



PRIME DISPATCH

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The late Drew Morphett with David Morrow at The Tea House in China Town Melbourne during Melbourne Cup week 2014

I must say I was lost for words when David Morrow called me early on Saturday morning to inform me of Drew Morphett's unexpected death from a heart attack the previous night. Since moving to Melbourne 16 years ago I had become quite good friends with Drew and one of the highlights of 'Cup Week' was heading off for dinner after the races. We seemed to always finish up at the Tea House.

This picture was taken in 2014 on the last day that Drew and David worked together at the ABC where they had honed their exquisite talents as sports broadcasters.

Drew had a wonderful personality and was an easy person to like. He would often come up to me when one of our horses ran well and say 'that bloke went alright'. In an era when many of our sporting journalists seem to look for the negative Drew was the opposite, always looking for a

positive angle to pass on to his audience. He had the great ability to paint a picture in words for the millions of people who listened to his broadcasts. While Drew was an outstanding television commentator he like David and many of the other fine sports presenters from the ABC were the masters of their delivery on radio.

As a young journalist Drew worked in Perth at the ABC for Fred Forstner who was a very popular and an integral part of Prime Thoroughbreds in our formative years in the Apple Isle. Sadly, we also lost Freddy too early, drowning in an accident in Tonga three years ago. Fred used to take great delight in telling stories about the young 'Drew' who he was very fond of. Each of the many sports broadcasters I have met that worked at the ABC have remarkable memories for details and are great story tellers. I suppose that is what makes them so good at their job and such great company to be with. It makes a big difference to your life to be surrounded by positive people and David, Drew and Freddy shared this great characteristic.

The last time I caught up with Drew was at the Inglis Premier Sale where he was in good form asking about our horses and passing his opinion on a couple he had noticed running recently. You only had to follow the commentary on social media once word had filtered out about his passing to gauge the enormity of his popularity. It was probably appropriate the last photo of Drew on his Twitter page was sitting next to Cameron Smith on a flight from Sydney. While Drew was probably best known in the AFL States he was originally from Cronulla, a Rugby League heartland.

Our thoughts are with Kaz, Drew's delightful wife and the many friends he has left behind. Australia has lost a legend of the airways and as decent a man as you are likely to meet. I feel privileged to have known and spent time with him.

STALLION PARADES

During the past couple of weeks the studs across the country have been opening their gates having stallion parades which are a great way for them to promote their sires to the industry of which you are a participant. I spoke to a client who spent the weekend in the Hunter Valley travelling around the studs enjoying the hospitality taking in the beauty of the studs and inspecting the imposing stallions. He left somewhat confused. The established commercial sire's records speak for themselves with many of these out of the financial reach of most.

At these open days the studs are really trying to promote the new boys on the block. History tells us that only about 10% of these sires will make the grade commercially. The million dollar questions are which ones will make the grade. A good start to identifying them is to have a look at last year's General Sire's List and see where the best performing twenty sires stood and where they originated from. History tends to repeat itself in our game and while a wildcard will pop up from time to time it is the exception rather than the rule.

Fifteen of these sires were reared in Australia, three were from Ireland and two originated in the USA. Four sires stood at Widden, four at Darley, Three at Arrowfield, three sires at Vinery, three at Coolmore, two at Yarraman and one at Woodside Park in Victoria. Anyone who follows the breeding industry here would be too surprised with the dominance of the Hunter Region based studs.

What is interesting is the number of sires each of these studs is standing in the coming season. Widden stand eight, Darley 25, Arrowfield 13, Vinery nine, Coolmore 12, Yarraman Park two and Woodside Park four. About 700 sires stand in Australia in any season with about 50 new sires available to breeders this year.

The 73 stallions standing at these seven studs will cover about ½ the mares sent to stud in Australia this season. It is also fair to write a majority of the more high profile mares will also visit these horses. This is a big change from when I first started full time in the industry.

I've got my thoughts but chose not to use any of the new sires this year for the dozen mares I help to manage. I found it very difficult to sort the new sires out and I'm not sure why some are standing at all but time will tell and this isn't different from any other year. I'm more than happy to wait and see what their progeny look like in about two years.

To finish up this segment I would like to relate the story of a well-known breeder who had just come into the industry about a decade or so ago. I ran into him in a hotel I was staying at in Sydney and he was full of enthusiasm for some high profile international sires he had just inspected in the Hunter Valley. When I got back to my office I posted him a yearling catalogue from five years before. He called and asked me why I had posted him the catalogue. I asked him to go to the back of the book and tell me what he thought of the first season sires in that year. After a couple of minutes he called me back and thanked me for the catalogue. The point was that very few of them had made the grade as sires.

