



The Big One Coming Up

The Racing Industry is gearing up for its Night of Nights when Australia's 2005 Champion Racehorse of the Year will be announced at a glittering ceremony at Crown's Palladium on Wednesday evening August 3.

The big night will feature the announcement of the winners of all of the following categories:-

- The Yallabee Stud Champion Two-Year Old.
- New Zealand Thoroughbred Marketing Champion Three-Year Old Filly.
- New Zealand Bloodstock Champion Three-Year Old Colt/Gelding.
- William Inglis & Son Champion Sprinter up to 1400 metres.
- TGM Engineers & Surveyors Champion Middle Distance Performer (1400-2199 metres).
- Radio Sport 927 Champion Stayer (2200 metres plus).
- IRT Champion International Performer.
- Australian Champion Racehorse of the Year.

Votes are cast by senior officials of principal and major racing clubs Australia-wide and by members of the Australian Racing Writer's Association (ARWA)

Two Year Olds

The season wasn't the best year for outstanding two-year olds, in alphabetical order:- **Carry On Cutie**, had the four starts for three wins and a second winning the Champagne Stakes in Sydney at her last outing and I don't think she has done enough to feature in the award.

The **Gai Waterhouse** trained filly, **Fashions Afield** was one that did catch my eye having six starts for four wins and two excellent seconds.

The daughter of **Sire Sensation**, **Redoute's Choice** won the Riesling Slipper, then finished second to **Stratum** in the Golden Slipper, won the AJC Sires Produce in brilliant fashion and ran a good second to **Carry On Cutie** in the Champagne.

Snitzel was the early boom two year-old and won four of his starts. Although in trouble in the Magic Millions, I still feel he was a little disap-



Makybe Diva, winner of last two Melbourne Cups is favourite to take out Australian Champion Race Horse of the Year. Photo courtesy of Racing Victoria Limited.

pointing and then he failed miserably in the Golden Slipper finishing 12 of the 16 runners.

Stratum won two of his six starts including the Golden Slipper, but disappointed in the Sires.

The South Australian youngster, **Undoubtedly** took out two of his four starts including the Blue Diamond and finished second last in the Golden Slipper when the chips were down.

Three Year Old Fillies

As far as the Three-Year Old Champion Filly is concerned, **Alinghi**, stands out as one of the best ever.

Even Trainer **Lee Freedman** stated that he felt that she was the best he had trained in his long and illustrious career. Her record speaks for itself being unplaced once in her career, winning 10 races with three seconds and two thirds.

In season 2004-2005 she won six from 10 including the Ascot Vale Stakes, Edward Manifold, 1000 Guineas, The Sangster Classic in Adelaide and scoring in the Newmarket.

Three Year Old Colt

We move to the top Three Year Old Colt or Gelding, and I was amazed to read one scribe leaving out **Fastnet Rock**. From 12 starts in 2004-2005 he won six and was placed in five others, missing a place on only one occasion.

On the way among them, was winning the Group 3 L'Oreal at Flemington, Group 2 Lexus, then the Group 1 Lightning, followed by another Group 1 the Oakleigh Plate and a gallant second to **Alinghi** in the Group 1 Newmarket.

His main dangers are the New South Wales youngster, **Eremein**, trained by **Alan Denham**, who won the Rosehill Guineas, the AJC Derby, and the Gold Coast Guineas

While **Plastered** who won the Victoria Derby in great style, along with the AAMI Vase at the Valley, a strong contender, and is favorite for the Melbourne Cup.

He also recorded good wins in the W.A Derby and their St.Leger.

Best Sprinter Award

In the Best Sprinter Award, the two that stand out are **Fastnet Rock** and **Alinghi**.



Damien Oliver on Alinghi. Photo courtesy of Victoria Racing Club and Getty Images.

Champion Middle Distance Award

The Champion Middle Distance Award looks like, **Elvstroem**, after a sensational season

He won the Group 1 Underwood, the Turnbull, The Caulfield Cup, the C.F.Orr, and a really big one, the Dubai Duty Free Cup, all Group 1s. He is the stand out in my opinion.

As for the Stayer of the Year, from 2200 metres up, you can't go past the mighty mare, **Makybe Diva**, who won her second Melbourne Cup, then trounced **Grand Arme** on his own turf.

Then came back later in the Autumn to take the Australian Cup in brilliant fashion. There is none better, **Makybe Diva**.

As for the International Performer, how can you go past **Elvstroem**, who performed so well in several Countries, his win in the Dubai Cup was sensational, then placings in Classics, in France and York in England.

As for the Australian Champion Racehorse, it will be out of **Makybe Diva**, or the well travelled and performed **Elvstroem**.

