

**SOUTH AFRICA: TEAM VALOR MAJOR PLAYER IN NATIONAL YEARLING SALE
BARRY IRWIN: HUGE IMPACT AT VENDUE AS BREEDER, BUYER AND SELLER
TEAM VALOR HAS TOP SELLING FILLY AT BOTH MAJOR SALES THIS YEAR
SOUTH AFRICAN MARKETING PLAN WORKS, EXCEEDS \$1 MILLION IN SALES**



The Western Winter yearling filly out of Grade 2 stakes winner She's on Fire topped all fillies sold at the National Yearling Sale on a final bid of 2 million rand, the equivalent in dollars of more than \$187,000. She has a weanling full brother that Barry Irwin expects will sell for even more at the 2015 sale.

The return of Barry Irwin, both as a buyer and seller, and the inclusion of Team Valor International's first full major consignment to a South African sale, helped lead to increases in median, average and gross sales this week at the National Yearling Sale in suburban Johannesburg, South Africa.

South Africa has two major yearling sales, the Cape sale in January and the National in April. This year, home-bred yearlings topped all fillies in both the Cape Sale and the National, with the Giant's Causeway out of Captain's Lover selling for 3 million in January and the Western Winter out of She's on Fire selling for 2 million in April.

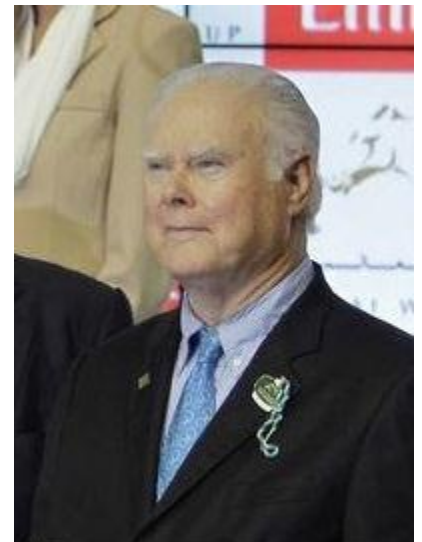
Team Valor dominated the fillies sold at the National sale this week, with the Western Winter out of She's on Fire topping the entire sale and the first session on Sunday and the Captain AI first produce of On Her Toes topping the second session on Monday and being the second highest-selling filly at the National Yearling Sale.

Combining the one sale at the Cape vendue with the ten yearlings sold this week at the Germiston sale, Team Valor International sold yearlings this year in South Africa for \$1,006,000, topping the magic million dollar plateau with just 11 yearlings offered and sold.

Over the last few years, Team Valor developed a broodmare band of note in South Africa, with the idea of marketing yearlings. "My plan," he said, "was to capitalize on my notion that the best way to take advantage of the South African Thoroughbred, other than to export the top horses, was to market yearlings. For reasons that are not clear, South Africans won't pay anything for a broodmare, or a racehorse for that matter, but they don't mind over paying for yearlings, probably because they represent hope and dreams."

With its first full consignment this year, Team Valor proved Irwin's theory held water, as his yearlings topped the sale for average, as well as quality.

Barry Irwin has developed one of the best band of broodmares of any breeders in the Republic of South Africa and 11 yearlings this year sold for \$1,006,000.



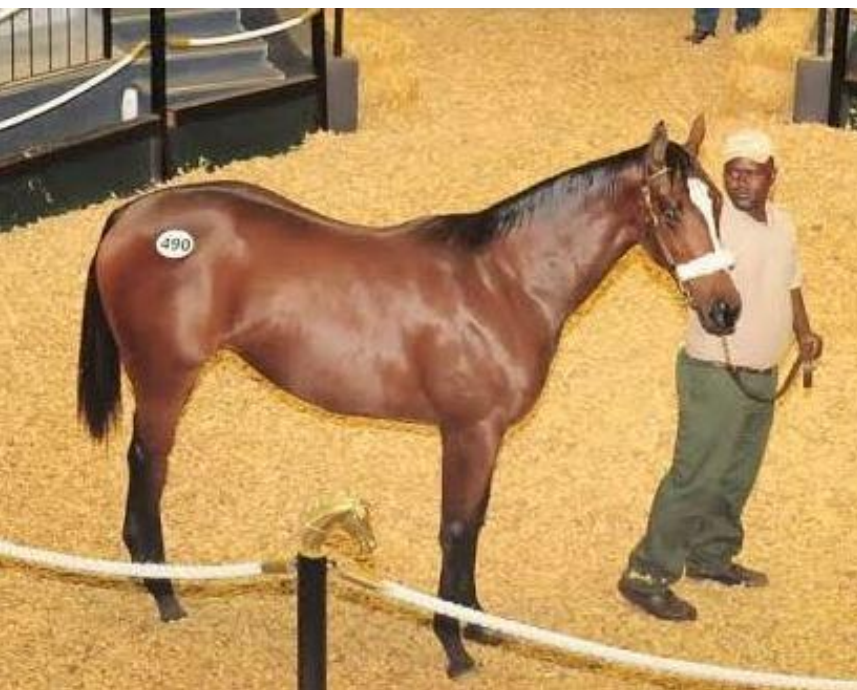
She's on Fire's Western Winter filly was recognized early on by Irwin as being the best filly in the sale. It was always going to be a question of how many people wanted her. With Irwin bidding for his own account, he pushed a newcomer to 2-million rand, before ceasing his activity and smiling as the dark-coated filly left the ring.

