

# EVEREST DIARIES



THIS ISSUE
INTERVIEWS: CLAYTON DOUGLAS | JAMIE WALTER | PETER KEAN
PETER SNOWDEN

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This issue we interview three people that will be leaving a long lasting legacy, trainer Adrian Bott, watches and jewellery retailer as well as the world-renowned master jeweller Nic Cerrone.

We also remember HH Queen Elizabeth II, who had a lifelong passion for horses, was a keen racegoer as well as a successful owner and breeder who enjoyed many notable triumphs.

She attended several race meetings in Australia during her 70-year reign and the Gr.3 Queen Elizabeth Stakes, held every autumn at Flemington is one of Australia's most popular races.

Royal Ascot will be bereft of their most passionate Royal.

Despite not having the budget of some of the giants of the sport such as Irish breeding powerhouse Coolmore Stud or the Maktoum family of Dubai, the British monarch celebrated more than 1800 winners

In October 2021, she was recognised for her decades-long contribution to the sport by being inducted into the British Champions Series Hall of Fame, the first person to gain membership as a "special contributor".

Her racing philosophy was simple, "I enjoy breeding a horse that is faster than other people's."

"To me, that is a gamble from a long way back. I enjoy going racing but I suppose, basically, I love horses, and the thoroughbred epitomises a really good horse to me," she said.

She will be missed.

We hope you enjoy reading this fortnight's issue and look forward to meeting again in two weeks.

Pallavi Sherade

# Editor's Note

# EVEREST DIARIES MAGAZINE



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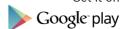
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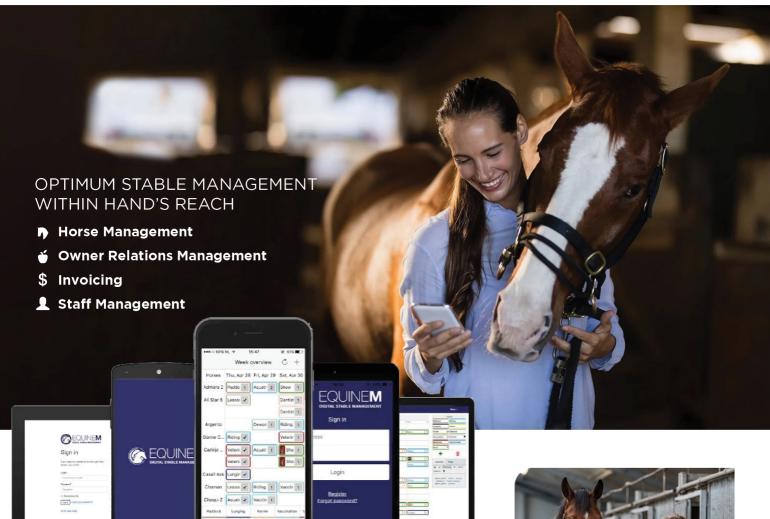
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ER: CLAYTON DOUGLAS WITH THE 2022 EVEREST TROPHY

PHOTO CREDIT: CLAYTON DOUGLAS RACING

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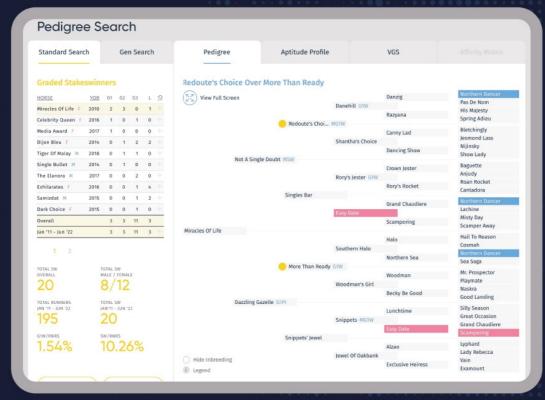
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# CLAYTON DOUGLAS ON GIGA KICK, 'THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK' AFTER BEATING THE PLANET'S FASTEST HORSE

It took something quite extraordinary to beat the force called Nature Strip on Everest day, and Clayton Douglas' Giga Kick delivered in spectacular style.

