

## THE CALCUTTA WINER SEASON 2005 – 2006

*The Calcutta winter season, like every new season, began on an expectant note. The rains have gone, the winter has set in, the mercury is down and hopes are high. The winter outstation challengers are in and the two-year-olds are going through their paces.*

The Calcutta winter season has its usual three-year-old Classic circuit of the 1000 and 2000 Guineas, Oaks, Derby, Leger and the very well set out older horse pattern races of the Calcutta Gold Cup, the Indian Champion Cup and the prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Cup.

With the monsoon Derby Trial Stakes winner Sanskara (Don't Forget Me – Sheseido) expected to have a bold say in the filies' races, her challengers arrived in the form of **Romantic Liaison (Razeen – Veena's Pet)**, **Supreme Princess (Razeen – Eminence)** and **Star Memories (Steinbeck – accrual)**. Fate has other plans. Sanskara was struck by high fever and an extended bout of purging which put paid to her Classic aspiration.

Romantic Liaison, after her two impressive wins, demolished here challengers in the 1000 Guineas and was shifted to Mumbai where she gave a very good account of herself, running a respectable second in the Indian 1000 Guineas. The supplements as a final entry in the Indian

Oaks to try and topple her conqueror in the 1000 Guineas, Desert Lightning (read Oaks review). Her dam, Veena's pet, is a sister to Indian Derby winner Indictment and stamina should not be deterrent.

**Romantic Liaison's** departure to Mumbai and Sanskara's unruly behaviour and subsequent withdrawal at the Oaks' start paved the way for Supreme Princess to post an easy runaway victor in the Oaks and lay down the gauntlet for a Derby challenge. Stamina is a her forte and she is expected to have a bold show over the grueling mile-and-a-half Classic.

The colts meantime has a similar tale, with South Indian Challenger, Rising Force, suffering from fever and purging, with left him without a lead-up race to the 2000 Guineas. The highly rated **Aristotle (Razeen – Excentrique)** after decimating Rasalas in their lead up annexed the 2000 Guineas with relative ease from Arturo, and shapes as the prime contender for the season's three year old plum, the Eveready-sponsored Calcutta Derby on Jan 8<sup>th</sup>.

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