





# THE FAMILY TIES OF COTEHELE HOUSE

*Australia's 2020/21 Horse of the Year, the sensational distaffer VERRY ELLEEGANT has become the poster girl for the crossing of strains from the family of influential matriarch COTEHELE HOUSE*

by Rommy Faversham

Auckland octogenarian Don Goodwin, breeder of local mare sensation Verry Elleegant is said to have quipped he “just got lucky”, which must be some sort of euphemism for “had a specific plan that worked out exceedingly well”. Goodwin’s breeding strategy designed a pedigree pattern that was distinct and deliberate, but most of all, clever.

Dubbed the planet’s top racemare by the recent Longines World Racehorse Rankings, Verry Elleegant’s highly anticipated seven-year old campaign could include Royal Ascot and/or the French Arc. She has, so far, bagged a total of ten Group One events, the most recent a true tour-de-force in last year’s Melbourne Cup, one of the finest performances in the race’s 160-year history.

## Verry Elleegant, Bay filly, 2015

ZED B 2002	Zabeel	Sir Tristram (IRE)	Sir Ivor	Sir Gaylord	2s
			Isolt	Attica	8g
		Lady Giselle (FR)	3 Nureyev	Round Table	2f
			Valderna	All My Eye	6e
	Emerald Dream	Danehill (USA)	Danzig	5 Northern Dancer	2d
			Razyana	Special	5h
		1 Theme Song	Sackford (USA)	Val de Loir	5h
			Cotehele House (GB)	Derna	16c
OPULENCE Br 2005	Danroad	Danehill (USA)	Danzig	5 Northern Dancer	2d
			Razyana	Pas de Nom	7a
		Strawberry Girl (USA)	Whiskey Road (USA)	His Majesty	4d
			Pay the Piper	5 Spring Adieu	2d
	Mulan Magic	King's Theatre (IRE)	Sadler's Wells	Giftisa	18
			Regal Beauty	Bombay Duck	13c
		1 Chalet Girl	Imposing	Riskay Reid	4m
			Cotehele House (GB)	5 Northern Dancer	2d
				3 Fairy Bridge	5h
				Princely Native	14c
				Dennis Belle	9b
				Todman	1u
				Hialeah	1c
				My Swanee	8j
				Eight Carat (GB)	9c



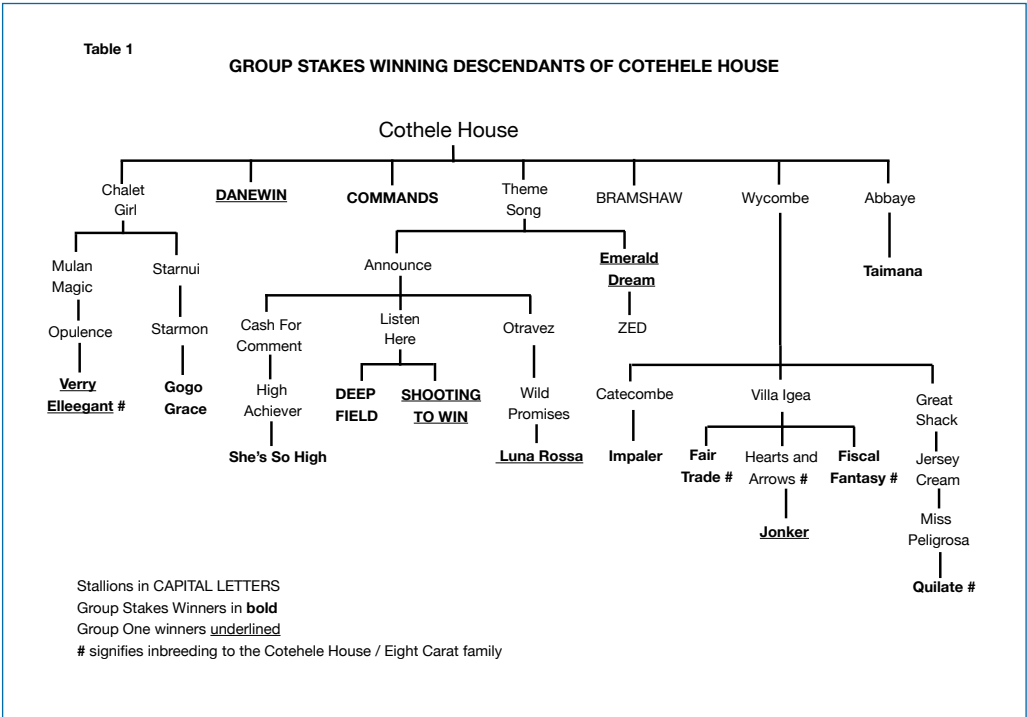


Table 1 illustrates the family tree of Group Stakes winning descendants of **Cotehele House**. Our subject's first foal, the unraced filly Chalet Girl (NZ) is now best known as Verry Elleegant's third dam.