An uncelebrated trainer who was a former picnic and jumps jockey and his 3YO albeit unbeaten sprinter upstaged one of Australian racing's most powerful stables to take home the A\$15m Everest cup.

All eyes are on him and he's still digesting the surreal reality.

"Unbelievable. To think that we came out on top and beat Nature Strip. It's awesome," said Douglas "And he's still unbeaten now. So, he's on an upward spiral. He might be the new kid on the block but he's only going to get stronger. He will mature and develop further as an older horse. So, it should just keep on getting better."



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It is not enough to have an unbeaten 3YO being selected at the last moment by one of the most successful slot holders in Everest's short history, you need the courage to devise a winning strategy to take on one of the world's most powerful of stables with the world's fastest horse, when the track conditions are less than ideal.

And Clayton Douglas has courage in spades, which is why progressive Group Two winner Giga Kick – a big market drifter – was picked, albeit quite late for the A\$15 million Everest, which his stable has never been considered for previously.

"Obviously, we knew there was plenty of speed and pressure with Nature Strip and Eduardo in the race. Mark Newman's Joyful Fortune, was obviously intended to be forward as well. Private Eye, who ran second, had also taken up a spot a little bit closer than we probably anticipated. "Giga Kick" was just a little bit steady away from the gates and ended up in that sort of third-last position but got into the right running line where he was comfortable.

"He travelled strongly in the run. Craig was able to keep him covered up around the corner, and then obviously present at the right moment with the lightweight.

"We always planned to be strong at the 1200m and not get there too soon," admitted Douglas, "So, it worked out lovely."

With over A\$7 million under his belt, the son of Scissor Kick is not yet headed to the paddock this spring.

"He's back in Melbourne now and seems to have pulled up really well from his run. There are two options for him. He'll either run Saturday week in the Gr.1 Coolmore Stud Stakes for 3YOs or wait another week if we feel like he needs a bit more time after the travel and then will run into the Champions Sprint down the street over 1200 against Nature Strip.

"So, it would be a clash everyone will be wanting to see. We'll just make that call sort of over the weekend and early into next week.

"It's going to be a Mini Everest of Melbourne," smiled Douglas conspiratorially of the bold tactical move he was considering.

In the longer run, Giga Kick, being a relatively young horse, has his card of options stacked really high.

"I've been to Dubai. I've experienced World Cup night and it was an amazing night. He's obviously a straight winner as well. He's won twice down in Australia already. So, the Al Quoz could potentially be a race on the cards for us.



"We can even get in a couple of prep runs in Saudi or Qatar.

"But we just want to get through his first season as a young horse. I'm sure as an older horse, there's no reason to think we can't get him onto the world stage and present him as an Australian horse and an Australian representative.

"We will no doubt aim for the Everest again in 2023," said Clayton. "Obviously it's a massive prize money race. Giga Kick has also proven himself to go the opposite way to what he normally goes. And he's proven himself at 1200 meters in high pressure. So, he's a genuine high-class galloper. And if it works out that he's back in the Everest field next year, and there's no reason to think that we won't be back there, we would be really hard to beat again."

"In the Autumn we hope to aim for races like the TJ Smith, the Sydney Cup and the Lightning Stakes in Melbourne. We have a lot of options and it's a good issue to have at the moment," said Douglas of Giga Kick. "He's a young horse and as long as he stays down and healthy, I'll be happy."

The 27-year-old trainer was impressed with Royal Randwick on Everest day when it was filled to the gills with what is rumoured to be 50,000 spectators.

"It was unbelievable. The atmosphere was amazing. It was one of the biggest crowds there, after a very long time. And the weather was lovely. It was a beautiful day, with not a cloud in the sky. It felt like a massive concert," said Clayton. "And for a young horse, I was very proud of the way Giga Kick coped with that sort of atmosphere. It was the first time he had probably seen that many people and for a young horse to handle itself the way he did, I was very proud. Every horse in that race was of good quality. There was a lot of prize money between the twelve of them. So, it was a very high-pressure race and it was amazing."





