

Real Waikato Horsepower run - 15th August

By Dennis Catchpole

Photos by Evan Steers

Once again we were blessed with an outstanding day weather wise, one could almost think that spring had arrived.

Gary had arranged for us to be guests at the Waikato Horse Stud in Matamata, and this was a very real privilege.

We arrived to be welcomed to a very special morning tea provided by Gary and Estelle, cup cakes to die for and scones, Estelle is without doubt a very talented lady.

We began to realise just how privileged we were when Mike Rennie, the very young, but very knowledgeable business manager for the Stud, introduced us to the one of the Staff who then proceeded to Parade for us some of New Zealand's premium horse flesh.

Ardrossan was the first Stallion to be shown to us. He is the most recent acquisition to the Stud and his service fee is \$8.000 plus GST.



Ocean Park was next and he has more winners from fewer runners than Savabeel and double the number of winners then Zabeel at the same stage of their careers.

Ocean Park had a value of around the NZ\$8.0 million mark.

We were shown Sacred Falls, a Stallion who when racing earned over \$4.7 million and in fact won the Group 1 Doncaster Handicap and even I had heard of that Race and I am not a racing person at all.

Mike indicated that this horse was worth around the \$8.0 million mark and his stud service fee was \$20.000 plus GST.





The horse that really caught our attention was Savabeel, a son of the Savabeel. He has been the Champion NZ Sire for the last five years, and has also won his fourth Dewar Award.

This award is based on the progeny earnings both in New Zealand and Australia.

He has also won the Centaine Award which is for combined Progeny earnings worldwide.

He has sired close to 100 stake winners including 18 Group one winners.

His service fee stands at \$125,000 plus GST - and his book is full.

The Value of Savabeel cannot be established as he is just too valuable. Last year two parcels of the syndicate sold for NZ\$600,000 each.

His progeny have earned to date over NZ\$93.0 million.

All the Horses shown to us were beautifully presented and clearly rather touchy except for Savabeel who was very calm but he had been at the stud for thirteen years so well used to being shown off.



Waikato Stud sent 88 yearlings to the Sale at Karaka last year, the premium sale for horses in New Zealand, this was the largest of any stud sent before.

Next year they are hoping to send 100 to the same sale.

Both Ocean Park and Savabeel won the Australasia Prestigious Cup Race the WS Cox Plate.

These Stallions are expected to service over 100 Mares in a season and along with the Sale of Yearlings is the main source of income to the Stud.

Mike then took us through the very complicated process of mating these fine animals, which can be fraught with danger as they are very strong and at mating time even more temperamental. You clearly need to know what you are doing.

Mike then took us for a tour of the Farm, which covers over 1500 acres of prime Matamata land and is beautifully kept. So good in fact that we were able to drive our Jaguars very easily through the Farm on Tar Seal roads. Horses are not good grazers so over 600 cattle are fattened on the farm to keep the grass under control. The Staff levels are around 28, and the farm has thirteen homes on it for the Staff, and at the Karaka Sale they had 64 Staff to ensure that the buyers were well looked after and the horses shown at their best.

Within a few months they will have about 240 foals on the property.

The Stud also has another Farm very near Karapiro.

We learnt much more from Mike, then to put down here, and to those of us that are not horse or Racing people this was a most interesting experience.

Once again thank you to Gary who set this up, as they very rarely have groups like us on the Farm, so as I have already said we were very privileged.



We then headed toward Hamilton where we enjoyed what was really a high tea at a purpose built home just out of Hamilton. A great setting for our cars in front of the house.

We finished the day with a visit to Duncan and Ebbett where we viewed the future of Jaguar, i.e. EV Cars, this writer was not, and will not be excited by these Electric boxes of the future.

Perhaps it is a very sad fact that the age of beautiful, iconic cars, may be over.

Dennis