

Tiger roars to launch young WA breeders into spotlight

BY ALEX WILTSHIRE | @ANZ_NEWS

Success in the commercial breeding, and racing game more generally, relies heavily on judgement. The judgement to purchase the right stock; the judgement to go to the right stallion; the judgement to go to the right sale.

To have bestowed the accolade of 'being a good judge' is probably the best compliment that can be paid to a breeder or buyer of bloodstock.

And the outstanding victory for Tiger Of Malay (2 c Extreme Choice - Sambar by More Than Ready) in yesterday's BRC Sires' Produce (Gr 2, 1400m) is the culmination of outstanding judgement from two young and fresh participants to the commercial breeding scene.

Under the banner of Ruby Racing and Breeding, based at Kojarena, 30 kilometres east of Geraldton in WA, Jaime O'Bree and her brother, Daniel, bred Tiger Of Malay, the high-class juvenile who emphatically broke through at stakes level at Eagle Farm yesterday, in a result which they hope will propel their fledgling operation to the forefront of the vendor list at yearling sales to come.

"We always knew he had something, but he just needed a bit of a go at it," Jaime O'Bree told ANZ Bloodstock News yesterday. "The last few starts he's been quite unlucky and it's just a fantastic result today.

"Tiger himself, he was a quality horse from the very beginning. He had the strength and athleticism about him and I think that's what stood out for the buyers in the Easter Sale."

Another aspect to successful breeding is courage. And just a few years ago the siblings, now aged 24 and 27, took the plunge to inject some impetus into their parents' farm, which was purchased in 2006 and played home to hobbyist breeding in the years since. However, attention has been turned to a commercial focus, and Tiger Of Malay has sent them off to



Jaime O'Bree and her brother Dan (sixth and fifth from right) with Tiger Of Malay

MICHAEL MCINALLY

a roaring start.

"Ruby Racing has been a bit of a family business. Between myself and my brother, Daniel, it has been a bit of a family hobby with the racing side, but we've kind of dived into the breeding side of things and we've just recently started to get a bit of a broodmare band together and we just hope we can start producing a few quality horses like Tiger," said O'Bree, the younger of the siblings.

"(Our parents) were moving out of the country and we hadn't started really developing anything at that point and it's gone on from a family tradition and we've carried it on a little bit further and a bit deeper."

Tiger Of Malay is out of the winning More Than Ready (Southern Halo) mare Sambar who, with Tiger Of Malay her third stakes winner from five named foals since her purchase by Ruby Racing and Breeding in 2016, is the first tick in the box for the judgement category.

Shortly after her purchase, first foal Samovare (Savabeel) claimed Group 3 honours in the WA Champions Fillies Stakes (1600m) at Ascot and in 2019 Samizdat (Not A Single Doubt) won the Magic Millions WA 3YO Trophy (RL, 1200m) at Pinjarra, before winning the Asian Beau Stakes (Gr 3, 1400m) ahead of Regal

Power (Pierro) and the Scenic Blast (Listed, 1200m) in January this year.

"Sambar has been fantastic and it kickstarted what we wanted to do and she's led the way in that," said O'Bree.

"Sambar came to us after a bit of a dispersal by Amelia Park and we did like her pedigree. A bit of a strong mare and we definitely liked her. When we bought her Samidzat was on the ground as a weanling and she was dry at the time.

"Samovare hadn't come up yet. So we bought her and when she was getting in foal that season Samovare came out and won a Group 3 that season and it just kind of followed from there.

"We definitely paid less than what she was worth!"

Next, came the judgement to go to the right stallion. The success of the first crop of Golden Slipper (Gr 1, 1200m)-winning stallion Extreme Choice (Not A Single Doubt) is probably beyond what anyone could have foreseen. However, Daniel's expertise in pedigrees and the early success of the mare, paved the way for Sambar to head east for a covering by what is now, arguably, one of the Hunter's most sought-after sires.

“Daniel is behind the breeding of it, with the pedigrees, and he was certain that Extreme Choice had performed well enough as a racehorse and we thought it was a good suit,” said O’Bree.

“Daniel was very happy with it and mum (Bridie O’Bree) agreed, so we went that way and he was the perfect type, in my eyes, for the mare.”

The Inglis Easter Sale beckoned, a sale that was favoured over the earlier Magic Millions auction in the belief that Tiger Of Malay would show dramatic improvement over the months between the two sales. And, despite the onset of Covid, O’Bree stuck to her conviction in selling the colt at Easter, and was rewarded with Newgate Farm and China Horse Club purchasing the colt for \$255,000.

“Our decision for Easter was that Sambar’s progeny tend to do better with time and they tend to mature over a bit more time,” explained O’Bree. “We were really happy with how everything was going from January into Easter but obviously Covid happened and it was a little bit of a mess but we still got a good result with Tiger Of Malay.

“We were also expecting Samidzat to come out a little bit too to update the pedigree, so just everything matched to go to Easter, but they’re definitely horses that need a bit more time.”

Jaime O’Bree retained a share in her prized colt and a debut win in the Kirkham Plate (1000m) followed by a subsequent runner-up effort in the Pago Pago Stakes (Gr 3, 1200m) saw Tiger Of Malay become a fixture throughout the autumn two-year-old calendar.

A decision to bypass the Golden Slipper by trainers Richard and Michael Freedman, resulted in a seventh placing in the ATC Sires’ Produce Stakes (Gr 1, 1400m), however, Tiger came of age at ‘The Farm’ to become Extreme Choice’s third individual stakes winner, beating Converge (Frankel) and Port Louis (Maurice) in a close finish.



Tiger Of Malay

MICHAEL MCINALLY

“We did believe in him from the start, he was just too much of a nice horse, and the progeny, what reports we were getting back, is that they were genuine horses in racing,” O’Bree continued.

“In the few starts that Tiger had we were very happy, he tried his hardest every start but he just wasn’t lucky and just today he’s performed exactly what we thought he would and it’s a great result.”

Not resting on their laurels, the O’Brees invested at both the Magic Millions National Broodmare Sale and the Inglis Australian Broodmare Sale, securing Maia Nebula (Bernardini) for \$55,000 in foal to Astern (Medgalia D’Oro) this week, and Bombay (Encosta De Lago) for \$30,000 in Sydney.

“We ended up with the mare we actually wanted. We bought her from Godolphin, she’s a Bernardini mare in foal to Astern and the cross is running at 17 per cent stakes winners, it is a beautiful cross and we do have a bit of faith in Astern,” said O’Bree.

“Initially, we had two or three mares we were breeding with and we’ve pushed it on and we’ve got seven or eight going to stud this year. There’s a few older mares that will probably retire at the end of it, but we really want to push forward with a few younger mares and see how we go with it.”

Since 2020 Ruby Racing and Breeding have consigned at the Perth Magic Millions Sale, selling a Playing God (Blackfriars) colt for \$130,000 this year, and with judgement, courage and, of course, a little bit of luck, O’Bree hopes they can become recognised as leading vendors at their home sale.

“Our ambition is to keep producing horses like Tiger, but we’d love a reputation that we produce consistent, genuine Saturday horses, that would be an amazing achievement for us,” she said.

“Getting involved in the breeding industry, let alone producing quality horses, is just something else, and we’re very proud of the start that we’ve had.”

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