



EUROPEAN BLOODSTOCK NEWS

EBN

“The Breeders’ Digest”



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Today’s Headlines

SALES TALK

NOT PURE BLOOD, BUT PURE IN SPIRIT

CARL EVANS TRACKS DOWN A UNIQUE FRENCH BREED ON A SHOWCASE DAY

An annual one-day celebration of a uniquely French product took place at Decize in central France yesterday. AQPS, a breed of non-thoroughbred horses with a growing list of major-race successes in Britain and Ireland, is synonymous with some of France’s finest exports, which in the Nievre region also include Charolais cattle. Many farmers in this landscape of sweeping vales produce both cows and horses, and run them together on grass apparently packed with goodness.

In August these farmers take their stock to town for a one-day show where 80% of the contestants are for sale – the ‘catalogue’ comprises foals and two-years-olds, and while no auction takes place there is plenty of dealing. In essence it’s a public occasion for private sales.

Nupsala, who beat **Desert Orchid** in the 1987 King George VI Chase, first raised awareness of AQPS (Autre Que Pur-Sang – other than pure blood) across the Channel, but it was **The Fellow’s** longevity, speed and stamina which gained these horses lasting respect. Their attributes are derived from the land on which they are raised, from the breeders who plan matings and handle the youngsters, and from the breed’s roots, founded in the 19th Century when farmers crossed thoroughbreds and cart horses.




Willie Mullins (left) and Ferdie Murphy judging two-year-old fillies at the AQPS show

As **The Fellow** was to prove by winning two King George VI Chases and a Cheltenham Gold Cup (not to mention three placings in those two races), the modern AQPS is more akin to fast cars than carts, and, since they are now seven-eighths thoroughbred they are close to being pure blood.

Which raises the question, why bother with AQPS – why not just produce thoroughbreds? The answer lies in the bloodlines, for they are proven and maintained by French men and women who want to preserve the breed. If they keep on producing winners it is hard to condemn their passion for AQPS.

 Today’s German Racing and Bloodstock News is on page 6.



COMING SEPTEMBER 11th

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Jacques Cypres, who bred **The Fellow** and **Al Capone II**

Few reveal that passion with greater abundance than Jacques Cypres of Domaine de Pron, who, with his wife Andree, bred **The Fellow** by crossing a non-thoroughbred stallion called **Italic** with thoroughbred mare **L'Oranaise**. They repeated the mating to produce **Al Capone II**, winner of the Grand Steeplechase de Paris and seven consecutive Prix La Haye Jousselein chases.

Yesterday's show provided agents and trainers with a chance to become acquainted with breeders like Cypres, and that opportunity attracted a small but strong contingent of overseas visitors, including Ireland's champion jumps handler Willie Mullins.

He trains **Quevega**, a triple winner at both the Cheltenham and Punchestown festivals, and who appeared at the Decize show in 2006 when she was bought by agent Pierre Boulard. Ask Mullins about the breed and he says: "There's a difference about the way they are produced – Irish stores are bred to sell, French horses are bred to race, although with the emergence of interest in them from Britain they may be produced differently. Originally they looked like they were suited to cross-country racing, but they have shown they are capable of weight carrying and speed, and are suited to racing outside of France."

Mullins, Yorkshire-based Ferdy Murphy and former jockey Franny Woods were special guests, chosen to



The **Shaanmer** colt chosen by Willie Mullins to head the two-year-old championship

judge classes of two-year-old fillies plus the overall juvenile champion. Others in attendance included Scotland's leading trainer Lucinda Russell and her partner, former champion jockey Peter Scudamore, agents Aiden Murphy and Richard Venn, a handful of British owners and several stud representatives.

Also taking an interest was Joss Hanbury, a landowner in Leicestershire and France, and who bred top staying hurdler **Mighty Man** from an AQPS mare. "His dam was the first horse I bought in France," said Hanbury. "I love AQPS horses – they are athletes. They don't have as much bone as a traditional Irish store, but a field of them will have fewer faults than a field of thoroughbreds. By coming to the show the breeders hope to speak to buyers – if they win a class they can ask a bit more for the horse. The breeders are certainly passionate about their horses and cattle."

