

Ascot, Saturday 24th July – Race Review by Paul Simmons

The President of the UAE Cup (Group 1 PA) Over 1 mile 2 furlongs

A quality field of 11 runners went to post from all over the globe including USA, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, France, Denmark, Oman and of course the UK. The field quickly broke with the American raider Burning Fancy setting a scorching gallop, Sabbat Al Khalidiah in behind and Al Charif, Aziz and Rawdat Al Khalidiah all in contention. As they turned into the home straight SR Dorwan powered into the lead hotly pursued by Aziz with Raqiyah making very smooth progress through the field in behind. Hitting the final furlong it was Aziz who had asserted his authority with Raqiyah travelling with ease in his slip stream. These two striking greys powered into the final furlong head to head, with 11/4 favourite **Raqiyah (Amer x Sarahmina (Tornado De Syrah))** taking the initiative inside the final half furlong to win by three quarters of a length under a superb well judged ride from Olivier Peslier (*who had earlier won the Group 1 King George and Queen Elizabeth Stakes on Harbinger for Sir Michael Stoute*). This win gave owner HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al Thani and trainer Alban De Mieulle their second victory in this race, and from this result, it would appear that Raqiyah looks set to be the horse to follow this season; a possible replacement for breeders Umm Qarn Farm's phenomenal Group 1 winning mare Al Dahma.

The Julian Smart trained Aziz (Amer x Aziza D'Aroco (Dormane)) ran a superb race on his UK debut galloping on strongly to the line and was in turn clear of the field. He remains a seriously classy colt and was unlucky to come up against the rapidly improving Raqiyah and definitely has a Group race within his grasp this term. One and three quarter lengths back in third was a fantastic run from the Danish trained runner SR Dorwan (Marwan x Dorwana Kossack (Dorwan Du Cayrou)), who made his claim for victory two furlongs out and whilst he couldn't hold onto the first two he galloped on resolutely to the line to retain third ahead of a staying on Rawdat Al Khalidiah (Tiwaiq x Rayyan (Bengali D'Albret)). The Royal Cavalry of Oman's Al Charif ran well back in fifth and lost fourth inside the final furlong, but was in turn clear of the Athbah Stud's Joybell.