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## Mark's Mail

Great week, apart from getting one year older! I'm happy with how the farm is looking, the weather has been awesome, meaning the grass is growing! Hallelujah. A solid week of foaling, thank you to the team for their hard work. 108 on the ground so far.

The first episode of the Everest show has aired, take some time and have a watch - link below. An outstanding effort from Trackside NZ and their production team. Special mention to Scotty Freeman. Man Entain is making some moves!!

**[Click here to watch ep 1 of The Everest Show.](#)**

A few of my faves from this week...

### Mating

Loire... Upgrading from Frankel to Savabeel.

### Foal

Maurice x Never Been Kissed (our G1 Flight Stakes queen).

### Winners

Cannon Hill (Ardrossan) and Walk Of Fame (Sacred Falls).

### Pregnancy

Magic Dancer x Savabeel (full to Noverre).

### Booking

Great judge Denny Baker's mare booked to Noverre off the back of the beautiful foals he is leaving.

### WS-bred runner to watch

Atishu (Savabeel x Posy) in the G2 Golden Pendant at Rosehill.

22 sleeps to go...

## WS on the big screen!

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"We just took him through quietly, and each step treated him as a normal horse" - Mark Chittick

It's an honour to feature on Sky News Australia - a huge thank you for this opportunity. We're on an incredible ride with I Wish I Win, and it's a pleasure to share his story.

#IWishIWinTheEverest

[Click here to watch.](#)

We couldn't do it without them...

Meet, Mike Rennie!

**1. Introduce yourself & how long you have worked at WS?**

Giddy, Mike Rennie here. I've been with the WS team for a tick over five years now and into my sixth season.

**2. What previous experiences have led you to where you are?**

Fitting enough, I started in the industry with Mark (Chittick) around 17 or 18 years ago. After getting a push from Bruce Slade, I applied for a job in my Uni holidays doing the yearling prep. Mark took a punt on me with no experience and I worked as hard as I could. Its amazing to think how different it could have been if Mark didn't give me a go. I ended up doing two preparations and three Karaka sales with Waikato so needless to say I loved it, and wanted to repay the faith Mark showed in me. After my first prep with Waikato I ended up working with Wayne and Karen Stewart at White Robe Lodge in between studying at Otago Uni. They are an amazing family and gave me a true grounding to build off.

From Uni I worked in a gym in Pukekohe and spent my spare time helping Les Wallace with the horses. I then had a year with a marketing sales company and six months in Ballarat with Dan O'Sullivan. I decided I wanted to focus more on the admin side of the industry so applied for the role of Communications Manager at Rich Hill Stud. This was my first significant step in the industry and I think it worked well as John was happy for me to be somewhat hands on. I learnt a lot with John and became a lot more familiar with the workings of a commercial stud farm. Alan was very

good to me as well. During my time at Rich Hill I set up MDR Bloodstock and started to try and buy a few horses at the sales. I had four years at Rich Hill before deciding to go travelling for a bit.

Prior to flying, Roddy Schick mentioned that Michael Wallace was looking for someone to help with his newly formed Waterford Bloodstock. The short being, I got the job and started on my return to NZ. I did three years with Michael and Nicky where we went to every major sale across Australasia and did the NZ work for Inglis Bloodstock. This was a fast paced environment and I appreciate the help from Michael and Nicky. I loved the Inglis work and learnt an enormous amount from some absolute legends. I all but took a role with Inglis after I left Waterford but a Bruce Perry nudge to Mark Chittick meant a phone call, then meeting about a role at Waikato Stud. So here we are, back where it began and fortunately working with Mark and a seriously good team. Needless to say Mark has been incredibly influential on my industry career.

### **3. Go-to beverage?**

Speights, but don't mind a Fugazi. A good red or chardonnay and I'm happy too.

### **4. What section of the farm do you mainly work in and what do you enjoy about it?**

These days I cross most sections in some capacity and a mixture of office and on farm. Its good to get your hands dirty and I enjoy synergising the sections into an overall business model and strategy.

### **5. Explain the highlight of your career so far**

The somewhat self indulgent vanity in me says, when my title changed to General Manager. Perhaps more meaningfully, seeing our team operate at such a high level continuously is certainly a highlight.

### **6. A piece of advice you would give someone who is new in the thoroughbred industry**

If you can, start out with someone who possesses similar motivations, ethics and synergies as you. Work hard and honestly, don't be afraid to get things wrong and ask when you need.

## Another beautiful Noverre foal





Noverre, our brilliant G1-winning son of Savabeel, is stamping his foals with quality and looks. This impressive filly is out of the four-time winning Pins mare Frankly, making her a half-sister to dual-Listed winner Ocean Beyond!

## Skew Wiff in top order for Australia



G1-winning Savabeel mare, Skew Wiff (ex Starvoia) enjoyed a quiet exhibition gallop between races at Matamata Racecourse on Wednesday afternoon in preparation for her G2 Rose of Kingston Stakes assignment at Flemington next month. We are very excited for the future of this mare.

[Read more](#)

## Some impressive WS winners from this week

### Savabeel

Allan Sharrock tipped **Savabeel** mare, **Ideal** (ex **I Do**) as his best winning chance for last Saturday afternoon and his judgement proved right on the money.

