

GITANO HERNANDO GETTING READY FOR WORLD CUP PREP AT LINGFIELD, TRAINER MARCO BOTTI REVEALS MESA MARAUDER WILL ACT AS RABBIT, WINTER DERBY TRIAL SET TO BE RENEWED FEBRUARY 27 IN ALL WEATHER



The countdown continues. Gitano Hernando is well into the thick of his preparation for a tilt at the richest horse race the world has ever known. While the \$10 million Dubai World Cup is 43 days away, Gitano is just 16 days away from his initial step on the road towards Meydan Racecourse.

First stop: Lingfield Racecourse, the Winter Derby Trial, February 27, 10 furlongs Polytrack, which will serve as Gitano's launching pad en route to landing in a starting stall for the World Cup on March 27.

If all goes well at Lingfield, Marco Botti will employ the same scheduled for Gitano Hernando that he just devised for his 4-year-old filly Soneva, which was sent from Botti's Green Ridge Stable base at Newmarket, England to Meydan race course in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates just a few days prior to upsetting the Grade 3 Cape Verdi Stakes.

"It is based on how we traveled Gitano Hernando to California for the Grade 1 Goodwood," he said.

Yesterday, in an interview in London's *Daily Mail*, trainer Marco Botti revealed for the first time in the press that Gitano Hernando would have a pacesetter in Mesa Marauder. The story follows:

Gitano Hernando to benefit from pacemaker at Lingfield, Kieren Fallon on board

by David Milnes

Marco Botti has revealed that Team Valor International, owners of his World Cup hope Gitano Hernando, have shipped in a pacemaker to ensure a trouble-free preparation when their hope warms up for his Dubai assignment in the Winter Derby Trial at Lingfield on February 27.

Mesa Marauder, a three-time winner for John Hammond in France, was given an outing at Kempton last month where he finished fourth in a one-mile handicap.

Botti said: 'Team Valor have kindly provided us with a lead horse for Gitano Hernando, he has been a great help at home already.'

'Mesa Marauder will be entered at Lingfield to ensure an even pace. The Derby Trial is usually a small field so we don't want a stop-start contest which you sometimes get at that track.'

Regarding jockeys, Botti added: 'Kieren Fallon has told us he can come back for the Lingfield race. With Ryan Moore switching to Presvis we are hopeful that Kieren can renew his association in the World Cup itself.'



From the United Kingdom Press Association comes the following:

Don't rule out Hernando - Botti

Marco Botti believes Gitano Hernando should not be discounted from the reckoning in the Dubai World Cup.

Kieren Fallon has been the making of the Italian-born trainer's colt, winning on him at Wolverhampton and then in the Goodwood Stakes, a Grade One event at Santa Anita last October.

"Gitano Hernando is still in England, his preparation has gone smoothly so far and we're happy with him," Botti told At The Races.



Gitano Hernando continues to train in England for the World Cup.



"I think he will have a prep race at Lingfield, the Winter Derby Trial at the end of February, and if everything goes well he will head to Dubai for the World Cup.

"It will be very competitive, tough for any horse, but there is still a month and a half before the race and anything can happen. Some will improve, others might not be 100%.

"Obviously Twice Over did well in the Breeders' Cup. It will be a tough race for Gitano Hernando, but he's a horse who keeps improving all the time."