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PEDIGREE
ANALYSIS
TRIPLE THREAT

Late boosts for Monsun in twilight of amazing career

AS THE founder and self-appointed president of the Monsun fan club (established 2000, when his first three-year-olds appeared), I have been thrilled to allude to his exceptional merit as a sire on countless occasions.

If he had merely proved himself the most successful sire in the history of German breeding, that would have been sufficient to justify the many eulogies delivered at the time of his death, at the age of 22, in September last year. But Monsun achieved a whole lot more than that, becoming the first horse from his country to make a major impact at the top level on the international scene.

These days the huge prize for the winner of the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe automatically ensures the horse responsible for it becomes France's champion sire. In 2012 that meant Poliglote – and only Poliglote – ranked more highly than Monsun on the list, and that was the second occasion when the Arc result had robbed him of first place, Rail Link having snatched the title for Dansili in 2006.

Monsun's fine record in France has since been enhanced in 2013. On the last Sunday in March his unbeaten son Ocovango notched an impressive Listed victory in the Prix Francois Mathet at Saint-Cloud, and on the Sunday just gone his sons collected the honours in the first Pattern events of Longchamp's new season. Three-year-old Triple Threat overcame a tardy start to fly home victorious in the Group 3 Prix la Force, and an hour or so later five-year-old Maxios returned with a smooth success over Don Bosco and Saga Dream (who had filled the first two places in last month's Prix Exbury) in the Group 2 Prix d'Harcourt.

Monsun's progeny have now accounted for 98 wins in the European Pattern, and the century cannot be long delayed. The former Schlenderhan resident now ranks ninth overall among Pattern sires, the elite group ahead of him being Sadler's Wells, Danehill, Galileo, Nureyev, Habitat, Riverman, Danzig and Northern Dancer. Compile your own list of the celebrities he has already left behind, and be aware that he may well reach fifth place before his last runners have departed the scene.

When Monsun began his innings at stud in 1996, what was anybody entitled to expect? He had been a good racehorse, a winner 12 times from 23 starts, his Group 1 triumphs coming in the Aral Pokal at three and the Preis von Europa at both three and four. One glance at his pedigree – German for several generations – was enough to convince that if he was going to make a mark, it would be solely in his homeland. That was the way of things, how they had always been, and the

TRIPLE THREAT

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Königsstuhl	Dschingis Khan	Tamerlane	Persian Gulf
		Donna Diana	Eastern Empress
		Tiepoletto	Neckar
		Königskronung	Donatella
Monsun (b 1990)	Kronung	Tornado	Scarlet Skies
		Olymp	Kaiserkrone
		Literat	Birkhahn
		Surumu	Lis
Mosella	Surama	Reliance	Suncourt
		Authi	Aureole
		Monasia	Virtuous
		Monacensia	Kaiseradler
Lyphard	Northern Dancer	Nearctic	Motette
		Natalma	Nearco
		Court Martial	Lady Angela
		Goofed	Native Dancer
Drei (b 1991)	Barra	Formor	Almahmoud
		Raise A Native	Fair Trial
		Raise A Cup	Instantaneous
		Spring Sunshine	Formor
Triple Tipple	Ameridouble	Nodouble	La Favorite
		Amerigo's Fancy	Native Dancer
			Raise You
			Nashua
			Real Delight
			Noholme
			Ala-Jay
			Amerigo
			Doctor's Fancy

Bred by Team Valor & Gary Barber in France. Unsold 72,000gns Tattersalls Dec foal

VERDICT

- Monsun's illustrious stud career provides a prime example of how a horse with a 'different' pedigree can succeed, given appropriate opportunities
- His success on the international stage resulted from the fact of his representing a radical outcross for a majority of mares
- If he is ever to become France's champion sire, he has to have an Arc winner. Triple Threat just might earn him that distinction

records of his own sire Königsstuhl and maternal grandsire Surumu might be cited as proofs of the point.

Monsun broke the mould. Although in his early years he covered only small books – none of his first four crops

numbered as many as 40 – local breeders noticed he was delivering an extraordinarily high ratio of winners to runners. Before long, breeders elsewhere recognised there was also a significant proportion of high-class

performers among his stock.

After Shirocco's victories in the Breeders' Cup Turf and Coronation Cup it became obvious Germany was harbouring a sire of genuine international class, and top breeders could no longer ignore him. Such other outstanding runners as Manduro, Schiaparelli and Stacelita confirmed he belonged among Europe's elite.

