



GIFT OF THE GABBEDY

WHEN meeting Damon Gabbedy one cannot help but be instantly impressed by his charismatic persona. Great intellect and enthused conversation are certainly key factors in the bloodstock agent's early success.

As a young boy in Perth, Damon's raceday role as valet for top jockey Albie Smith was a direct result of his father investing his discretionary income racing horses. A variation in his father's influential footsteps as a wool buyer, Gabbedy lacked the passion for his marketing degree and sought a path he would thrive upon.

Gabbedy joined Goodwood Bloodstock in Western Australia (now Magic Millions) straight out of university and spent five years in pedigree research. His extraordinary knowledge is a testament to the value of this work pre-computer age, as pedigrees would be researched and written by hand, developing a strong retention for families and breeding trends.

Keen to develop more industry experience, Damon spent time on the land, quickly coming to the realisation hands-on experience was not his forte. A 12-month stint at Tattersalls in England followed.

His experience with Goodwood and Tattersalls provided a fantastic grounding.

However, it was Debbie Evans of Belmont Bloodstock Agency in Perth that provided Damon with his career-shaping opportunity.

"Debbie approached me and offered a partnership position with her bloodstock agency in Perth," Gabbedy says.

"I admired her lifestyle and the way she taught me to think big and commercially. She introduced me to her connections, who were a great

network-base, providing a platform for industry credibility."

Thinking outside the square was a skill that Gabbedy embraced. This ability, combined with uncanny perception and fantastic pedigree knowledge, has spawned many a deal for Belmont Bloodstock.

"Trading horses is the greatest adrenalin rush, especially when you can create a deal through your own instincts. A big part of being an agent is timing and perception," he assesses.

"My job is my hobby and my passion – to me it's not work. I think owning a racehorse is the greatest adrenalin rush. However, as much as I love racing horses I keep it only as a small hobby, as you must maintain your integrity when buying and selling bloodstock."

Belmont Bloodstock has been firmly planted in Melbourne for the last eight years with Gabbedy at the helm – Debbie's retirement from the business, in line with the demise of many of Western Australia's bloodstock and business key players, proved a timely move for the business.

During his time with the Belmont Bloodstock, Damon has been involved in many successful deals, including the purchase of yearlings Encosta de Lago (now champion sire) for \$140,000, Benicio (winner 2005 VRC Derby), a \$1.2 million Royal Academy colt who is a half-brother to Charge Forward (purchased a day prior to his win in the Group 1 Galaxy) and warhorse Le Zagaletta.

Stallion deals in Western Australia include the syndication of Old Spice (sire of Melbourne Cup winner Rogan Josh), Marooned, and the relocation of Don't Say Halo from Widden Stud to Perth. He also negotiated the sale of jumper Specular from Australia to Britain.



Damon Gabbedy

However, Gabbedy seems to arouse extraordinary success in the breeding shed with his broodmare deals. To Mitchell's Yarraman Park, he sold Alinghi's dam, Oceanfast, in foal to King Charlemagne prior to Alinghi setting foot on a racetrack. The foal subsequently brought \$525,000 at the 2005 Sydney Easter Sale, whilst the Mitchells put her back in foal to Encosta de Lago, producing a cracking filly.

Gabbedy also put together a deal for Oakland Stud's Neville Duncan to buy Bellwater mare North Bell straight off the track. She subsequently produced champion Northerly and stakes winners North Boy

and Northern Song. Via his negotiations, Danelagh, the dam of Vengeance Of Rain and Dizelle, was sold to Darley prior to her progeny's Group 1 successes. Melbourne Cup winner Jezabeel, in foal to Danehill, joined John Singleton's Golden Slipper-winning filly Belle du Jour in the paddock, whilst the sale of Dashing Eagle and Halibery are also on the honour roll.

With an eye for upcoming fashion trends in and out of the sales arena, Gabbedy's reputation and results will continue to keep the breeding world interested and entertained for many years to come. Pacemaker