

# DAMON IN DEAUVILLE

*It's good to be back*

Well, its good to be back!

Talk about drama - sadly we lost one of our tour members before the French trip had even started. Peter Watson from Mill Park Stud in Adelaide who was in top form eating and drinking everything in sight has been left back in hospital in Newmarket following a nasty bout of food poisoning. I knew that rich lamb shank and all that gravy was dodgy. Adrian Hancock, his travelling companion, has been very concerned but decided to continue on without him. Surely Tattersalls do not need to go to such extreme measures to stop us Australian's spending up in Deauville?

We arrived into a rather wet and windy Deauville on Thursday afternoon after a rather turbulent flight on the plane that Arqana kindly put on for me and my closest friends (and 75 others who I have never met before). There were a few moments when we thought we might not make it to Normandy, however, no life jackets or emergency chutes were required and we all arrived in Deauville (minus poor Peter)!

Based on the fact that the sale is somewhat of a marathon, we started off rather steadily on Thursday. A quiet dinner at Santa Lucia. Why we would choose on our first night in France to go to an Italian restaurant seems illogical, however, the food is fantastic. Poor Adrian Hancock, still worried about Watson, decided to drown his sorrows with three bottles of Chablis and then got all gala (something that is usual reserved for me) & ordered a truffle pizza at 75 euros, about \$100 Aussie !! can only be described as a organismic eating experience.

Peter Ford, as you know a simple country man thought it was all a bit much so Hancock finished off his half eaten piece of pizza.

After the slow steady sensible start we hit Le Drakkar where we bumped into several Aussies, Duncan Grimley, Scott Springett, French regular Gary Mudgeway amongst them. Duncan was in his usual fine form & speaking a strange version of French/Swahili by about 2 am at which time he told us the name of the unknown soldier!! Well so much for a sensible start. I left Hancock to find his own way home, which he couldn't & grabbed a cab for a 100 metre ride that cost him €25! So much for a sensible start.

The sun decided to come out on Friday and so we were able to inspect the foals, fillies and mares in rather good conditions for December. For those of you worried about attending the sale due to weather, James Price would be happy to speak to any concerned parties to reinforce the fact that the Inglis sale in Melbourne in August is usually far colder than it is here now.

In their newly refurbished sales ring, which includes an uber-groovy & stylish restaurant, Arqana hosted their pre sale cocktail party. A new addition to the function this year was a cocktail bar - what more could you want than a Pina Colada. Gary Mudgeway was never far from the attractive bar tenders who served him a good number of Coladas which came complete with a straw and banana leaf!

This year the touring party has grown to include Bruce Neil from Cressfield Stud & his son Brodie who resides in London. Bruce has



Myself, Adrian Hancock, Tara Routledge & Jon Haseler

shown a particular liking to the french reds from Bordeaux & if there was an olympic event would surely be a gold medallist ! The Party was terrific & we bumped into loads of familiar faces including Sam Sangster, Stuart Boman, Hubie de Burgh, & our honorary Aussie Angus Gold.

After the cocktail party it was off to Chez Herve which has become my favourite Deauville eatery and so I decided to take a table there whee i discovered that all my french lessons have been a complete waste of money, I ordered a yummy sounding terrine de pieds de cochon thinking it was light healthy asparagus tart & ended up looking at a pigs trotter ! YUCK ! Chez Herve was pumping with the horse set, Coolmore, Aga Khan, even James Price from Inglis was hosting a table of internationals.

Another quiet round of cleansing ales at the Brok before bed.

The sale has started & I decided to go hard go early, something I usually do in the bars !

I purchased lot 26 for 175 000 euros a stunning type by champion sire Pivotal, she is a half sister to Gr 1 My Kingdom Of fife, from the great Highclere pedigree, she was purchased for Victorian breeder Michael Niall who was on the phone.

A few lots later Glenn Burrows from boutique nursery Willow Park Stud called & over a glass of red secured lot 30 a winning Street Cry half sister to 4 stakes winners & from a stakes winner. Anthony Mithen & his wife Selena have popped up here for their first visit & bought 2 so far, lot 37 a Stakes winner for €37,000 & lot 79, a Stakes-placed High Chaparral mare for a mere €15,000. I bought, what I considered a bargain.

Lot 75, A Kingmambo descendent of Grand Luxe for a Queensland client for €32,000. Not to be out done, Hancock Quality Bloodstock President, Adrian Hancock of 'quality is remembered long after price is forgotten' fame, secured a gorgeous daughter of Pivotal, a direct descendent of the great Miesque for a steal, but has remembered very tight lipped about his client. I have my annual Australian dinner table booked tonight at Restaurant 21, which I am sure you are all familiar with by now, so I will let you know how that goes tomorrow.