

Inbreeding *to the historic* **ALLEGRETTA** *tribe*

Reviewing the results of crossing complementary strains from the classic German "A" family that produced the boundless "Arc queen", Urban Sea. Her influence on the world's greatest race is unparalleled.

by Rommy Faversham

True Love



Galileo's transformative influence on the breed helps to explain the direction in evolution today's thoroughbred has taken. Certainly a good part of this influence is his own extended tail-female line (#9-h) that has, for well over a century and a half, been a veritable fountain of excellence. Most recently, as depicted in Table 1, Galileo's grandam Allegretta has, to date, become matriarch to no less than 47 international Group and Graded stakes winners over the past twenty-five years.

Bred by Gestut Schlenderhan, Germany's oldest and arguably most prestigious private stud (circa 1869), Allegretta traces back to her eighth dam, 1906 German Oaks winner Ibidem. Having been purchased by the famed nursery, Ibidem founded the vaunted "A" family, following the longstanding

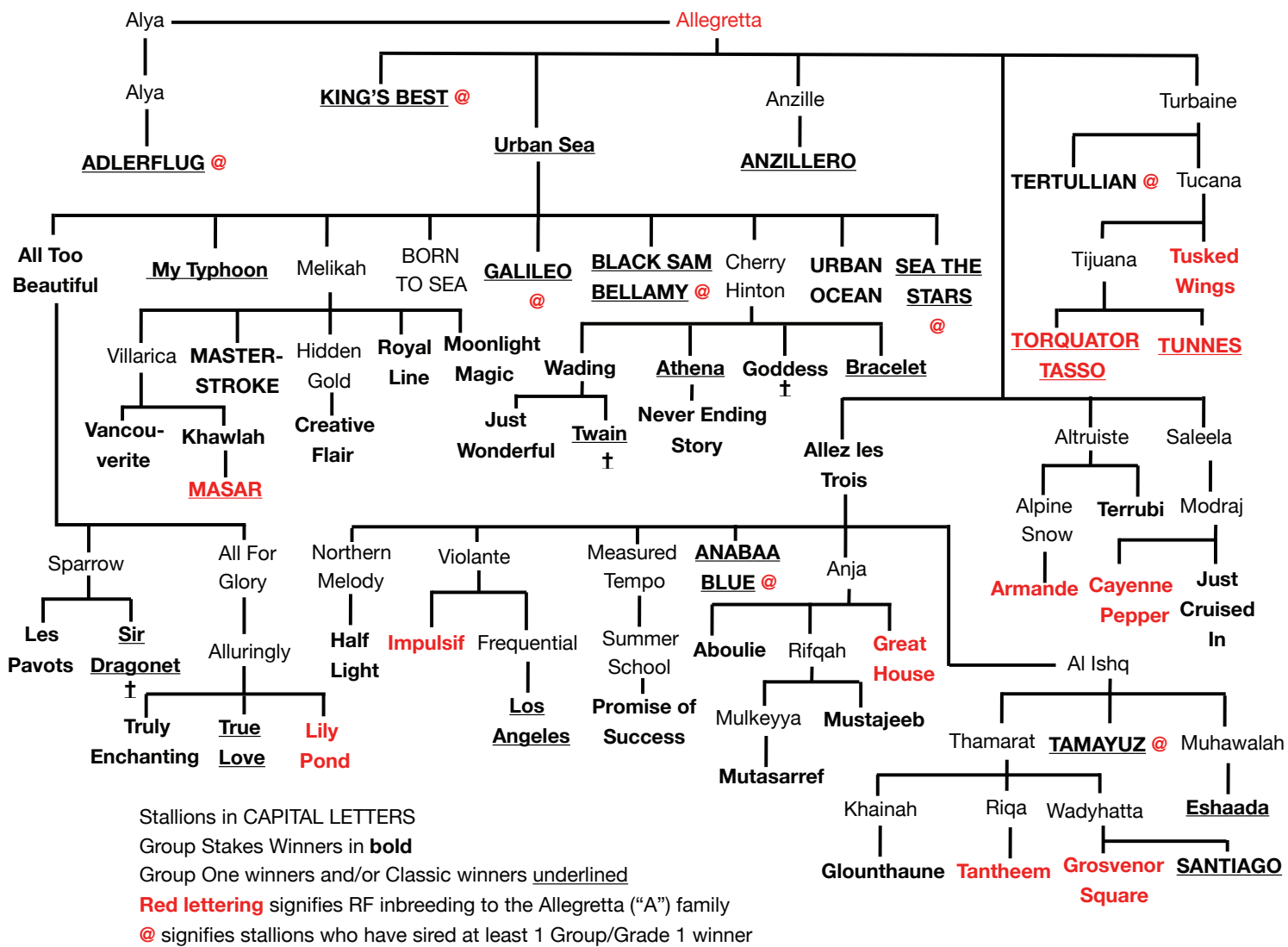
tradition in which all German farm-bred progeny receive names starting with their family's chosen letter - a very useful marker of heritage that identifies individuals within their line of maternal descent. Seven of Gestut Schlenderhan's record nineteen German Derbies were, in fact, representatives of their "A" family. Further back, the entire #9-h branch was initiated by Allegretta's eleventh dam, Maid of Masham (GB:1845), by Don John, whose stirp became, in subsequent years, responsible, for a remarkable portion of the world's greatest sires. She was indeed the source of a remarkable cluster of influential stallions.