[Read more](#)

WS-bred son of **Savabeel**, **Sir Albert** (ex **Diana Dors**) produced an impressive performance at Riccarton Park last Saturday afternoon to double his winning tally for Terri Rae.

[Read more](#)

**Spaltet** (ex **Splits**), WS-bred son of **Savabeel**, returned to winning ways with a fast-finishing run for Bjorn Baker at Warwick Farm on Wednesday afternoon under Nash Rawiller.

“We were very confident he would run well, his last two efforts had been really good.” - Luke Hilton.

[Read more](#)

## Ardrossan

**Ardrossan** scored at Matamata racecourse. WS-bred 3YO colt, **Cannon Hill** (ex **Vanilla Essence**) charged home to maiden success for trainer, Tony Pike. He was a \$150k Karaka buy for Tony & we're thrilled to have retained a share in him. Well done to our fellow connections!

[Read more](#)

## Tivaci

WS-bred son of **Tivaci**, **Popsagoosey** (ex **Common Courtesy**) broke his maiden under Jonathan Riddell for Lisa Latta. Initially a Karaka National Weanling Sale grad, his trainer secured him at the R2R sale for \$70k from Cheltenham Stables. Congratulations to all!

[Read more](#)

## WS trifector

WS stallions trifecta at Doomben!

- 1 🐎 Kureder (Ocean Park)
- 2 🐎 Savileo (Savabeel)
- 3 🐎 Sacred Feeling (Sacred Falls)

**Ocean Park's** son **Kureder** (ex **Charmeuse**) stayed on strongly under Damien Thornton for Chris Waller. Bred by Kevin Hickman, he was a \$380k Karaka buy for Guy Mulcaster and CWR. Well done to all involved.





Attempting to make sense of our Thoroughbred Sport in little more than two paragraphs is more often than not going to require a little plagiarism. After all, even though the eleven of you accept my opinions to be unwaveringly correct, I need to shore up my knowledge frequently, mainly as a result of age-induced amnesia.

So today, I confess to being attracted to the recent piece by Jamie Walter of Proven Bloodstock. Now I haven't told Jamie of my intent, and I doubt he will ever know, not being one of the eleven. Anyway, his views are not exclusive and frequently debated.

His subject, the expected early performances of our two-year-olds, whilst he doesn't directly say it shouldn't happen, he uses results based on information.

As you are aware, I have been around a long time, I have seen more than I am going to see, my initial involvement with horses was before the days of farm bikes, an acquaintance of my father retired a trotter which having only ridden push bikes in Lower Hutt became my transportation around the rolling country of Taranui, my first farm. Wexford Chief carrying stock saddle, and me, we learnt together how to muster both the modest numbers of sheep and cattle that I farmed. I sparred a number of fences to avoid the opening gates. We were an ungainly pair, a retired trotter, stock saddle and me!

I loved it, not sure he did, and we were not aspiring to collect any ribbons at the local shows. However, I had a cousin who was winning ribbons, encouraged by his father, who like so many, lived in their progeny's reflected glory. For all that the father, my uncle, loved and cared for their horses. With my equestrian skills confined to the farm, he could have left me to my own devices, but his concern for the horse, which outweighed his concern for me, meant he regularly would turn up, each time with a pearl of wisdom about the horse. Nutrition, feet, grooming, I couldn't get off the hook, but he drummed into me a horse could not be considered mature until the age of seven.

Now clearly, there are a number of seven-year-olds still racing, a handful, competitive on the flat but most over the jumps. Obviously, I am not advocating that we spend six years preparing them for the rigours of racing, but it does beg the question, is pre-Christmas trialling and racing an ideal start to the young athlete's future? We are encouraged to get them up and going, after all, the pre-Christmas stakes are juicy, but the early autumn races are enough to sacrifice a lot of our future prospects for the immediate gratification of not only stakes but the frenzied competition for a colts semen.

Like Proven, a Golden Slipper in the trophy cabinet would be acceptable, the prize money followed by the syndication would not only be part of history but encourage me to purchase increasingly expensive yearlings for the rest of my life, attempting to repeat the result.

We, at Waikato race predominantly fillies with a view of replenishing our broodmare band. You note we race very few two-year-olds. Obviously, fillies are not the lottery ticket a colt can be; also, there is little emphasis on two year old racing in NZ. We have the two Group One races and the fillies Matamata Breeders Stakes, these races we would be delighted to add to the trophy cabinet, we like our fillies to have a start prior to the winter so they are prepared for the spring racing. This may change if we were based in Australia, but that would require the upending of our broodmare band and, more importantly, our sire selection.

No one is right in this debate, unless you relate the outcome to the welfare of the horse. Prior to the emphasis on so-called Colonial bred then the aspiration was to aim your gelding through the classics onto the cups. Either way, it's exciting, as a commercial breeder, we are now confronted with a two-tiered market, you know, hook into an early maturing sort, if you want a cup runner pop across to Europe (buy a bumper).

It might surprise you to know there were only three colts that were successful at Group One level last year. I do have a small share in a colt who apparently is burdened by the two-stone impediment that without he may race for years. A partner was reluctant to go along with this change when shown the odds succumbed.

I started this corner with a seven-year-old gelding chasing sheep, I traversed the choices we are confronted with, in the end, it is, as always, the horse that matters, and regardless of our aspirations, we will not beat nature, we might stuff it up though.

Cheers

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