

Flyer!

Last season's Equus Champion Two Year Old Filly Return Flight continues to make giant strides and set herself up for a likely bid on the Woolavington 2000 at Greyville next month, when running out an easy winner of Saturday's R500 000 Gr2 Gerald Rosenberg Stakes.

Sean Tarry and Anton Marcus teamed up again after Piere Strydom deputised in Marcus' absence at the Dubai World Cup for her courageous victory in last month's SA Oaks.

Marcus rode a typically brave and confident race from the front and obviously knowing what he had under him, never panicked as he pushed the bargain buy out ahead of the chasing bunch up the long Turffontein home straight.

Return Flight stayed on relentlessly under a well judged ride to beat Insignis by 1,25 lengths in a time of 126,33 secs.

A R20 000 CTS 2017 March Yearling Sale buy by Chris Van Niekerk's Rainbow Beach Trading, Return Flight was bred by Mike Sharkey and is out of the four-time winner Heading Home (Special Preview).

She has won 6 races with 4 places from 11 starts for impressive stakes earnings of R2 210 975.

Gr2 Gerald Rosenberg Stakes (F&M) 2000m

Winner Return Flight set the pace; kept on strongly

Runner-up Insignis raced 4th; 3 lengths behind the eventual winner entering home straight; ran on

Third Secret Potion (3rd best handicapped) raced 2nd a length behind the eventual winner entering home straight; no extra

Time: Particularly slowly run in the first half of the race, the overall time was not a good one. Assumed to be a false run race, with suspect ratings. We gave the 4th (prev best 94) 94 which makes the winner (prev 104/70/96/102/103) 104, the runner-up (prev 89/88/88/83/89) 94 and the third (prev 92/100/98/86/87) 93

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|--|-----------|--------------|----------------------|------|------|--------------|-------|
| 104 | 1 | 0.00 | RETURN FLIGHT | (1) | 58.5 | A Marcus | 27/20 |
| 3 b f Pomodoro - Heading Home (Special Preview) | | | | | | | |
| 94 | 2 | 1.25 | INSIGNIS | (5) | 59.0 | M v Rensburg | 29/4 |
| 4 ch f Go Deputy - Alula (Western Winter) | | | | | | | |
| 93 | 3 | 2.75 | SECRET POTION | (7) | 60.0 | G Lerena | 11/1 |
| 4 b f Elusive Fort - Lemon Drop Girl (Parade Leader) | | | | | | | |
| 94 | 4 | 2.90 | Pretty Border | (9) | 56.5 | L Hewitson | 36/1 |
| 88 | 5 | 4.50 | Fresnaye | (3) | 59.0 | S Khumalo | 93/20 |
| 90 | 6 | 5.00 | Ghaalla | (6) | 56.5 | R Simons | 15/1 |
| 84 | 7 | 6.25 | Jet Start | (2) | 59.0 | L J Ferraris | 81/10 |
| 84 | 8 | 6.50 | Sylvan On Fire | (4) | 59.0 | B Fayd'herbe | 9/1 |
| 85 | 9 | 8.00 | My Dream Chaser | (8) | 56.5 | R Fourie | 36/1 |
| 0 | 10 | 99.99 | Cold Cash | (10) | 59.0 | D Schwarz | 36/1 |
| Time: 126.33s (63.17s avg/1000m, or 57km/h) SP Total %: 116% | | | | | | | |
| 1st T: SG Tarry O: Mr C J H Van Niekerk B: M Sharkey | | | | | | | |

Many Happy Returns

The champion duo of Sean Tarry and Piere Strydom, who have endured the inevitable ups and downs of a tough game, were victorious after the smashing R20 000 bargain buy Return Flight had slammed her rivals to win the R750 000 Wilgerbosdrift Gr2 SA Oaks.

With instructions to ride Return Flight economically in view of her stamina uncertainty, Piere Strydom found himself searching for plan B as he pinged the gates and found himself in front.

“She jumped well. I looked around. There was nobody there. I thought I would have to lead. But then Craig Zackey came around me on Seville Orange and I was happy to sit second. She followed the leader and when I asked her, it was race over. She is a lovely filly!”

