

“There’s an intuitive buzz you get when you see a horse like Roaring Lion”



James Thomas speaks to David Redvers, who recalls sourcing the dual Group 1 hero as a yearling



Roaring Lion (left) storms clear to win the Juddmonte International; (below) David Redvers

Gold and exciting Australian import Zoustar.

“The wonderful thing about the stallions we’ve got is they’re not all from one line,” says Redvers. “That Roaring Lion, Light Spear, Hot Streak and Zoustar are all top-notchers in the field and aren’t by Galileo out of a mare by Galileo massive asset and sometimes I’m really very excited by them.”

And Roaring Lion’s future career is not the only thing that has Redvers excited at the moment. With yearling season about to hit top gear, the opportunity to unearth the next big thing may only be around the corner.

“Behind every stable you open there could be another Roaring Lion,” says Redvers. “And that’s what makes our job fun. These horses cost the most money in the world.”



THE butterfly effect: the principle by which a small change or decision can give rise to huge future events. It is a principle that is evidenced in many walks of life, and is particularly pertinent in the bloodstock world.

The latest example was observed at York on Wednesday when Qatar Racing colour-bearer Roaring Lion dismissed Poet’s Word – officially the second-best horse in the world – with a ruthless and relentless display of galloping to claim the Juddmonte International, his second Group 1 prize of the campaign.

However, despite the seismic performance put in by Roaring Lion, the first step towards that three-and-three-quarter-length demolition job came at the Keeneland sales in Kentucky back in September 2016 when Qatar’s racing manager David Redvers wandered between barns three and four and said: “Can I see lot 127, please?”

In the aftermath of Wednesday’s success, Redvers explained how he and his team picked out the steely grey son of Kitten’s Joy from among the 4,479 lots catalogued at that year’s September Sale.

“He was first spotted by Hannah [Wall, Redvers’ assistant] and as soon as I saw him it was obvious he very much fitted the template of what we look for,” he says.

“There’s an intuitive buzz you get when you see a horse like Roaring Lion, although it’s

pretty rare one that effect on you.

“I’ve always been a fan of the sire but they’ve been hard to buy. They tend to come in all shapes and sizes and aren’t necessarily the most correct, but this horse was the best-looking and best-moving son of the stallion I’ve seen by some way.

“It’s a personal thing buying horses, sometimes you get it right and sometimes you get it wrong, but he just absolutely screamed at all of us.”

One of the difficulties of buying yearlings of such abundant quality is that when they have screamed at you, they have probably screamed at others too, and when rival parties with deep pockets clash things can become expensive very quickly.

So imagine Redvers’ surprise when he found little in the way of competition in the Keeneland ring, with Roaring Lion knocked down in his direction for \$160,000. And while that is by no means a chicken-feed sum in the wider world, the average price during the first session of that year’s September Sale was \$319,730.

“We set our stall out to try to buy him and were stunned we were able to get him for the price we did,” says Redvers. “It amazed me then that there wasn’t more interest in him and it amazes me even more now.”

Although it is Redvers’ name on the docket, he makes no secret that sourcing horses on

behalf of Qatar Racing is a collaborative effort.

“I’ve got a fantastic team on the buying front with Hannah and Peter Molony,” he says. “We scour the sales looking for these sort of horses, so to get him from a very small group we bought that year means we’re at the top of our game. It’s very satisfying for all of us.”

With huge stallion potential secured, thoughts are already turning towards Roaring Lion’s second career.

and to have somebody like Sheikh Fahad to help me achieve it is a wonderful position to be in.”

Whenever the call is made to bring the curtain down on Roaring Lion’s racing career he will add another outcross option to an already diverse roster of stallions at Tweenhills, joining the likes of up-and-comers Charm Spirit, Havana

WHILE Redvers stressed that no decision had been reached

regarding Roaring Lion remaining in training next year, with the final call resting with Sheikh Fahad, he is already brimming with excitement at the prospect of standing such a high-achieving colt at Tweenhills Stud.

“There comes a point where the risk of keeping a horse in training outweighs any of the benefits,” he says. “There’s an equation we’ll have to make as a group, most importantly Sheikh Fahad, as to whether the value derived from winning races at the top level outweighs the downside if something goes wrong.”

“A large part of that is a personal decision and that decision lies with Sheikh Fahad and his brothers.”

Expanding on his plans for Tweenhills, Redvers says: “My ambition is to make Tweenhills one of the top three stallion farms in Europe. That might sound like a crazy ambition but we’re making strides towards it. We’re spending a considerable amount of money on expanding the farm and the team running the show to ensure we can offer a service equal to any of the best farms in the world.

“That’s my lifetime ambition