

# TONY MORRIS



PEDIGREE  
ANALYSIS  
**Flotilla**

## Sky may not be the limit for impressive Classic filly



**Flotilla:** French Guineas winner should improve with a probable Ascot clash with *Sky Lantern* on the horizon

IT WAS a treat to see truly-run races on good ground for the first two Classics of the French season at Longchamp on Sunday. If there were still doubts as to whether the colts' Guineas produced the right result, with Intello looking an unlucky loser from his wide draw, the form in the fillies' event appeared reliable enough, with two good fillies drawing clear of their rivals, and Flotilla's superior powers of acceleration enabling her to overcome Esoterique in the closing stages.

It was no surprise that Esoterique started a warm favourite, as she had won her first two starts in taking style, impressing especially in the Group 3 Prix Vanteaux last month, when she settled the issue with a sharp turn of foot in the manner of a top-class performer. Just why three others should also have merited more support in the market than Flotilla was not so easy to fathom. She had capped her first season with a fine display in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf at Santa Anita to earn recognition as joint-best of her sex (with Prix Marcel Boussac heroine Silasol) in France and was the only top-level winner on parade in Sunday's 20-strong field.

If punters felt that Flotilla, making her first appearance since that triumph in California, was going to be at a disadvantage against race-fit rivals, they were sadly mistaken. The filly's six months away from competition proved no detriment. Mikel Delzangles had her straight enough to do herself justice on her comeback and she will come on for the outing. Sky Lantern, who had her excuses on the occasion of their last meeting when five and a half lengths behind Flotilla at Santa Anita, will need to be on the top of her game if she is to reverse placings when they are expected to clash again in the Coronation Stakes at Royal Ascot.

Both of Flotilla's parents began their racing careers in Europe before transferring to the States, where they enhanced their reputations by displaying improved form. Sire Mizzen Mast did not win above Group 3 level in France, but added scores at both higher levels for Bobby Frankel in California. Dam Louvain was twice Listed-placed in France at two, fetched €260,000 at that year's Arc sale, and less than six weeks later became a

### FLOTILLA

**b f 25-02-2010**

		Fortino	Grey Sovereign
	Caro		Ranavalo
		Chambord	Chamossaire
	Cozzene		Life Hill
		Prince John	Princequillo
			Not Afraid
	Ride the Trails		Sir Gaylord
		Wildwook	Blue Canoe
Mizzen Mast (gr 1998)			
		Ribot	Tenerani
			Romanella
	Graustark		Alibhai
		Flower Bowl	Flower Bed
Kinema		Tom Fool	Menow
	Mrs Peterkin		Gaga
		Legendra	Challenger
			Lady Legend
		Chief's Crown	Danzig
			Sis Crowns
	Grand Lodge		Habitat
		La Papagena	Magic Flute
		Lashkari	Mill Reef
	Sinntara		Larannda
		Sidama	Top Ville
			Stoyana
Louvain (b 2002)			
		Kris	Sharpen Up
			Doubly Sure
	Common Grounds		Lyphard
		Sweetly	Sweet And Lovely
Flanders		Explodent	Nearctic
			Venomous
	Family At War		Bold Bidder
		Sometimes Perfect	Miss Ribot

Bred by Eric Puerari, Oceanic Bloodstock & Mme Ariane Gravereaux in France. €120,000 Arqana August yearling

#### VERDICT

►►Unquestionably the current leader of France's three-year-old filly division at a mile.

►►Possesses a fine turn of foot, promises to prove a worthy contender for the Coronation Stakes at Ascot.

►►Product of a valuable outcross stallion who deserves greater recognition.

Grade 3 winner, also for the Frankel barn, at Hollywood Park.

Mizzen Mast was bred by – and is still owned by – Juddmonte Farms. At two, Crique Head-Maarek saddled him for a win in a 1m newcomers' race at Deauville and a second, beaten a nose, in the Group 3 Prix des Chenes

at Longchamp. He then took his chance in the Grand Criterium, but on softer ground than he had previously encountered he finished well behind his stable companion Okawango.

