

ANTIPODES'



Among the world's 478 Gr1 races, Australasian horses are performing at historically high levels. **RENEE GEELLEN** reports.

World Thoroughbred Rankings: May 2011

Rank	Rating	Horse	Year of Foaling
1	130	Black Caviar (AUS)	2006
1	130	Frankel (GB)	2008
3	126	So You Think (NZ)	2006
4	125	Rocket Man (AUS)	2005
4	125	Canford Cliffs (IRE)	2007

trained horses are now getting the recognition on the world stage that they deserve, and the performances of our horses internationally have certainly gone a long way to assisting in that recognition.

"Make no mistake, while the overall numbers have grown, 2010 is a year to remember. To have Black Caviar and So You Think rated so highly is a clear demonstration that the Australian-trained horses do not have to go overseas to prove their worth."

So You Think is starting to look like the next Phar Lap – rightly claimed by both New Zealand and Australia – after his 6 Gr1 wins in 3 nations over the past season. On top of his 4 Australian Gr1 wins, Gr1 triumphs in both Ireland and England have been the coup de grace.

While satisfying to have Australia's racing scene accepted as world class and to have produced the best horse in the world, it leaves the question of where this leaves us on the international stage?

International Gr1 Stage

There are plenty of ways to measure success by using the 478 Gr1 races that have been run around the globe in 2010/11. This analysis covers the entire Southern Hemisphere season for 2010/11, while the Northern Hemisphere season is split into the latter half of the 2010 season and the first half of the 2011 season.

At the end of May, an unprecedented event occurred: Australian and New Zealand-bred horses filled three of the top four places on the official World Thoroughbred Rankings.

Not only that, but champion mare Black Caviar sat alongside brilliant UK 3YO Frankel on 130 at the top of the table, the first time ever a runner from the southern hemisphere has achieved the distinction.

What made the feat more remarkable is that Black Caviar raced solely in Australia, in essence a huge nod to the quality of our racing and, in particular, to the class of our sprinters, the rock-bed of Australian breeding.

Australia's representative on the World Thoroughbred Rankings Committee Greg Carpenter told Breeding&Racing that, "2010 has been a break-through year, not only for Australian racing, but also for sprinters, which is one of the great strengths of Australian breeding.

"The perception of the quality of the Australian scene has certainly changed over time. In 2005, there were nine Australian-trained horses rated 115 or higher (the mark of a genuine Gr1 performer) and this progressed to 50 in 2009 and 43 in 2010. So Australian-

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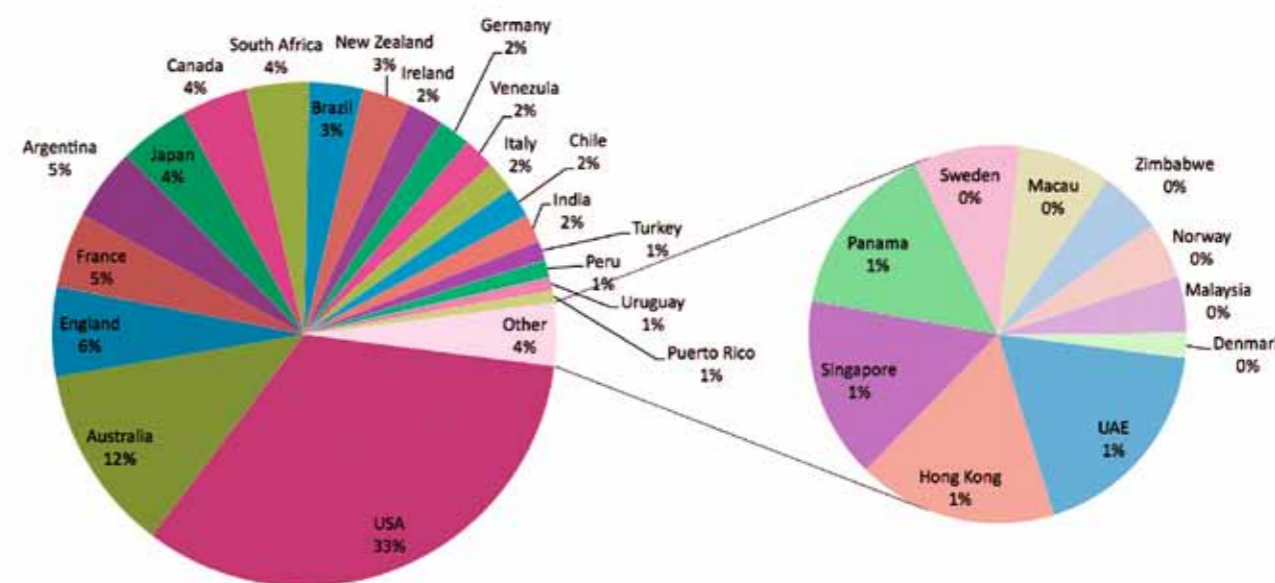
So You Think is an international star