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# "HE'S A VERSATILE HORSE" – WALTER LANDS AT THE CRUX OF WHAT MAKES PRIVATE EYE SO SUCCESSFUL

Proven Thoroughbreds' stable star, chosen at the veritable last moment, Private Eye, placed runner-up behind Giga Kick I the A\$15 million Everest, with syndicate principal Jamie Walter hailing him an "amazingly versatile horse" whose ultimate career goals could include both an Everest and a Cox Plate win.

The finest moment of the 5YO son of Al Maher's stellar career was when he overtook the best sprinter on the planet, Nature Strip, in the sixth edition of the Everest. The challengers came over the final 100m however with Giga Kick flying past the favourite, beating the Joe Pride-trained Private Eye by a long neck, a result nobody expected.

"He was awesome. I have always been a big fan of him. To see him sprint at that level. I thought I was the winner there for two strides. I had the big horse covered in front of me and then the 3YO got me late. He was awesome," Private Eye's jockey, Brenton Avdulla said.



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"Nature Strip is quite a horse but I guess he's like all of us. He can have his off days. But his run was still meritorious because he had to work hard from a wide gate and didn't get the control of the tempo that he often does being such a big fast horse. Plus, you know they're not machines. He's been all around the world this year, has barely had a spell and might be looking for a rest," said Walter.

"When you've got a horse like him who's finally learned to conserve his energy, then common sense suggests he's going to have more to give in a finish. Top sprinters can have little breaks in between and they don't need as much work on the track to get them fit in most cases. So maybe Nature Strip will keep going, maybe he'll make a complete liar out of me and win the Champions Sprint. But it wouldn't be the first time a horse has made a fool of me," said Walter of the Everest favourite.

Nature Strip was bidding for back-to-back Everest wins but was forced to sit deep from a wide barrier and when given his cue at the 300m, the chestnut responded to establish a break on his chasers. But it was short-lived.

Although The Everest was robbed of one of its leading contenders when Lost And Running was scratched on race morning, trainer Chris Waller said Nature Strip did not disgrace himself in defeat. "It didn't quite work out the way we wanted it to but at the 50 metres he still looked the winner," Waller said.

Private Eye will be hoping to cement himself as a superstar over the next few weeks.

"The plan all along was to race him in the Champions Mile at Flemington on the last day of the Carnival. So, Private Eye will hopefully progress to that race via the Nature Strip Stakes in a fortnight at Rosehill.

"The only sort of proviso would be that we wouldn't really want to run on a heavy track (10). But then he'll back up from wherever he runs, and a week later go into the Champions Mile," said Walter.

Private Eye has won 9 of his 22 career races, placed runner thrice and landed third place once. The Joseph Pride-trained gelding has won at Group One level and has amassed A\$4,428,060 in career earnings, with his most significant win to date, the A\$1.5 million Epsom Handicap, defeating Aramayo.

"We haven't got down to make any long-term plans. And I guess one of the reasons for that is he's certainly this preparation seems to have gone up a division or, at least improved from the best he displayed previously.

"And I hasten to add, he's so versatile. We didn't expect him to be that competitive at 1200 metres even though he's always raced well fresh and his 1200-metre record reads very impressively. Now it's something like six starts, four wins, and a narrow second in the Everest. But this is a horse that also won a Group One at a mile in the Epsom, unluckily beaten over 1400 in the Stradbroke and ran fifth in the MacKinnon 12 months ago over 2000m. So, we're a bit spoilt for choice.

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"It's merely a question of where we want to go with him and what we want to set him for and that's the domain of the trainer.

"We could also keep him fresh and go to the Champions Sprint on the same day as the Champions Mile. So, there's that to consider as well," said Walter with a clear understanding of what he was looking at in Private Eye.

A race that has Jamie Walter going is the great Australian 2000m Gr.1 Cox Plate.

"I know Joe would like to win a Cox Plate. So would I and the owners. This is a horse who has clearly shown that he's very competitive over 1200. If he can stretch that to 2000 there's no reason that the Cox Plate could not become a realistic target," he said.

With the Everest behind everyone, the next race that has Walter excited is the Gr.1 Melbourne Cup, with his other star, Stockman in the frame. We are very excited about him."

