

# TONY MORRIS



Pedigree analysis on  
**Fleeting Spirit**

**M**ANY stallions contrive a fine first season with their runners; it frequently seems to be almost a natural consequence of the breeders' fad for the latest recruits to the ranks. But that obsession with the new generally means that allegiances are swiftly transferred elsewhere, so that initial promise is never fulfilled.

A lot of horses never feature more prominently on the sires' list than when their first crop of two-year-olds are at the races. Support tends to dwindle, younger horses come to the fore, and that early success is seen as just a flash in the pan. Today's apparent celebrity becomes tomorrow's nonentity.

At the time those first juveniles appear, the stallion is covering his fourth book, and that tends to be a hard one to fill, unless the market has taken kindly to the auctioned foals and yearlings. It is a rare horse who can retain his popularity through to the fourth year, achieve significantly with his initial runners, and be well placed for a successful follow-up.

Invincible Spirit is one such rare horse. His appeal at the outset of his innings at the Irish National Stud was obvious. An impeccably bred, handsome specimen, he had won seven times over 6f, and, crucially, there was a recent Group 1 score – in the Haydock Sprint Cup – on his cv. It was no wonder that he was able to attract 129 visitors at a fee of €10,000 in his first season.

There was the predictable falling-off in his second year, but the reduction was small – down to 113 – no doubt helped by the fact that another son of Green Desert in Oasis Dream had meanwhile notched a Group 1 double in the July Cup and Nunthorpe Stakes, and he was to kick off at Banstead Manor at a fee of £25,000.

Invincible Spirit remained at €10,000 for four seasons, attracting 137 mares in 2005 and 163 in 2006. In the latter year his first crop reached the races, and they gave him a sensational start, a world-record 35 of them proving successful as juveniles. Among the victories were prestige scores at Group 2 level by Conquest in the Gimcrack Stakes, and Captain Marvelous in the Criterion de Maisons-Laffitte, while Bahama Mama and Stevie Gee both scored in Listed company.

Those results had predictable effects in the marketplace, initially with increased demand at the sales, where 55 from his second batch of yearlings averaged 63,374gns. Next came a sharp rise in his fee to €35,000, which proved to be anything but a deterrent to breeders, who supplied him with 195 mares in 2007.

On the racecourse there was no slackening of the momentum, for along came Lawman to stamp himself as one of the best of Europe's three-year-olds, collecting a Group 1 double in the Prix du Jockey-Club and Prix Jean Prat. And by the end of last season Invincible Spirit also had two juvenile Pattern winners from his second crop, their exploits helping to justify another huge hike in his fee, up to €75,000.

Campfire Glow took the Group 2 Debutante Stakes over 7f at the Curragh, and gave every indication that she might develop into a classy miler, while Fleeting Spirit notched both her wins at the minimum distance, in the Group 3 Molecomb Stakes at Goodwood and Group 2 Flying Childers Stakes, promising to



**Fleeting Spirit and Ryan Moore break the course record in the Temple Stakes at Haydock**

# Fleeting quick to prove sire's worth

## Record breaker another star for Invincible Spirit

### SIRE: INVINCIBLE SPIRIT

Bred by Nawara Stud Co Ltd in Ireland. Won 7 (all 6f) of 17 races, viz. 2 out of 4 at 2 years, 0 out of 2 at 3 years, 3 (inc. Macdonogh Boland S.-Gr3) out of 6 at 4 years, 2 (Duke of York S.-Gr3, Haydock Park Sprint Cup-Gr1) out of 5 at 5 years. Timeform 111p at 2 years, 106 at 3 years, 115 at 4 years, 121 at 5 years. Earned £247,786.

Strong, medium-sized (15.3hh), attractive sort, in the mould of a sprinter.

A game, consistent performer, usually held up, with a fine turn of foot. Suffered broken pelvis in spring at 3, and though round-actioned, did not compete on rain-affected ground thereafter.

Well bred. Half-brother to 7 other winners, inc. Sadian (by Shirley Heights; Gr3), Acts Of Grace (by Bahri; Gr3) and Massarra (by Danehill; Listed, Gr2-placed). By a top-class sprinter and noted sire of sprinters and milers. Dam won Prix de Diane, half-sister to Chiang Mai (Gr3) and 8 other winners.

Family of champion sire Pitcairn. Stands at Irish National Stud, Tully, Kildare, at a fee of €75,000. Sire of 3 crops of racing age, inc. notable winners: Captain Marvelous (Gr2), Conquest (Gr2), Lawman (Prix du Jockey-Club-Gr1, Prix Jean Prat-Gr1), Campfire Glow (Gr2), Fleeting Spirit (Gr2). Also stood in Australia 2003-06, no stakes winners there to date.