STAR RISES

International Gr1 Wins By Country Of Birth

Country of Birth	Total Gr1 wins	Not in home country	Total Countries	Average Foal Crop (2004-2009)
USA	121	18	11	33,600
AUS	66	22	7	17,500
NZ	48	30	6	4,500
ARG	46	5	5	7,400
IRE	43	35	9	11,500
GB	37	22	10	5,900
BRZ	29	4	3	3,000
SAF	27	2	3	2,900
JPN	19	1	2	7,700
CHI	18	0	1	Unknown
FR	10	2	3	5,300
GER	7	2	3	1,200
PER	7	1	2	Unknown
Grand Total	478		18	

Percentage of all Global Stakes Races



The 478 Gr1 races were run in 18 nations, split evenly between Northern and Southern hemisphere. The 9 nations on Northern Hemisphere timing held 238 Gr1 races, and the remaining 240 were run in countries racing to a Southern Hemisphere timetable.

These races were won by horses born in 13 different nations. That leaves 5 nations that held Gr1 races, but didn't breed a Gr1 winner. Of those, only Canada and Italy actually have a breeding industry, leaving Hong Kong, Singapore and the UAE as nations that race horses but don't breed them.

Surprisingly, the countries that bred Northern Dancer (CAN) and Nearco (ITY) couldn't win a Gr1 race anywhere, even on home soil, however this could just be a statistical blip, and an outcome they will likely bounce back from.

United States of America

Unsurprisingly – their annual foal crop is twice as big as the next biggest breeding industry – the overall winner for 2010/11 is the USA with 121 Gr1 races in 11 different nations.

At an average of 33,600 foals per annum over the last five years and 33% of all black type races globally, the US is a huge player on the international racing and breeding stage.

They also held the greatest number of Gr1 races in the time period with 116 races. US-bred horses won 103 of the 116 US-based races. This still leaves them with 18 Gr1 races won in 10 other nations: England (6), Italy (3), Ireland (2), and one each in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan and Peru.

The international highlight of the US-bred horses would have to



US-bred American won the Melbourne Cup

be Australia's richest race, the Melbourne Cup, with the appropriately named American (by Dynaformer from America) who single-handedly demonstrates just how international racing has become.

US-born, French-trained and Australian-owned, American is only the fourth horse bred outside Australia and New Zealand to win the Melbourne Cup in its 150 year history.

Matt Iuliano, Executive Vice President and Executive Director of the US Jockey Club, notes: "American-bred thoroughbreds have proven very competitive at the highest levels of international competition over the years. This is testament to successful breeding programs and the careful and competent nurturing of these horses by their breeders as well as their trainers and owners."

Great Britain/Ireland

The original base of horse racing, England and Ireland, is still a large source of horses to the rest of the world. With Gr1 wins in 10 and 9 nations respectively, horses bred in the British Isles are spread around the world. English-bred horses won Gr1 races in England (15), France (8), America (4), 2 each in Canada, Hong Kong, and the UAE, as well as a Gr1 race in each of Australia, Germany, Ireland and Singapore.

The Irish results were given a big boost by super mare Goldikova who picked up 5 Gr1 races in France and America this season, but their figures are still imposing with 43 Gr1 wins in 9 nations. Those nations are France (11 – 4 to Goldikova), England (10), Ireland (8), America (4), 3 in Hong Kong and Italy, Canada (2) and 1 in Australia and Japan.

Horses bred in England and Ireland have been part of a growing trend for Australian-based owners and trainers with leading Sydney conditioner Chris Waller being one of the trainers leading the charge. This season he won the Gr1 Queen Elizabeth Stakes with My Kingdom of Fife (GB), ironically a horse that was originally owned by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Waller also collected the Gr1 Sydney Cup with Irish-bred Stand to Gain, meaning that the only two Gr1-winners in Australia born in England or Ireland came from the same stable.

Waller explains his stable has been buying horses in Europe for several years now as they are a good source of mature stayers, commenting: "Because prizemoney is so good in Australia, proven

horses from both Australia and New Zealand are too expensive for our clients, whereas European horses represent better value. The stable still has to settle for the second tier horses, but there is a huge depth in the staying ranks over there, which makes the second tier horses a good punt for city class racing in Australia.

"Sydney Cup winner Stand To Gain (IRE) is a good example as

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he had a reasonable rating, without having won too many races. This meant that he was well treated by the handicapper when he arrived in Australia, ensuring that he had a decent chance of being competitive. As it has turned out, he has been a dream horse and will follow the owner's dream of having a Melbourne Cup runner this spring. By contrast, My Kingdom of Fife (GB) has more class and had already proven that he could compete at the highest level before he was purchased (by another agent)."

