train exceptional horses very early in my career, which allowed me to take on challenges that gave me confidence.

"My greatest daily pleasure is to see my horses evolve in training."

"I enjoy getting them ready and taking them to competitions and have had great joy in many races because I have been lucky enough to train several great horses." Everyone is different in character and background, and you have particular affinities at different times in your life as well.

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"If I had to remember one race in particular, I would say the victory in Doha in the Grade 1 H.H. Amir Sword (2015) with Al Mourtajez, owned by His Excellency Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al Thani and bred by Hassan Mousli."

"It was a great first prestigious victory abroad for me, and Mousli had such a large influence on me early on, so it was very important." "Winning the big races gives me a lot of joy."

"The owners also had a lot to do with helping me succeed." They pushed me to the limit sometimes, but knowing my horses and understanding their condition helped me accept challenges that I would not have dared as a young trainer.

"His Excellency Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al Thani wanted to see Mister Ginoux and Al Mourtajez run in the major events in Doha in the second year of my installation as a trainer in 2015.

"We won the two Group One matches, and that gave me the confidence to prepare for other big events."

Development of Racing in the Middle East

He is a great advocate for racing and the increased opportunities for racing throughout the Middle East.

"The development of major races in the Middle East has presented an opportunity to travel to represent French training and breeding, which is a great thing."

"We are fortunate to have very good-age horses to compete in the premier events, and we are supported and encouraged by our owners."

"The competition from abroad is increasingly good, and it is interesting to compare our French horses with those from other countries."





Darren and his dogs checking the going at Curragh Racecourse / Darren Bunyan

DARREN BUNYAN'S GIGANTIC 2023 OBJECTIVES

With the year coming to an end, multi-group winning Irish trainer Darren Bunyan shares his reflections on the transition to a new yard and his plans for J.J. Jumbo in Dubai.

"This year has been a bit of a transition." We've moved to a new yard. We probably have one of the best yards I have ever come across. The facilities are fantastic here.

"It's been like a building process for us and the horses, as well." A lot of our older horses have gone on to second careers, and we have a large number of yearlings brought in this year with some new owners. Moreover, some existing owners have reinvested in yearlings.

"It looks like we are going to have our biggest number of 2-year-olds next year. There is an awful lot to look forward to. We probably have the nicest bunch of yearlings that I can remember.



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"There is a lot of excitement around the yard at the moment." "Everybody has been looking forward to next year very much," he said.

The Jumbo Moment

With many new horses lined up to train at Bunyan's stables, there is one particular talk of the town: a chestnut colt called J J Jumbo, for whom Bunyan has high hopes.

"If he were a human, he'd be your best friend." Everybody who meets him loves him. He's a character in all ways. He's a beautiful horse to work with; nothing seems to ever phase him—he's just a really solid horse.

"Last winter was a work in progress with him going to the carnival." I sent him out mainly for the climate, and I've always believed that he's a horse that will go on the dirt, which is unusual for a European horse and particularly with his breeding.

"I was 100% sure that J.J. (Jumbo) would go on the surface even though he hadn't run on it, but he developed a huge amount during the last carnival with the climate being to our benefit.

"When he came home, I gave him a short break, but we had one of our best summers in years, and he went from a really good climate in Dubai to a really good climate here." "He is a pure powerhouse now," said the Irish trainer.

Winning on home ground

The William Hill Best Odds Guaranteed Handicap win at Dundalk over 7 furlongs was very memorable for the softly spoken Irishman. However, Sultan Saeed Mohammed Harib Alfalahi's 3YO hasn't been delivering the expected wins, finishing tenth at Dundalk recently.

"He's just been out of luck the last couple of runs he's had." That's racing for you. Not everything works every day.

If you go back to his run in France, that was a huge run. It must have appeared insane to send him to France. but he beat them just the same.

"He went out and he really stepped up." He was only caught near the line that day. He's won in Ireland, which is one of the most competitive countries in the world for racing, so he's able to back up good runs.

"As I say, every horse has its day." When things didn't go right for him on his last day of racing, even though it was a good run, he was defeated. It was a run, but we didn't see the real J.J. at all on the night. "Everything has to fall your way, or it will cost you at the finish line," said Bunyan.

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