The Oaks was not run in a rush. Return Flight’s winning time of 161,78 secs was over 2 secs slower than the SA Derby run a half hour later

The eventual favourite Blossom, ridden by replacement rider Luke Ferraris, would not have enjoyed the sedentary pace but came out of the pack to run second, ahead of the game Seville Orange.

Owner Chris van Niekerk said he felt a ‘pang of guilt’ every time reference was made to the R20 000 he paid for her at the CTS 2017 March Yearling Sale.

Return Flight was bred by Mike Sharkey and is out of the four-time winner Heading Home (Special Preview).

She has won three Gr1’s in her 5 wins with 4 places from 10 starts and took her career earnings to R1 898 475.

Gr2 SA Oaks 2450m

Winner Return Flight (best handicapped) raced 2nd; led 450m; won comfortably

Runner-up Blossom raced in the rear, too far out of her ground given the slow pace; ran on well late, but no chance with winner;

Third Seville Orange set the pace; ran on but no chance with first two

Time: particularly slow in the middle of the race, this comparatively was the slowest of the nine races around the turn. A false run race, where the result and ratings may not stand the test of time. We gave the runner-up (prev 64/70/70/83/93) 93 which makes the winner (prev 88/97/63/89/95) 96 and the third (prev 64/77/73/79/88) 92.

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|--|---|------|-----------------------|-----|------|--------------|-------|
| 96 | 1 | 0.00 | RETURN FLIGHT | (6) | 60.0 | P Strydom | 3/1 |
| 3 b f Pomodoro - Heading Home (Special Preview) | | | | | | | |
| 93 | 2 | 1.80 | BLOSSOM | (9) | 60.0 | L J Ferraris | 22/10 |
| 3 b f Silvano - Cherry On The Top (Tiger Ridge) | | | | | | | |
| 92 | 3 | 2.90 | SEVILLE ORANGE | (7) | 60.0 | C Zackey | 11/1 |
| 3 ch f Duke Of Marmalade - Serruria(GB) (Galileo) | | | | | | | |
| 90 | 4 | 4.00 | Bize | (8) | 60.0 | R Danielson | 7/1 |
| 87 | 5 | 5.30 | Chitengo | (5) | 60.0 | G Lerena | 6/1 |
| 87 | 6 | 5.40 | Pretty Border | (3) | 60.0 | R Mungler | 22/1 |
| 83 | 7 | 7.70 | Second Request | (2) | 60.0 | L Hewitson | 17/2 |
| 81 | 8 | 9.20 | Red Al | (1) | 60.0 | W Kennedy | 20/1 |
| 80 | 9 | 9.70 | Fariha | (4) | 60.0 | R Simons | 20/1 |
| Time: 161.78s (66.03s avg/1000m, or 55km/h) SP Total %: 116% | | | | | | | |
| 1st T: SG Tarry O: Mr C J H Van Niekerk B: M Sharkey | | | | | | | |

Bargain Buy's Gr1 Score

Anton Marcus took the R1 250 000 Wilgerbosdrift Gr1 SA Fillies Classic by the scruff of the neck at Turffontein on Saturday and went all the way on the 2017/18 Equus Champion 2yo Return Flight to deny Mike de Kock a hat-trick in the prestigious classic.

Marcus, a master of judging pace, played down his achievement, giving the filly all the credit and confirming that she was running on ‘pure heart’ in the final 150m.

With Warren Kennedy looking to capture the second leg of the SA Triple Tiara on Gauteng Fillies Guineas winner and favourite Nafaayes, the unknown of the extra 200m was always a question mark against a few of the runners.

Kennedy did nothing wrong as he had Nafaayes relaxed in fourth and five lengths off as Marcus took Return Flight out to lead and he controlled things from there all the way around.

With Nafaayes under a left handed whip and appearing to gain, Return Flight hung out under pressure which allowed Nafaayes to draw level at the 150m marker.

But it wasn't a prize Marcus was giving up too lightly, and he put his head down and gathered his mount in that familiar style. Return Flight never looked like getting beaten again and she rallied and held Nafaayes by 0,80 lengths in a time of 112.09 secs.

A daughter of past SA Triple Tiara winner Cherry On The Top, Blossom charged home from way back to grab third and signal her SA Oaks prospects.

