

Sunday 23 June 2024

LUVNWAR IMPRESSIVE IN BELMONT GUINEAS



Luvnwar adds a black-type win to her record when winning the Listed Belmont Guineas. (Western Racepix)

Kiwi import **Luvnwar (NZ)** (War Decree) scored her first stakes victory when landing the Listed Amelia Park-Belmont Guineas (1600m) at Belmont on Saturday, with a length and a half to spare over runner-up Petrouchka (More Than Ready).

Prepared by Michael Grantham, Luvnwar had previously won over 1400m at Belmont, having finished runner-up on her Australian debut over

1200m.

The daughter of War Decree is raced by Peters Investments Pty Ltd and was purchased privately out of New Zealand by Liam Peters Byerley Bloodstock on behalf of his grandfather Bob, after finishing third in the Gr.3 Barneswood Farms Stakes (1400m) for trainer Terri Rae in October last year.

In an open contest, Luvnwar was sent out \$4.40 equal favourite and flew

the gates from barrier 3 under jockey Patrick Carbery before finding the box seat in third.

Angled into the clear soon after straightening, Luvnwar found the front a shade too early but was strong to the line as she comfortably saw out the mile.

"She does everything right, the

Continued on page 2



LUVNWAR IMPRESSIVE IN BELMONT GUINEAS

(Continued from page 1)

way she jumps and puts herself into position is good and we were lucky with the barrier (3). She got a nice run through and it was good to see her get the 1600m," Bob Peters said.

Race	WA Belmont Guineas L. 1600m
Winner	Luvnwar (NZ) 2020
Owners	Peters Investments Pty Ltd
Trainer	Michael Grantham (North Dandalup)
Breeding	by War Decree (USA) out of Pretty Woman by Pins (AUS)
Breeder	T Schroeder
Sales	2022 National Yearling Sales – Book 2; V: Beaufort Downs, P: Riversley Park; \$22,500

"When he was well into the straight, he still hadn't moved on her and I thought 'that's good' but then she hit the front probably a little too soon and I saw those others coming down the outside but she fought on well, so that was good to see."

Trainer Michael Grantham enjoyed a treble on the day, including a double in the Peters silks.

"It has taken us a while to learn what is going on and the different tracks Michael has got, but he listens and he does a good job," Peters said.

The prominent owner was pleased for his grandson Liam who did the deal on the filly he identified in New Zealand's South Island.

"He is the one who found this horse. I didn't know anything about it and he came to me with it and it was good to see," Peters said.

"A lot of people think he only acts for me, but he can act for other people as well. That's what his job is, so I am quite happy if they want to leave him to find them for me."

By Inglewood Stud stallion War Decree, who has enjoyed plenty of headlines care of his Queensland Derby-winning son Warmonger (NZ), Luvnwar is out of the Pins mare Pretty Women.

The filly is a half-sister to Listed winner Chokito (NZ) (Vespa) and was originally purchased by Sam and Hana



Beatson's Riversley Park for \$22,500 at the 2022 New Zealand Bloodstock Book 2 Sale.

Luvnwar has now won three of her six career starts with a further two placings.

– **NZ Racing Desk**

Patrick Carbery urges Luvnwar to the line in the Listed Belmont Guineas. (Western Racepix)



RICH HILL STALLION POWER

PROISIR

**Australasia's
LEADING
GROUP 1 SIRE
in 2022/23**

**NZ's CHAMPION
SIRE of 2022/23**

Sire of **SIX**
**INDIVIDUAL GROUP 1
WINNERS** over the
last 20 months

2024 yearlings sold
to **\$1.6 MILLION**
averaging \$275,000

Proisir's future is
assured...

Bigger books
Better pedigreed
mares

Book Filling Fast!

