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By Brent Zerafa



Earth Angel (image: Racing Photos)

Angel emulates mum with winning debut

Earth Angel has a long way to go before she matches the deeds of her famous mother Miss Finland but she has started her career in similar fashion, with a win on debut at Ballarat.

It was more than 11 years ago that **Miss Finland** was taken to the same track for her first run and she duly saluted, easily accounting for her rivals in a 1000m contest.

That victory was the first of 11 in a career that netted five Group 1s including the Golden Slipper, Thousand Guineas, VRC Oaks, Australian Guineas and Arrowfield Stud Stakes.

David Hayes guided Miss Finland to such brilliant success and he feels her daughter has the makings of a filly that can progress to the top grade.

"Miss Finland wasn't any more impressive than that when she won her debut at Ballarat but it is fair to say that Earth Angel isn't as precocious," Hayes said.

"It is hard to compare the two of them and probably isn't fair on either horse.

"You can maybe compare her to a filly like **Stay With Me** (her half-sister) and my thought is that she won't be as sharp as her up to a mile but beyond that, I think she will develop in to a better filly."

Hayes intends to send Earth Angel to Sydney for The Championships but is unlikely to test her at the highest level just yet.

The Fernhill Handicap has been identified as a target, a Listed race over 1600m run at Randwick on April 8.

"She is still nominated for the Sires Produce and Champagne Stakes but we are of the opinion that she might not be quite ready for Group 1 events at this stage of her career.

"She is a filly we feel can get to that level as a three-year-old so we are happy to take our time."

Earth Angel races in the colours of Arrowfield Stud and her victory holds special significance for the powerful breeding operation as she provided the first win for sire Animal Kingdom.

Arrowfield boss John Messara has had a high opinion of Earth Angel since she was broken in by his son Paul and was delighted with her performance at Ballarat.

"The pressure has been on, we've had an expectation that she was pretty good ever since she was broken in so to see her do that today is fantastic and a huge relief," Messara said.

"When Paul (Messara) broke her in, he said to me, 'Dad I reckon this one is pretty special'.

"He said the same thing with Stay With Me and she was able to go on and win a Group 1.

"So when I rang David Hayes to say I had this filly to train, I told him I think we have another one that may be special."

Messara echoed the thoughts of Hayes in suggesting that Earth Angel wouldn't be rushed to compete at Group 1 level this campaign but there is definitely an ambition to see her contesting Classic races as a three-year-old.

"Everything about her indicates she is going to be a filly that will develop in to a serious three-year-old," he said.

"Her sire **Animal Kingdom** is a Derby winner and anything that his progeny are doing at two is simply a bonus.

"Earth Angel is still learning but what I liked most about her win was the last 50m, she exploded through the line, we think she is pretty special."