"He's kind of been advantaged by the fact that we've only had three good tracks in Sydney in the last 12 months. An extraordinary statistic that's probably helped him.

"A lot of heavy track middle distance staying horses are advantaged because the superior turn of foot that some of their rivals have, is nullified on really wet ground. Also, the longer the race, I find the less significant the turn of foot. Stockman seems to be enjoying getting out in distance.





"His run in the Metropolitan was very good but in the Sydney Cup, he was in a quagmire when he drew badly and was back in the field and never really got into it. I think he deserves another chance in the Melbourne Cup. And I will say in my living memory, this is the weakest Melbourne Cup I've ever seen.

"Unless there's an overseas visiting horse that settles in beautifully and is just too classy for our stayers, I think this year represents real opportunity and Stockman is coming solid as they say at the right time," said Walter.

The seasoned horseman delves deeper into the issues currently plaguing the industry which have unexpectedly impacted Australia's 'race that stops the nation', "Our breeding industry's preoccupation with Sprint racing has contributed to that (a lack-lustre Melbourne Cup field).

"In the last 12 to 15 years is our leading staying races either just dominated by imports that have been purchased to race after years put, or horses trained overseas who come here specifically to compete in certain races. I think by the about three or four years ago, something like 80 or 90% of the Melbourne Cup field was imported.

"But I also think even amongst the horses that have been purchased in the last 12 months or last couple of years to compete here, aren't as good this year from what I've seen so that represents opportunity and Stockman is a fully mature horse now," he said.

With the yearling sales just around the corner, Walter expounds on the strategy that he adheres to and which has kept him in good stead.

"I'm a pretty prolific buyer at yearling sales during the year. We buy generally between 30 and 40 horses which takes a bit of syndicating and haven't bought an import yet.

"I'll tell you one thing that's changing here in Australia and that's probably because our obsession with precocious speed is going to be overheated. The Cox Plate is becoming a stallion-making race.

"So, I'm rather hoping for a more balanced Australian racing landscape that the Cox Plate does become as sought after a race as the Golden Slipper, because a lot of Australian owners like me want to win races like that and want to win Melbourne Cups.

"So, it would be great if Australian breeding could start producing middle-distance horses capable of winning Cox Plates," said Walter with finality.



## THINGS WITH EXCITING MAZU

Mazu is the first horse to have been locked into a two-year Everest deal, by the Star and Arrowfield slot, and Snowden is confident that Mazu will only get better in 2023 after his third place in the 2022 Everest this year.

The dual Everest-winning trainer has high hopes for the well-regarded Mazu.

"He ran very well and we expect him to only get better over the next twelve months."

The 4YO son of Japanese stallion Maurice, has amassed over A\$3.3 million in career earnings. The Triple-Crown owned entire will make his next start in the Nature Strip Stakes over 1300 meters.

Mazu, ridden by Sam Clipperton scored his most significant win to date, in the Gr.1 Doomben 10,000, defeating Godolphin's star Paulele.



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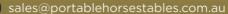
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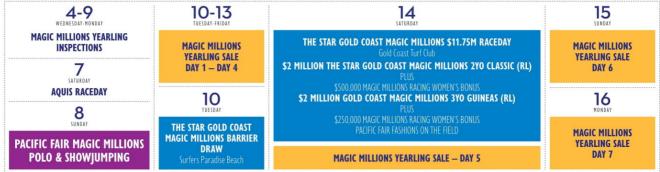


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Snowden, who trains in partnership with his son Paul, is chasing a third win in The Everest after the dual triumphs of Redzel in 2017-18.

There is reason to draw comparisons between Redzel and Mazu as both Team Snowden sprinters are raced by Michael and Chris Ward of Triple Crown fame and came into The Everest off the back of breakthrough Group One wins in the Doomben 10,000 during the Brisbane winter carnival.

Mazu returned this spring for a close fifth to Nature Strip in The Shorts before being nosed out by Lost And Running in a thriller for the Premiere Stakes.

Prior to the Everest, Snowden had conceded that if anything it would be the 4YO's relative inexperience – The Everest will be just his 14th career start – would be significant a concern.

