

AROUND THE STABLES with Garrick Knight

Arna Donnelly

Racing Team

Third Time, an over-sized half-brother to stable star Kango, will have a few more starts hunting a penalty-free win before a brief let up. Consideration will then be given to sending him to Canterbury in a group of "five or six" in the spring. Pacing Hope, Red Rackham, Crusader, Mannion, recent southern arrival Denny (who won last Friday night) and the veterans, New York Minute and Rough And Ready, will continue to race through. Denny's development is encouraging for his new trainer while Mannion just needs a half-decent draw to put his hoof in the till again. Juveniles Little Spike (g Terror To Love) and Shez The One (f Sweet Lou) are due to qualify this week and will probably then head to the races.

Working Up

Naturally, Roy Purdon Memorial winner Kango heads this list. He had three weeks off then 10 days on the water walker but is now back in the barn. Donnelly plans on having him in Canterbury in time to defend his Kaikoura Cup trophy but before that he might trek across the Tasman for his early spring racing. Classy 3yo Jolimont has been back in three weeks and the natural target is the New Zealand Derby at the end of the year. Bad Medicine, Keep It Klassy, Tequila Sunrise (3f What The Hill) and four two-year-olds are also on the way up. Chief among the latter quartet are two Art Major geldings that have already raced and carry high hopes into the back half of the year, Major Major and Le Major. "They both showed quite a bit last time and I expect they'll have improved a lot from their spells," said Donnelly. Rounding out this group is Beta Prepare (c Bettor's Delight), who is a week from the workouts, and The Surfer (g Downbytheseaside).

Spelling

Unfortunately the promising 3yo Scout's Honour has gone amiss and is facing 6-12 months on the sidelines. Also out, but due back soon, are Virginia Clowers, who came a long way in her first racing prep and is earmarked for an Australian campaign in the spring, Mr President, Stars N Dreams and an unnamed Art Major-Youshallnotpass juvenile gelding. Out for a bit longer will be Apple Of My Eye, Cracker Rock (2c Rock N Roll Heaven), Whenyourehavingfun (2f Bettor's Delight), Dragonstone (2f Father Patrick), Collateral Beauty (2f Vincent) and recent qualifier, Mako (2g Downbytheseaside).

Departures

Fairly quiet on this front lately. Blueblood mare Perfect Bet has been retired and sold as a broodmare to Taffy Ltd's Todd Anderson. She had plenty of ability but had ongoing niggles that eventually got the better of her. The qualified but unraced trotter Fadhi has also been retired.

Yearlings

Around about 10 have been broken in by Donnelly's father Brent, a renowned expert in the field, and the first batch have just arrived with her for their second prep. One that is already impressing is Skys Legacy (c Bettor's Delight), a half-brother to Skylou and Sky Major, among others. Also ticking the boxes are Chase Me (c Downbytheseaside), a half-brother to Chase Auckland, and an unnamed filly by Art Major out of Baquero, which Donnelly trained and had huge speed but not the brain to match. The others, mostly from the yearling sales, are Vandyarna (f Sweet Lou), Ragnar Lothbrok (c Art Major), Quicksilva (c What The Hill), Allaboutideals (f Ultimate Machete), Final Change (c Bettor's Delight) and an unnamed Father Patrick colt out of Factor The Odds.

Horse to follow: Major Major