Service Fee NZ**\$80,000** +GST

Contact:

John Thompson +64 21 779 931 or Karl Mihaljevich +64 21 247 8892

p +64 7 888 3833 **e** richhillstud@xtra.co.nz **www.richhillstud.co.nz**





CASINO PRINCESS LANDS POPULAR WIN IN TAURANGA CLASSIC



Casino Princess and Jasmine Fawcett return to scale after winning the Wealleans Tauranga Classic. (Trish Dunell)

The Listed Team Wealleans Tauranga Classic (1600m) produced one of the most popular winners in its 44-year history with Saturday's black-type breakthrough by local mare **Casino Princess (NZ)** (Casino Prince).

The highly talented five-year-old is trained at the track by the 92-year-old Cliff Goss, who also shares ownership with his close friend Darryl Heaphy.

Saturday's \$80,000 fillies and mares' feature was the first black-type appearance for Casino Princess and clearly her toughest test yet. She had risen through the grades with four wins and four placings in her promising 10-start career, culminating in a last-start Rating 75 success over 1560m at Rotorua on May 11.

Casino Princess was ridden for the first time on Saturday by Jasmine Fawcett, who was well aware that the Tauranga track

was favouring horses racing on or near the lead and close to the inside rail. Fawcett saw renowned front-runner Wessex (NZ) (Turn Me Loose) as the biggest danger under that pattern, so she drove Casino Princess forward from her wide draw of gate 10.

Casino Princess took up a position on the outside of Wessex by the time the field turned out of the back straight, and she kept that rival squarely in her sights coming down the side of the track.

Fawcett made her move just before the home turn, sprinting past Wessex and taking a clear lead as she swung into the straight.

Casino Princess quickened smartly and shot clear. The favourite Malt Time (Adelaide) produced a strong late run from

Continued on page 5





CASINO PRINCESS LANDS POPULAR WIN IN TAURANGA CLASSIC

(Continued from page 4)

well back in the field and chased bravely down the straight, but Casino Princess was well out of reach and swept to victory by two and a half lengths. Malt Time edged out Wessex for second by a long head, with more than four lengths back to the rest of the field.

"I was a bit concerned about Wessex getting too far in front on this track today, so I decided to take the initiative and go forward to sit outside her," Fawcett said.

"Cliff Goss sounded pretty confident when I spoke to him before the race, so I knew that she would be right in it if I could get her the right run.

"She's probably one of the most beautiful fillies I've ever ridden and she won very well today."

Casino Princess has now had 11 starts for five wins, four placings and \$110,610 in prize-money. The daughter of Casino Prince is providing another shot at the big-race spotlight for Goss, whose rapid rise through the ranks with the super-talented Gold Watch (NZ) (Swiss Ace) was cruelly cut short by his breakdown in the Gr.2 Rich Hill Mile (1600m) in January of 2022.

It has not always been smooth sailing either with Casino Princess, who won three of her first four starts but then bled last spring and was off the scene for almost six months.

"That was a beautiful win today," Goss said. "Especially winning a stakes race – you know, they're very hard to win. But I suppose she was a horse that could do it, and she proved it today."

"Jasmine was caught a bit wide from that draw and had to go forward, but that didn't worry us at all.

"We were very happy with her going into this race, despite the (42-day) gap between runs. She gallops once a week on a Wednesday, and I certainly thought her gallop on Wednesday of this week was a winning gallop.

"It's so important to get black-type for a filly or mare, so this is very good."

–LOVERACING.NZ News Desk

Race	RT Team Wealleans Tauranga Classic L. 1400m
Winner	Casino Princess (NZ) 2018
Owners	C E Goss & D J Heaphy
Trainer	Cliff Goss (Tauranga)
Breeding	by Casino Prince (AUS) out of Sonsy by Thorn Park (AUS)
Breeder	J R Orr
Sales	gavelhouse.com 23 December 2019 auction; V: Simms Davison, P: Darryl Heaphy; \$5,000

Casino Princess dominates Saturday's Listed Team Wealleans Tauranga Classic (1600m) for Jasmine Fawcett and Cliff Goss. (Trish Dunell)