Allegretta (GB:1978) was the first in her family to be foaled and raced outside of Germany. She was particularly stoutly-bred as her X-ray pedigree illustrates. Allegretta's sire, Schlenderhan-bred

Lombard was a two-time German Horse of the Year. He was out of Promised Lady, herself a half-sister to Noble Lassie, the dam of breed-shaper Vaguely Noble. This helps to explain the affinity between the descendants of Allegretta and Vaguely Noble. Allegretta's pedigree also reveals another auspicious family tie. Lombard's sire German classic winner Agio is a grandson of one of the farm's key matrons Aster, by Oleander, who also serves as Allegretta's fifth dam. This 4X5 inbreeding to Aster is a reinforcement of the tail-female line, historically a well-practiced recipe for success and demonstrated throughout Table 1. Allegretta's regretful culling by Schlenderhan in 1981 extinguished the family's alphabetical identity but none of its quality.

Six of Allegretta's seven daughters forged branches yielding at least one Group

Table 1 INTERNATIONAL GROUP STAKES WINNING DESCENDANTS FROM THE FAMILY OF ALLEGRETТА



winner. Her best daughter, Urban Sea issued a total of eleven foals, but only four producing daughters. Three of these, All Too Beautiful, Melikah and Cherry Hinton, have all been highly successful, particularly the latter. The fourth, My Tycoon, by Giant's Causeway, set a world record as a weanling in 2002 when sold for \$1.8m guineas (almost \$US3 million) before joining the barn of Hall of Famer Bill Mott where she captured six graded stakes including the Grade 1 Diana. And yet, My Tycoon's produce record could not have been much more of a disappointment. Three unremarkable winners from ten foals. Her branch still seeks its first group/graded winner. Of note, none of her Kentucky daughters or granddaughters have, so far, been bred to a sire carrying a strain from the "A" family.

In recent years, female families who issue a cluster of influential stallions (what famed Australian breeding theorist Bruce Lowe referred to as 'sire families') have indeed become a rarity. Perhaps genomics and A.I. will eventually identify a reason for this change. At present, the contemporary thoroughbred family with the largest cluster of bona fide sires is, in fact, the disrupted "A" family of Allegretta and Galileo, by some measures, the world's most successful stallion. As such, Allegretta has certainly followed in the footprints of her foundation matron, Maid of Masham. So far, as documented in Table 1, seven individual sires descending from Allegretta have sired Group/Grade One stakes winners. Another, 2007 German Derby (Deutsches Derby) winner Adlerflug, a grandson of Allegretta's full sister Alya, has sired at least nine top level winners.

One of the consequences of a diminished number of sire families (domestic and globally) is a significant drop-off in the formation of female family inbreeding (FFI) patterns. We have already begun to appreciate this phenomenon, particularly in the United States. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Allegretta clan has rather quickly become one of if not the greatest current source of international FFI patterns as measured by the well documented Rasmussen Factor (RF) in which the duplication(s) appear within the fifth generation of an individual's pedigree.

