

VALOR BREAKS ALL-TIME RECORD PRICE FOR SO AFRICAN YEARLING FILLY GIANT'S CAUSEWAY FILLY OUT OF CAPTAIN'S LOVER RINGS BELL IN CAPE HOMEBRED BRINGS 3.2 MILLION RAND (\$295,000), CO-TOPS FIRST EVENING



Song of Happiness is both the name of a filly and an apt description of what her connections were in the mood for after the homebred Giant's Causeway filly out of Captain's Lover realized a final bid at yesterday's first of two 2014 sessions of the Cape Thoroughbred Yearling Sale.

Knocked down to an agent of Coolmore Stud maestro John Magnier for 3.2 million rand (\$295,000), the elegant bay filly realized 200,000 rand more than any filly ever sold for as a yearling in the history of the South African breeding business.

The stunningly athletic filly co-topped the sale's first session with a son of Western Winter. The 3.2 million tag was just 50,000 shy of the all-time record for the Cape Sale established just last year on a final bid of 3.25 million for another colt.

Barry Irwin, representing the Captain's Lover Thoroughbred LLC, and Gaynor Rupert, whose own stud Drakenstein acted as the consignor of the filly to the sale, discussed a reserve price earlier in the day yesterday. Mr. Rupert, an astute horsewoman and keen market observer, advised Irwin that she thought the filly would bring 3 million.

Irwin dismissed that notion and suggested a reserve of 1.5 million. "Let's not go crazy here!" he said. "My guys are in a mood to sell and we don't want to race her. We are sellers with this filly."

Song of Happiness strikes a chord.

The filly opened at 300,000 rand, was soon at a million and very soon after that she sailed right past the reserve. When the filly was at 3 million, Mrs. Rupert was on the phone to Irwin. "I'm out now. They wanted me to stay in for a leg (25 percent), but at this figure, I am out of the picture," she said. Song of Happiness, named by Mrs. Rupert, was banged down shortly thereafter on a final astonishing bid of 3.2 million.

Irwin said "I designed the mating. I have bred to the sire many times. I like him because he gets a sturdy, honest horse. Giant's Causeway had a major Grade 1-winning miler in South Africa, so they know him down there.

"This is big for our team, because we have 15 broodmares in production in South Africa, with the strict intention of selling their offspring. We do race an occasional foal, but our mission is to sell the produce for a profit. We have previously sold yearlings for \$247,500 and \$185,000. So this is big." There are two major yearling sales in South Africa, one in January and one in April. Both as a seller and buyer, Irwin prefers the April sale for the simple reason that Team Valor does not breed for early developing horses and the extra 3 months between sales allows for the late-developers to improve.



Team Valor will be represented in April by some high powered yearlings, including offspring of Sunshine Lover, the dam of Captain's Lover and Ebony Flyer, and Grade 1 winner On Her Toes.

Irwin said "This is our first year as a market producer in which we will have some decent numbers. And next year will be even better."



Captain's Lover was among the first group of yearlings bought by Irwin when he began attending the sales in South Africa in the middle 2000s. He gave \$27,000 for her, even though her sire Captain AI was unproven at the time and her family was bereft of black type. My oh my, how things have changed, thanks in great part to Irwin himself.

Captain's Lover (left, winning G3 Diana) was voted Champion Filly at 3 after winning the Classic, Grade 1 Cape Fillies Guineas, which is the most prestigious race in South Africa for a 3-year-old filly.

Captain's Lover then went to France, where for Andre Fabre she took the Group 3 Prix du Pin sprinting vs. colts and ran fourth in the Group 1 Prix de la Foret. Switched to Todd Pletcher in America, the filly accounted for the \$200,000 Matchmaker Stakes, which lost its Grade 3 status when it was switched to the sloppy main track at Monmouth Park.

Before Captain's Lover revealed her level of class, Irwin engineered the acquisition of her unproven dam Sunshine Lover, with a Jet Master filly foal at side. That foal was named Ebony Flyer and she might have developed into the greatest South African female racehorse of all time if she had not been plagued by a paralyzed throat.