Cotehele House (GB), Black or Brown filly, 1980

MY SWANEE Gr 1963	Petition	Fair Trial	Fairway	Phalaris 1i Scapa Flow 13e
			Lady Juror	Son-in-Law 5d Lady Josephine 9c
		Art Paper	Artist's Proof	Gainsborough 2n Clear Evidence 14f
			Quire	Fairy King 8k Queen Carbine 16h
	Grey Rhythm	Grey Sovereign	1 Nasrullah	3 Nearco 4r Mumtaz Begum 9c
			Kong	Baytown 15d Clang 6f
		Metronome	Solferino	Fairway 13e Sol Speranza 19b
			Golden Meter	Tetrameter 5f Golden Emblem 8j
EIGHT CARAT (GB) Blk 1975	Pieces of Eight	Relic	War Relic	Man o' War 4c Friar's Carse 1o
			Bridal Colors	Black Toney 10c Vaila 8f
		Baby Doll	Dante	3 Nearco 4r Rosy Legend 3n
			Bebe Grande	3 Niccolo dell'Arca 4r Grande Corniche 3o
	Klairessa	Klairon	Clarion	Djebel 5j Columba 1n
			Kalmia	Kantar 3n Sweet Lavender 1w
		Courtessa	Supreme Court	Precipitation 2i Forecourt 14c
			Tessa Gillian	3 Nearco 4r 1 Sun Princess 9c

Verry Elleegant's pedigree features 'text book' genealogy with both of her parents descending from the same influential matriarch. As such, she represents the latest example of an extraordinary thoroughbred whose pedigree demonstrates the Formula One pattern, perhaps the most auspicious form of female family inbreeding. Verry Elleegant's five generation pedigree shows Cotehele House (highlighted in bold red) serves the dual role of grandam to her sire, Zed, as well as her dam, Opulence. Since close inbreeding to foundation stallions, such as Danehill and Sadlers Wells, has not shown to be a particularly successful strategy, it is the novel duplication of a superior female that warrants this focus. It is also worth adding, Formula One females have long been shown to perform greater than expected as broodmares and subsequent maternal ancestors. Imported to Australia in 1980 as a weanling

alongside her soon-to-be invaluable dam, Cotehele House has become in her own right an anchor to one of the country's celebrated clans. Her sire, the rather obscure Petition stallion, My Swanee carried a 2X3 cross of the close relatives Fair Trial and Nasrullah. These two were, in turn, complemented by Cotehele House's fourth dam Tessa Gillian, a full sister to the foundation sire Royal Charger, a three-quarter brother to Nasrullah. Cotehele House's prodigious dam Eight Carat (GB) was sold while in foal with the former at the 1979 Tattersalls sale for 9,400 guineas. Failing to earn a paycheck from five starts in England, she arrived in Australia accompanied by her weanling filly soon thereafter. An RF, Eight Carat was inbred 5X5X5 to Nogara, the dam of Nearco. Since the pattern system came into practice, she is one of just

two broodmares, along with Juddmonte blue hen Hasili, to have produced five Group/Grade One winners. Additionally, she remains the only broodmare to have produced an Australian Horse of the Year (Octagonal) who went on to sire one of his own (Lonhro). The overwhelming majority of Eight Carat's matriarchal influence has, so far, been divided between her first foal, the unraced Cotehele House and her second, Group One winner Diamond Lover. Cotehele House was named after one of England's most complete medieval manors still remaining, with a structure unaltered since it was built in Cornwall in the dawn of the fourteenth century. Cotehele House shared her dam's black coat which had been inherited from Man o' War's black grandson, Relic. The large majority of Eight Carat's extensive family, in fact, have been particularly dark in coat color. Table 1 illustrates the family tree of Group Stakes winning descendants of Cotehele House. Our subject's first foal, the unraced filly Chalet Girl (NZ) is now best known as Verry Elleegant's third dam. Don Goodwin bought her granddaughter Opulence (NZ) for \$14,000 with the plan to make her a regular mating partner for Zed, a once discarded Zabeel stallion and a great grandson of Cotehele House for whom he had a share in. The resultant cross features duplication of this family's complementary strains. Out of the Group One-winning Danehill mare Emerald Dream (Table 1), Zed won only one of his four starts and yet was at one point a G1 New Zealand Derby favorite before injury curtailed his career. Emerald Green was out of Cotehele House's daughter Theme Song (NZ), a two-time winner and third dam to the Group Two winner Deep Field and his Caulfield Guineas (G1) winning full brother Shooting To Win, by Northern Meteor. The former, now in residence at Newgate Farm, has eight stakes winners from four crops of racing age. The latter serving at Darley Kelvinside



