

Lodge an interest in Lane

THE PROFESSIONALS' GRAPEVINE

With
Matthew Thole



THIS week on the Grapevine I will highlight some dark horses that are well fancied to pay their way over the winter.

My private clients ended the Flat season in style with Charm School winning the November Handicap, advised at 10-1.

We then clicked into jumping action with French Opera winning at Cheltenham at 3-1, Phidippides hacking up at Ludlow at 3-1 and the Barney Curley-trained Sereth slucing in at the first time of asking at Huntingdon.

I would suggest that both Phidippides and Sereth are worth following, while I have been told French Opera will now be aimed at the Grand Annual at the Cheltenham Festival and will go there a fresh horse.

Trainer Victor Dartnall consistently turns out a steady stream of winners, many of which are improving sorts as the trainer likes to give his horses time to mature and improve.

Two of the trainer's horses of special note are **HENRY KING** and **LODGE LANE**.

Henry King is a well-regarded five-year-old who has already run well in defeat this season when second to

the Paul Nicholls-trained Pepe Simo at Wincanton in October.

That is good form in itself, but when you consider the race was not run to suit, Henry King is guaranteed to improve for the effort.

Lodge Lane is a horse that has promised so much in the last few seasons and on a going day he has beaten the likes of the ill-fated Wichita Lineman, Tazbar and Carruthers.

He finished a creditable third on his first start of the current campaign at Carlisle and rest assured, given true soft ground and a real test of stamina, Lodge Lane can be backed once again.

Nicky Henderson has a great team once again this year and in truth, it would be easy to select a couple of dozen horses to follow this season.

One that is high on the list at Seven Barrows is the once-raced **OSCAR WHISKY**, a nine-length winner of a Newbury bumper on his debut.

He has reportedly schooled really well and will be aimed at a quality novice hurdle for his debut,

meaning he could still be a highly regarded. The Venetia



The Victor Dartnall-trained Lodge Lane is a horse with plenty of promise

Williams-trained **QUARTZ DE THAIX** was beaten 20 lengths on his seasonal bow at Fontwell, but is expected to leave that form well behind over the coming months.

Donald McCain has built up an impressive reputation with the aid of his under-

rated jockey Jason Maguire and if his horses remain in good health, they are a team worth following.

Two of the lesser known inmates that are high on his list are **MWALESHI** and **PEDDLERS CROSS**. Mwaleshi is a well-bred

unraced four-year-old that is working well at home in preparation for his debut run in a bumper, while Peddlers Cross cost 100,000 guineas and is regarded as a horse with a big future.

Both could be capable of winning at the first time of

Professionals' Grapevine:
Horses to note:
Saturday 21 November
FRENCH OPERA
PHIDIPPIDES
SERETH
LODGE LANE
HENRY KING
OSCAR WHISKY
QUARTZ DE THAIX
MWALESHI
PEDDLERS CROSS
BEDLAM BOY
SIR BOREAS HAWK
SCALE BANK

asking under Ruels and Peddlers Cross gets his chance in the bumper at Haydock today (1.45).

One horse that has already won this season is the Ferdy Murphy-trained **BEDLAM BOY**, but I still rate him as a dark horse for the remainder of the campaign.

His impressive novice chase win at Carlisle may have gone under the radar and he can be followed in northern events.

Alan Swinbank has a reputation of really knowing the time of day and two of his horses worth special mention are **SIR BOREAS HAWK** and **SCALE BANK**.

Sir Boreas Hawk has already been beaten twice this season, but his winning turn is near and off a mark of 125 he is expected to be competitive on his next few outings.

Scale Bank was beaten 36 lengths on his latest run at Kelso, but this Indian Danehill gelding is better than that effort and again should also go into the notebook.