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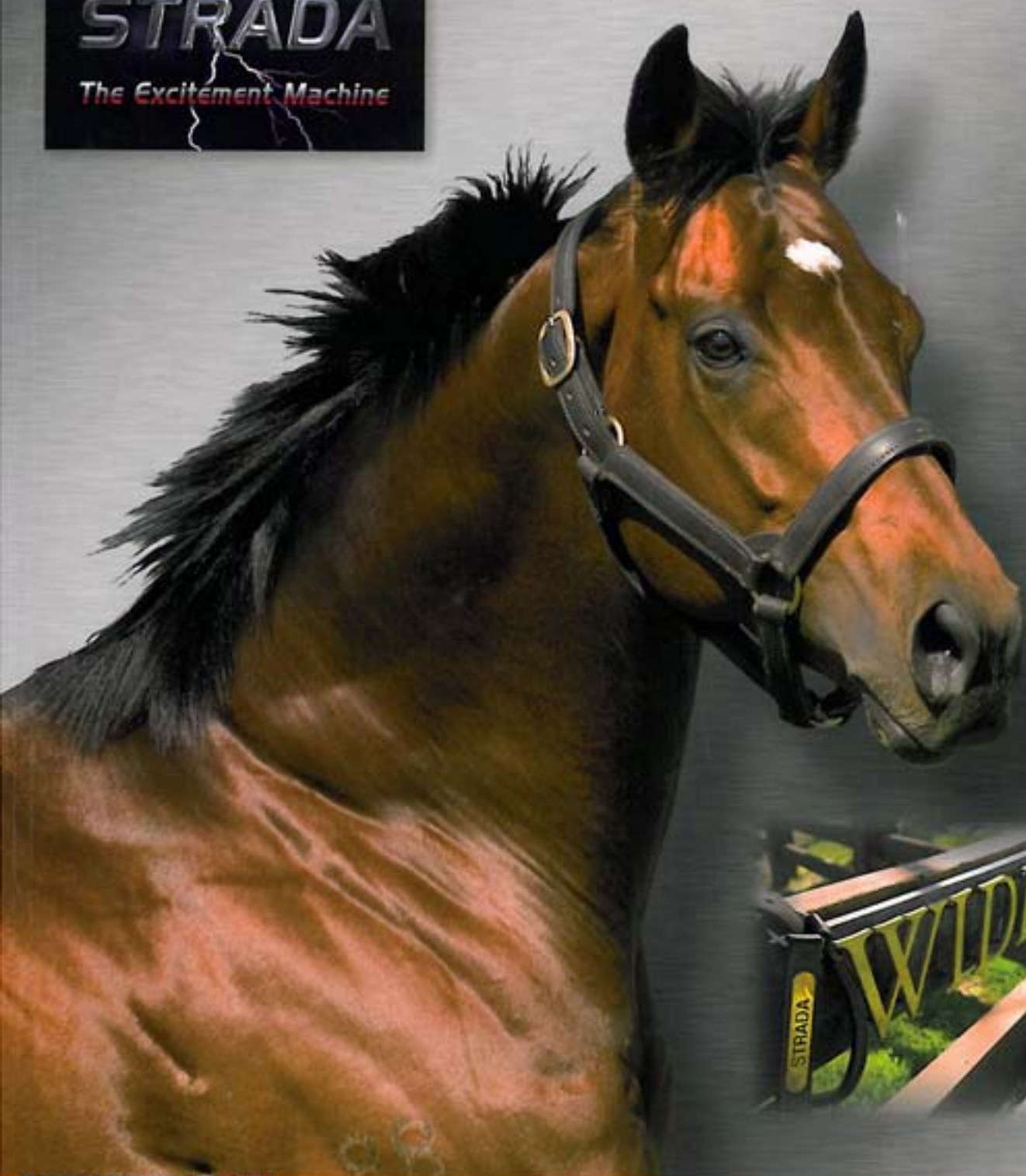
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RUNNING AN EMPIRE

When asked of the future goals of Darley Australia, General Manager of the Australian arm of the worldwide operation Olly Tait, does not hesitate in his response, "To be the number one racing and breeding organisation in Australia."

In May of this year, Darley took a considerable step toward realising that ambition, when the acquisition of the very successful and very well established, Woodlands empire was finalised.

In this article, **SCOTT GOOLEY** investigates how the new look stud is coping with the additional stallions & personnel and what their plans are for the upcoming season & beyond.

OVER A PERIOD spanning in excess of twenty-five years, Jack and Bob Ingham had built Woodlands into an empire that incorporated two stud farms at Denman and Cootamundra; training establishments at Warwick Farm, New South Wales and Flemington, Victoria as well as two pre-training complexes on the outskirts of western Sydney.

Woodlands was home to some of Australia's leading stallions, a roster that had access to arguably the highest quality collection of broodmares assembled in

Australasia. The resultant progeny led to countless Group 1 and feature race victories and in the process, produced several champions of the Australian turf including the great Lonhro.

Woodlands were a successful and efficient organisation with an undisputed track record of proven results. It's no wonder then, that when the owner of Darley, His Highness Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum was looking to further his interests and increase his commitment within the Australian racing industry, that Woodlands came to his attention.