### DAM: MILLENNIUM TALE

Bred by Ecurie Decrion in France. Unraced. Half-sister to 5 winners, inc. Listed-placed Finir En Beaute. Dam Gr3 winner in Ireland, sister to Whisky CS (dual Classic winner in Czech Republic), half-sister to 3 other winners, inc. My Cornrake (Listed, Gr3-placed). Grand-dam winner, half-sister to stakes-winner in US.

To stud at 3 years, and dam of: Alone He Stands (2000 c by Flying Spur; Listed-placed winner), Aughaderney (2001 g by Desert Style; unraced), unnamed (2002 c by Bahhare; unraced), Swynford Lady (2004 f by Invincible Spirit; unraced), Fleeting Spirit (2005 c by Invincible Spirit; dual Gr2 winner). She has a yearling colt by Invincible Spirit, and was covered by Verglas in 2007. No return in 2003.

### CONCLUSIONS

Another significant advertisement for her sire. Has trained on impressively and a likely challenger for this season's top sprint honours.

### FLEETING SPIRIT

(b f, 8-3-2005)

	Northern Dancer	Nearctic Natalma
Danzig	Pas de Nom	Admiral's Voyage Petitioner
Green Desert	Sir Ivor	<b>Sir Gaylord</b> Attica
Foreign Courier	Courtly Dee	Never Bend Tulle
Invincible Spirit (b 1997)	Sharpen Up	Atan Rocchetta
Kris	Doubly Sure	Reliance Soft Angels
Rafha	Artaius	Round Table Stylish Pattern
Eljazzi	Border Bounty	Bounteous B Flat
	<b>Sir Gaylord</b>	Turn-to Somethingroyal
Habitat	Little Hut	Occupy Savage Beauty
Distant Relative	Claude	Hornbeam Aigue-Vive
Royal Sister	Ribasha	Ribot Natasha
Millennium Tale (b 1996)	Vaguely Noble	Vienna Noble Lassie
Corvaro	Delmora	<b>Sir Gaylord</b> Penitence
The Bean Sidhe	Bold Hour	Bold Ruler Seven Thirty
Whiskey Mountain	Touch the Clouds	My Babu Be Cautious

Bred by Mrs Bernadette Hayden in Ireland. € 35,000 Goffs Sportsman's yearling

reach the top as a pure sprinter.

Invincible Spirit has been answering all the questions in the affirmative. Yes, he can get precocious stock, and get them in numbers; he proved that from the off. Can he get quality stock? Yes, no doubt about it, and although he did all his own winning at 6f, his progeny were not exclusively pure sprinters, as Lawman indicated by his top-level wins at 1m2.5f and 1m.

What is common to all of Invincible Spirit's stock is their colour. You can cheerfully send him a chesnut mare and be sure of getting a bay product. That characteristic is one he shares with a number of past great sires such as Highflyer, Galopin, St Simon, Bayardo, and his own paternal grandsire, Danzig, but of course it matters not one iota.

Invincible Spirit can't help it. He doesn't have a chesnut gene, so he can't transmit one and can't have chesnut progeny. He must invariably pass one of the bay genes he inherited from sire Green Desert or dam Rafha, and bay will always dominate chesnut.

But prepotency for coat colour should not be taken as an indication that a horse is prepotent for any characteristics more meaningful in the athletic ability department. An awful lot of pure-breeding bay stallions fail to sire any progeny of note.

So the fact that Invincible Spirit is both a dominant bay and a sire of real consequence is merely coincidental. It is only the second attribute with which we need to be concerned. And in the case of Fleeting Spirit, who made a profoundly impressive return to action in Saturday's Group 2 Temple Stakes at Haydock Park, it is hard to escape the view that she is very much her sire's daughter.

**W**AS Fleeting Spirit supposed to be ring-rusty after her long absence from competition? It might have appeared that she was, when she reared at stalls-exit and presented accomplished and more experienced sprinters with several lengths' advantage. But how she knuckled down to business when acceleration was required!

Here was a filly with only five runs behind her, burdened with a penalty for last year's Group 2 victory, yet she produced a devastating turn of foot to sweep past battle-hardened foes and knock more than a second off the course record. Whatever the Australians care to send for the King's Stand Stakes (now restored to its rightful Group 1 status) will know they have had a race if Fleeting Spirit turns up fit and well on the day.

There really is not much to get excited about on the distaff side of Fleeting Spirit's pedigree. Her unraced dam Millennium Tale is inbred 3 x 4 to Sir Gaylord, who also features in the fourth generation of Invincible Spirit's background, but so what? Distant Relative, in common with most sons of Habitat, was an indifferent sire, and was never broodmare sire of a Pattern winner until now.

Millennium Tale's dam, The Bean Sidhe, was a Group 3 winner over 7f in Ireland, but she was the only runner of any distinction by Corvaro, like almost every other son of Vaguely Noble, a desperately disappointing sire.

Fleeting Spirit's merit is surely all about her sire, and she represents the happiest possible outcome of the mating which produced her.