

TONY MORRIS



Pedigree analysis
Silver Frost

THERE was plenty to admire in the juvenile performances of Silver Frost, which earned him a mark of 112 in the European Thoroughbred Rankings, and he has returned in fine form this year, enhancing his reputation with two more victories. After Sunday's Prix de Fontainebleau provided him with his third Group 3 success he demands recognition as a genuine Classic aspirant.

Bought for €95,000 as a yearling at Deauville, the grey finished third on his debut at Maisons-Laffitte, broke his maiden next time out at Saint-Cloud, then collected his first Pattern score in the Prix de Cabourg at Deauville.

That performance earned him a crack at the Prix Morny, a race which served to show that at the top level 6f was too short for him; he finished only seventh, and trainer Yves de Nicolay has since campaigned him exclusively over 1m.

His last two runs of 2008 were both at Saint-Cloud, delivering a comfortable victory in the Prix Thomas Bryon before an honest effort in the Group 1 Criterium International, where he was beaten under a length into third place, behind Zafisio and Prince Siegfried.

Saint-Cloud was also the venue for his comeback in the Prix Omnium on 23 March, and as the terms of that Listed event did not involve a penalty for his higher-level successes, he understandably started at odds-on. He duly won handily by a length and a half, his performance indicating that he had trained on and, at the very least, retained his form.

On Sunday he was favourite again, despite the fact that he was opposed by Ballydoyle raider Westphalia, who had been rated his superior by 2lb in their juvenile season. The French colt's presumed edge in fitness was doubtless a factor with punters.

Whether that advantage decided the outcome is anybody's guess. Silver Frost, always handily placed, quickened readily to assume control approaching the final furlong, and Olivier Peslier did not have to pull out all the stops to hold Westphalia by half a length.

The obvious immediate target for the colt, who has now won five out of eight starts, is the Poule d'Essai des Poulains, over the same course and distance on May 10; a trip to Newmarket for the 2,000 Guineas would involve a costly supplementary entry, so seems unlikely. Looking further ahead, the Prix du Jockey-Club could be on his agenda, raising questions over the limit of his stamina, which is not readily discernible from his pedigree.

Silver Frost comes from the sixth crop by Verglas, which might suggest that there should be plenty of evidence concerning the sire's influence on his progeny, but that is not really the case. The son of Highest Honor spent his first five stud seasons in France, generally covering mares of no great distinction, and we are likely to learn a lot more about him as more of his products conceived at the Irish National Stud, his base since 2005, show their capabilities.

Verglas was a good racehorse at his best, if always a little short of the top bracket. Trained by Kevin Prendergast for Lady O'Reilly, he won a Leopardstown maiden by eight lengths on his second appearance in public, and followed that with an impressive victory in the Group 3 Coventry Stakes at Royal Ascot, a performance that immediately resulted in his being named ante-post



Silver Frost's sire Verglas, seen winning the Coventry, has his best books to come in France

Frost a warm order for French Guineas

Pedigree offers few clues as to whether top miler will stay further

SIRE VERGLAS

Bred by Godolphin Management Co. Ltd. in Ireland. Won 3 (6f-1m) of 13 races, viz. 2 (inc. Coventry S.-Gr3) out of 5 at 2 years, 1 out of 5 at 3 years, 0 out of 3 at 4 years. Also placed 4 times, inc. 3rd in Phoenix S. at 2, and 2nd in Irish 2,000 Guineas at 3. Earned £128,624.

Strong, well made, attractive individual, 15.3 1/2hh. High-class performer, best at 1m. Clearly outstayed in Irish Derby.

Very well bred. By a top-class runner and multiple champion sire. Half-brother to 8 other winners, inc. Cassandra Go (by Indian Ridge; Gr2, dam of triple Gr1 winner Halfway To Heaven and Gr3 winner Theann) and Persian Secret (Listed, dam of Gr3 winner Do the Honours and Listed winner Seba), and to the unraced dam of Gr3 winner Prima Luce. Dam winning half-sister to 8 other winners, inc. Glory Forever (Gr3).

Same family as Gr1 winners Royal and Regal, Fire The Groom, Dowling and Stravinsky.

Stands at Irish National Stud at a fee of €10,000. Sire of 7 northern hemisphere crops of racing age, inc. notable winners: Blackdown (Gr2), Stormy River (Prix Jean Prat-Gr1), Silver Frost (Gr3). Also sire of Spirited One (Gr3 in Australia).

DAM HIDDEN SILVER

Bred by Ecurie Skymarc Farm in England. Ran only at 3 years, won 1 (9.5f) of 4 starts. Also placed twice. Earned €7,700. Useful performer in ordinary company.