Three Troikas winner Storm Destiny was also gaining late for fourth, and is another who looks to be competitive in the Oaks.

Return Flight, a daughter of last season's Champion freshman sire Pomodoro (Jet Master) won the Gr1 Thekwini Stakes on Super Saturday last term.

A R20 000 CTS 2017 March Yearling Sale buy by Van Niekerk's Rainbow Beach Trading, Return Flight was bred by Mike Sharkey and is out of the four-time winner Heading Home (Special Preview).

She has won two Gr1's in her 4 wins with 4 places from 9 starts, and took her career earnings to R1 429 725.

Gr1 SA Fillies Classic (3yo's) 1800m

Winner Return Flight (3rd best handicapped) set modest pace, unchallenged; kept on strongly

Runner-up Nafaayes (2nd best handicapped) raced 5th; was a length behind the winner 400m out; ran on well

Third Blossom was drawn wide; raced in the rear some 7 lengths off the pace; was 3 lengths behind the winner 400m out; ran on strongly

Time: Run almost 3s slower than the SA Classic, this was only the 7th fastest of the ten races around the turn, and decided in a sprint for home. We gave the runner-up (prev 85/77/89/99/94) 94 which makes the winner (prev 90/88/97/63/89) 95 and the third (prev 64/70/70/83) 93

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|--|----|-------|----------------------|------|------|--------------|-------|
| 95 | 1 | 0.00 | RETURN FLIGHT | (2) | 60.0 | A Marcus | 15/4 |
| 3 b f Pomodoro - Heading Home (Special Preview) | | | | | | | |
| 94 | 2 | 0.80 | NAFAAYES | (1) | 60.0 | W Kennedy | 26/10 |
| 3 b f Exceed And Excel - Decelerator(USA) (Dehere) | | | | | | | |
| 93 | 3 | 1.00 | BLOSSOM | (11) | 60.0 | R Fourie | 16/1 |
| 3 b f Silvano - Cherry On The Top (Tiger Ridge) | | | | | | | |
| 92 | 4 | 1.50 | Storm Destiny | (6) | 60.0 | G Lerena | 12/1 |
| 90 | 5 | 2.75 | Perfect Tigress | (3) | 60.0 | M v Rensburg | 25/1 |
| 89 | 6 | 3.05 | Running Brave | (4) | 60.0 | D L Habib | 9/1 |
| 88 | 7 | 3.55 | Chitengo | (9) | 60.0 | R Danielson | 11/1 |
| 85 | 8 | 5.25 | Skye Lane | (5) | 60.0 | S Khumalo | 13/1 |
| 82 | 9 | 6.75 | Dagmar | (10) | 60.0 | R Simons | 36/1 |
| 79 | 10 | 8.25 | Second Request | (7) | 60.0 | L Hewitson | 8/1 |
| 74 | 11 | 10.85 | I Like It | (12) | 60.0 | S Brown | 100/1 |
| 67 | 12 | 14.10 | Ronnie's Candy | (8) | 60.0 | K Zechner | 10/1 |
| Time: 112.09s (62.27s avg/1000m, or 58km/h) SP Total %: 116% | | | | | | | |
| 1st T: SG Tarry O: Mr C J H Van Niekerk B: M Sharkey | | | | | | | |

Money, Money, Money

The Riverton Stud bred Pomodoro colt Cirillo has proven a genuine moneyspinner for owner Chris van Niekerk. He took his earnings to over R4,3 million on Saturday – without having won a stakes feature in his 12 starts to date.

The stakes placed galloper was astutely dropped back in distance by trainer Sean Tarry after running a well beaten fourth in the Cape Guineas behind Soqrat at his last start. He had won the R2,5 million CTS Ready To Run Stakes in November at his penultimate start.

A popular Pick 6 banker, Anton Marcus had Cirillo in touch with the leaders in the R5 million CTS 1200 for much of the race as Temple Grafina and Celestial Storm showed the way.

At the 350m marker Marcus brought the consistent colt up the outside and he bounced away from his field with only Elusive Trader putting up any resistance.

At the line, Cirillo won under the hands by 3,50 lengths in a time of 71,02 secs.

Elusive Trader tried hard but had no answers, with Seventh Sea and Joburg visitor Palace Chapel rounding off the quartet.