I have pasted the General Sire's List for the first four weeks of the season below featuring the top 10 sires. Street Cry, High Chaparral and Galileo either don't stand here or are deceased. The remaining seven represent Arrowfield, Coolmore, Yarraman Park, Woodside Park and Widden Studs. Not much has changed from last season although Galileo's figures are mainly due to returns from jumps races. I'd expect him to drop off once the jumps season is completed.

What about Snitzel with 113 runners in the first 28 days of the season. He produces tough, sound horses. Unfortunately, they are also very expensive!!!

General Sires

	Sire	Runners	Winners	Wins	Rnrs/Wnrs	Total Earnings
1	Snitzel (by Redoute's Choice)	113	21 (5)	26 (5)	18.6%	\$1,248,158
2	Street Cry (by Machiavellian)	61	20 (1)	22 (1)	32.8%	\$796,060
3	Fastnet Rock (by Danehill)	80	10 (3)	10 (3)	12.5%	\$750,874
4	I Am Invincible (by Invincible Spirit)	69	16 (2)	18 (2)	23.2%	\$714,809
5	Written Tycoon (by Iglesia)	91	24	25	26.4%	\$547,954
6	Star Witness (by Starcraft)	63	16 (1)	18 (1)	25.4%	\$539,370
7	High Chaparral (by Sadler's Wells)	88	13	13	14.8%	\$510,690
8	Sebring (by More Than Ready)	86	10	12	11.6%	\$503,696
9	Nicconi (by Bianconi)	80	17	17	21.3%	\$485,169
10	Galileo (by Sadler's Wells)	12	5	6	41.7%	\$463,175

TELEVISION COVERAGE OF OUR INDUSTRY

I have written about this before but the sooner the industry can get together and get all the television coverage of our industry on the one network the better.

I've got nothing against either Sky Racing or Racing.com but the latter in particular seems to be floundering a bit and while it produces some good content it would be much better to see our premium racing given comprehensive coverage on the one network.

The questions posed by a prominent owner recently regarding the cost to the industry in Victoria propping up Racing.com are well founded. We are still waiting to find out the 'real' cost to the industry of TVN with Racing.com being its replacement. As I see it NSW is the big winner with outstanding coverage at no cost to the industry through Sky Channel. I'm certain the TVN details will never be released although it would be a good way forward for the new board of RVL to pass on these figures to the industry.

The purchase of Winning Post and Best Bets by TVN was something that always surprised me given the change in the way people access their racing form these days.

We should all be concerned about the future of free to air television in this country with Channel 10 about to be taken over by an American Network and the other two free to air networks posting big losses for the 2016/17 FY.

We have seen player pay deals being brokered in Cricket and Rugby League based on projected incomes from the various media organisations. What if these companies go broke. It will leave the codes in question in a very poor position.

On another matter I noticed a report yesterday that the WA State Government is investigating selling the State's TAB. The participants in WA should contact their counterparts in Tasmania and ask their opinion on such a move.

FLEMINGTON COMMITTEE ROOM LUNCH 20 JANUARY 2018

The cost for the day in the Committee Room is \$225 per head. This is great value and it should be a day to remember. The VRC Committee Room overlooks saddling enclosure and is the prime position at the great course.

I'm expecting the function to be very popular given the number of replies I have already had for the day. This is a superb venue and Shawn Cosgrove will be our host for the day. Obviously clients of Prime Thoroughbreds will have priority for the function. We are restricted to 150 guests.

- racecourse admission

- dining package – sit down four course lunch
- beverage package
- car parking
- race books
- exclusive tote facilities

To book this function email: primefunctions@outlook.com

On Sunday 21 January we will be visiting Fulmen Park on the Mornington Peninsular for a bbq lunch. This will also give you the opportunity to inspect the facilities available at the property where we spell many of our horses.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO JOIN A RACECLUB

If you are considering joining one of the Melbourne Racing Clubs now is the time. I saw a report recently that the Melbourne Racing Club may be about to cap membership.

The VRC's new member's stand will be complete by the start of the 2018 Spring Carnival. It will be a major attraction for any racing person visiting not only Victoria but Australia. Membership of the VRC is currently open but I'm certain once people start to get a sniff of just how good the facilities will be in the new stand the club will get a rush on membership.

The VRC are doing their bit to attract the younger generation to the races with a really good function on 16 September. The younger race enthusiasts like my two daughters look to a day at the races as a social event and the work being done by the bigger clubs in both Melbourne and Sydney is to be highly commended.

