

BLOODSTOCK JURY

Experts from the breeding industry on the big issues of 2014 – and what 2015 has in store

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What did you make of the first Frankel foals?



He seems to be stamping his foals and they appear to have his bone, walk and quality. I am envious of anybody who has a Frankel foal and have no doubt they're going to develop into even more outstanding yearlings.

I think those at the sales were not a true representation. I have seen several on farms and there are some very good types. The colt out of Dar Re Mi is exceptional.

Of the few I've seen, it seems they all have size, substance and scope, but of those I saw at Goffs and Tattersalls it also seems the mares' physical characteristics have a strong influence.

The Finsceal Beo filly was obviously an outstanding individual, reflected by her price. I don't think the others at public auction were a fair representation of Frankel. I've seen some exceptional foals on farms and I'm sure that next year at the yearling sales, and then in two years on the racecourse, progeny of Frankel will really come to the fore.

We were lucky enough to foal quite a few and they were all of a good size, strong and with a good outlook. Superstar Leo has a filly foal who is truly stunning with an amazing backend.

Can Sea The Stars become a breed-shaping stallion?

He's my favourite horse and I'm fully aware of what he has produced, but one has to read between the lines as plenty of his three-year-olds haven't raced. I like to see a stallion stamp his stock, but I have a three-year-old, two two-year-olds and three yearlings who all look like their dams. I breed stamina as it is and as a result haven't been back, so I'll wait and see.

Without doubt. Sea The Stars has all the credentials. I'm a huge fan. His half-brother Galileo is the best of all time and he seems to produce horses who can perform over a very wide range of distances.



He's got a bit of a way to go yet, but his dam was a breed-shaper and his brother is a breed-shaper. He's operating at a high level with the progeny of a lot of proven dams – the books he's had so far have been very, very strong. It's early days and at the moment he's a good sire with the potential to be a very good sire.

His half-brother Galileo is already a breed-shaping sire and I see no reason why Sea The Stars can't also become one. In Sea The Moon and Taghrooda he has already produced a brilliant colt and filly. I've no doubt there will be more to come. But we won't really find out if Sea The Stars is shaping the breed until his sons and daughters produce runners.

Definitely. He's a half-brother to the greatest living stallion and is by Cape Cross, who is already a significant broodmare sire in his own right. He has shown with his first crop that he can get a high percentage of top-class horses – however, it's important to send a mare with quality herself.

Bloodstock sales seemed strong again in 2014, but is there any chance of the market overheating?

There will always be demand for quality stock by what are perceived as the right stallions. The yearling and foal sales were strong, but the mares' sales were patchy. People wanted instant returns and unless they felt they could make a profit on the foal the mare was carrying, she was shunned. Stallion fees are too high, and they cover too many mares. It will cause misery for some at the sales in future.

No, because there is always demand for quality, of which there is less and less available at auction. So you then get the knock-on effect all the way down the line.

I don't think so. In some places the market is a little one-dimensional, and in other areas it's overheating a little, but overall it isn't. It's still quite difficult to sell indifferent stock, and in places the middle market is patchy. But what's perceived to be wanting on the day is in strong demand in different sectors.

I hope not. The fact the aggregate, average and median at the most important mare sale in Europe [Tattersalls December] were all down on last year suggests the market is still sensible. What is important is that the market is now truly international. It is vital the market remains controlled and lessons have been learned regarding the pitfalls of overproduction.

Yes. Nomination fees have already reached levels that will make it very hard for commercial breeders to make a profit. Stallion masters need to understand just how hard it is for small breeders to secure nominations at viable prices.

Who will be next year's leading first-season sires?

It has to be, on sheer numbers, between Dream Ahead, Poet's Voice and Zoffany. I sold my mare Tyranny carrying to Zoffany. His yearlings were well received but it will be interesting to see if they have temperament issues, as it's a family I know well. My heart goes with Poet's Voice, who I would call a proper horse, although I think he'll have better three-year-olds.

Zoffany looks very promising, while Cape Blanco had excellent individuals and those by Poet's Voice had quality. But overall, the answer to the question is Zoffany.

It's pretty much guesswork, and you can't even make educated guesses until they run. All we have to work from at the moment are the physicals, and time has shown us there isn't as strong a link between the physical attributes and the will to win as we imagine.

Poet's Voice and Zoffany. I was very impressed by their stock. They appear to be producing a lot of athletic and quality individuals. I bought some yearlings by both of the sires and at this early stage they seem to be pleasing their trainers.

Zoffany by the number of winners and Poet's Voice (below) by prize-money.



Give us a Classic winner for 2015

Convey. Juddmonte are going to hit the jackpot yet again.

A Galileo colt trained at Ballydoyle. I just wish I knew which one!

John F Kennedy is my most likely Classic winner at the moment. I was at the Curragh when he won his maiden – he travelled well and finished well.

I could see Ol' Man River giving Montjeu another Derby winner. On a personal note, I bought the Hugo Palmer-trained Spanish Squeeze as a yearling, he won his maiden impressively and will go for a trial. I'd love Brown Panther to win the Irish St Leger again for connections.

Banzari to win the Oaks. She's a ten-length maiden winner who was bred at New England and is trained by Michael Bell.

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His 27 Autumn yearlings averaged £32,205, almost 6 times his stud fee

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