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his successor. However, Ameeta was more inclined towards education and spirituality. The younger daughters, Radhika and Devika, were not in a position to step up. Having reached a stage where he did not need to work, Pradeep even considered closing down the business. However, a hard-hitting conversation with Ameeta in 1990 changed everything. She agreed to join the farm, fuelling the realization of her own dreams through the business.

Ameeta's decision to join the stud farm gave Major Mehra fresh impetus. While she went off to the Irish National Stud in Ireland and then to Kentucky in the USA for intensive training, Major Mehra went on to buy, in 1992, one of the best bloodlines in the world – a son of the legendary Northern Dancer

▼ Pradeep Mehra dropping his daughter off at the Irish National Stud, County Kildare, Ireland in 1991



“There were very few people who knew more about horses than Pradeep did.”

BEZAN CHENYO, VETERAN TRAINER

called Razeen. In his very first crop, Razeen proved his lineage by siring seven individual Classic winners. This lot included Indictment, the winner of the Indian Derby, Group 1 (1997). Razeen was subsequently crowned Champion Sire six times. A year later, Major Mehra bought Steinbeck, a son of the Champion Sire Mr. Prospector, whose best filly, Running Flame, won the Indian Invitation Cup in 1999, bringing Steinbeck's total tally to 20 Classic winners. The number of broodmares at the stud rose to around 85.



▲ Ameeta learning the ropes from her father at various racecourses

From 1992 to 2000, Major Mehra spent considerable time and effort teaching Ameeta the art of breeding, management, and selling. She would accompany him to various racecourses around the country, learning and observing all the time. Time in flight would be used to set mathematical sums and percentages to brush up her selling skills. In true Indian tradition, she learnt the art and science of breeding at the feet of a master. Major Mehra was not only Ameeta's father and her boss but also her guru.

Major Pradeep Mehra strode the Indian racing and breeding scene like a colossus. The Turf Authorities of India acknowledged

► Major P.K. Mehra receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997 from the Turf Authorities of India

his tremendous contribution through the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Pradeep Mehra attributed his success to his great expertise on horses, which he had picked up in his polo days and built upon since, and to good farm management. He introduced breeding practices that were till then not common at stud farms. These included providing facilities such as open paddocks of 8-10 acres for horses to run, gallop, and play with each other and be close to nature.

One of the rare breeders who was a horseman first, Major Mehra understood horses. For him, instinct counted for a lot. In an interview to *BusinessWorld* in 1983, he said, "I get vibrations about horses. When Nelston ran, I got foot vibrations and sure enough he won though he was least expected to."

S. Padmanabhan recalls a summer afternoon when the yearlings were being paired off and sent into the barn away from the heat. Noticing that one of the fillies was going crazy, Major Mehra asked if she had been paired with the right companion. The vet was sure that she had the right companion and said that this was just the way she was. Not satisfied, Pradeep Mehra ordered that all the foals be put back in the paddock and paired them off himself. The filly calmed down immediately with her new companion, who was her paddock friend.

