



No doubts...

...for leading sales consignor Ted Voute, who voices his opinion on all things bloodstock and sales-related

LEXINGTON in the autumn is always littered with spectacular arrays of colour from the changing trees. This November, the view at the Fasig-Tipton and Keeneland sales was no different.

Since opening the catalogue I was relishing the chance to see 16 Group 1 winners at Fasig-Tipton. I did worry that there could not possibly be that many people who could afford to buy so many animals at one auction, let alone over the two sales, but I did not reckon for Mandy Pope from Florida, who has been buying horses for years but usually more at the \$100,000 level.

She didn't just buy one either and went from Fasig to Keeneland to continue stocking up at the highest level. Because of the Breeders' Cup on the Saturday a handful of fillies were not scheduled to arrive until Sunday afternoon, and hence the day before the first day the grounds were mobbed as it appeared every serious buyer was in Lexington. The Japanese, who have been strong this year, were out in force.

To see that many high-class mares and fillies in one place was an amazing education, and, on the whole, I was surprised how correct each one was – with homebreds it can be quite a different story.

These mares as it turned out, though, were mostly sales horses, bought correct in the first place and purchased for people who only enjoy racing and don't want to get involved with breeding. It was satisfying viewing and the US sales proved that there is economic reasoning buying horses to race with a pay-out in sight at the end of the career.

The owners in the US who get it right buy good yearlings or two-year-olds who have a tremendous outlet, and can make money other other than prize-money. Buying and then selling at that level legitimises their racing stable and the investment.

The top of the market was amazingly strong and, as always when you step into the sales ring with a nice weanling, it was very strong, mostly driven in the US by the racing people out-bidding the pinhookers.

Two freshman sires particularly impressed me: Quality Road and Blame. I would really like to see some Blame offspring race on the turf in Europe – the ones I saw had that "Roberto" look to them.

"Unopened packages" as I call them – fillies straight from the track or mares in foal for the first time – were in demand, but the more foals a mare had had, then quite often the bigger the disappointment in the ring. In many cases there was often no market at all, even though, time and time again, these mares are invariably dams of a stakes winner, it is the same ordinary winners who are the money-makers.

Can we draw similarities to the US and European market in any meaningful way? Probably not, but a cursory glance at the Tattersall's December Breeding Stock catalogue makes me think that, with fewer star lots than in the US, there will be fireworks at the top as the Qatar Royal family continue to buy for the farm in France.

Below this mesmerising level, the "unopened packages" will be strong, but when it comes to selling the perfectly good-producing mare, it might be quite lonely standing in AA and BB boxes. I hope I am wrong! ■

Tattersalls and Osarus form

TATTERSALLS and young French auctioneer Osarus are developing what has been termed “a strategic alliance” in which Tattersalls will provide logistical and personnel support to Osarus

for yearling inspections and auctioneering, as well as acting in an administrative and advisory role.

Osarus, based in the south-west of France, came into existence in 2008 and staged a programme of four sales in 2012.

Emmanuel Viaud, managing director, said: “The strategic alliance between ourselves and Tattersalls is a huge endorsement for Osarus and for the French



Ready for end of t

THE YEAR'S final column sees little change in weather patterns with sweeping clouds dumping rain countrywide.

Migrating birds have long left for warmer climes, but hopefully the meteorologist predictions of a bitterly cold winter will be as wide of the mark as their barbecue summer prophecy.

Frankel dominated the Cartier Awards in much the same way as he has been racing's sunshine over the last three years. Amazingly, Flora Balding, aged two, was able to identify him from the cover of the book that grandfather Ian is reviewing for the *Racing Post*. Auntie Clare will have to guard her position on *Channel 4 Racing*.

Lee Mottershead made a good case for modifying the Cartier Awards to occupy a similar place here as the Eclipse Awards hold in the US. I have long felt that they should take place in January in

order to include the Japan Cup, Melbourne Spring Carnival and Hong Kong International races. Racing needs a single champion in each category and not become like boxing or tennis with multiple and competing championships; though Frankel would still win anyway.

The sales season is gradually drawing to a close with the end-of-term party at Deauville in the second week of December. The spotlight is now on foals and breeding stock.

Keeneland was not as strong as last year when two significant dispersal sales swelled the totals. However, Fasig-Tipton sold the third-highest distaff lot when Havre De Grace made \$10 million. She was bought by Mandy Pope, whose family developed a highly successful retail store business from their base in North Carolina.

In Europe, interest will focus on the 26 stallions with first-season foals. Equiano, Lope De Vega, Makfi, Paco Boy, Rip Van Winkle,