ALLEGRETТА 1978

Lombard	Agio	ex Aralia	Alchemist	
			Aster	
	Promised Lady	ex Belle Sauvage	Big Game	by Bahram
			Tropical Sun	by Hyperion
Anatevka	Espresso	Acropolis	ex Aurora	by Hyperion
		Babylon	by Bahram	
	Almyra	Birkhahn	by Alchemist	
		Alameda	ex Asterblute	ex Aster

Aralia and Alameda are ¾ sisters

One of the consequences of a diminished number of sire families (domestic and globally) is a significant drop-off in the formation of female family inbreeding (FFI) patterns.

I originally addressed this subject in the May 2018 issue of Bluebloods in an article entitled "Inbreeding to Allegretta". At the time, there had been a total of 120 foals of racing age worldwide who were inbred (within RF criteria) to the Allegretta family. Six of these became Group/Graded stakes winners, for an unsustainable clip of 5% GSWs. The first was Australian-bred, Sword of Light winner of the 2016 Group 3 Blue Diamond Preview at Caulfield. A week after the issue reached its readers, Masar (GB) became Godolphin's first Epsom Derby (GB-1) winner at 16/1. Masar's was

inbred 3X4 to Allegretta's incredible daughter Urban Sea who has become nothing short of ubiquitous in the pedigrees of Europe's biggest race winners.

Urban Sea, indeed the "Arc Queen", appears in the winners' pedigrees in nine of the last ten runnings of the Prix de l'Arc Triomphe, a race she herself commandeered in 1993. She appears in the pedigrees in all of the last eight winners of the Epsom Derby (GB-1) as well as fourteen of the last eighteen. The Miswaki mare appears in every Oaks Stakes (GB-1) winner's pedigree for the last fourteen years. Over in Ireland, Urban Sea has been a constituent in 24 of the last 28 winners of the Irish Derby and Oaks. These are Pocahontas-like numbers. For good measure, her impact is widening, particularly across Europe.

Inbreeding to this packed tribe has now (through 2025) resulted in 1,423 foals of racing age which averages a little more than one hundred foals per year. So far, this collective lot has yielded 32 Group/Graded stakes winners (2.25 %). Seven have been Group/Grade One winners (21.9% Gr1w/sw). These figures suggest the crossing of complementary strains from this prodigious family would, from a purely quantitative standpoint, figure to improve the likelihood of getting a superior individual by roughly 50 to 60 %. (using Bill Oppenheim's rule of thumb where G1 SWs + G2 SWs= 0.008 or 0.8 % of the total number of individuals). At some point

(if not already), a “pedigree heatmap” engineered with A.I. should provide a more sophisticated evaluation.

Qualitatively, in a span of little more than a dozen years, this collection has featured some truly stellar performers including a pair of Arc winners, with Ace Impact an undefeated Cartier Horse of the year as well as the aforementioned Masar. A roster of the top representatives demonstrating this pattern of FFI appears in Table 2. A deep field, many of these are multiple

Group / Graded stakes winners and/or Group/Graded One placed.

With Galileo already having become the world’s next super sire (and broodmare sire-of-sires), it is quite obviously the second complementary strain and the individuals who carry them that determines the frequency of opportunity to inbreed to this premier classic family.

Broodmares that feature the tail-female line of the “A” family, as detailed in Table 1, would provide an auspicious

second strain. The most common variation of the overall pattern figures to continue to involve the family’s two best sires (and sires-of-sires), Urban Sea’s sons, Galileo and Sea The Stars. Blood from any of the lesser sires from this clan would be another valuable source. One also gets the sense that this relatively rare ‘sire family’ is quite likely of yielding more influential stallions in the not-too-distant future.

