

Dubai Duty Free announces winners at Spring Trials Weekend



Tom Marquand receives his trophy from Colm McLoughlin, Sinead El Sibai and Bernard Aquino after the Group 3 Dubai Duty Free Finest Surprise Stakes

The Dubai Duty Free Spring Trials Weekend, which opened Newbury Racecourse's 2024 Flat campaign on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 April, attracted a large crowd and brought several impressive performances.

There were surprises in both the Classic Trials, which featured on day two of the meeting. Italian runners are rare in the United Kingdom though after an unbeaten two-year-old career in her native Italy, Folgaria took part in the Dubai Duty Free Stakes Group 3.



Colm McLoughlin, Sinead El Sibai and Bernard Aquino present Dubai Duty Free Stakes trophies to Lucie Botti, Valentina Botti and Hollie Doyle

Winning Newmarket trainer Marco Botti's wife Lucie represented the stable at Newbury as she does in her husband's satellite yard in Dubai. Hollie Doyle was riding Folgaria for the first time and it is said that her strength in the saddle is what forced the filly home.

Hollie's husband Tom Marquand won the opening race of the day, the Group 3 Dubai Duty Free Finest Surprise Stakes aboard Hamish. The finish was a replica of last year's St Simon Stakes when Hamish held the Shadwell-bred Al Qareem, who finished only a neck behind in second.

"We could have done with the ground being a bit softer," said Haggas, happy to give his wife and his eight-year-old gelding all the credit. The victory was the fifth in a row for Hamish. His last defeat was in a photo at Newbury.

The colts' trial, the Watership Down Stud Too Darn Hot Greenham Stakes, was won by Esquire, trained in the North by David O'Meara.

It is evident the future is bright for Economics, winner of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships Maiden Stakes for three-year-old colts and fillies over a mile. As shared in a press release by the retailer, Economics is a serious Derby contender if he comes through his next trial, the Al Basti Equiworld Dante Stakes at York.

Even more striking, in the manner of his wide margin victory, was Godolphin's first winner of the meeting, Hidden Law, in the Darley Maiden Stakes over a mile and three furlongs for three-year-olds.

“Sheikh Mohammed will decide whether he takes the Classic Trial route,” said Godolphin’s retained jockey William Buick. “But I would say there’s a lot more to come and he’s bred to stay at least this trip. This was only his second run and he was unlucky to just get beat on his debut.”

The opening day of the meeting also saw success for the Dubai Royal Family with Teraabb ridden to victory in a tight finish by Jamie Spencer in the familiar yellow and black colors of H.H Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in the GBP 32,500 Dubai Duty Free Full of Surprises Handicap, a seven furlong contest for three-year olds.

Racegoers on both days of this event were able to sample Arabic Hospitality in the Dubai Duty Free Marquee where there were also opportunities to win prizes including free entry into the Dubai Duty Free Finest Surprise and Millenium Millionaire prize draws.

Dubai Duty Free’s Executive Vice Chairman and CEO Colm McLoughlin said, “The Dubai Duty Free Spring Trials Weekend never fails to produce quality racing which help elevate our brand on the international stage. We look forward to following the progress of many of the bright prospects we have seen on the track this weekend as the season unfolds.”