

It's rare that a Royal Ascot winner comes to auction' - Wathnan Racing talent drive continues with record-breaking Tattersalls top lot at 775,000gns

James Thomas reports from the final day of the sale in Newmarket



Recent Royal Ascot winner Quai De Bethune smashed the July Sale record when selling for 775,000gns at Tattersalls late on Thursday evening. A host of interested parties took up position inside the Park Paddocks auditorium when Andrew Balding's Kingsclere Training Stables presented the son of Persian King, including the Wathnan Racing buying team of Olly Tait, Richard Brown and Case Clay.

After a mazy round of bidding that featured a heavy online involvement, the business end was fought out between Brown, who sat in his usual position on the stairs to the left of the rostrum, and Dr Khaled Salami, stationed on the opposite side of the ring. Salami proved a persistent rival, but ultimately gave best when Brown signaled the decisive 25,000gns raise with a subtle nod of the head.

Quai De Bethune has won two of his six starts for Balding and owners Gary Gillies and **Team Valor**, with the latter buying into the colt ahead of his breakthrough success in a mile maiden at Kempton in late January. He wasn't disgraced in warm company subsequently, including in the London Gold Cup, and showed a chunk of improvement to claim the Golden Gates Stakes at Royal Ascot last time out.

The 12-1 shot ended up in rear after an untidy start but made sustained headway from over furlongs out and, once in the clear, charged home under Oisin Murphy to collar favourite Seraph Gabriel close home. That effort was given a Racing Post Rating (RPR) of 107.

Tait confirmed that Quai De Bethune would be added to the increasingly powerful stable being assembled by Wathnan Racing, the banner under which the Emir of Qatar competes. "The horse won at Royal Ascot, and didn't have the smoothest passage but found a way to win," said Brown. "What can you say, it's not very often a Royal Ascot winner comes on the market. He's still relatively lightly raced and it looks like the plan will be to send him back to Andrew. We'll give him a break now and then maybe onto a Middle Eastern campaign. You've got to buy them first, though. We hope he's got a good future, we'll just see where that is."

On the price, which surpassed the previous record of 550,000gns that was set by Badgers Bloodstock for Calyx's sister a little over 24 hours earlier, Brown added: "It was probably stronger than I thought but there was a very persistent underbidder and, like I say, it's rare that a Royal Ascot winner comes to auction straight after a victory. It was never going to be easy to buy him, but it was probably stronger than I thought."

Quai De Bethune was making his second appearance at the sales after Richard Venn Bloodstock and Gary Gillies signed at €75,000 at the BBAG Yearling Sale in 2023.

The record-breaking transaction contributed to a successful sale for the Balding stable, with 23 lots sold for receipts totalling 1,873,500gns. Reflecting on a productive evening at Tattersalls, Balding said: "We're thrilled. We've had a very strong sale with the highlight obviously being Quai De Bethune's price. It was always the plan to come to auction with him and, after he won at Royal Ascot, we thought he'd be in the position to make a decent price, which he has. It's great news that he is coming back to us. It's been a good evening and it's great to be able to give owners a return."

NEW TATTERSALLS JULY SALE RECORD

775,000 GUINEAS
(\$1.1 MILLION)

LOT 895
QUAI DE BETHUNE (FR)



TEAM VALOR *Congratulates*

Partner GARY GILLIES

Trainer ANDREW BALDING

Agent GORDIAN TROELLER &

Buyer WATHNAN RACING