Coolmore’s Galileo shuttled to Australia from 2002 to 2006 providing hundreds



Table 2

TOP INDIVIDUALS WITH PEDIGREES DEMONSTRATING INBREEDING TO THE ALLEGRETTA FAMILY

Individual	Sire	Inbreeding pattern	Racing Distinctions
ACE IMPACT	Cracksman	Allegretta 5X4	undefeated; 6 for 6; €3,996,100; 2023 Cartier Horse of the Year; Arc
ALLEN0	Nathaniel	Allegretta & Alya 4X4	Gerling-Preis (G2), 2nd Union-Rennen (G2), etc.
ALESSIO	Teofilo	Allegretta & Alya 4X4	Oleander-Rennen (G2), The Land Trophy (G3), etc.
ARROW EAGLE	Gleneagles	Allegretta 4X4	Prix Royal-Oak (G1), GP de Chantilly (G2), Prix d’Hedouville (G3)
ARMANDE	Sea The Stars	Allegretta 3X3	Pr Corrida (G3), 2nd Pr Allez France (G3), 3d GP de Saint-Cloud (G1)
BORNA	Saxon Warrior	Allegretta 5X3	Derby Italiano (G2), Pr. Ambrosiano (G3), 2nd Deutsches Derby (G1)
CAYENNE PEPPER	Australia	Allegretta 5X4	Blandford S. (G2), Flame of Tara S. (G3), 2nd Irish Oaks (G1), etc.
DESERT HERO	Sea The Stars	Urban Sea 2X4	Gordon S. (G3), 3rd St. Leger (GB-1); bred & o by Queen Elizabeth II
EL CORDOBES	Frankel	Urban Sea 3X3	Sword Dancer S. (G1), Princess of Wales S. (G2), 3rd BC Turf (G1)
ETNA ROSSO	Decorated Knight	Urban Sea 3X3	Newcastle Gold Cup (GB-3), 2nd EF Brisbane Cup (G2), etc.
FIREGLOW	Teofilo	Allegretta 4X3	3X SW (GB-L); 3X 2nd in (GB-G3), 4th 1,000 Guineas (GB-1)
Frankly Awesome	Frankel	Allegretta 4X4	SW; 2nd ATC Storm Queen S. (G1), 3rd ATC Australian Oaks (G1)
GOSTAM	Saxon Warrior	Urban Sea 4X4	Zukunfts-Rennen (G3), Pr der Winterfavoriten (G3); 2YO Ger. Champ
GREAT HOUSE	Galileo	Allegretta 3X3	NJC Newcastle Cup (G3), VRC Lexus S. (G3), etc.; A\$968,000
GROSVENOR SQUARE	Galileo	Allegretta 3X5	Irish St. Leger Trial (G3), Eyrefield S. (G3), 2nd Curragh Cup (G2)
LILY POND	Galileo	Galileo & All Too Beautiful 1X3	Kilboy Estate S. (G2), 4th Beverly D,
MASAR	New Approach	Urban Sea 3X4	Epsom Derby (G1), Craven S. (G3), Solario S. (G3), 3rd 2000 Gs. (G1)
MEERGORL	Adlerflug	Alya & Allegretta 4X4	Diana-Trial (G2)
MOHAAFETH	Frankel	Urban Sea 3X3	Hampton Court (G3), Newmarket S.-L, 4th International S. (G1)
MONTREAL	Sea The Stars	Allegretta 3X3	2nd Prix du Jockey Club (Gr1)
ONESTO	Frankel	Urban Sea 3X3	Grand Paris de Paris (G1), Prix Greffulhe (G2), 3rd Arc (G1)
PRETTY TIGER	Sea The Moon	Allegretta 4X5	Prix Eugene Adam (G2), Prix Exbury (G3), 2nd Prix Ganay (G1)
RIVER OF STARS	Sea The Stars	Allegretta & Alya 3X4	Bronte Cup Fillies S (G3), 2nd Caulfield Cup (G1), Pr d Royallieu (G1)
SOPRAN BASILEA	Night of Thunder	Allegretta 5X3	Prix Lydia Tesio S. (G2), Prix Verziere (G3), Robert G. Dick S. (G3)
SPACE LEGEND	Sea The Stars	Urban Sea 2X4	2nd King Edward VII (GB-1), Cocked Hat S.-L; 4 starts: 1 - 3 - 0
SWORD OF LIGHT	New Approach	Allegretta 4X3	VRC Lets Elope S (G2), Blue Diamond Preview (G3); A\$536,450
Tasmania	Australia	Allegretta & Alya 4X4X4	SW; 2nd Hoppings S. (G2), 3rd Prix de Diane (G1)
TORQUATOR TASSO	Adlerflug	Alya & Allegretta 3X4	Arc deTriomphe (G1), GP vonBerlin/Baden (G1); Hansa-Preis (G2) 2X
TANTHEEM	Teofilo	Allegretta 4X5	Prix de Cabourg (G3), Prix de Meautry (G3), Pr. du Petit Couvert (G3)
TE ENCUESTRO	Frankel	Allegretta 4X5	2nd Matamata Breeders’ Stakes (NZ-2), 2 starts: 1 - 1 - 0
THE LION IN WINTER	Sea The Stars	Urban Sea 2X4	Acomb S. (G3), 2nd Queen Elizabeth II S. (G1), 3rd BC Mile (G1), etc.
TUNNES	Guiliani	Turbaine 3X3	Grosser von Bayern (G1), Deutsches St. Leger (G3)
TUSKED WINGS	Adlerflug	Alya & Allegretta 3X3	Diana-Trial (G2)
ZARIR	Frankel	Urban Sea 3X3	2nd Prix Ganay (G1), Prix Foy (G1), etc.