In the big money sales race, another Joburg visitor in Joey Soma's Comaneci squeaked into fifth to bank the R200 000 final cheque.

The enigmatic Gr1 winner Van Halen disappointed again, finishing well downfield.

Trained by Sean Tarry for his leading owner Chris van Niekerk, the R300 000 Cape Premier Yearling Sale purchase has won 4 races with 6 places from 12 starts for stakes of R4 311 750.

Bred by Riverton Stud, Cirillo is by Pomodoro (Jet Master) – who won the July in the same silks – out of the Lake Coniston mare, Miss Wordsmith.

The CTS 1200 (3yo's) (non-black type)

Winner Cirillo (3rd best handicapped) raced 3rd; led 250m; drew clear easily closing stages

Runner-up Elusive Trader raced in midfield 3 lengths behind the eventual winner; ran on

Third Seventh Sea was squeezed out at the start losing 1 length; raced in the rear 5 lengths behind the eventual winner; ran on

Time: This was the second fastest of the afternoon's five sprint races. We gave the third horse (prev 87/82/66/17/82) 84 which makes the winner (prev 93/90/89/95/94) 101 and the runner-up (prev 79/84/86/67/72) 89

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|--|----|-------|-----------------------|------|------|--------------|-------|
| 101 | 1 | 0.00 | CIRILLO | (13) | 60.0 | A Marcus | 15/10 |
| 3 b c Pomodoro - Miss Wordsworth (Lake Coniston) | | | | | | | |
| 89 | 2 | 3.50 | ELUSIVE TRADER | (2) | 60.0 | B Fayd'herbe | 20/1 |
| 3 b g Elusive Fort - Armatrading (Var) | | | | | | | |
| 84 | 3 | 4.75 | SEVENTH SEA | (4) | 60.0 | R Fourie | 15/1 |
| 3 b g Seventh Rock - Schism (Count Dubois) | | | | | | | |
| 84 | 4 | 4.95 | Palace Chapel | (15) | 60.0 | G Lerena | 10/1 |
| 76 | 5 | 5.45 | Comaneci | (9) | 57.5 | S Khumalo | 36/1 |
| 76 | 6 | 5.55 | Varsity Lover | (14) | 57.5 | R Simons | 50/1 |
| 75 | 7 | 5.85 | Temple Grafina | (8) | 57.5 | P Strydom | 13/2 |
| 80 | 8 | 5.90 | Mastagambit | (3) | 60.0 | S Veale | 16/1 |
| 78 | 9 | 6.65 | Arabian Air | (6) | 60.0 | D Dillon | 17/1 |
| 75 | 10 | 7.40 | Priceless Ruler | (7) | 60.0 | K De Melo | 22/1 |
| 74 | 11 | 7.70 | Captainofthesea | (11) | 60.0 | C Zackey | 36/1 |
| 72 | 12 | 8.20 | Van Halen | (5) | 60.0 | W Kennedy | 16/1 |
| 62 | 13 | 9.45 | Shamrock Wind | (19) | 57.5 | C Orffer | 22/1 |
| 59 | 14 | 11.70 | Clipper Captain | (10) | 60.0 | G Cheyne | 50/1 |
| 58 | 15 | 12.00 | Sacred Arrow | (17) | 60.0 | A Domeyer | 44/1 |
| 50 | 16 | 12.75 | Dalai's Promise | (16) | 57.5 | L Hewitson | 100/1 |
| 42 | 17 | 15.00 | Celestial Storm | (1) | 57.5 | R Munger | 100/1 |
| 44 | 18 | 16.00 | Frank Lloyd Wright | (12) | 60.0 | M Khan | 44/1 |
| 14 | 19 | 22.75 | Sugerpova | (18) | 57.5 | M Winnar | 100/1 |

Time: 71.02s (59.18s avg/1000m, or 61km/h) **SP Total %:** 116%
1st T:SG Tarry O:Mr C J H Van Niekerk B:Riverton Stud

Many Happy Returns

The 2012 Vodacom Durban July winner and South Africa's Champion First Crop Sire elect Pomodoro rounded off a cracking opening season when he sired his first Gr1 winner courtesy of the R20 000 purchase Return Flight, who spread-eagled her field to win the R750 000 Gr1 Thekwini Stakes at Greyville on Saturday.