KING OF COMEDY

*"The **BEST** 3yo in Europe,"* – TIMEFORM, 2019



BY KINGMAN – The Best Young Sire in Europe – Two Group 1 winners from 5 runners
in Australia from his 2020 Southern Hemisphere crop – King Colorado & Zardozi
TIMEFORM – “Bred in the purple and a most taking sort on looks”

CROSSHAVEN RETURNS TO WINNER'S CIRCLE

The Ben, Will & JD Hayes-trained **Crosshaven** (Smart Missile) recorded the seventh win of his career after closing late to land the Country Achiever Shane Fliedner (1100m) at Flemington on Saturday.

The son of Smart Missile was patiently handled by Luke Currie before navigating a path closest to the fence, scoring his first win since his triumph in the Gr.3 Kevin Heffernan Stakes (1400m) back in November 2022.

With the rail out 11 metres and the fresher ground out wide, Crosshaven defied his inside draw to score at odds of \$17.

The Karaka graduate has now advanced his career earnings to A\$1,118,103, with the Lindsay Park team showing their training nous to help the six-year-old gelding get back to the winner's circle.

"Ben (Hayes) said he gave him a jump this morning and got his mind on the job," Currie said.

"He jumped okay, and I was happy to just let that speed go, thinking that everything would come out (towards the outside fence).

"I just held him up until the furlong and then he found clear air and he burst through and was strong.

"If you end up going back to the inside, there is plenty of room there and I thought the track is a bit more even than it looks like it is racing but he has done a good job to go back to the inside and win from there."

Bred by Auckland-based Daniel Nakhle, the five-year-old gelding is one of five winners from as many to



Crosshaven bursts clear of his rivals to win at Flemington. (Bruno Cannatelli)

race out the Group Two winner Irish Colleen (NZ) (Shinko King), who Nakhle had purchased for just \$8,500 at the 2005 NZB National Weanling Sale and enjoyed racing with father Elias.

Crosshaven is closely related to Gr.1 New Zealand 2000 Guineas (1600m) winner Crocetti (NZ) (Zacinto), who is out of his O'Reilly half-sister Gracehill (NZ).

An \$80,000 yearling graduate of Haunui Farm's 2019 Karaka Book 1 draft, Crosshaven was initially passed in before selling to Lindsay Park with Nakhle retaining a share.

Now the winner of seven of his 44 starts, Crosshaven has also been placed on nine occasions.

– NZ Racing Desk

Race	VRC 2024 Country Achiever Shane Fliedner Qlty 1100m
Winner	Crosshaven 2017
Owners	Lindsay Park Bloodstock, Mr D E Nakhle, The R B O, Mr S R Anthony, Mr N B Donnelly, Mr N M Gray, Mrs K D Greer, Mr M W Heinz, Mr R M Jarvis, Mr A C I Mastapha, Peak To Creek Racing, Mr T J Pender, Mr M R Powell, Mr S Sharp, Mrs J M Bradby
Trainer	Ben, Will & JD Hayes (Flemington)
Breeding	by Smart Missile (AUS) out of Irish Colleen by Shinko King (IRE)
Breeder	Mr D Nakhle, Elias Nakhle
Sales	2019 National Yearling Sales – Book 1; V: Haunui Farm, P: Lindsay Park Racing; \$80,000



KHAN HUNTER DELIVERS FULLER'S KIWIFRUIT CUP



Khan Hunter and Maria Sanson winning the Seeka Kiwifruit Cup (2100m) at Tauranga on Saturday. (Trish Dunell)

Tauranga horseman Antony Fuller has been chasing a victory in the Seeka Kiwifruit Cup (2100m) for several years, and his talented stayer **Khan Hunter (NZ)** (Mongolian Khan) got the job done in style on Saturday at his home course.

A son of Mongolian Khan, Khan Hunter earned his breakthrough success in a maiden highweight over 2100m in March 2022, and he has come a long way since that victory highlighted by a standout season this term.