Many of his fellow countrymen and women were guests of the French Racing and Breeding Committee, and given the host country's reputation as a source, if not the home of, good food and wine, an August jolly to the region could be no hardship. Yet there was a serious side to the occasion, too, for AQPS horses are consistent winners. Leading examples include Grand National winner **Mon Mome** and Cheltenham heroes **Azertyuiop**, **Edredon**



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2ND SEPTEMBER, BADEN BADEN YEARLING SALES – DO NOT MISS

LOT 70

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LOT 166

Quality yearling colt by Cape Cross out of Black Type performer LASIRA and ½ brother to Gr.3 winning LINDENTHALER

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Herve D'Armaille, who bred Welsh National winner **Notre Pere**

Bleu and My Way De Solzen, who found fame with British trainers. **First Gold** and **Algan** were trained in France but plundered the King George VI Chase, a race requiring speed and stamina.

Why AQPS breeders prefer to sell from their farms or at similar shows – rather than under the hammer – might confuse the outsider, but small breeder Jean-Marie Callier said: *“That’s just history, the way it’s always been done. The breeders tend to retain fillies and sell colts.”*

Boulard, the buyer of Quevega, said: *“This is the mecca for AQPS. You can find a nice foal, but it is harder to find a two-year-old – sometimes you get lucky because the breeder suddenly has too many horses.”*

*“Over the last 15 years the breed has looked more thoroughbred, but the dam’s side is still based on stamina and jumping. **Lucarno** [the St Leger winner who soon joins Haras de Saint-Voir] is an example of a growing number of stallions with US breeding, which in my opinion is not always good, but in his case **Dynaformer** [Lucarno’s sire] produces lots of scope and the ability to stay.”*

One Lucarno filly foal was on view yesterday, having been conceived while the stallion stood at Shropshire’s Wood Farm. Joss Hanbury created the mating, but sold the mare **Lola Lolita (Dom Alco)** with the foal inside to official breeder Jacques Lauriot.

The leading two-year-old, as chosen by Mullins and bred by the Cypres family, was by the **Darshaan** stallion **Shaanmer** out of a **Lute Antique** mare called **Koukie**.



Joss Hanbury (right) with agent Aiden Murphy

The champion foal was a colt sired by **Dom Alco** and foaled by the **Kadalko** mare **Jimanji**, a half-sister to useful chaser **Innox** and from the family of **L’Ami** and **Kelami**, who all won leading races for trainer Francois Doumen. That pedigree was enough to draw interest from the visitors, although Ferdie Murphy’s attempt to strike a deal had, by late afternoon, apparently fallen short of the vendor’s valuation.

Another visitor from Britain, David Futter of Shropshire’s Yorton Farm Stud, was full of praise for the occasion. *“We need to do something like this in Britain,”* he said. *“We ought to put on a show where breeders and stallion masters can place their horses before the public in a bid to get more people involved. It would require sponsorship and some input from breeders, but it is worth giving it a go if we can find the right location. Somewhere like the showground in Malvern comes to mind.”*

In that respect central France has a big advantage, for in August it is warm and sunny – well, most of the time. Yesterday it was wet, but the welcome was warm, and at least it was clear that young AQPS horses are not inconvenienced by soft ground.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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All bred and raced in Germany!

ARQANA DEAUVILLE AUGUST YEARLING SALE – DAY ONE

Lot	Sex	Sire – Dam	Vendor	Buyer	Price (€)
31	c	INVINCIBLE SPIRIT – Elle Galante	Lodge Park Stud	Waratah Thoroughbreds	440,000
94	c	MONTJEU – Minaccia	Ecurie Des Monceaux	Demi O’Byrne	340,000
65	f	RAVEN’S PASS – Lady Elgar	Haras Du Quesnay	Blandford Bloodstock	300,000
90	c	DALAKHANI – Midnight Angel	Newsells Park Stud	KK Eishindo	280,000
87	c	MONSUN – Melodramatic	Watership Down Stud	Charlie Gordon-Watson	270,000
13	c	OASIS DREAM – Consuelita	Haras Des Capucines	BBA Germany	260,000
		CAULEO – Miss Bio	Haras De Clairefontaine	Demi O’Byrne	260,000

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