Outgoing SA Champion trainer Sean Tarry, by his own admission having seen his team 'drop the ball' in the first half of the season, finished like an express train to bring the curtain down on our final major raceday.

Jumping from a good draw with Anton Marcus in the saddle, Return Flight had been earmarked as his likely 3rd career Gr1 winner for her original pilot, the bitterly disappointed and injured Lyle Hewitson, and enjoyed good betting support to start at 16-1.

Relaxed behind Mazari early on, Anton Marcus took Return Flight up the outside at the 350m marker and she came home strongly to beat the late finishing Joburg visitor Railtrip by 1,75 lengths in a time of 96,98 secs and give the new Highlands-Ridgemont rider his 101st Gr1 success.

Brand new trainer Chesney van Zyl saddled the runner-up, who got the better of his brother Gareth's runner Can You Feel It, who ran 2,25 lengths back in third.

A R20 000 CTS 2017 March Yearling Sale buy by Rainbow Beach Trading – she came up as the second lot on that sale – Return Flight was bred by Mike Sharkey and is by Pomodoro (Jet Master) out of the four-time winner Heading Home (Special Preview).

Return Flight has won 3 races with 2 places from 5 starts for stakes of R613 625.

Pomodoro, who ran in the same silks for the same trainer when winning the Vodacom Durban July at this track, will stand at Klawervlei for a fee of R12 000 (unchanged) in 2018.

Gr1 Thekwini S. (2yo fillies) 1600m (turf)

Winner Return Flight (jnt 3rd best handicapped) raced 2nd; led 500m
Runner-up Railtrip was slow into stride and thereafter squeezed out shortly after the start; raced in midfield; 5,5 lengths behind the winner entering the straight; ran on

Third Can You Feel It (jnt 3rd best handicapped) raced 5th; stayed on
Time: Although not a fast run race, the time was a reasonable one.

We gave the 5th horse 82 which makes the winner (prev 66/78/88/88) 88, the runner-up (prev 63/73/78/84) 86 and the third (prev 80/88) 83

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|---|----|-------|------------------------|------|------|-------------|-------|
| 88 | 1 | 0.00 | RETURN FLIGHT | (3) | 60.0 | A Marcus | 16/10 |
| 2 b f Pomodoro - Heading Home (Special Preview) | | | | | | | |
| 86 | 2 | 1.75 | RAILTRIP | (7) | 60.0 | K De Melo | 9/1 |
| 2 b f Trippi - Graal Maiden(AUS) (Galileo) | | | | | | | |
| 83 | 3 | 4.00 | CAN YOU FEEL IT | (4) | 60.0 | W Kennedy | 4/1 |
| 2 b f Jackson - Wonder Glow (Windrush) | | | | | | | |
| 83 | 4 | 4.25 | Dagmar | (8) | 60.0 | R Simons | 8/1 |
| 82 | 5 | 4.30 | Storm Destiny | (13) | 60.0 | P Strydom | 11/1 |
| 78 | 6 | 7.80 | Sand Princess | (12) | 60.0 | S Khumalo | 36/1 |
| 77 | 7 | 7.85 | Gimme A Brake Nate | (5) | 60.0 | B Lerena | 75/1 |
| 77 | 8 | 8.00 | Beat It | (9) | 60.0 | M Yeni | 66/1 |
| 77 | 9 | 8.10 | Perfect Tigress | (1) | 60.0 | K Zechner | 28/1 |
| 74 | 10 | 10.10 | Long Pond | (11) | 60.0 | R Danielson | 30/1 |
| 74 | 11 | 10.35 | Pearl Tiara | (14) | 60.0 | R Fourie | 36/1 |
| 74 | 12 | 10.60 | Mazari | (10) | 60.0 | C Zackey | 8/1 |
| 67 | 13 | 15.35 | Believe The Best | (2) | 60.0 | M Khan | 30/1 |
| 55 | 14 | 24.10 | Runaway Gal | (6) | 60.0 | C Orffer | 66/1 |

Time: 96.98s (60.61s avg/1000m, or 59km/h) **SP Total %:** 119%
1st T:SG Tarry O:Mr C J H Van Niekerk B:Mike Sharkey