He won a competitive Dunstan Horsefeeds Stayers' Championship Qualifier (2100m) in November, before finishing a narrow second to Trust In You (NZ) (Sweynesse) in the Gr.3 Queen Elizabeth II Cup (2400m) and fourth in the Gr.2 Avondale Cup (2400m) through the summer period.

Fuller spelled the six-year-old after he finished 13th in the Gr.2 Auckland Cup (3200m), but brought him back into work with designs on winning Saturday's race, where he flew slightly under the radar rated a \$7.80 fourth-

favourite.

In the hands of apprentice jockey Maria Sanson who brought his topweight down to 57kg, Khan Hunter bounced the gates and was sent straight to the front, while \$2.90 race-favourite Blue Sky At Night (NZ) (Shamexpress) sat just worse than midfield in fifth.

Khan Hunter travelled strongly along the back straight and his lead began to extend at the 800m, opening up the field who began to chase

Continued on page 10



PER INCANTO

(Street Cry - Pappa Reale)

The gift that keeps giving

2023/24 Highlights

Gr.1 Winner - Belclare

9 x Stakes Performers

48 Yearlings sold throughout Australasia (including NZB online sale) ave **\$170,000**

Top Price A\$650,000 (Per Incanto x Dreamlife colt Elsdon Park) **Sydney Easter 2024**

NZ's Leading Sire Sydney Easter 2024, ave **A\$315,000**

Weanling Pinhook (Per Incanto x She's Apples colt) \$150,000 into a **\$500,000** yearling sale, Riversley Park **Karaka Book 1 2024**

2nd NZ Premiership to Savabeel for individual winners & 4th on Prizemoney

2nd NZ Centaine Stallion awards for Prizemoney 2023/24

23rd Australian 2YO Premiership The highest ranked NZ based stallion

Leading NZ Sire Hong Kong Premiership for earnings 2023/24

2nd Hong Kong Premiership for individual winners 2023/24

CURRENT & PROVEN
NZ\$50,000 +GST LFG





KHAN HUNTER DELIVERS FULLER'S KIWIFRUIT CUP

(Continued from page 8)



Jockey Maria Sanson. (Trish Dunell)

turning for home. The main danger in Blue Sky At Night loomed up strongly nearing the 300m, but Khan Hunter still had plenty left in the tank as he powered away under little pressure by 3 ¾ lengths.

Fuller, who has twice run fourth in the Kiwifruit Cup with former Auckland Cup winner Roger That (NZ) (Shinko King), was delighted to pick up the local feature.

"I wanted this race, I've tried to win it for years and I thought I had a horse that could do it, so we'll have a go," he said.

"At the 800m I was thinking he's only had a 1300m sprint since he last raced, and if he had had more racing it wouldn't have worried me, but she (Sansons) knows him. He probably annoyed her around at the start so she thought, take this.

"I looked at the track on Thursday

and I couldn't possibly see any advantage to coming out wide, and we haven't had any rain since then. So, all I said to her to her before the race was 'don't go wide'.

"This was the only one we brought him back for, whether or not he races again this winter we'll wait and see. Summer is the aim, but I won't say no and there is the Taumarunui Cup."

Sansons's summer had been restricted by injury which caused her to miss the ride in the Dunstan Qualifier, however she was delighted to reunite with the gelding for their fourth win as a combination in 12 starts.

"His last win when Triston (Moodley) rode him, I had broken my ankle two days prior and missed out on the ride so it's nice to get back on him today and win a race," she said.

"He was just an arrogant prick in the prelim, so I thought bugger you, go to

the front and keep going.

"I was travelling really strongly down the back and I know Antony always has his stayers really fit, so I thought if they can catch me they're doing really well.

"My first win on him was on a bottomless heavy track and we thought maybe that was what he was limited too, but he ran second on New Year's Day on a good track so he might be able to go on with it into the spring. The world's his oyster really."

