

David Hayes Racing

Saturday's Blue Diamond Stakes has been the launch pad of many leading racehorses and the 2008 renewal could well herald the arrival at racings top table of All American, a handsome son of Red Ransom who has won both his starts impressively.

All American races for a group of owners that includes trainer David Hayes and Irishman Hubie de Burgh, who selected All American as a yearling in conjunction with Mark Pilkington. De Burgh is probably best known to many as the stud manager of Derrinstown Stud in Ireland for Sheikh Hamdan al Maktoum, a role he filled for some 20 years. In 2003 De Burgh decided to branch out on his own and start De Burgh Equine, a bloodstock consultancy based in Co Kildare, and a steady stream of winners since suggests he perhaps should have made the move sooner. The affable approach can deceive and as much as he has been known to enjoy the odd night out in the name of client relations, the disarming smile disguises a will to win and a mind that can instantly recite pedigrees and physical traits of horses all over the world.

For all that, De Burgh is very focused on this weekend, for obvious reasons. "We're very excited about All American and very much looking forward to Saturday," de Burgh says, adding, "he has already proved a very good piece of business for us." De Burgh is referring to a sizeable percentage in All American that has just been sold to a syndicate headed by Melbourne businessman Bruce Mathieson in a deal that values the \$220,000 yearling in the multi-million dollar bracket.

All American became the 78th stakes-winner for shuttle-sire Red Ransom (USA) when winning at Moonee Valley. The 20 year-old son of Roberto missed his ninth and final season at Vinery Stud due to the E.I. outbreak, returning to his Northern hemisphere base at Dalham Stud in Newmarket without leaving quarantine. Red Ransom was seen by many as the natural foil for Danehill (USA) and while it is too soon to say that is correct, he has proved effective here and he already has Group 1 winning colts like Charge Forward and Red Dazzler at stud.

The unbeaten All American (pictured) embodies a lot of the De Burgh philosophy. "We think that Australia is an ideal place for Europeans to buy horses. You can buy European pedigrees by stallions people can relate to and at a discounted price," he reasons. "The cost of training in relation to the prize-money returns is so much more in favour of the Australian owner than to us in Europe. Buying in Australia makes so much sense that I am frankly surprised that more Europeans aren't buying horses here."

De Burgh is certainly no newcomer to Australia. Having accompanied Hot Spark (GB) as his groom on his trip to Milluna Stud for the 1976 stud season, De Burgh liked South

Australia sufficiently to stay longer at Milluna and then move on to Coles Bloodstock in Adelaide. The country clearly left its mark and De Burgh has been a regular visitor since.

Since establishing De Burgh Equine his forays have been concentrated on racing and breeding and De Burgh is a passionate advocate of the Australian experience. "I am constantly amazed," he enthuses, "that more owners from Europe are not involved in Australian racing as there is everything I would expect an owner would want there, from huge prizemoney, low cost, very competitive racing and world class facilities.

The involvement in All American reflects his approach to buying in Australia. "We identified him (All American) pretty early on as the right horse in the wrong sale and thought he'd sell below his value." De Burgh explains. "That's not a criticism of Magic Millions, far from it, but most buyers go to the Magic Millions looking for a more precocious type and we thought he was a colt that would benefit greatly from a little time to develop."

De Burgh is quick to point out that he owes much of his success in Australia to the close working relationship he has developed with Mark Pilkington, universally known as 'Pilko' "We rely on Pilko a lot for his input and communication and without him we would not have had as much success as we have."

De Burgh is keen to expand his operations in Australia and has also added a chunk of ownership in Chatswood Stud in Victoria to his portfolio. "We've dipped our toe in the water and it was David Heffernan, one of the partners in All American, who made the Chatswood deal happen. I knew David from dealing with him in Dubai and it was he who alerted me to the opportunity to joint venture with him and Chatswoods owner Greg Willis on such a beautiful property."

De Burgh's philosophy is a global one and he is also involved with Terry Henderson in sourcing horses to race in Australia. "Our entire approach is global and we view horses as being able to run anywhere, which is just another reason why Australia appeals so much with its level of prizemoney." De Burgh cites Doctor Dino, a winner at the Hong Kong International Meeting last December and trained by good friend Richard Gibson as a prime example of the global racehorse. "There is a lot of money to be won with a sound horse that can travel."

In keeping with his Australia love in, de Burgh singles out communication as another big selling point. "I can honestly say that having owned and managed horses for clients in at least 6 (10) different countries, the level of communication that comes out of Australia, Lindsay Park in particular, is second to none. Obviously it makes our job easier and for an owner in London or Paris to have a horse trained at Flemington or Randwick is no different to being at Chantilly or Newmarket in terms of trainer contact."

The effect of the 'global racehorse' has opened up more European eyes to the virtues of Australian racehorses and de Burgh has seen a subtle shift in recognition. "Choisir,

Takeover Target, Starcraft, Elvstroem and Miss Andretti have all proved great ambassadors for Australia in recent years and I take my hat off to Aushorse, they do a great job of promoting Australia and it is sure to reap rewards.”

De Burgh has been active purchasing breeding stock for the past two years in Europe for Australian breeders and he is busying himself with the catalogues for the Inglis and Magic Million yearling sales. “We’ll be there for both and it would be nice to find another All American,” de Burgh says.