South America

Argentina dominated the South American scene with Gr1 wins at home (41 of the 45 run in Argentina), as well as 2 in Brazil, and one each in Chile, Peru and the United States. The South American product is becoming more recognisable in Australia through the deeds of Hussonet (Champion Sire in Chile and Gr1 sire in Australia), and a number of his excellently credentialed overseas sire-sons now at stud in Australia. Sires sourced from that region have the added attraction of carrying outcrossed pedigrees for our broodmare band that appears to be increasingly saturated with Danehill blood.

Although relatively new to Australia, the Argentine bloodlines have been exploited for decades in South Africa where the ranks of their top runners are liberally dotted with horses carrying the ARG suffix.

Black Type Racing by Nation

Country	Stakes Races	Percentage of all Global Stakes Races
USA	1,545	33.3%
Australia	557	12.0%
England	267	5.8%
France	223	4.8%
Argentina	217	4.7%
Japan	208	4.5%
Canada	199	4.3%
South Africa	186	4.0%
Brazil	162	3.5%
New Zealand	141	3.0%
Ireland	108	2.3%
Germany	96	2.1%
Venezuela	94	2.0%
Italy	92	2.0%
Chile	91	2.0%
India	84	1.8%
Turkey	57	1.2%
Peru	53	1.1%
Uruguay	39	0.8%
Puerto Rico	36	0.8%
UAE	34	0.7%
Hong Kong	32	0.7%
Singapore	29	0.6%
Panama	28	0.6%
Sweden	17	0.4%
Macau	15	0.3%
Zimbabwe	10	0.2%
Norway	9	0.2%
Malaysia	9	0.2%
Denmark	4	0.1%
	4,642	100.0%

Australia

Aside from Black Caviar's achievements, Australia's results highlight the importance of the export market to local breeders. This season, Australian-bred horses have raced in 22 nations outside Australia, winning over 2,350 races.

Obviously the highlights on a global stage are the 22 Gr1 wins in 6 of our export nations, as well as a further 44 Gr1 wins at home. The six nations were South Africa (7), Singapore (7), New Zealand (4), Japan (2) and one each in Hong Kong and the UAE.

Last year's Hong Kong Horse of the Year Sacred Kingdom won another Gr1 this season and is still the highest rated horse in Hong Kong. Australian-bred Rocket Man proved his worth outside Singapore winning at the wealthy Dubai World Cup meeting, and Kia Ora Stud-bred Igugu dominated in South Africa by winning the Triple Tiara for 3YO fillies, then smashing the older horses in that nation's



Black Caviar topped the world rankings

richest race, the Durban July.

Not only that, but Australian bred 2YOs showed their strength, producing a clean sweep at home in the five 2YO Gr1 races, winning both juvenile Gr1 events in New Zealand, and three of the five Gr1s for 2YOs in South Africa.

"Australian horses have proven beyond question that they are the most adaptable and resilient in the world able to succeed in all environments," Aushorse Chief Executive Peter McGauran observes. "No other country produces horses tough and fast enough to win Gr1 races in both Northern and Southern Hemisphere climates with such frequency. Australian breeders produce horses that take their place with the best in the world to the point of breeding the world's best horse Black Caviar. As a result, Australia's export market of over 2,500 horses worth \$200m continues to grow. But it's a competitive game, with all breeding nations chasing market share in Asia, and Australia has got to keep producing fast, adaptable and affordable horses to stay ahead of the pack. That's the challenge Australian breeders are taking up with relish."

The spread of Gr1-winners around the globe for the locally-bred horses shows the importance of our export markets. A strong dollar may be against our stock come sales time, but the quality of our horses provides a massive incentive for overseas buyers to actively target the Australian product.

Recent exported Gr1-winners have ranged in cost from as little as \$23,000 for South Africa's dual Gr1 winner Happy Archer (by Dubawi) to the expensive Delago Deluxe (by Encosta de Lago) who sold for \$550,000.

New Zealand

Further cementing the reputation globally for this part of the world, 2010/11 has been a huge season for the NZ-bred horse.

Not only do they have So You Think flying their flag in Europe after a stellar spring in Australia, they won twice as many Gr1 races in Australia as usual. Aside from 21 Gr1 races in Australia and 18 at home, NZ-bred horses won 6 Gr1s in Hong Kong (half of those to Hong Kong's 2011 Horse of the Year Ambitious Dragon), and So You Think contributed with Gr1 wins in both England and Ireland.

New CEO of NZTM Andrew Birch says, "21 Gr1 races in Australia is an outstanding effort, and we are proud that we continue to dominate in that mile to mile-and-a-half bracket. Our breeders set out to focus on this area of the market, and international buyers can find good value for these horses in New Zealand. We budget on exporting about a third of the annual foal crop, and with our horses doing the job on the track, NZTM expects this to continue."

Combined with the ongoing impact of locally-bred horses on the global stage, and growing awareness of the international Gr1 calendar, there is renewed focus on thoroughbred racing's elite events.

And soon we'll have a deluge of Australian Spring Gr1 racing to get all excited about!