Bred by Debbie and Peter Seebeck, Khan Hunter was initially purchased for \$130,000 out of Windsor Park Stud's draft at the 2019 National Yearling Sales at Karaka. His first victory was in the care of Shaune Ritchie and Colm Murray, who then sold him via gavelhouse.com for \$9,500 to current owners Fuller and Gene and Barb Jacobson.

Saturday's victory saw his stakes earnings near \$220,000, with six wins in 37 starts.

-LOVERACING.NZ News Desk

Race	RT Seeka Kiwifruit Cup 2100m
Winner	Khan Hunter (NZ) 2017
Owners	A D Fuller, Gene & Barb Jacobsen
Trainer	Antony Fuller (Tauranga)
Breeding	by Mongolian Khan (AUS) out of Penaka (AUS) by Pentire (GB)
Breeder	Mrs D S & P L Seebeck
Sales	2019 National Yearling Sales – Book 1; V: Windsor Park Stud, P: Mr SF Ritchie / Mr W Chan; \$130,000 – gavelhouse.com 17 October 2022; V: Shaune Ritchie Racing, P: Victor Jacobson; \$9,500





JAY BEE GEE TRIUMPHS IN RACING RETURN

The talents of Jay Bee Gee (NZ) (Complacent) and his Hunterville owner-trainer Adrian Bull were clear for all to see at Riccarton on Saturday with a remarkable first-up victory in the Greenwood Amberley Cup (1600m).

The Amberley Cup was Jay Bee Gee's first raceday appearance for 217 days. He was last seen during the New Zealand Cup Carnival at the same venue last November, where he finished eighth in the Listed Metropolitan Trophy (2600m) and 17th in the Gr.3 New Zealand Cup (3200m).

Bull gave the six-year-old two trials to prepare him for his return to racing in Saturday's \$40,000 open handicap, running third over 850m at Foxton on May 28 and winning a 1200m heat at Waverley a week later.

Punters expected a bold showing from Jay Bee Gee in a fresh state on Saturday and sent him out as the hottest favourite of the day at \$2.40,

and he did not let them down.

Rider Kelly Myers positioned Jay Bee Gee in second as Leitrim Lad (NZ) (Tavistock) set the pace. Jay Bee Gee was travelling easily coming up to the home turn, and he cruised up alongside the leader at the top of the straight.

Myers pushed the button with about 300m remaining and Jay Bee Gee quickly took command, pulling away from his six rivals to score an emphatic three-length victory.

Jay Bee Gee was bought by Bull's son Harry for \$26,000 at Karaka in 2019. The son of Complacent has now had 19 starts for five wins, four placings and \$111,885 in prize-money.

Jay Bee Gee has proven himself to be particularly effective over Saturday's distance of 1600m, recording four wins and two placings from nine attempts at that trip.

Bull may now give him a feature-race assignment over the same course and distance in the Gr.3 Winning Edge

Presentations Winter Cup (1600m) on August 3, for which the TAB has put him on the second line of favouritism at \$10. He shares that quote with Spencer (NZ) (Derryn), while the favourite Justaskme (NZ) (No Excuse Needed) is narrowly ahead of that pair at \$8.

Saturday's Amberley Cup also marked a welcome return to Riccarton for Myers, who is a three-time winner of the New Zealand Cup. She took out the time-honoured staying test aboard the Bull-trained Mungo Jerry (NZ) (Don Eduardo) in 2014, along with victories on Hoorang (NZ) (Zerpour) (2008) and Pump Up The Volume (NZ) (Savabeel) (2016). Her 60 winning rides at Riccarton also include the 2012 edition of the Gr.2 Coupland's Bakeries Mile (1600m) with the Bull-trained Nashville (NZ) (Darci Brahma).

"When Adrian asked me to come down here today, I was very happy to make the trip," Myers said. "It's been a long time since I've ridden here, but it's still one of my favourite tracks."

"He won very nicely today. I was a little bit worried coming into it, with him being fresh up on a very testing track, but he was just too good for them."