Vale some Greats

OVER recent weeks the Racing Industry has lost some great people who gave there all along the way.

A personal friend of mine **Graham Campbell** who founded the Blue Gum Farm and a top golfer in his own right, passing away on the Gold Coast.

His son Phil will, stand Elvstroem there when the four year-old returns from England.

Another top bloke was **Ian Saunders**, who we lost recently, a great rider and a top trainer who prepared All Shot to win a Cox Plate.

And in the past few days another of the top trainers in **Angus Armanasco** left us.

Angus was one of the best in the business with horses that I can remember, Star Of Heaven Bletchingly, True Version and the mighty Zeditave. He had some handy hoops riding for him too.

Try this for size, Roy Higgins, Greg Hall, Stan Aitken, and many more. Our sympathies to their Families.

Rant and Rave

... by Paddles Hackett



Haul of Blame

SO A FEW journalists helped used-to-be footballers sort out the AFL Hall Of Fame candidates. Yeah, so what's the big deal.

There's this misguided perception in the football community that only former players know anything about the game. That only AFL blokes have any footy insights.

Here's an analogy to disprove that ridiculous argument: would you only trust a doctor who had survived cancer to treat you for the disease, or would you seek out the best qualified medical practitioners.

I've been at a game where the tub of lard alongside me in the stands had a better handle on football tactics than the guys perched up in the Carlton coaching box. And I'm sure SHE didn't play at league level.

Did **Gary Ablett** deserve to be inducted into the Hall Of Fame? The jury is split down the middle on that one, with me voting on the affirmative side.

Sure, he had a major role in a drug-related tragedy. But, correct me if I'm wrong, he wasn't convicted of any crime in relation to **Alisha Horan's** death in his company five years ago.

You can't legislate against stupidity, and lack of intelligence is an integral aspect of the AFL scene. You don't need a brain the size of **Stephen Hawking's** to pull down a speccy or snap that amazing goal or deserve a spot in the Hall of Fame.

But, apparently, moronic footballers suddenly become intuitive and profound when they hang up their boots. That's when they are appointed as AFL commentators, coaches or Hall of Fame judging panellists. Yeah, right!

End of the Daze

Victorian coach **Greg Shipperd** recently took guard on the perplexing **Brad Hodge** issue.

After sniffing the interstate breezes for the odour of Australian currency, Hodge made a five-year commitment to the Big V. So Shipperd strode to the media crease to face a not-so-hostile attack.

Up stepped a tabloid reporter with a deceptive looping query about why Hodge chose staying over departing.

"At the end of the day Brad wanted security and we understand that, and are happy to give him opportunities," Shipperd said.

There's an ominous rattle. Got him, yeeeessssssss. He's gone. Shipperd was look-

ing for the straight delivery, but gets dismissed with the obvious cliché.

Hullo. At the end of the day ... it gets dark. At the end of the day it is 11.59pm. What is this obsession with clichés that so besots our sporting spokespeople.

At least he didn't start the response with "Yes no ...". That's the current No.1 on the answer charts. It beats the old favourite affirmative response "Absolutely".

But enough of cliché bashing, let's get to the crux of the Hodge phenomena: why all the hand wringing and plaintive exhalations about this over-rated leather walloper.

If Hodge was as good as he thinks he is, then New South Wales or some other state would have offered a cash figure that would have been impossible to refuse.

Clearly Hodge thinks he's worth \$x and NSW offered \$x-y. Victorian officials responded, I expect, with \$x-y+z and Hodge reluctantly agreed to accept this value for his talents. Don't insult me with rubbish about state loyalty and other such nonsense.

Hodge is a professional sportsman; he hits and chases and catches cricket balls in order to pay the mortgage and put food on the table. Period.

Third Swipe

Guys like **Andrew Symonds** just don't get it, do they? And that goes for the powers-that-be at Cricket Australia. There's this ridiculous assumption that you can represent your country and still behave like a complete yobbo.

That it's fine to ignore team rules, be on the turps all night, turn up for a practice session semi-legless and that teammates will make an allowance for your selfishness.

But then Cricket Australia, still trapped in some 1970s time warp, delivers a penalty that indicates tacit approval of Symond's crime.

Overpaid buffoons like Symonds seem to forget where the contents of their inflated wallets originates. It comes from the hard-earned of cricket aficionados like you and me, when it costs so much to get through the turnstiles at the MCG Test.

So, the bottom line is that Symonds is OUR employee, and we demand better conduct from our staff.

A two-match ban? That drunken clown should have been sent home from the Old Dart, his card marked **Never To Play For Australia Again**.