

# Hylands Dreaming Big

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**Pat and Hugh Hyland** | *Emma Berry*

**By Emma Berry**

The Hyland brothers of Oghill House Stud have a simple plan for the year.

“We’re going to win the Guineas and the Derby,” says Pat Hyland.

It may sound like a ridiculous boast but Pat delivers his verdict with a wink and a grin to ensure that he’s not taken too seriously. However, when one reflects on the stud’s results for 2015, which saw the 300-acre farm in Kildare punch well above its weight with winners in strength and depth, then perhaps his claim shouldn’t be dismissed out of hand.

The horse to which he is referring, of course, is Marcel (Ire) (Lawman {Fr}), whose 33-1 victory in the G1 Racing Post Trophy last October had the walls of the old stone farmhouse shaking as he was roared home by the Hyland family. “You should have been here, it was quite something,” recalls Pat with a smile that rarely fades from his face.

Pat and Hugh Hyland are at the helm at Oghill House Stud, but it is very much a family affair, with Hugh’s son John also involved; another brother, David, listed as the breeder of Marcel, and yet another, Paul, having bred Royal Ascot winner and G1 Keeneland Phoenix S. runner-up Washington DC (Ire) (Zoffany {Ire}) in partnership with the family’s longtime friends and patrons, Chris and James McHale.

While Marcel is being primed for a Classic campaign in England and possibly France by his trainer Peter Chapple-Hyam, the more speedily bred Washington DC has a return to Royal Ascot on the agenda, with the G1 Commonwealth Cup pencilled in as his primary mid-season aim.

Meanwhile back at the farm, their dams are each carrying full-siblings to the two highly regarded 3-year-olds. Marcel’s dam Mauresmo (Ire) (Marju {Ire}) was predicted to have been one of the star turns of last week’s Goffs February Sale, but when she exhibited signs that she was due to foal, she was withdrawn from the sale with prospective buyers invited to visit her at home and make offers through the sales company. At the time of writing, she was still holding on to Marcel’s brother or sister, while How’s She Cuttin’ (Ire) (Shinko Forest {Ire}) is set to foal a brother to Washington DC later this month.

Adding to a glorious autumn in 2015 was another of the farm’s graduates, Third Time Lucky (Ire) (Clodovil {Ire}), the winner of five of his seven races throughout the season, culminating in Newmarket’s heritage handicap, the Cambridgeshire. Mister Brightside (Ire) (Lord Shanakill) was also successful twice at Newmarket last season for Jeremy Nosedo before switching to the U.S. stable of Patrick Gallagher and running second in the GII Twilight Derby at Santa Anita.

“We’ve been breeding horses full-time here since the 1980s. We foal about 100 mares here through the season and keep anything up to 30 mares ourselves and with different partners,” says Hugh. “Before that we farmed and did a bit of everything—corn, cattle. We’re the fourth generation of our family here at the farm.”

One of those partners is Joseph Burke, who bought the Johannesburg mare Pleasantry (GB) privately for the farm and himself the year before her half-brother Kingman (GB) started demonstrating his extraordinary talent. Pleasantry’s first two foals—the 3-year-old Pirquet (Ire) (Sea The Stars), who is now in training with Michael Halford, and 2-year-old filly Parlance (Ire) (Invincible Spirit (Ire)—sold for 200,000gns and 450,000gns as yearlings respectively to Godolphin and Cheveley Park Stud.

Hugh says, “We’ve tried to upgrade a bit but you need a bit of luck to hit on a good mare. To see a pedigree taking off like that is just amazing.”

The sum of 450,000gns was also recorded for a December Foal Sale-topping Sea The Stars filly out of Oghill House’s Danehill Dancer (Ire) mare Chiosina (Ire). Like Sea The Stars’s Oaks winner Taghrooda (GB), the juvenile filly, named Almahroosa (Ire), is now owned by Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum and in training with John Gosden. Chiosina’s most recent foal sale result was 175,000gns for her Shamardal filly in 2015.

“I couldn’t believe it when she got to 450,000. I was hoping she’d make 100,000 and it went on and on and you start to pinch yourself. It’s great to have the success at the sales and we all need that to keep going, but when you get to the races and your horse is winning that’s a different buzz altogether,” adds Pat.

Burke, who advises the brothers on purchases, came home from last year’s Keeneland November Sale with two well-related fillies. Circleofinfluence (Eurosilver) is a half-sister to the multiple graded stakes winner Classy Mirage and has recently foaled an Afleet Alex filly who is a close relation to GI Three Chimneys Hopeful S. winner Dublin. Amusing Plan’s credentials also bear scrutiny. The daughter of Pleasantly Perfect, sold in foal to Strong Mandate, has one half-sister, Folklore (Tiznow), who won the GI Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies, while another, Godolphin’s Dreamup (Bernardini) has provided a decent update by scorching home to break her maiden by more than 10 lengths at Tampa Bay Downs in late December.

Last year’s banner season, in which the Hylands witnessed 27 of their graduates win races and six of them strike at stakes level, rightly saw the Hylands recognised in January with the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders’ Association’s Special Merit Award.

“That was like the Oscars for us,” says Pat, while his brother adds, “Thirty of us went to the dinner and it was a really enjoyable night. We’d already had our reward from the horses on the track but it was great to be acknowledged.”

With the foaling season now in full swing, and the anxious wait for the next generation from Mauresmo, Pleasantry, Chiosina and How’s She Cuttin’ all due towards the end of this month, there’s a palpable buzz of optimism about the quiet yard at Oghill House Stud but not a hint of bombast.

Hugh admits, “We have a lot of things to look forward to—not just Washington DC and Marcel but all these young horses, too. They are our dreams and you need to have that.”

Such consistent success is not gained from mere fancifulness but the hard work and good planning behind the Hyland family’s operation certainly entitles them to dream on.