Two days earlier, her half-sister She's a Pippa became a black-type winner in the East Cape Oaks, but Irwin said "I don't think that moved the dial one rand. This filly was always going to make this sort of figure, based on the conformation alone. She was an absolute knock out," he said.

As he did on 8 of the 10 Team Valor lots, Irwin was the underbidder. This helped the yearlings sell well and provided Team Valor with possible opportunities to acquire new yearlings for racing.

"What I did was bid what I considered to be 75 percent of their value," he explained. "If I wound up with any, I would have been very happy at the price. If I bought the Western Winter, I would have invited all of the other partners to continue to play, or simply absorb the unsold portion." Irwin already was the majority owner of the filly, so either way it was going to be a big day.

Sunshine Lover had her Captain Al colt (above) realize a final bid of 2 million as well, with Sabine Plattner going to that figure for the half-brother to Ebony Flyer and Captain's Lover, as well as a full brother to Cape Cutter. Team Valor as the breeder once again rung the bell as it has in previous years, when the mare's offspring sold for \$247,500, \$185,000 and \$80,000 and this week \$187,280.



On Her Toes had her first yearling, a Captain Al filly, knocked down to Mrs. Plattner as well, this time on a final bid of \$1.8 million. Irwin did not rate her as highly as the Western Winter filly, so he stopped bidding at 1.6 million. "I was not tempted to press further," he said. "I was not tempted to go higher on the Sunshine Lover yearling either.

"I was awfully tempted to keep on bidding on the She's on Fire yearling, but she came early in the sale and I just didn't know how much money was out there for a filly.

On Her Toes' Captain Al filly sold for the second highest price among yearling fillies at the sale on a bid or U. S. \$168,552.

“As it turned out, her 2 million topped all fillies in the sale, so I may have done the right thing. Regardless, I wanted her so badly and was torn, so that when I rose up after the bidding, my legs were shaking from nervousness. It surprised me. It was difficult having to sell a filly of this quality, but I wanted to send a message loud and clear that Team Valor is serious about marketing its yearlings. Few others if any would have sold either this filly or the previous sale topper from the Cape.”

Going forward, Irwin said that the next crop of foals that will be offered in 2015 is also loaded with quality, especially a Western Winter colt out of She’s on Fire that could be the star of the auctions next season in South Africa. “I plan to cull at least 3 of our 14 mares and add stakes winners Agra and She’s a Pippa, unless the latter shows next time out that she can cut it in Graded company,” Irwin said. “I also am always looking to buy a mare or two.”

The Thoroughbred Breeders Association was very happy to see Irwin back in his customary position as a leading buyer. This year Irwin bought 5 yearlings for 1.8 million rand. “I was lucky, in that except for one filly, none of the horses that topped my conformation evaluations had a pedigree that caused me to spend a lot of money. We got tremendous physical specimens for an average of about \$35,000. There is no place on earth that one can accomplish this,” he said.

In addition to the fantastic yearling sale and the bargain purchases, Irwin said the debut yearlings in South Africa of Visionaire was the highlight of the trip. “Before the sale, people kept coming up to me and complimenting the Visionaire yearlings,” he said. “I thought they were either trying to butter me up or were being nice.

“But they were right! The Visionaires sold so well that the Grand Slam Grade 1 winner for Team Valor was the leading Freshman Sire in the sale and one of his fillies realized a final bid of 1.4 million, the second highest one at 600,000 was bought by Irwin for the 5-year-old partnership. Team Valor owns the majority of Visionaire, who stands in the Natal region at Summerhill Stud. They averaged about a dozen times his stud fee, which is sensational anywhere in the world.

Top 3 prices in U. S. Dollars with Barry Irwin’s comments:

She’s on Fire filly by Western Winter sold for \$187,280.

Top filly in the sale, nearly flawless.

Sunshine Lover’s colt by Captain Al sold for \$187,280.

Typically big offspring of the mare, has quality.

On Her Toes’s Captain’s Lover filly sold for \$168,552.

Excellent first effort for the mare.