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Magic money

What can possibly go wrong, asks *Kate Andrews*



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course it was. She did it in her living room. The retreat element of the exercise was a moot point because she's already in retreat. We all are, unless we decide otherwise.

The turf

Robin Oakley



It wasn't so much a Derby victory this year as an act of grand larceny. Aidan O'Brien isn't just a master racehorse trainer. He is a master of psychology too. On Serpentine, a son of his first Derby winner Galileo, he put up a capable but little-known jockey who hadn't had a winner for 260 days assuring him that his mount would last two furlongs more than the Derby distance. Emmet McNamara duly pushed Serpentine into a massive lead and the other jockeys assumed they would blow up well before the finish, just as two front runners had done earlier in the Oaks. By the time the others realised that Serpentine wasn't stopping, it was too late. Aidan had won a record eighth Derby with a 25-1 shot and the 14 top jockeys who had forgotten that you should never underestimate a son of Galileo had serious questions to answer.

Talk of success and failure brings me to how our Twelve to Follow fared through the winter. No fewer than eight — Ard Abhainn, Battleoverdoyen, Beakstown, Champagne Well, Ecco, Lostintranslation, Oakley and Vinndication — did well enough for their trainers to run them at the Cheltenham Festival. The downside is that none of them won there although Battleoverdoyen (twice), Ard Abhainn, Hang In There and Lostintranslation triumphed elsewhere. With only five victories from 37 runs we showed a loss on a £10 level stake of more than £100. Okay, so we had twice as many second places but as Gary Player noted: 'If you finish second only your wife and your dog will like you — if you've got a good wife and a good dog.' Lostintranslation did finish third in the Gold Cup and Vinndication's festival run makes him a serious contender there next year.

The other bonus is that keeping an eye on Vinndication's progress introduced me to his trainer Kim Bailey's blog, one of the most entertaining reads in racing, where horse talk is interspersed with ruminations on how caddies got their name, why receptacles for savings are shaped like pigs and some well-worn jokes: A man goes to his doctor and says he is worried he's addicted

to Twitter. Doctor: 'I'm sorry, I don't follow you...'

Selecting Twelve for this year's squeezed Flat season has been tricky, with Ascot coming before Epsom and traditional Derby trials such as the Dante following the big race. Lord North tops my list. After he won Ascot's Prince of Wales's Stakes, trainer John Gosden revealed why he'd been gelded: 'Testosterone is the most dangerous drug in the world and it was driving him completely mad. Since he's been gelded, he's been a content, still very playful horse but he's not crazy like he used to be.' His trainer calls him classy and progressive too. I am also sticking with the Gosden-trained stayer Enbihaar.

Two come also from Clive Cox's yard, both sprinters. I had my eye on his Golden Horde even before he won the Commonwealth Cup at Ascot after his trainer's revelation that the Lethal Force colt, a strong two-year-old, had really grown into his frame. Clive's Tis Marvellous, who loves Ascot, was an eye-catching fourth behind the great Battaash in the King's Stand when his trainer said he might not quite be ready. Ascot form dominates this year so far and the 51b-claiming jockey Thore Hammer Hansen secured his first Ascot win on Alan King's Coeur De Lion. I watched him soon after at Newmarket ride a cool race behind two well-fancied speedsters on Richard Hannon's three-year-old Lexington Dash. They won so cosily he must go on to the list.

Jim Crowley rode three winners on the first day at Ascot this year as Hamdan Al Maktoum's horses dominated but the one that got away was Marcus Tregoning's Mohaather in the Queen Anne. His jockey sat at the back with a handful, fuming as no gap opened up in the wall of horses ahead of him. The pair will surely make amends to poor Marcus who saw his Raatea (not in the Twelve but also worth watching) suffer a similar fate at Newmarket a few days later.

Michael Dods has done this column some good turns and I was tempted to include his sprinter Dakota Gold but will instead go for Brunch, a Newcastle winner in June, who should pick up some decent races over a mile. It would be unthinkable not to have a Mark Johnston horse and though his Elarqam disappointed at Ascot he gave Lord North a real race at Haydock earlier. Roger Varian has strength in depth this year with the likes of Ascot winner Fujaira Prince. I will take his Setarhe, second at Ascot to the runaway winner Dardalla, and Valyrian Steel, a son of Frankel who won well at Newcastle on the first day racing resumed. Karl Burke's progressive Guipure also won nicely over a mile at Newcastle and I will complete the Twelve with James Fanshawe's Audarya who improved nicely from the rear at Kempton in June after a long break.

Good luck to all.

Bridge

Susanna Gross

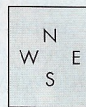
What goes through a world-class player's mind when he or she stops to think for an age during a hand? I always find it slightly humbling: are they calculating probabilities, spotting chances, and creating contingency plans that mere mortals would find hard to grasp? Almost certainly that's true, but they're also doing something else: sizing up their opponents. I've lost count of the times I've presented a declarer-problem to a top player, only to be asked: 'Who am I playing against?'

Take this hand. When I asked David Gold how he would tackle the diamond suit, his immediate response was: 'How good is my left-hand opponent? How good is my right?'

Dealer South

NS vulnerable

♠ A 6
♥ J 10 6
♦ A Q 7 5 4 3
♣ J 3



♠ Q J 7 5
♥ A 7 4
♦ J 2
♣ A 7 5 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

The ♠10 is led. You play low. East wins with the ♠K and returns a spade to dummy's ♠A. You now play a low diamond from dummy to your ♦J and it holds. You continue with a diamond towards the ♦AQ and West follows small. What now? Both defenders have played in perfect tempo. Obviously if East began with Kxx you have no chance.

Here was David's reasoning. If East is a good player, he could well have ducked smoothly holding ♦Kx. But if he's less experienced, you should assume he doesn't hold ♦Kx, and finesse the ♦Q rather than play to the ♦A and hope the ♦K drops.

But what about West? Holding ♦Kxx, very good players would duck the ♦J smoothly. So if you rate West highly, that's another reason to finesse the ♦Q. But if West is an average player, you should assume he doesn't hold the ♦K and go for the drop.

And now for the really hard part: you need to balance your opinion of West against your opinion of East. If East is the weaker player, go for the finesse. If West is the weaker player — go for the drop! No wonder they sometimes take so long to think...