Ash McGregor from the ATC is always on the look out to improve the experience for everyone attending a day at one of the Sydney Club's four racecourses. I still think the model of having just the one club with multiple venues at its disposal is the best one but it would be difficult to see how the three Melbourne Clubs could combine. The one downside to being a member of a racing club in Melbourne is the cost if you decide or need to be a member of the three clubs, it is expensive.

AT THE TRACK

I must say I thought Annaman had won on Saturday at Morphettville where he just got too far out of his ground and probably did a good job to get so close.

Today sees Not Surprising running at Tamworth, Montana Pines heads to Ipswich on Wednesday and Flying Jess resumes at Caulfield on Saturday.

The next couple of weeks will be vital to the makeup of the field for 'The Everest'. From where I sit the field is far from being finalised but time is running out with just seven weeks until the race for outside chances to make their case for a slot.

This weekend sees some outstanding racing in both Melbourne and Sydney. The Memsie Stakes in particular is a cracking race but also is the Chelmsford Stakes at Randwick.

SHARES AVAILABLE

And then there was one!!! I am almost certain the only shares I have remaining are in the Sizzling colt out of Dedication. If there are any others available I will advise next week in the dispatch. The interest we have had in our yearlings this year has been unprecedented with the overall spend on our yearlings up over 300% on five years ago.

The mail I'm getting back on Sizzling's first crop now two is outstanding.



Sizzling /Dedication colt – Tony Gollan
10% shares \$8,500 5% shares \$4,250

This is a cracking colt and he certainly attracted my attention at the sales where he was one of only two colts I had vetted. He is well grown and a very athletic horse. He has a wonderful attitude and is a nice walking horse. He handled the breaking in process without any issues.

I love his pedigree and more than that I was instantly attracted to him when I inspected him. If you don't like a horse when you first inspect it you should never buy it. In my opinion this colt was as good an individual as I inspected in the sale and a colt I really wanted to secure. I only usually purchase two colts a year with this being the second.

The colts and geldings we currently have in our system to have raced and won include Husson Eagle, Invincible Al, Reneged, Annaman, Lomazzo, Banachek, Great Southern and Makeadane.

We have three geldings that have raced but are yet to win including the highly promising three year old Chalmers as well as Montana Pines and Quirion.

I really liked what I saw in a number of the progeny of **Sizzling** at this year's sales. To me it is a no brainer that he will be a success at stud. He was a terrific racehorse and precocious two year old from the most dominant sire line in Australia for the past 20 years out of a 'black type' mare by one of the greatest sprinters of the modern generation in General Nediym. General Nediym has done a remarkable job through his daughters at stud with him currently sitting in 5th spot on the Australian broodmare list. This isn't surprising. The 'General' had good depth to his pedigree on his dam's side with his daughters residing at the very best studs in Australia.

Sizzling's pedigree page is very strong with a host of very good horses down the page. In fact it couldn't be any stronger with both the 2nd and 3rd dams being superior producers.

I love the General Nediym (1st dam), Alzao stakes winner (2nd Dam) and Without Fear stakes producer (3rd dam) down the page. Estate Label, the 3rd dam was a very high class producer also throwing the outstanding two year old filly Loving Cup.

I must say I had a bit to do with both sides of this pedigree with Sizzling's sire Snitzel being out of Snippet's Lass. Both General Nediym and Snippet's Lass were trained by Bill Mitchell when I was his Racing Manager. They were both high class racehorses with Snippet's Lass being one of the toughest mares I have had anything to do with.

Dedication

Dedication is a young well related mare by a sire that has had a great impact in Australia through his daughters at stud and provides a perfect outcross to the many Danehill line sires we have standing in Australia. A close look at this female line displays plenty to be enthusiastic about.

Firstly, Singspiel has crossed beautifully with the sons of Danehill with the high class Australian Group 1 winners Helmet and Epaulette being amongst the thirty two Group winners his daughters have thrown.

Secondly, there are several examples of Danehill working in this pedigree headed by Alverta, the Group 1 winning daughter of Flying Spur, Group 3 winner Aerobics and stakes performers Violet Lane and Star Mystic.

On the strength of my opinion of this colt and the Sizzling filly I purchased at the Gold Coast Magic Millions I have recommended to our owners that we send three of the mares I manage to Sizzling. I rate him a huge chance at being a success at stud.

I am getting very positive feedback on the progeny of Sizzling. He has to be a good chance at stud. He is by Snitzel out of a General Nediym mare. Speed on speed.



Hijack Hussy winning at Flemington trained by Tony Gollan Melbourne Cup Day