Table 2

AUSTRALASIAN GROUP STAKES WINNERS INBRED TO COTEHELE HOUSE

COSMIC FORCE b.,c.	Deep Field	ATC Roman Consul S. (G2), ATC Pago Pago S. (G3)
FAIR TRADE b.,g.	Danewin	CS Hayes Stakes (G3)
FISCAL FANTASY b.,f.	Skilled	ARC OMF Stakes (NZ-G3 / 2X), Manawatu Br. S. (NZ-G3)
QUILLATE b.,f.	Bramshaw	MRC Ladys Day Vase (G3)
TAILLEUR b.,f.	Shooting To Win	ATC Triscay Stakes (G3)
VERRY ELLEEGANT b.,f.	Zed	200/21 Australian Horse of the Year; Melbourne Cup, etc.

Deep Field

has so far sired four stakes winners also from four crops. Elsewhere of note, Theme Song also became fourth dam of Luna Rossa (G1), a daughter of last year's Australian Champion Stallion, Written Tycoon. Luna Rossa was a top New Zealand juvenile filly in 2016.

Cotehele House's fifth foal and first son was easily her finest runner. A member of Danehill's (USA) initial domestic foal crop, Danewin was a five-time Group One winner while claiming Australia's 1994/95 three-year old championship. Standing at Emirates Park, Danewin was limited by fertility issues siring 25 stakes winners and six Group One winners from less than 500 total foals.

Danewin's full brother Commands was five years younger. A Group Three winner and multiple Group One-placed, he became a prominent stallion indeed getting 65 stakes winners, including thirteen Group One winners while serving at Woodlands Stud and Darley's Kelvinside property in Hunter Valley. Commands was also Australia's Leading Sire by Winners on three consecutive occasions.

Another of Cotehele House's best producing daughters was Wycombe, by Imposing. She, in turn, foaled the exceptional broodmare Villa Igea whose produce record showed dramatic improvement once she was purchased at auction by Joseph and Daira's Wingrove Park in Lancefield, Victoria. The new owners put Villa Igea on an assembly line of sires whose pedigrees just so happened to all carry a strain of Cotehele House and the results indeed show the plan to have worked (again).

Villa Igea's Fair Trade was a gelded son of Danewin. At three, he became the farm's first home-bred stakes winner when easily capturing a Group 3 fixture at Flemington to remain undefeated and a serious contender for the Australian Guineas. Instead, Fair Trade took a different course when purchased by interests in Hong Derby where injuries would limit some of his success.

When Wingrove sent Villa Igea to Kempinsky, a son of Danehill and a third generation descendant of Eight Carat, the result was the black filly, Hearts And Arrows, inbred 4X4 to Eight Carat, who reeled off two quick wins before injury in her third start ended her racing career. At stud however, Hearts And Arrows showed her quality foaling Jonker, by Thatch-line stallion Spirit Of Boom, who peaked at age six when he annexed last year's MVRC Manikato Stakes (G1). Jonker looks to be a fascinating stallion prospect with the opportunity to perpetuate his ultra-rare sire line and its long skein of dedicated sprinters. His dam's pedigree certainly enhances this notion.

Villa Igea's final foal, Fiscal Fantasy was by Skilled, a Group One winning son of Commands. As such, her pedigree sported 3X3 inbreeding to Cotehele House. Fiscal Fantasy won a trio of Group Three events in New Zealand and was Group One-placed. Villa Igea produced several other good winners when bred to a variety of Cotehele House-line sires as well.

On the other hand, Villa Igea's half sister Great Shack required three generations for her own family to issue a horse of distinction (Table

2). Quilate, a third generation descendant of Great Shack and, therefore, a fifth generation descendant of Cotehele House, won a Group Three contest at Caulfield. Quilate's sire, the star-crossed Bramshaw, was an unraced son of Encosta De Lago and Cothele House whose career at stud can only be described as mediocre at best. Quilate, inbred 2X5 to Cotehele House, was his only blacktype winner.

It is actually quite extraordinary how well Cotehele House stallions have performed when bred to Cotehele House-line broodmares. Zed's Verry Ellegant, Bramshaw's Quilate, Danewin's Fair Trade and Skilled's Fiscal Fantasy have already been mentioned.

So far, Shooting To Win's richest offspring is the Group Three winner Tailleur whose dam was out of a Commands mare. This same pattern is observed with Shooting To Win's full brother Deep Field whose second richest offspring is multiple Group winner and sire prospect Cosmic Force also out of a Commands mare. All of this is summarized in Table 2.

To this point, there have been a total of 45 individuals of racing age with pedigrees demonstrating inbreeding to Cotehele House within five generations (Rasmussen Factor criteria). Six (13 percent) of these 45 have become Australasian Group stakes winners.

The quality of this family shines through at periodic intervals which appear to occur more frequently and with greater effect with the duplication of Cotehele House's complementary strains.