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Great start for a new name

VICTORIOUS Forever, renamed after the merger of Victorious Racing and KHK Racing, is off and running, and September 26th is a date they will remember.

Under their new banner, they had their first stakes winner, and quickly made it a stakes double. Simon and Ed Crisford sent out Zanthos (Sioux Nation) to win the Group 2 Rockfel Stakes for two-year-olds at Newmarket, while George Scott followed up with the older Phantom Flight (Siyouni) in the Listed Diamond Stakes at Dundalk.

Both stakes winners are breeze-up graduates, Mick and Sarah Murphy's Longways selling Phantom Flight for 100,000gns a few years ago, and Zanthos being one of the highlights of this year's Arqana Sale, selling for €1 million from Kildaragh Stud, a massive return on her yearling value of €48,000.

Now a six-year-old, Phantom Flight has won listed races in Ireland, Britain and Bahrain, and placed a number of times at Group 3 level. He may be no world-beater, but he is a most admirable performer. He has shown consistency on the track, winning on turf and the all-weather, and he has seven wins and nine placed finishes in his four seasons racing to date.

Phantom Flight's dam Qushchi (Encosta De Lago), a stakes winner at Saratoga, came on the market last December as a 16-year-old, and Kildaragh Stud owner Peter Kavanagh was tempted, paying 50,000gns for her. She was not in foal, but with two stakes winners to her credit she was obviously worth a punt. Her first foal was Mrs Sippy (Blame), group-placed in England, a listed winner in France and a Grade 2 winner in the USA. Mrs Sippy came close to winning a Grade 1, and was only beaten three-parts of a length by the outstanding Sistercharlie in the Flower Bowl Stakes at Belmont.

Kavanagh will be keeping an eye on the most recent offspring of Qushchi when her son goes under the hammer this week in Book 1. He is a February-foaled colt by Night Of Thunder (Dubawi), offered from Newsells Park, and he is sure to prove popular. His grandam La Persiana (Daylami) won a couple of listed races in England, and she was one of a trio of stakes winners out of La Papagena (Habitat).

If the last name seems familiar, it is probably because her best runner was none other than the European champion juvenile Grand Lodge (Chief's Crown). He won the Group 1 Dewhurst Stakes, and confirmed his status as a leading miler the next year when winning the Group 1 St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot. When the death of Wootton Bassett is fresh in our minds, it is sad to recall that Grand Lodge died after suffering a knee injury when shuttling to Australia. He didn't recover and he was euthanised on Christmas eve in 2003.

Another champion juvenile who descended from La Papagena is English. She was the best filly at two and three in Australia almost a decade ago, and is by the same sire as Phantom Flight's dam, Encosta De Lago (Fairy King).

Zanthos
Cathy Grassick picked up a great bar-

gain when she bought Brioniya (Pivotal) at the 2023 Arqana Breeding Stock Sale for a longtime client of hers and her late father Brian, Ameeta Mehra. She owns Usha Stud near Delhi and has many times been the leading breeder in India.

Brioniya was carrying a colt, born in India, by Zelzal (Sea The Stars), but now the success of the mare's two-year-old makes the purchase look like incredible value indeed. That juvenile Zanthos caused a sensation in the sale ring in May when she sold for €1 million, and now she is a leading classic fancy for 2026 after her victory in the Group 2 Rockfel Stakes. She is the fourth winner for Brioniya.

There is an interesting back story to Brioniya. She won three times, in Poland, but showed that we should never assume their racing is poor, as she then moved to France and was twice runner-up in listed races, at Longchamp and Chantilly. She is now lost to the breeding world in Europe, and hopefully will prove to be a classic producer at Usha Stud.

Brioniya is a daughter of Bahia Breeze (Mister Baileys), a 3,200gns foal and 5,000gns yearling who belied her small value by winning a couple of listed races, while her many placed efforts numbered among them finishing runner-up in a pair of Group 2 races, the Betfred Mile at Sandown and the Prix Jean Romanet at Deauville. She had eight winning progeny, and her daughter Beshayair (Iffraaj) had her best win in the Group 2 Ridgewood Pearl Stakes at the Curragh.

The Sioux Nation (Scat Daddy) success story continues apace. He is one of the most popular sires in the sale ring, and the growing success of his runners has seen his stud fee treble to €30,000 this year from a low in 2021 and 2022. He has a Group 1 winner in Australia, and is on the cusp of one in the northern hemisphere. Six of his sons and daughters have won Group 2 races, the tally of Group 3 winners stands at nine, while his overall tally of stakes winners is 21.

Don't forget that his daughter Shes Perfect was first past the post in the Group 1 Poule d'Essai des Pouliches-French 1000 Guineas this year, but was demoted.



Ameeta Mehra now owns the dam of Zanthos



Zanthos and Oisín Murphy winning the Group 2 BoyleSports Rockfel Stakes \ focusonracing.com

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