Well bred. By a top-class sprinter and successful sire. Half-sister to 7 other winners, inc. Homeland (by Highest Honor; Gr3), High Flash (by Selkirk; Gr3-placed), Hideaway (by Cape Cross; Listed) and High Rock (by Rock Of Gibraltar; Gr3). Dam winning sister to Hill Silver (Listed), half-sister to Gr3-placed winner Black Question.

Grand-dam stakes-placed winner, half-sister to US Gr2 winners Mio Robertino and Star Of Manila. Next dam unraced half-sister to US Gr1 winners Banquet Table and State Dinner.

To stud at 4 years, and dam of: Silver Frost (2005 c by Verglas; triple Gr3 winner). She has a 2-y-o colt by Verglas and a yearling colt by Poliglote.

CONCLUSION

High-class miler with a good turn of foot. Classic potential at the distance, and may well stay further.

SILVER FROST

gr c 19-2-2006

Kenmare	Kalamoun	Zeddaan Khairunissa
Highest Honor	Belle Of Ireland	Milesian Belle Of The Ball
	Riverman	Never Bend River Lady
High River	Hairbrush	Sir Gaylord Bug Brush
Verglas (gr 1994)	Northern Dancer	Nearctic Natalma
Secreta	Betty's Secret	Secretariat Betty Loraine
Rahaam	Mr Prospector	Raise A Native Gold Digger
Fager's Glory	Street's Glory	Dr Fager Native Street
	Northern Dancer	Nearctic Natalma
Danzig	Pas De Nom	Admiral's Voyage Petitioner
Anabaa	Gay Mecene	Vaguely Noble Gay Missile
	Bamieres	Riverman Bergamasque
Hidden Silver (b 2000)	Alydar	Raise A Native Sweet Tooth
	Alysheba	Lt Stevens Belthazar
Hint Of Silver	Bel Sheba	Northern Dancer Special
	Nureyev	Herbager Silver Bright
Hot Silver	Her Silver	

Bred by Ecurie Skymarc Farm in Ireland. €95,000 Arqana August yearling.

favourite for the 2,000 Guineas.

Sadly, the colt fell from grace somewhat with indifferent efforts in his two subsequent ventures at two, managing no better than third in the Phoenix Stakes before a moderate sixth behind Desert King in the National Stakes. He was still rated joint fourth-best of his crop in Ireland's juvenile rankings, but that had to be considered a disappointment in view of what had seemed possible after Ascot.

Verglas had four outings for Prendergast as a three-year-old, and one showed him in a distinctly better light than the others. That came in the Irish 2,000 Guineas, when he came from a long way back to claim second place behind Desert King, clearly a career-best display. He had previously been a well-beaten fourth in the Tetrarch Stakes, and afterwards he plainly failed to stay in the Irish Derby, then turned in another dull effort as sixth in the Desmond Stakes.

The rest of Verglas's racing career was spent in America, where he was in the care of Charlie Whittingham. He started well with an allowance win over 1m to close his second season, but he failed to score again in three further runs as a four-year-old, his best performance coming as runner-up in the Listed San Marino Handicap over 1m2f at Santa Anita; like a lot of other immigrants from Europe, he found a little more stamina when competing over California's tight grass courses.

Verglas was never going to have appeal as a prospective stallion in the States, but a son of Highest Honor could expect some appreciation in France, albeit without benefit of high-class mares. And breeders who expressed faith in him were soon rewarded, as winners appeared with remarkable frequency.

HE BROKE into the top 20 French sires in 2005, reaching 15th place, and has kept improving. Eighth in 2006, and fifth in 2007, he rose to third (behind Zamindar and Anabaa) last year, when he had the most runners (155), the most individual winners (66), and was the only sire whose products registered 100 victories.

Winners in numbers helped to fuel interest in Verglas on his transfer to Ireland, but it is winners of quality that really boost appeal, and Stormy River came along to provide the required advertisement in 2006, when he notched the first Group 1 victory in the Prix Jean Prat. Also placed second in three other top-level events, he is now doing duty as a stallion at the Haras d'Etreham.

Silver Frost's dam Hidden Silver had no pretensions to class as a runner, but a win – at 1m1 1/2f – and two placings from four starts showed that she was not entirely devoid of merit. What is more, she is half-sister to several rather better runners, none of whom was inhibited when asked to venture beyond a mile.

Homeland, a son of Highest Honor, won a Group 3 event over 1m2f, and Hideaway was a Listed winner who also got that trip. Better still, High Rock finished a creditable fourth in last year's Prix du Jockey-Club, after having scored at 1m2f in the Group 3 Prix La Force.

So there are grounds for thinking that Silver Frost might turn out to be a viable contender for the Prix du Jockey-Club, but meanwhile he needs to be taken seriously as a Classic candidate over 1m, the distance at which we know he excels.