"It was the perfect fit", confirms Tait. "We're very excited to be able to complement Darley's current operations with the wonderful people, history and horses of Woodlands."

In all, over two hundred and thirty people were employed by Woodlands Stud, all of whom now work for Sheik Mohammed and Darley.

That was an added bonus to the deal according to John Ferguson, Bloodstock Advisor to Sheik Mohammed who stated, "When we entered the deal, we knew we were buying some wonderful properties and some fantastic bloodstock. What has become clear to us in the last few weeks is that the greatest asset Woodlands has is its people."

Darley, who were already one of the largest participants within the racing industry, has now blossomed into unquestionably Australia's largest racing and breeding operation. Darley will require each and every one of its three hundred and thirty staff members to ensure that the approaching breeding and racing season is a successful one.

It's a task that Tait welcomes with the confidence of a Manager who knows the organisation he represents is fully prepared.

"As with any successful organisation, it's imperative that there be a definite staff and managerial structure and processes in place."

"Our Stud Directors, Peter Flynn and Henry Plumtre oversee the running of the

four stud farms. They each have a wealth of experience and I'm in contact with them on a daily basis." Tait continues.

Since the establishment of Darley Australian in 2001, and with the continuing success of the United Kingdom, Japan, Europe and United States Darley operations, the structure that Tait speaks of has obviously served them well.

Assisting Flynn and Plumtre is Stud Manager John Sunderland with Alastair Pulford and Andy Makiv heading up the Stallion Nominations departments in New South Wales and Victoria respectively.

The extensive Nominations team will be one relied upon heavily this breeding season as Darley stand an incredible roster of twenty-eight stallions. Quite possibly, the largest stallion roster in the world today.

As Tait had mentioned, the mix of proven local stallions and former Woodlands residents, Canny Lad, Strategic and Commands complement the international stallions sourced from Darley's international operations perfectly.

International Group 1 performers the likes of Dubai Destination (by King Mambo), Ad Valorem (by Danzig), Refuse to Bend (by Sadler's Wells) and Dubawi (Dubai Millenium) enable Darley and their clients to access some of the most influential bloodlines in the world today.

The overall stallion roster is given great balance as a number of young and well credentialled sires embark on stamping themselves of equal quality as some of their counterparts.

Danehill's son, Exceed and Excel has already established himself as a stallion of enormous potential by producing six individual Group and Listed race winners from his first two crops. Unbeaten in five career starts, the son of Zabeel - Reset and Redoute's Choice stallion, Gonski are two more young stallions that will be given every opportunity to succeed.

Whilst the number of stallions to represent Darley is constantly under review, as Tait explains, this does not mean that the numbers will necessarily be reduced.



“WE’RE VERY EXCITED TO BE ABLE TO COMPLEMENT DARLEY’S CURRENT OPERATIONS WITH THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE, HISTORY AND HORSES OF WOODLANDS.”

“Provided we believe that a sire has the potential to be a success at stud, we’ll definitely be interested in them standing at Darley.”

Success on the racetrack is another prerequisite for Darley in reaching their ambition. As with their breeding operation, all is in place to see this come to fruition. Indeed, some impressive results have already been recorded on racetracks across Australia with an indication of more to come.

Commands three-year-old El Cambio enjoyed a most successful winter campaign by claiming two Group 3 events - the Gold Coast Guineas and BTC Classic - in successive outings.

Two-year-old Fravashi claimed the Group 2 Qld Sires Produce Stakes by more than two lengths and within the last two months Darley introduced two more impressive youngsters, Eighto and Caymans, who indicated they may be bound for Group status as well.



The former WOODLANDS STUD at Denman - now under the Darley banner



OCTAGONAL (left) joins **RESET** (middle) on the massive Darley roster; **FRAVASHI** (right) - one of the young talents in the Darley stable

HOWEVER ONE VIEWS THE ORGANISATION, DARLEY APPEARS TO HAVE ALL THE BOXES TICKED TO ENSURE THEIR POTENTIAL IS REALISED

Eighto kicked off his career at a non-descript Sunday Geelong meeting. Being the full brother to champion racehorse Lonhro, Eighto's first start was always going to create interest and the three-year-old gelding didn't disappoint.

Despite meeting only moderate opposition, Eighto cruised to victory by six lengths and led trainer Peter Snowden to

report, "He is a very nice type of horse and a ready made package. It was a huge run. Not many horses can sustain a run like that and keep going to the line."

Caymans won his at his second start in two-year-old Open Company at Randwick by three and a half lengths.

These horses are but a few that look to have the ability to represent Darley well during the

upcoming Spring Carnival in the maroon and white silks of Sheikh Mohammed.

Darley's acquisition of Woodlands has created an operation the likes of which has never before been seen in Australia.

However one views the organisation, Darley appears to have all the boxes ticked to ensure their potential is realised. With assets including an unprecedented stallion roster, well established facilities and experienced personnel and a culture of success, Darley Australia is poised to have a substantial impact, not only on the Australian racing scene, but on racing landscapes further afield as well.