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Pedigree analysis
on **Montmartre**

WHEN the Aga Khan described Montmartre's rout of his Grand Prix de Paris rivals on Monday as "a very nice performance", was he seeking acknowledgement for the understatement of the century?

How "very nice" came to serve as his appraisal of what everyone else, awestruck by such breathtaking brilliance, regarded as stupendous, is hard to imagine. I suppose we must assume that, as the owner of Shergar, he has higher standards than the rest of us.

Personally, I am inclined to doubt whether there has ever been a more visually impressive display in a major race at Longchamp since Sea-Bird's Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

Of course, we have no reason to suppose that Prospect Wells and Magadan belong in the same league as Reliance and Diatome, who gave vain chase to Sea-Bird in 1965, but the manner of Montmartre's victory was scarcely less convincing. Here was surely the revelation of a very rare talent, a colt with the hallmark of champion already on him.

Soon settling into an easy rhythm, with only the pacemakers in front of him, Montmartre was always going like the winner. But that impression did not prepare us for what happened when Christophe Soumillon gave him an inch of rein.

The horse who can summon such blinding acceleration after ten strongly run furlongs can only be special. The way in which he asserted in just a few strides, bounding clear of struggling, high-quality rivals, had to be seen to be believed.

If his rider's natural flamboyance had not made this an occasion for easing down, stroking his mount's neck and blowing kisses to the crowd, the margin of victory might have been doubled.

Four lengths did not adequately express Montmartre's degree of superiority over late-rushing Prospect Wells; nor did the seven lengths by which he beat fourth-placed Doctor Fremantle, but that still exceeded the margin that separated the latter from New Approach at Epsom.

Montmartre did not race at two. His debut coincided with that of Magadan in a 1m2f maiden on heavy ground at Longchamp in early April, and in a tight finish he went under by a head against the Wildenstein colt.

Three weeks later he lost his maiden tag with a comfortable victory in a minor 1m3f event at the same course, and such was the confidence in his ability that Alain de Royer-Dupre had no qualms about pointing him for the Prix du Jockey-Club. Chantilly punters treated him with respect, sending him off at single-figure odds in spite of his inexperience.

However, Montmartre ran no sort of race, never promising to reach contention, and he came back a dismal 15th of 20. We learned subsequently that the occasion had been too much for the highly strung, still raw colt. Already out of sorts before stalls entry, supposedly upset by booming loudspeaker announcements and the general razzamatazz of a Classic raceday, he might as well have stayed at home.

But 18 days later he had a confidence-restoring exercise back at Longchamp in the Group 3 Prix du Lys, and he trotted up, relishing his first opportunity to race over 1m4f.

Going into Monday's race, he seemingly had form to find with several more battle-hardened rivals,



Montmartre: nervous before his stunning Grand Prix de Paris win, a quirk he has inherited from his sire

Best at Longchamp since Sea-Bird

Montmartre potential world-beater if conquering temperament

SIRE MONTJEU

Bred by Sir James Goldsmith in Ireland. Won 11 (1m-1m4f) of 16 races, viz. 2 out of 2 at 2 years, 5 (Prix Greffulhe-Gr2, Prix du Jockey-Club-Gr1, Irish Derby-Gr1, Prix Niel-Gr2, Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe-Gr1) out of 7 at 3 years, 4 (Tattersalls Gold Cup-Gr1, Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud-Gr1, King George VI & Queen Elizabeth S.-Gr1, Prix Foy-Gr2) out of 7 at 4 years. Also 2nd in Prix Lupin at 3, and in Champion S. at 4. RPR 113 at 2, 136 at 3, 133 at 4. Earned £2,263,831.

Tallish, well made, but not strikingly handsome. Not a good mover in his slower paces, seemed unsuited by firm ground, but acted on any other, and possessed a tremendous turn of foot. One of the best 1m4f horses of recent times.

Well bred. The best son of his outstanding sire. Out of a lightly raced high-class stayer (won Prix de Lutece-Gr3, 2nd in Prix Royal Oak-Gr1), who was among the best daughters of her sire, a Prix du Jockey-Club winner also responsible for Darara and Princess Pati.

Stands at Coolmore Stud at a fee of €125,000. Sire of 5 northern hemisphere crops of racing age, inc. notable winners: Corre Caminos (Prix Ganay-Gr1), Hurricane Run (Irish Derby-Gr1, Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe-Gr1, Tattersalls Gold Cup-Gr1, King George VI & Queen Elizabeth S.-Gr1), Montare (Prix Royal Oak-Gr1), Motivator (Racing Post Trophy-Gr1, Derby S.-Gr1), Scorpion (Grand Prix de Paris-Gr1, St Leger S.-Gr1, Coronation Cup-Gr1), Mont Etoile (Gr2), Papal Bull (Gr2), Anton Chekhov (Gr2), Authorized (Racing Post Trophy-Gr1, Derby S.-Gr1, York International S.-Gr1), Davidoff (Gr3), Macarthur (Gr2), Alessandro Volta (Gr3), Frozen Fire (Irish Derby-Gr1), Montmartre (Grand Prix de Paris-G1).