When he returned to action in a Chantilly Listed event the following spring the going was heavier than

before, the outcome simply providing more evidence that he needed faster conditions. He got them for the Group 3 Prix de Guiche, which he won by six lengths, and for the Group 1 Grand Prix de Paris (then 1m2f), in which he finished a good second to Chichicastenango. His last run for Head-Maarek came in the Secretariat Stakes at Arlington Park and, as luck would have it, the rains came to thwart him; he started favourite, but beat only one of ten rivals.

Things soon improved in America, and by the end of the year he had won a minor 1m stakes event on grass at Hollywood Park and notched a Grade 1 success in the 7f Malibu Stakes at Santa Anita, his first start on dirt. He had just one run at four before injury stopped him, winning the Grade 2 Strub Stakes over 1m1f.

Ideally, to attract stronger patronage from Kentucky breeders, his career in the States would have lasted longer and he would have proved he belonged among the best older horses there in 2003. In fact, he had an earlier start at stud than had been intended, and he got good results from his initial books, with the Grade 1 Hollywood Gold Cup winner Mast Track among seven stakes-winners in his first crop, while no fewer than 11 of his second crop collected stakes victories, among them Midships, a Grade 1 scorer on turf in the Charles Whittingham Memorial Handicap.

Inevitably, numerical support dropped off until the first two crops established their merit at the track, but it duly built up again and his Grade 1 double at the 2012 Breeders' Cup – Mizdirection won the Turf Sprint in addition to Flotilla's success – raised his profile to new heights, ensuring that he would not be overlooked by major breeders this spring.

Mizzen Mast is clearly doing the business, with high-class performers on all surfaces, and at \$15,000 he should appeal as an affordable and viable outcross for most broodmares. He has no Mr Prospector and no Northern Dancer in his background, something rare among today's stallion population.

Richard Gibson was the first trainer of Flotilla's dam Louvain, sending her out for five starts that resulted in minor placings in sprints at Maisons-

Laffite and Longchamp, then a success over 7f back at Maisons-Laffite before ventures in Listed company in the provinces – a second at Vichy and a third in the Criterium de l'Ouest at Craon over an extended mile. Offering obvious potential for further racing, Louvain duly found keen demand at the Arc sale, and she swiftly returned a proportion of her purchase price by winning a division of the Grade 3 Miesque Stakes over Hollywood Park's turf course on her American debut. In the following year she added two lesser stakes to her cv, both of them at 1m on grass.

A daughter of the always underrated Sinnadar, Louvain has made an excellent start to her stud career. Her first foal is the Calder stakes-winner Louvakhova (by Maria's Mon), her second is the useful handicapper Marshgate Lane (by Medaglia D'Oro), and her third is Flotilla. She has an as-yet-unraced two-year-old filly by Zamindar and a yearling filly by High Chaparral to follow.

Louvain's dam was Flanders – not the one whose Grade 1 treble made her America's champion two-year-old filly in 1994, but the namesake by Common Grounds who earned some distinction for herself closer to home. The Flanders campaigned so successfully by Tim Easterby lacked something in size, but nothing in gameness and consistency, winning six times, including the Listed Scarbrough Stakes at Doncaster and failing by only a short head in the King's Stand Stakes (then Group 2) at Royal Ascot.

Louvain was the first foal of Flanders, who maintained a fine record as a broodmare with her seven subsequent runners all successful, including the Listed winner Laajooj (by Azamour) and the Group 3-placed Desert Poppy (by Oasis Dream).

The high-class form shown by Flanders represented a marked advance on that shown by her dam, the Explodent mare Family At War, whose only victory came in a two-runner juvenile maiden at Pontefract. But there was quality not much further back in the female line, as Family At War's granddam was Miss Ribot, a daughter of Sir Ribot who won 15 of her 53 races, seven of them at stakes level, and was placed second in the Kentucky Oaks.