-LOVERACING.NZ News Desk



Race	CJC Greenwood Amberley Cup 1600m
Winner	Jay Bee Gee (NZ) 2017
Owners	A M, H L & Mrs R E Bull
Trainer	Adrian Bull (Hunterville)
Breeding	by Complacent (AUS) out of Huluava by Pins (AUS)
Breeder	Pencarrow Thoroughbreds
Sales	2019 National Yearling Sales – Book 2; V: Bradbury Park, P: Mr HL Bull; \$26,000

Kelly Myers salutes aboard Jay Bee Gee after the Greenwood Amberley Cup (1600m) at Riccarton. (Race Images South)





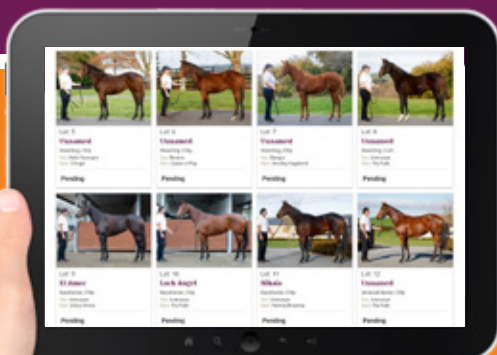
gavelhouse.com®

Elsdon Park Annual Reduction & Dewar Partnership Dispersal live on Gavelhouse Plus!



Featuring 29 Lots, the Elsdon Park Annual Reduction and Dewar Partnership Dispersal includes weanlings by Ardrossan, Banquo, Hello Youmzain and Noverre plus racing propositions and broodmares with covering sires including Ardrossan, Banquo, Noverre, Per Incanto, Time Test and Tivaci.

Also online at gavelhouse.co.nz is a 48 Lot mixed bloodstock sale with bidding closing from 7pm on Monday.



**AUCTION LIVE & RUNS
THROUGH TO 7PM
TUESDAY 25TH JUNE!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE TEAM:
E. [INFO@GAVELHOUSE.COM](mailto:info@gavelhouse.com) P. 09 296 4436**



SPRATT ON SONG **AT TAURANGA**

Sam Spratt's ability to control races from the front has been no secret this season, and she was at her very best early at Tauranga with a top ride aboard promising three-year-old **Did The Trick (NZ)** (Iffraaj).

Spratt had been aboard the Wayne Hillis-trained gelding at each of his four starts prior to Saturday's Gartshore Construction 3YO (1300m), and adopting front-running tactics in the most recent effort at Taupo helped him secured a breakthrough maiden success.

Stepping into open age-group company at Tauranga, Did The Trick was rated an \$8.20 chance to go back-to-back with Spratt on board, while smart filly Cornelia (NZ) (Swiss Ace) topped the market at \$2.80 ahead of last-start winner Bella Voce (Fastnet Rock) (\$3.60).

Did The Trick burst away from barrier three and took up an uncontested lead, with Spratt controlling the tempo as she pleased ahead of Hanalei Star (NZ) (Darci Brahma). The remainder of the field were left chasing on the home turn as the leading pair snuck away by a decent margin, and Did The Trick never looked in doubt as he powered clear to score by 3 ¼ lengths.

Cornelia finished creditably into second with a strong finish in the testing conditions, with Hanalei Star and another late-finisher in Swycho (NZ) (Echoes of Heaven) separated by a nose to complete the first-four.

"I was always going to be there, I thought Alexander's horse (Cornelia) might kick up a bit but it didn't, so I got a pretty easy lead," Spratt said.

Jockey Sam Spratt. Photo: Trish Dunell

"He kicked away really nicely and he's putting it together, it was good."

Matamata-based Hillis prepares Did



Did The Trick powers away from his rivals to score in Saturday's Gartshore Construction 3YO (1300m) at Tauranga. (Trish Dunell)

The Trick for Evans Breeding Ltd, with the late Emma Evans breeding the son of Iffraaj out of her Don Eduardo mare Nailed It (NZ).

