

# ECHO GAL IN MAGIC MILLIONS CONTENTION

## TOMMY BERRY TO LODGE APPEAL AGAINST HONG KONG SUSPENSION



Echo Gal

SPORTPI

**T**he Gai Waterhouse-trained Echo Gal (Stratum) made an impressive debut at Warwick Farm yesterday, taking out the TAB Rewards Maiden Plate (1000m) by almost four lengths to put herself in the picture for the Magic Millions 2YO Classic (RL, 1200m) on 11 January.

Having opened a 26 chance for the Gold Coast feature on Tuesday morning, Echo Gal was backed down to 7.50 following her winning debut effort, a result that was never in doubt scoring by three and three quarter lengths being eased right down.

Jockey Tommy Berry was taken by the filly's effort and is set to appeal a ten-

meeting suspension meted out to him by stewards in Hong Kong that would rule him out of riding her in the 2,000,000 contest.

Echo Gal was a little slowly away but quickly mustered pace from barrier five to share the lead before settling outside I Am Snippet (I Am Invincible) who crossed from barrier seven to take a clear lead before the home turn. Echo Gal cruised up on straightening and drew right away in the run to the line stopping the clock in an impressive 57.58s for the 1000 metres.

She had to do a bit of work early to cross them and I was pleased with the way she pulled away, Berry said.

I am tipping her last furlong wouldn't have been overly quick because she floated

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with me down the straight.

When she gets a bit of competition, she really goes on. I think she will improve off that.

Because the suspension is based on Hong Kong meetings, Berry will not be able to return to the saddle until 15 January, four days after the Magic Millions Classic is run at the Gold Coast.

I started to put some processes in place today about an appeal, Berry said.

Hopefully I can stay here and have it heard but if I have to go back to Hong Kong I will because I think this filly is definitely worth it.

A delighted Denise Martin of Star Thoroughbreds told ANZ Bloodstock News afterwards: "She is a filly I purchased especially for major clients of Star, a family who live in Malaysia.

They follow racing here very closely and some months ago I told all the members of the family during a visit to Malaysia that the filly could well be the best horse they have owned.

The team at Gai's stables highlighted her ability early and Tommy Berry acknowledged after her barrier trial that she appears to be very talented.

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Echo Gal pictured as a yearling

MAGIC MILLIONS

### Magic Millions here we come

A 145,000 Gold Coast Yearling purchase by Star Thoroughbreds from the Newgate Farm consignment, Echo Gal is the first foal of the Encosta De Lago (Fairy King) mare Pink Siris, a sister to the Hong Kong Vase (Gr 1, 2400m) fourth and Hong Kong Group One winner, Liberator.

Meanwhile, Nordic Empire (Wilander), who is part-owned by BC3 Thoroughbreds (hereafter BC3), remains on target for the Magic Millions 2YO Classic, trainer Mick Price confirmed yesterday.

BC3 only own 15 per cent so the administrators are happy for us to train at the moment and I would think eventually, as an asset of a company that's under administration, that 15 per cent will come on the market at some point and it will be offered to the original owning group first as proper protocol," he said.

But until we get word that we can do that, BC3 own their share.

In other news yesterday relating to BC3 it has been revealed that Inglis yesterday relocated eight horses from the property of Bill Vlahos, chairman of BC3 and head of the troubled punter's club 'The Edge'.

The BC3 entered voluntary administration earlier this week while Vlahos is being sued by one investor in the punter's club.

Inglis chief executive Mark Webster said the horses in which the auction company held a financial interest were moved to "a safe place" due to welfare concerns but clarified they have not been repossessed.

He said BC3 had shown no signs of financial distress when buying horses at sales over recent years and added: This is a case

where a person was involved in other activities that were completely inappropriate. We had no knowledge of Bill's other life.

BC3's most high-profile purchase was the \$5,000,000 half brother to Black Caviar (Bel Esprit) by Redoute's Choice (Danehill), which topped the 2013 Inglis Australian Easter Yearling Sale.

Webster confirmed the colt had not been fully paid for by BC3.

BC3 also has a full sister to the colt, Belle Couture (Redoute's Choice), who won a jump out at Flemington last week in preparation for a planned racetrack debut later this month.

Webster said Inglis would review its business to see if people were able to buy horses too easily under the current structure.

The challenge for the industry is that it depends on a certain number of horses coming through the system every year and if auction houses are doing the role providing credit to buy horses, that needs to be recognised, he said.

We're going to review our procedures to see if we are being too generous.

It has also been revealed some members of the Victoria police are among those caught up in the collapse of the punting club.

Chief Commissioner Ken Lay says the Fraud Squad is now investigating the matter.

This is a dynamic investigation, there's things happening on a daily basis, Lay said, adding it was a complicated investigation that would need untangling.

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