Going for back-to-back wins in the world's richest race on turf, Nature Strip couldn't match Giga Kick in the dying stages before finishing fourth in a result no one saw coming. Private Eye was momentarily hailed the winner before finishing second with Mazu taking the minor placing – just ahead of Nature Strip.

"Mazu will follow a similar pattern as this year, with a race in the Brisbane Winter Carnival again followed by the lead races for the Everest in 2023, like The Shorts and the Premier Stakes," said the veteran trainer of future plans.

Snowden said Mazu has "come a long way in a hurry" since the gelding won a benchmark 75 sprint to start his dominant, unbeaten five-race autumn campaign last year.

In a unique deal, John Messara, representing joint slot-holders Arrowfield and The Star, has such confidence in Mazu's potential he reached a long-term agreement with the gelding's connections for successive The Everests.

"He's the one to beat in The Everest next year," said Snowden.







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# 'HE'S A CHAMPION REGARDLESS. SO THAT HASN'T CHANGED.' CO-OWNER PETER KEAN ON NATURE STRIP

October in Australia is a time when a racing fan's thoughts turn to the Everest, and for many racing fans that invariably includes a misty-eyed reminiscence of Nature Strip's 2021 Everest win, when, inside the final furlong, Nature Strip was out to a nearly two-length lead, but the winning margin was quickly shortened by a fast-finishing Masked Crusader.

This is legendary stuff all right, in the most intensely concentrated sense of the word.

The only horse ever to win an Everest and a King Stand Stakes, Nature Strip is something truly remarkable; doing it in front of a wild crowd, carrying the weight of Australian Dollars from around the world, was something else entirely. Starting from a wide gate, Nature Strip began as the shortest-priced favourite in the Everest's short history but Giga Kick denied the wonder horse to win the A\$15 million 2022 Everest at Randwick.

Going for back-to-back wins in the world's richest race on turf, Nature Strip couldn't match Giga Kick in the dying stages before finishing fourth in a result no one saw coming. Private Eye was momentarily hailed the winner before finishing second with Mazu taking the minor placing – just ahead of Nature Strip.

"He jumped very well but he had drawn the widest gate, number 12. So that can either work as an advantage or a disadvantage. And in this case, it was a disadvantage.

"The ground and the going out was trickier. The going was better inside because the track had been moved out a bit to account for that.

"And so I understand that he probably covered about nine or 10 meters more than most of the others in the race because of coming across and therefore, he got left a bit on his own.

"He showed his normal kick, but in the last 25 meters, the other horses had the better run," said co-owner Peter Kean as he looks back on Nature Strip's last start.

The overhauling of Nature Strip, after his trials and tribulations during the feature, in the last gasps of the most significant yardage in racing reflected his status as the ultimate champion.

"Certainly, we congratulate the first, second, and third horses, they deserved their position on the day, and albeit we were a bit disappointed. But we know he'll come again. He's a champion regardless. So that hasn't changed," said Kean.

When reflecting on a racing career that retains a living, breathing presence beyond the record books, undeniably there is an acknowledgement of gratitude for the benevolent interventions of the gods of racing fortune that maintained the career of this 8YO long enough for the star to be delivered.

The Australian Racehorse of the Year (2019/20), (2021/22) and the Australian Sprinter of the Year (2019/20), (2020/21), (2021/22) counts his significant wins as The Everest (2021), King's Stand Stakes at Royal Ascot (2022), TJ Smith Stakes (2020, 2021, 2022), Black Caviar Lightning (2021), Concorde Stakes (2021), The Shorts (2022), McEwen Stakes (2018), Rubiton Stakes (2019), The Galaxy (2019), Moir Stakes (2019), Darley Sprint Classic (2019, 2021) and the Challenge Stakes (2020).

It's not about the big things, the ones that sell biographies, but more about the cupped hands of fate that will shape his return to the Everest field from Spring to Spring. A second Everest win will catapult Nature Strip's racetrack earnings from A\$19 million bringing him within sight of Winx's remarkable earnings record of A\$26.45 million.