Also sire of notable winners in Australia & New Zealand, inc. Sharvasti (Avondale Gold Cup-Gr1) and Nom Du Jeu (Australian Derby-Gr1).

DAM ARTISTIQUE

Bred by Jean-Luc Lagardere in Ireland. Won 2 (both 1m7f) of 4 races, viz. 0 out of 1 at 2 years, 2 out of 3 at 3 years. Earned Ff283,000.

Progressive form in brief career. Natural stayer who needed distance and was capable of a sharp turn of foot at the end of 1m7f. Promised to achieve higher rank until injury caused early retirement.

Well bred, by a high-class miler and excellent sire. Sister to Gr3-placed winner Armilina and to a minor winner, half-sister to Listed-placed multiple winner Army King (by Fairy King) and useful winner Armaramak (by Mark Of Esteem). Dam won Ribblesdale S.-Gr2.

To stud at 4 years, and dam of: Art American (2001 c by Quiet American; winner), Artiste Of World (2003 c by Spinning World; winner), Artistica (2004 f by Spectrum; Gr3-placed winner), Montmartre (2005 c by Montjeu; Gr1 winner), unnamed (2006 f by Sendawar; unraced to date). She has a yearling filly by Kalanisi and was covered by Bahri in 2007. Not covered in 2001.

CONCLUSION

Exceptional display at Longchamp makes him the prospective Arc winner and Racehorse of the Year. Temperament the only possible concern.

MONTMARTRE

gr c, 18-3-2005

Sadler's Wells	Nearctic	Nearco	Lady Angela
	Northern Dancer	Native Dancer	Almahmoud
Montjeu (b 1996)	Natalma	Bold Reason	Hail To Reason
	Fairy Bridge	Special	Lalun
Floripedes	High Top	Forli	Thong
	Top Ville	Derring-Do	Camena
Toute Cy	Sega Ville	Charlottesville	La Sega
	Tennyson	Val De Loir	Tidra
Mendez	Adele Toumignon	Zeddaan	Alvorada
	Bellypha	Lyphard	Belga
Linamix	Miss Carina	Caro	Miss Pia
	Breton	Relko	La Melba
Artistique (gr 1996)	Lunadix	Alcide	Mona
	Lutine	Bold Ruler	Barn Pride
Armarama	Persian Bold	Relko	Running Blue
	Relkarunner	Palestine	Malapert
Rossitor	Pall Mall	Worden	Sonsa
	Sonia	Sonsa	

Bred by SNC Lagardere Elevage in France

but that did not deter the punters, who sent him off a warm favourite and never had a moment's worry once the preliminaries were over.

That was the one slight doubt, because he did exhibit some slight signs of nervousness in the parade, and we must hope that he becomes a calmer individual by the time of the Arc, when the build-up invariably provides a pressure-cooker environment far more nerve-racking than that on Prix du Jockey-Club day. Perhaps the cotton-wool-in-the-ears treatment, so effective in seeing The Minstrel through his Derby day ordeal in 1977, might do the trick for Montmartre.

WE DON'T need to think too hard to guess the source of Montmartre's less than perfect temperament. He is a

Montjeu, and we have become used to the idea that there is a quirkiness about many of the progeny of Sadler's Wells's most accomplished racing son.

We should not forget that Montjeu was a tricky customer himself, and that what we might politely refer to as 'character' is a trait associated with many great runners and sires in the history of the thoroughbred – and that they are generally no worse for it. An obvious example is Nasrullah, cussed and wilful as well as immensely talented, and his massive influence on the breed has been almost wholly positive, even through rogue sons like Red God and Rego.

By all accounts Montmartre's problems are more about nervousness than malice, and we may reasonably hope that with experience, and his trainer's sympathetic handling, he will emerge as a more sober, confident individual. Indeed, that process may already be under way; the colt was totally focused on his job once the stalls opened on Monday.

While his connections remain convinced that the shorter distance of the Prix du Jockey-Club was not a factor in his defeat, there is little doubt that 1m4f will always see him to better advantage. It is surely no coincidence that Montjeu, ideally suited by that trip himself, is compiling a collection of Derby winners in Motivator, Authorized (both at Epsom), Hurricane Run, Frozen Fire (at the Curragh) and Nom Du Jeu (Australia). He is turning out chips off the old block with remarkable regularity.

But we must also recognise that there are two halves to Montmartre's pedigree, and note that both parents had stamina to impart. His dam Artistique had her career cut short by injury after only four starts, but not before she had promised to develop into one of the best stayers in France.

Unplaced in her only effort at two, and uncompetitive over an extended 1m2f on her seasonal debut at three, she came into her own when given tests of stamina. Her last two races were both over 1m7f, and she won both, notably a smooth victory in the Group 3 Prix Berteux at Chantilly.

Andre Fabre had more ambitious targets in mind after that, but it was not to be, and Artistique embarked on a career at stud, initially for her breeder Jean-Luc Lagardere, and subsequently for the Aga Khan, who acquired her in his en bloc purchase of the Lagardere bloodstock holdings.

A daughter of Ribblesdale Stakes heroine Armarama, herself half-sister to Kalaglow, Artistique was entitled to make her mark at stud. She may just have produced a genuine world-beater in Montmartre.