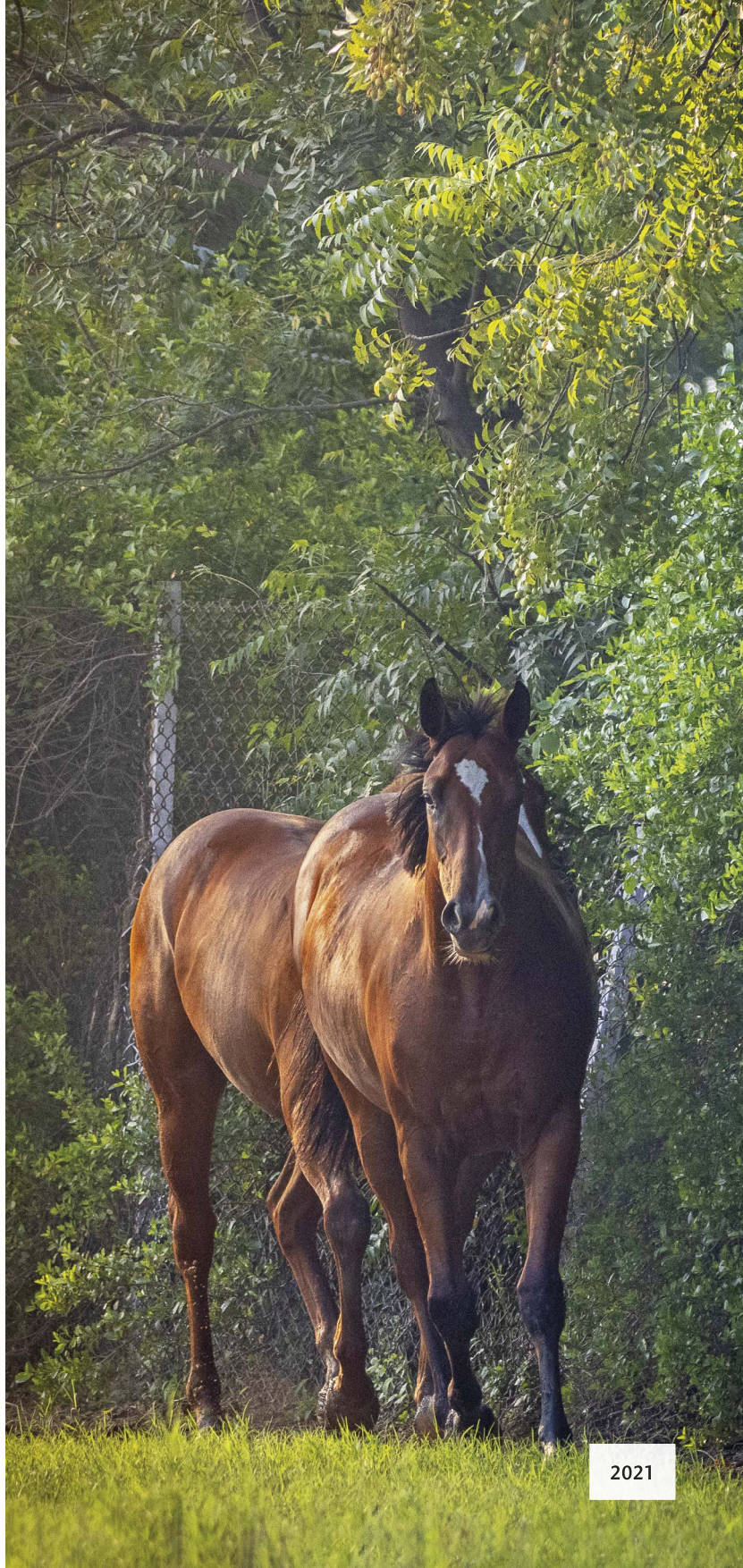


Major Mehra also had an uncanny knack when it came to selecting a stallion or reading a trend in the racing world. This was clear in his choice of stallions, Grey Gaston being a prime example, and also in introducing the element of speed into horse racing in India when all other buyers were focused on buying stayers. He knew when to change with the times.

Having an exceptional trainer in Rashid Byramji was, of course, a big advantage for him, but Pradeep Mehra was also good with

people. Anyone who showed the slightest interest in horses or in what he was doing – whether big spenders, regular buyers, first-time buyers, young or old – was welcomed by him to visit the farm and view the horses. He would give everybody full attention. His outstanding quality as a hands-on person who led from the front – to the extent of accompanying horses on planes from London to India, or being present when they were moved to or from the railway station to race at Mumbai or Bengaluru (earlier

Usha Stud Yearlings



Revelation

★ The first filly to win the Indian Derby and the Indian Turf Invitation Cup.



Born 5 June 1980 (second foal)
Bred by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Khatau,
M/s. C. M. & K. C. Khatau, and Mrs. Veena Mehra
Bred at Usha Stud, Carterpuri, Haryana

RACING RECORD

Won six races (1000 m. to 2400 m.) from nine starts at 3 and 4 and placed thrice, earning INR 17,27,427. Wins include the Indian Derby, Indian Turf Invitation Cup - NTR, Indian Oaks, Golconda 1000 Guineas, Gen. Rajendrasinghji Cup, and placed third in Pune Derby. She was never out of the first three in any of her races.

Finally, 16 years after Fair Haven, a filly won the Indian Derby once again. Fair Haven was unfortunate to meet with an accident that prevented her from contesting the Invitation Cup, but Revelation won both the races.