As legendary trainer Jonjo O'Neill said in an interview with Racing Post, "I was the youngest of four and I remember all my father said to us was 'do what you enjoy doing because if you enjoy it you'll put in that bit extra, and if you don't put in that bit extra you'll never be better than run of the mill'."

Peter Kean and the owners, together with leading trainer Chris Waller are intent on making sure Nature Strip is able to go that extra mile, in a spectacular career he has thoroughly enjoyed.

"He has got two options. And that will be the Nature Strip Stakes on the 29th of October at Randwick or the Darley Sprint at Flemington on the fifth of November," said Kean looking ahead. "One is 1300 at Randwick, and the other is 1200 at Flemington."



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"We've won the Darley Sprint twice. Black Caviar's won it twice as well. I don't think any horse has won it three times. So, these are good options."

Nature Strip's fairytale career has some way to go for the purpose of making a legend. Being a lightly raced entire is sometimes both a blessing and a curse.

"It all depends on the horse. Now he's eight and lightly raced. He only had six races this year. And I think in his career, he's only had 40 races. So, he's very lightly raced for a thoroughbred.

"After the next race this year, he will be spelled and then we will probably aim to come back in February next year.

"We wouldn't disregard Ascot or the Everest again, but it'll all depend on how he goes. He's big. He's strong. He's fresh and he's wiser as he gets older," said Kean. "So, you never know if he could have another year."

Once the race was done, the owners retired to the plush dining room of a Sydney bar. Celebratory cheers and stories of the 2022 Everest race night would have begun to trip off the owners' tongues. Many stories would probably have been highlighted by cliffhanging drama, always offset by the secure knowledge that it all ended well and an assuredness about their sprinter that comes with long-lived success.

"The day was fantastic. I guess we went a bit flat for a while after the race, because in one minute we had the race, and then in the next minute we didn't. Our emotions were high, but we all know that this is racing - you can't win them all...

"We hired out just a small bar in Sydney. And we all met afterward for a few drinks, a meal, and a lot of laughs. Now we're just looking ahead.

"We made sure that we congratulate the winners, the Giga Kick owners. They thoroughly deserve the pride of a place after winning the Everest.

"But if I had to compare, I think we had more 'fun' at Royal Ascot, probably because we won," said Kean recalling the spectacular Kings Stand Stakes win. "It was just so special with 300 years of history at that place.

"But there's nothing taking away the Everest. I mean, you look around Randwick and there's nearly 50,000 there.

"There was so much support when Nature Strip was on the track. It made it a bit hard for us when he didn't win because there was so much support for him," he said.

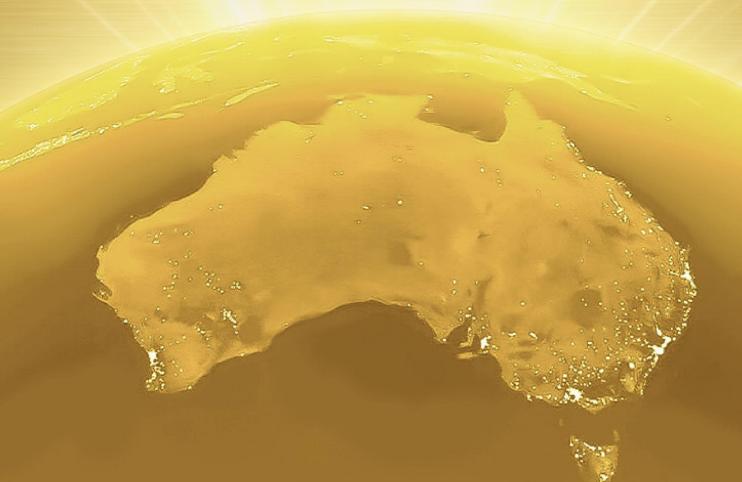
The 8YO seems a long way off from retirement at this point. He's just raring to go again and again although connections, in the interest of his health, plan to settle him down for a bit of a rest after the next race.

One more Everest win from Nature Strip would crown a sensational career, having built a long and distinguished one starting with a few unsuccessful early years, but Peter Kean knows it's the long haul that counts, for racehorses and owners.



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