A winner of nine races, Nailed It has produced one other foal to race in Itsashame (NZ), a son of Shameexpress who trialed three times in New Zealand before being sold to Macau, where he has been successful in two of six starts.

Two races later at Tauranga, another impressive front-running victor in Martell (NZ) (El Roca) was successful in the hands of Spratt, securing the fifth win of his 14-start career for Jim Collett and owner-breeder Gerry Harvey of New Zealand Thoroughbred Holdings.

She later collected her third winning ride on the card aboard Murray Garrett's Impaired Vision (NZ) (Rock 'N' Pop),

saluting in the Waikato/BOP Racehorse Owners Maiden (2100m).

Spratt rounded out the day winning the final race on the card aboard the Simon & Katrina Alexander-trained Midnight Scandal (NZ) (Belardo).

The quadruple boosted Spratt's season tally to 64 with eight stakes winners, her leading overall total since the 2015/16 season.

- LOVERACING.NZ News Desk

Race	RT Gartshore Construction 3yo 1300m
Winner	Did The Trick (NZ) 2020
Owners	Evans Breeding Ltd
Trainer	Wayne Hillis (Matamata)
Breeding	by Iffraaj (GB) out of Nailed It by Don Eduardo
Breeder	Mrs M E A Evans



MIDNIGHT RUNNER TICKS OFF RICCARTON WIN

A win at the South Island's flagship racecourse was one of the only things missing from the CV of accomplished Winton galloper **Midnight Runner (NZ)** (Jimmy Choux), and the nine-year-old ticked that box with a barnstorming come-from-behind performance in Saturday's Daphne Bannan Memorial (1200m) at Riccarton.

Midnight Runner was already a 10-race winner before Saturday's \$40,000 sprint feature. He began his career with five wins in the North Island, then ventured south in 2020 and has since added victories at Gore, Riverton, Ascot Park, Oamaru, and back at Riverton two starts ago on May 10.

Race	CJC Daphne Bannan Memorial 1200m
Winner	Midnight Runner (NZ) 2014
Owners	J R, M T & S R Phillips
Trainer	John Phillips (Winton)
Breeding	by Jimmy Choux out of In The Midnight (AUS) by Quest for Fame (GB)
Breeder	Rich Hill Thoroughbreds Ltd & Showtime Breeding Pty Ltd
Sales	2016 National Yearling Sales – Festival Sale; V: Rich Hill Stud, P: Mr GJ Jones; \$50,000

His nine previous starts at Riccarton had produced only two placings, but he turned that record around in style on Saturday.

Midnight Runner was ridden by 3kg claimer Ruvanesh Muniandy, who settled well back in third-last as La Bella Nera (NZ) (Sweynesse) and Miss Harley Quinn (NZ) (Natural Destiny) set only a moderate speed out in front. They were pursued by The Good Shepherd (NZ) (Power), Blue Vein (NZ) (Shamexpress) and Street Fightin Man (NZ) (Pure Champion), who fanned across the track at the top of the straight and looked like having the finish to themselves as they surged past the leaders.

But then Midnight Runner roared home from the back of the field, bursting to the front in the final 50m and kicking away to win by half a length.

"He ran really well," said Muniandy, who has now ridden Midnight Runner to two wins from just three rides. "His last 600m were very good and he won the race easily in the end."

Midnight Runner's 64-start career has now produced 11 wins, 18 seconds and eight thirds, earning \$298,394 in stakes.

The Jimmy Choux gelding is trained by John Phillips, who shares ownership as part of a family syndicate that also includes his son Shane.

"That was very good," Shane Phillips said. "After that win at Riverton last month, we had a bit of confidence coming into this race today. It's my first win as an owner here at Riccarton, so it means a lot."

-LOVERACING.NZ News Desk



Midnight Runner storms to victory under Ruvanesh Muniandy in the Daphne Bannan Memorial (1200m) at Riccarton. (Race Images South)