Born on 5 June, Revelation was a late foal and that is, perhaps, the reason why the Khataus, her breeders, decided not to race with her. Revelation began and ended her racing career in a span of just 11 months during which she raced at four centres and won at all of them. She made her debut at Bombay and won easily by two lengths but had to survive an objection. During the monsoon season at Pune she raced four times, winning the General Rajendrasinhji Cup – a good pointer in those days – but placed in the inaugural Pune Derby. In her second



AT A GLANCE: 1985 INDIAN DERBY | BOMBAY, 3 FEBRUARY, SUNDAY

1. **REVELATION** (P. Shroff) (7/2, fav) (gr f Grey Gaston* – Monica by Prince Pradeep)
Owners Mrs. Zeenia S. Lawyer, Mrs. Bakhtawar B. Chenoy, Major P.K. Mehra, and the Estate of the late Mr. N.M. Irani **Trainer** Bezan Chenoy
2. Eminence (M.J. Kinane) (5/1) (ch f Grey Gaston* – Tina's Way [GB] by Palestine)
3. Prudential Champ (Aslam Kader) (4/1) (b f Malvado [CAN] – Taletta* by Taj Dewan)
4. Step By Step (J. Lowe) (15/1) (gr c Simead* or Mighty Sparrow* – Amarantha by Paddykin*)

Also ran Scintillating (D. Parnell), Prima Facie (R. Corner), Renowned (V. Shinde), Alphabatium (P. Cook), Midori (E. Johnson), Namak Halal (Warren Singh), Aeolus (R. Guest), Adrinello (A. Barclay), Magnum Power (J.E. Pereira), Concordant (M. Shafiq), Paper King (Saroop Singh), and Party Hit (R. Fox). 16 ran.

Verdict 6, 1½, 8 **Time** 2.33.9

year's racing, she was unbeaten in four starts, winning four Classics.
Her trainer Bezan Chenoy took the unusual step of sending her to Malakpet for the Golconda 1000 Guineas. He may have been forced to do so since Revelation's owners had another very good filly, Eminence, and an early clash was to be avoided. It could not be postponed for long, though, and the two fillies took each other on in the Indian Oaks where Kinane rode the grey and won easily. Revelation, with Shroff as her jockey, then won the Indian Derby and Invitation Cup without any alarms. After the 50 to 1 no

hoper, Magnum Power had led till they approached the final turn, when Shroff gave Revelation her head and she sauntered home by six lengths, the longest winning margin registered by a filly in the Derby till then.
After the Derby, Revelation travelled by float to Calcutta for the Invitation Cup. The float took five days to reach and the filly had lost about 35 pounds when she entered her stall at Hastings. Chenoy did not hustle the filly. He put greater emphasis on getting her back to her normal self and worked her only lightly. That preparation was spot on because Revelation won the Invitation Cup,



Revelation (P. Shroff up) led by trainer Bezan Chenoy (left) and part owner Major P.K. Mehra (right)

And now... members of the international “chorus” pay their respects

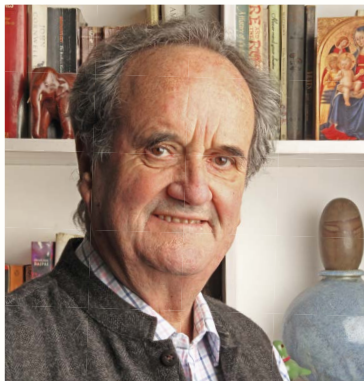


EDWARD JOHN BECKETT, 5TH BARON GRIMTHORPE

conducted business with Major Mehra on behalf of the British Bloodstock Authority (B.B.A). He was racing manager to Prince Khalid Abdulla during the heyday of Frankel, highest-rated thoroughbred ever. Teddy recalls his association with Ameeta and her father.

“Pradeep’s no-nonsense approach was passed on to Ameeta. And, of course, a woman in man’s world means that bit more in India. When I travelled to India, Usha and Poonawallas were the significant players. Still are. Pradeep was a man who got things done; he knew what broodmares would be suited to his stud, knew how to feed them, and passed on these crafts to Ameeta. She was incredibly bright and followed her parent’s example. Those who tried to undermine her quickly came to understand how much more they needed her than she, them.

I love talking about my friends and it’s a privilege to talk of and with Ameeta.”