of foals, and yet could never shake the notion that his Northern Hemispheric progeny were of considerably higher quality. The difference in statistics were quite marked. More recently Down Under, Sir Dragonet (Ire.), by Camelot with Urban Sea as his third dam, would have been a fascinating domestic source. Sadly, the winner of the 2020 MVRC Cox Plate (G1) and the 2021 ATC HE Tancred S. (G1) broke down during a workout and had to be euthanized. Another with Urban Sea as his third dam and sire potential, Twain (Ire.) by Wootton Bassett was an undefeated French Group 1 winning juvenile in 2024 who suffered a leg injury in training and had to be put down as well (Table 1). More positively, Irish Derby winners Los Angeles (Ire.), by Camelot and Santiago (Ire.), by Authorized, both from the Allez les Trois branch of Allegretta, appear bona fide sire prospects.

For the most part, these early RFs have demonstrated relatively close inbreeding patterns (especially 3X3 and 3X4). In the coming years, duplication of Urban Sea and the Allegretta family will progress into the fourth and even fifth generations of an individual's pedigree. This may give us a little bit better idea of how very prepotent the "Arc Queen" actually is.

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STOP PRESS: While this edition was going to press Rommy Faversham's article proved prescient with the victory of True Love in the 2026 English 1000 Guineas. Her dam Alluringly is a granddaughter of Galileo's full sister All Too Beautiful who is in turn a daughter of Urban Sea and granddaughter of Allegetta.

True Love is the 21st Gr1 winner directly descended from Allegretta out of 652 runners at a rate of 3.2% Gr1 winner/runners, phenomenal stats for a mare.

There are now 11 Gr1 winners out of 143 runners directly descended from Allegretta's daughter Urban Sea at a scarcely believable rate of 7.69% Gr1 winners/runners.

Full marks to Rommy Faversham.

Andrew Reichard.

MASAR 2015

New Approach	Galileo	Sadler's Wells	by Northern Dancer	
		Urban Sea		
	Park Express	by Ahonoora		
Khawlah	Cape Cross	Green Desert	by Danzig	by Northern Dancer
		Park Appeal	by Ahonoora	
	Villarica	ex Melikah	ex Urban Sea	

TORQUATOR TASSO 2017

Adlerflug	In The Wings	Sadler's Wells	by Northern Dancer	
		High Hawk	by Shirley Heights	by Mill Reef
	Alyana	Last Tycoon	Try My Best	by Northern Dancer
			Mill Princess	by Mill Reef
		Alya	Lombard	
Tijuana	Toylsome		Anatevka	
		Cadeaux Genereux	ex Smarten Up	by Sharpen Up
	Tucana	Treasure Trove	by The Minstrel	by Northern Dancer
			Trempolino	by Sharpen Up
		ex Turbaine	Allegretta	Lombard
				Anatevka

Alya and Allegretta are full sisters

ACE IMPACT 2020

Cracksman	Frankel	Galileo	Sadler's Wells	by Northern Dancer
			Urban Sea	ex Allegretta
		Kind	by Danehill	by Danzig
	Rhadegunda	ex St Radegund	by Green Desert	by Danzig
Absolutely Me	by Anabaa Blue	Anabaa	by Danzig	by Northern Dancer
		Allex les Trois	ex Allegretta	