In a sense, Monsun's success, which at first had seemed so unlikely, might now be viewed as almost natural. His pedigree made him a complete outcross for a multitude of mares, and that was just what they needed. Ribot might be cited as a similar example, although his breakthrough as a sire was more predictable after an unbeaten racing career including a King George and a pair of Arcs.

The Ribots and Monsuns of this world should provide pause for thought. How many other horses with less than mainstream pedigrees have been neglected – and are still being neglected – because breeders prefer to stick with what is fashionable rather than have faith in something a little out of the ordinary?

The last figure I saw for Monsun's ratio of winners to foals was 64 per cent – phenomenal, outlandish, quite off the scale. And his stock are typically honest, genuine performers who train on, excelling at middle and extended distances. As we should have anticipated, his best runners have come from a wide variety of female backgrounds; he has blended successfully with all sorts, although it comes as no surprise that mares descending from Northern Dancer have featured significantly.

The broodmare sires of Shirocco, Manduro and Schiaparelli were, respectively, The Minstrel, Be My Guest and Old Vic. The three sons who have been to the fore in France this spring fit a similar pattern; Maxios was produced by a daughter of Nureyev, who is the sire of Ocovango's granddam, while Triple Threat is out of a mare by Lyphard.

There are naturally Classic aspirations for Ocovango and Triple

Threat. Both are trained by Andre Fabre, who was famously associated with the latter stages of Manduro's career, referring to him then as the best horse he had ever trained. On the evidence of their performances there can be no doubt each will be well suited by the Derby distance, whether it be that at Epsom or the shorter version at Chantilly.

Triple Threat provided the second major success in eight days for Team Valor as owner and breeder after the triumph of Animal Kingdom gave the operation its all-time high at Meydan. Barry Irwin, its principal, has long been known for his global outlook on thoroughbred matters, something that sets him apart from most of his countrymen, and he is being duly rewarded for his adoption of that stance.

MY COLLEAGUE Nancy Sexton drew attention last week to a number of prominent winners produced in recent years by mares in the twilight of their stud careers. We can add Triple Threat to the tally, as his dam, the once-raced Drei, delivered him when she was 19, and many would have supposed her most productive years were behind her.

Some of her earlier efforts were notable enough, as her Sabrehill filly Pina Colada won a minor stakes event and was Grade 2-placed, and although her Marju filly Mrs Marsh failed to make it to the races, she found celebrity as a broodmare with an outstanding son in crack miler Canford Cliffs.

The family had gone a little quiet before Canford Cliffs revealed his merit, but Drei's dam Triple Tipple had shown good form on both sides of the Atlantic in the early 1980s. Trained by Luca Cumani, the daughter of Raise A Cup won six times as a three-year-old, most notably the Listed Strensall Stakes at York, and finished a creditable third in the Nassau Stakes (then Group 2) at Goodwood. Transferred back to the States, she won a Grade 3 at four and at five, in addition to a Grade 2 success at Hollywood Park, she was second in the Grade 1 Gamely Handicap at the same venue.

Triple Tipple was the best of her dam Ameridouble's brood, although both Pale Purple (by Verbatim) and Tapstress (by Desert Wine) also recorded stakes victories. Ameridouble's sister Amata delivered her best product, a Bluebird colt called Bluegrass Prince who won the Group 3 Diomed Stakes and Grade 3 All-American Handicap, at the age of 19, and produced two further winners in her 20s, one of them Statua (by Statoblast), who finished third in the Rockfel Stakes.

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LOT #	COL	SEX	BREEDING	PRICE	SALE NAME	BUYER
2		F	Street Cry	45,000 USD	Keeneland September Yearlings 2012	Franktown Stud
3	B	C	Mama Hadine	9,000 GHS	Tattersalls December Foals Sale 2011	Emma O'Gorman
4		C	Halling	95,000 USD	Keeneland September Yearlings 2012	Tally Ho Stud
6		C	Mamounia	90,000 USD	Keeneland September Yearlings 2012	Franktown Stud
7	B	C	Elusive Quality	32,000 GHS	Tattersalls December Foals Sale 2011	Seymour Bloodstock (UK)
8	B	F	Mary Elise	0 EUR	Goffs Orby Yearling Sale	Vendor(60000)
			More Than Ready			
			Tammyut			
			Mathool			
			Teofio			
			Mayenne			
			Lauman	65,000 GHS	Tattersalls October Yearlings Sale	Vendor