SIR MARK TULLY KBE

brought India into British homes with his peerless and unique broadcasts for the BBC over twenty years as Bureau Chief in Delhi, where he still resides. Sir Mark was born in Calcutta where, like Ameeta, he was taught to ride at the same time as he learned to walk. He is interested in racing and delights in his visits to Usha though his friendship with Ameeta stems from their time together as fellow members on the Board of Auroville.

“Ameeta achieves her goals in racing, as in spiritual matters, simply by the intensity of her commitment, without dividing her loyalty or attention. She puts everything into her life. People tend to be sniffy about racing in India but almost single-handedly she lifts its profile with her flair with horses, which she obviously loves. Her journey with them is far from over.”



CATHY GRASSICK

took on the mantle from her father, the late Brian Grassick whose Kildare Bloodstock Agency formed a great, and personal, partnership first with Pradeep Mehra and then with Ameeta. Brian was responsible for effecting the purchase of Razeen.

“I have been so lucky to work in concert with Ameeta Mehra buying so many successful mares and stallions. Just as my late father and Ameeta’s found common ground and a deep relationship, it has been such a special legacy for their daughters to inherit the passion and knowledge of two giants of the bloodstock industry. The fruits of this successful legacy and of our mutual understanding have resulted in the acquisition of stallions such as Multidimensional and Speaking of Which and mares such as Exquisite, dam of Smashing; Khalila, dam of Miracle; and Dhawiah, dam of Manifold and Multifaceted. I have many fond memories of times spent when our families met socially, both in Ireland and India, and I wish Ameeta Mehra and Usha Stud nothing but success for generations of champions yet to come.”

KIRSTEN RAUSING

is owner-breeder of an array of champions, not least the latest winner of the world’s most prestigious race, the Prix de l’Arc de Triomphe, with her home-bred mare Alpinista. Miss Rausing is chairperson of the International Thoroughbred Breeders Federation, which is where she and Ameeta first met. It would be churlish to call her Europe’s Ameeta Mehra or vice versa. The fact is both women bestride their sport on different continents but with similar philosophies and unique understanding of the horse.

“Ameeta Mehra and Usha Stud are at the pinnacle of achievement in Indian racing and breeding and I am delighted to congratulate them on yet another record-breaking year. I first met Ameeta at an International Breeders’ Meeting, many years ago. We have been friends and kept in contact ever since. Her tremendous achievement as a breeder in India has greatly contributed to the progress of Indian racing in general. I am one of many who admire her fierce ambition, professionalism, and extensive knowledge of thoroughbred breeding, factors which have combined to produce Usha’s marvellous success.

As we know, Ameeta’s achievements in the thoroughbred industry have been reached in conjunction with her spiritual interests and the establishment of the research centre for the growth of consciousness called The Gnostic Centre and L’avenir; a marvellous accomplishment to combine two seemingly disparate projects. I salute Ameeta and her team at Usha and wish them many more future successes, in India and perhaps also at an international level.”



THE HON. HARRY HERBERT

is director of the family Highclere Stud, which has produced Classic winners and is run by his sister Caroline and her husband John Warren, King Charles’s racing manager. Harry Herbert conceived the premium ownership syndicate, Highclere Thoroughbred Racing whose latest champion was the 2022 1000 Guineas heroine Cachet. Here, he recalls his own “unforgettable trip” to Usha.

“I have such fond and happy memories of Ameeta’s beautiful farm. The invitation by Ameeta Mehra was the highlight of my visit to India for the 2016 Asian Racing Conference in Mumbai. Naturally I compared the organization and atmosphere of Usha with our family stud at Highclere and I concluded that here was a world class operation – we could have been twinned! I started the day with a meditation in the Gnostic Centre – and then my breath was taken away by the stunning parade of stallions, mares, and offspring – transporting me to our own parades back home. Surely some, at least, of these remarkable youngsters would hold their own on an international stage? What a historic stud farm and what a remarkable record of continued breeding success over so many years. I would like to congratulate Ameeta on Usha’s Golden Jubilee and wish her ever more success in the years ahead.”





Champion Sire
Speaking of Which



“Horses hear intention, they are sensitive to the human emotion, and mirror our true self.”

AMEETA MEHRA

Champion Sire
Multidimensional