

# Global AUSTRALIAN DOMINATION FILLIES

The recent influx of quality, Northern Hemisphere pedigrees into Australia have a double whammy effect. First off, the impact they have when bred to proven Australian stallions. Secondly, once they have thrown a runner with stakes ability, it then extrapolates out to suddenly make the Australian-bred offspring of a recognisable family much more attractive to a North American, Japanese or European buyer.

Miss Finland is a perfect example of such a theory. By Redoute's Choice, who has already eclipsed his breed-shaping sire Danehill's early record, out of a Woodman daughter of an Epsom Oaks heroine in Moonshell who is out of a Saddler's Wells mare, Miss Finland has obvious appeal. Combine that with breathtaking Group 1 ability and you have an object of extreme desire.

Miss Finland won Australia's premier juvenile contest, the Golden Slipper Stakes (Gr 1) and then made history in her classic year by winning the 1000 Guineas and Victoria Oaks, becoming the first filly ever to win the Slipper over 1200 metres and to train on to land the Oaks over 2500 metres. In the words of Grant Pritchard-Gordon who purchased Miss Finland on behalf of Arrowfield Stud Ltd syndicate as

a yearling for A\$450,000 (€282,485), "She's priceless, worth her weight in gold". And Pritchard-Gordon should know, having managed Khalid Abdullah's racehorses for more than a decade.

Comparative Australian values have been drawing the shrewd and selective overseas buyers to the yearling sales for some time now. Adrian Nicoll of the BBA (Ireland) has enjoyed notable success. A keen sense of value, aided by an uncanny eye for the individual led Nicoll to purchase a Danehill filly out of Prawn Cocktail for A\$500,000 (€297,351) at the 2000 Inglis Easter Yearling Sale.

Named Langoustine and racing for an international set of owners that included Lord Sam Vestey and Robert Sangster, Langoustine did her bit by winning the Maribyrnong Plate (Gr 2) as a juvenile and suddenly things were different. Shipped to North America, Langoustine was sold at the 2002 Keeneland November Breeding Stock Sale for US\$900,000, in foal to Giant's Causeway, to HM The Queen's bloodstock advisor John Warren.

At the other end of the spectrum is Forest Express, a daughter of the New Zealand-bred stayer Kaaptive Edition but from an imported mare with European group win-

**Darley have been active buying Australian race fillies in recent years at all levels of ability and price.**

Group 1 winners:

Top: Miss Finland  
Bottom: Alinghi

ning relatives. Purchased at Inglis for A\$2400 (€1427), Forest Express was trained by Gary Portelli for a group of owners that included Newmarket-based bloodstock agent Andrew Mead. Winning at Group 1 level in Australia, Forest Express' value suddenly took on a whole different perspective. Shipped to Europe, Forest Express had a Machiavellian filly foal sell for six figures in the UK and sold herself, in foal to Green Desert, to Johnny McKeever of McKeever St Lawrence for 400,000gns.

"There is," Andrew Mead muses, "absolutely no doubt that the European pedigrees can be turned into a good investment if they can run a bit. Quite apart from covering your cost in Australia, you create two market values for one horse, which can't be bad in anyone's language".

Australian black type makes fillies with international pedigrees very attractive to local buyers, let alone international visitors. The difference in currency value gives those from the North a distinct advantage and, when coupled with Group form, makes for a potent combination.

Zodiac Miss was a listed winner in Australia from a European family of note a generation removed. She found herself owned by Allen Paulson in America and repaid the favour with interest by producing the great Azeri, a daughter of Jade Hunter, who was to win several Grade 1 races in the USA, earning in excess of US\$4 million and was named the Eclipse Award Champion and Horse Of The Year in 2002 and then later Champion Older Female in 2003 and 2004.

There are similar parallels with Alinghi. A brilliant Group 1 winning sprinter, this daughter of Encosta de Lago boasts a European female family. It was however her ability on the track that saw her purchase by a partnership that included John Messara's Arrowfield in a multi-million dollar deal with a North American race career in mind. Alinghi showed Eclipse award winning trainer Bobby Frankel a glimpse of her prodigious talent with a Grade 3 win before her American dream was cut short by injury, but the fact that Australian fillies with stakes ability can transfer that talent to the world stage has not gone un-noticed by major owners and breeders.

The other advantage of the international pedigree is the chance that there is always going to be something happening in the pedigree elsewhere that instantly makes the