Ebony Flyer beat the remarkable Horse of the Year Igugu in the Grade 1 Cape Fillies Guineas and added two more Grade 1 wins to her resume, both after a pair of throat surgeries. A one-third interest in Ebony Flyer was sold to Mrs. Rupert just before she won the Guineas.

Captain's Lover, while in America, had a 50 percent interest in her sold to Gaynor Rupert. She left behind in America her first foal, Shipboard Romance, a prematurely born filly by Pulpit, who will be bred in the spring and offered at Keeneland in the fall. She failed to stand training because her skeletal structure was compromised by her early birth.

Captain's Lover aborted a Trippi fetus last year and is in foal on an early September cover to the Classic sire Dynasty, who is the best Derby and Staying sire standing in South Africa.

Irwin said "We have a wonderful partner in Gaynor Rupert and it looks like we are clicking together, both on the race course and in the sales ring. We look forward to continued success with her."



The following piece appeared in today's TDN (Thoroughbred Daily News).

A Giant Purchase...Almost an hour later, the R3.2 million session-topping price tag was matched by lot 53, a filly with seemingly all the right assets both physically and on paper. By Giant's Causeway, the Drakenstein Stud-consigned miss is out of G1 Cape Fillies Guineas winner Captain's Lover (Saf) (Captain Al {SAf}), who was bred in partnership by Team Valor International and Gaynor Rupert's Drakenstein Stud. Captain's Lover globetrotted to France to take the G3 Prix du Pin in 2008 and to the U.S. in 2009 to lift the GIII Matchmaker S. at Monmouth Park in the Team Valor International silks.

Her first foal is the as-yet unraced 3-year-old Shipboard Romance (Pulpit), and she was mated to Giant's Causeway in 2011 before returning to her native country with this filly in utero after being bred on Southern Hemisphere time.

The resulting foal was hammered down last night to Badgers Bloodstock's Grant Pritchard-Gordon, who signed the ticket of behalf of Christy Grassick and Andreas Jacobs in partnership. Christy Grassick, Manager of Coolmore Ireland, and Jacobs of Maine Chance Farms in South Africa, as well as Newsells Park Stud in the UK and Gestut Fahrhoff in Germany, began purchasing horses together to race in South Africa at this sale two years ago and currently own "four or five" horses together.

"We're very glad to be in partnership with a high quality team," Jacobs remarked. "We've had success with the first horses we bought here, and this is the continuation of it. With that pedigree, you can't close your eyes. In South Africa, it's probably the best pedigree you could get in the last decade."

Captain's Lover boards at Drakenstein Stud, and is currently in foal to Dynasty. She is a half-sister to Ebony Flyer (SAf) (Jet Master {SAf}), who also includes the Cape Fillies Guineas amongst her three Group 1 victories.

Barry Irwin talks about Andreas Jacobs...



"In South Africa, it's probably the best pedigree you could get in the last decade," says Andreas Jacobs, international horseman.

Barry Irwin has been doing business with Andreas Jacobs for the past 3 decades and seemingly everything they have done together has born fruit. "This is, however, the first time the shoe has been on the other foot," laughed Irwin, "because in the past Andreas has always been the breeder/vendor and I have always been the buyer/consumer."

Jacobs' family has operated Gestut Faehrhof for decades and his father later established Newsells Park Stud in Newmarket. Between father and son, they bought no less than a dozen ex-Team Valor racing fillies and mares as broodmares for their stallions. The son runs Maine Chance Farm in Africa.

Faehrhof stood Acatenango, sire of Animal Kingdom's dam, and Faehrhof developed the female family of Animal Kingdom. Jacobs himself was underbidder to Irwin when he bought Dalicia, dam of Animal Kingdom, for a German record price of 400,000 euros at public auction.

Jacobs helped Irwin buy Gitano Hernando from his stepmother following his father's death. From Jacobs, Irwin has bought several yearlings that have become stakes winners.