

Opportunity ABOUNDS

From proven Group 1 sires to top-class runners, there is something across the board for those hunting for value within the British and Irish stallion ranks

Words: Nancy Sexton

With the persistent dark cloud of Covid hanging over us and the pressures of a selective market, it can be argued that the hunt for a value sire has never been so important. Thankfully, breeders in Britain and Ireland are faced with ample choice, with an array of approximately 90 stallions who are advertised for the 2021 season at up to £8,000/€8,000, ranging from proven Group 1 sires to talented new additions.

Group 1 sires aplenty

The gold standard in this British-based category belongs to Derby winner **Sir Percy** (Lanwades Stud). At a fee of £7,000, British breeders have access to a proven Group 1 sire who operates at a clip of 41% when it comes to winners to foals of racing age, is responsible for 49 stakes horses and boasted a pair of 150,000gns yearlings in 2020. In fact, he ended the season with a yearling average close to 50,000gns to bolster a profile that epitomises value.

A similar sentiment also applies to **Sixties Icon** (Norman Court Stud) at his new fee of £1,000. Here is another proven Group 1 sire who is enjoying success under both codes and boasts 32% winners to foals of racing age. Like Sir Percy, he appeals as an inexpensive option to get a young mare going, as does **Mayson** (Cheveley Park Stud: £4,000), who fires in plenty of winners (33% winners to foals of racing age) alongside quality, last year's July Cup hero Oxted being a fine example.

Of the other proven sires in this bracket, Sharpen Up's grandson **Cityscape** (Overbury Stud: £4,000) is another Group 1 sire with eye-catching figures (7% Group winners to first-crop runners) while the first crop of **Outstrip** (Dalham Hall Stud: £4,000) offered encouragement, given it contains the



Sir Percy: Derby winner is a proven Group 1 sire with a high ratio of winners to foals

likes of Gold Trip, the Prix Greffulhe winner who ran fourth in the Arc, and Grade 3 winner Outburst.

For several of these horses, there is the enticing prospect of possessing larger crops to come. For instance, **Havana Gold** (Tweenhills Farm and Stud: £7,500) has 145 two-year-olds to run for him bred in the aftermath of a first crop that included Group 1 winner Havana Grey. Those youngsters, which sold for up to 150,000gns as yearlings, are now housed in some of the country's leading yards and it will be disappointing if they do not enhance their sire's profile.

Highclere Stud's **Cable Bay**, available for £8,000 in 2021, covered 100 mares last season thanks to a swift start highlighted by the Group 1 filly Liberty Beach. Another with a respectable commercial following, his yearlings sold for up to 150,000gns in 2020.

Similar comments apply to **Due Diligence** (Whitsbury Manor Stud: £6,000), whose feat of supplying three

“Havana Gold has 145 two-year-olds to run for him this year”

first-crop stakes winners saw his 2020 book rise to 100.

Of the older horses, it's worth noting that **Pastoral Pursuits** (Norton Grove Stud: £2,000) boasts a lifetime winners to foals of racing age figure of 38%. A fee of £2,500, meanwhile, is commanded by proven stakes sire **Heeraat** (Mickley Stud), **Swiss Spirit** (Batsford Stud), who offers access to the Invincible Spirit sire line, and **Music Master** (Throckmorton Court Stud), a high-class half-brother to