

Island Hopping

After the news that veteran Weichong Marwing will be riding in Mauritius for the Gilbert Rousset yard, the latest is that Mauritius Hall Of Famer Derreck David could be set for a return to the island where he has achieved great heights in past years. The South African-born David became one of only 14 jockeys to be inducted to the Mauritius Hall Of Fame in 2015. He will be engaged by the Alain Perdrau yard. SA jockeys found themselves under fire in the middle of the last Mauritius season and very few locals were expected to be brave enough to take up contracts in the new term, which starts next month.

BIPOT BLISS

Top class Richard Fourie is now on 65 winners for the season with a 17% win strike-rate after he rode a hat-trick at Kenilworth on Saturday, including the Bipot. The exotic has been in existence for just under 5 years and there is no history of any other jockey having achieved this feat.

New Jockey

Inaugural Sun Met winner Whisky Baron has his first run in Dubai on Thursday evening where he contests the Zabeel Mile. Regular jockey Greg Cheyne has been replaced by 37 year old Colm O'Donoghue, who will keep the ride for the campaign. Classic winner O'Donoghue has been a key member of the Aidan O'Brien team at Ballydoyle for many years.



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Amateurs

Commentator Alistair Cohen asked if a secrecy bill had been passed at Flamingo Park on Monday. Firstly, the reasons for the delay at the start of the second race was not communicated - and then no word was forthcoming on a late withdrawal in the same race. It is frustrating amateurism and unacceptable as this is basic process as we race 364 days a year. Obviously the NHA and Tellytrack are not talking to each other.

Fatty @ Fairview

Former Joey Ramsden trained and Mayfair Speculators-owned Gr2 Joburg Merchants winner Brutal Force has his first run for his new owner partnership of Michael Brown, Hedley McGrath & Braam van Huyssteen at Fairview on Friday. The one-time sales record-breaker, affectionately known as 'Fatty', ran a good fourth in the Gr1 Cape Flying Championship on Met day. He is now trained by Yvette Bremner.



VINTAGE VAR

Avontuur's top class producer, and last season's SA Champion 2yo sire, Var is maturing like those excellent reds on his home turf and he produced an outstanding 2yo treble last Saturday. This was highlighted by a pair of very impressive debut winners in the form of the Robbie Sage-trained William The Silent and Vaughan Marshall's Zinedine, respectively. Joey Ramsden's Carioca completed the Var two-year-old treble when she won at her fourth start. Can Var defend his title this term?

Mystery

Mike de Kock has reported that two of his runners bled at Meyday last Thursday evening. Suyoof and Icy Trail, both unplaced in a handicap over 1600m on turf, bled during the race. "Bleeding has been a problem for us this season, more so than in previous years, and we can't offer an explanation why. We can't put our finger on it," said De Kock.

While veteran retired trainer Ian Jayes simply blames schooling, the old starting stalls bugbear raised its ugly head at Turffontein on Saturday, where the trainer of the first race winner, William The Silent, called the goings on 'wrong and offside'. Robbie Sage enjoyed a race of mixed emotions after two horses - including his own Dewali - were withdrawn at the start. "Dewali is probably even better than the winner, but ended up standing in the stalls for five minutes. That's wrong. It's offside." The Stipes made a tacit acknowledgement that the fault lay with the poor behaviour of the Candice Dawson-trained Var-do, by not punishing Dewali. But the damage to betting turnover and owner costs had already been done.

More Farce Than Class

The Karaka New Zealand Sale first session ended with a female stalker in the ring. Bookmaker Rob Waterhouse tweeted his assessment of the uncatalogued lot: "An unusual and appealing lot going through the ring : an athletic, precocious type, good stride - plenty of bounce, if a shade frisky. My grandmother might dismiss as 'lacking breeding' and, no doubt, might be expensive to keep in work."

