

The entente cordiale of owning in France

The French training ranks were boosted in 2013 with the arrival of 10-time Cheltenham Festival winning handler Ferdy Murphy. The Irishman has chosen to sell his Yorkshire yard and settle in the West of France at Senonnes, whose training centre he describes as «amazing».

born with Pierre and Nelly de la Guillonière, whose Haras de la Rousselière featured on the FRBC tour, and a number of McMillan's horses have been sourced from here. «We buy mostly youngsters, in the French way, and have interests in some foals out of Rousselière broodmares. All our horses are purchased with Etienne Leenders, who is a part owner of all of them. I am also beginning to involve people from home who can easily own shares in horses without going through the paperwork of being owners in their own right.»

The first horse to carry Douglas McMillan's grey and red colours in France is **Aristo des Mottes** (AQPS) (FR), whom he spotted during his first visit to the AQPS show at Lion d'Angers. The son of **Maresca Sorrento** (FR) has already picked up €16,500 in prize money as a three-year-old, and hopes are high that there is more to come. «He has shown a lot of promise in three flat races reserved for AQPS horses, finishing third on his debut in an educational outing at Argentan, before winning impressively by six lengths at Fontainebleau. He was then rather unlucky in the important Prix Jacques de Vienne at Saint-Cloud but still took a respectable third place. We've had offers to buy him but we are really looking forward to seeing him over hurdles in 2014. He has been schooling and is a natural jumper so we are very optimistic for the future.»

«I just can't understand why more people don't have horses in France!»

Douglas McMillan

Scottish-based Douglas McMillan's French racing adventure began when he accompanied judge Lucinda Russell to an AQPS show at Lion d'Angers in 2012. «We met some lovely people including Étienne and Christine Leenders, whose Senonnes stable we visited with the FRBC. They have now become great friends and Etienne trains all our horses» McMillan already had an affinity with France as he explains, «my wife is French and I can manage to get by in the language. We enjoy

rural France and this area is very well-situated with at least 30 racecourses within a two-hour drive. It is reasonably accessible for me and I have been known to fly to France for a day trip to attend the races, although I prefer to stay for longer to make the most of what the region has to offer; so far I've tried driving a trotter and wild boar hunting!» A friendship has also been

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