

RACING POST

'The aim is to found a proper Spanish stallion line' - Noozhoh Canarias proving champion material once again

Tom Peacock 16.12.2024



Noozhoh Canarias (left) goes head-to-head with Karakontie in the 2013 Prix Jean-Luc Lagardere. Edward Whitaker

There's something that feels right and proper when a racehorse replicates his achievements on the track as a stallion. Frankel becoming British and Irish champion sire was survival of the fittest in action, a true sense of the best breeding the best.

For a time, Noozhoh Canarias was regarded as the Iberian Frankel. This year, in even quicker time with just four small crops of racing age, he too will be crowned as a national champion sire.

It is a moment to capitalise upon for Jose Hormaeche, who has known the 13-year-old since birth and stands him at Yeguada Arguero in Asturias, northern Spain.

"He's a homebred, so it makes that very exciting," says Hormaeche, who used to manage Felipe Hinojosa's Yeguada de Milagro as well as being involved in studs in Newmarket and Yorkshire.

"We've stood him since he retired. We bred him, then he was with his owners for his racing career. We stood him for them for the first two years and finally we bought him back and now stand him for ourselves. He seems a very good stallion, his numbers are extremely good."

Noozhoh Canarias first made a name for himself with a blistering debut two-year-old win at La Zarzuela in Madrid for trainer Enrique Leon, and his reputation spread in 2013 when he repeated that performance in a Listed race at La Teste-de-Buch in France.



It was a big day for Spanish racing when Noozhoh Canarias took part in the 2,000 Guineas. Credit: Edward Whitaker

He blew away all but Karakontie in the Prix Jean-Luc Lagardere, which was enough to tee up an audacious attempt at the 2,000 Guineas. Although a mile proved a stretch at that stage of his career, Noozhoh Canarias was a commendable sixth behind a trio who have all established themselves as big-league stallions in a deep pond, namely Night Of Thunder, Kingman and Australia.

What is satisfying for Hormaeche is he goes even further back to Noozhoh Canarias's sire, Caradak, who won the Prix de la Foret for Godolphin following a transfer from the Aga Khan. "I bought Caradak when he finished racing," says Hormaeche. "I remember I went to see him in Newmarket.

"He was a very good-looking horse, very strong, and he had very good form on fast ground, so I thought he was ideal for Spain. He also had speed, he won the Foret, so we thought that was perfect.

"He was an instant success in Spain anyway, so he was a good decision, which isn't always the case with stallions."

After Noozhoh Canarias finished sixth in the July Cup he was moved to the Chantilly stable of Spanish-born Carlos Laffon-Parias, for whom his best performance came when third in the Prix de la Foret behind Olympic Glory.

A European Group win never materialised, but he would score again in Spain and is still recognised as the best horse to represent his country in many years.



Jose Hormaeche: 'Noozhoh Canarias is very good most of the year for covering'. Credit: L. Green

"Noozhoh Canarias is very assured of himself," says Hormaeche. "He stands there and he knows he's there, very calm but a lot of confidence in himself. Ever since he was born, he has always been like that. He's very good most of the year for covering."

The reason, of course, that Noozhoh Canarias emerged as such a curiosity is because Spain is a pretty minor European racing nation with a small handful of racecourses and only a meeting or two a week.

Hormaeche passes on that the sire has produced 12 winners out of 21 runners this year, with his career total running to 22 winners from 33 runners and many being towards the top tier.

It is a stark indication of the size of the Spanish breeding industry.

"He got 15 mares in foal this year – it was a bad year for him – but hopefully next year he'll be covering between 35 and 40," says Hormaeche. "It's a very small scene here, there are about 150 foals born every year, so there's very little left."

For this reason, Hormaeche decided to send his other resident stallion First Eleven, the winning Frankel half-brother to Kingman, to Haras de la Barelriere in France with the aim of him getting more of an opportunity. Unless you attract a good proportion of the resident mares, it isn't worth bothering.

In the case of Noozhoh Canarias, there is also the element of national pride which spurs on Hormaeche.

"Hopefully he can breed another one to keep the line going," he says. "That's the aim at the moment; to found a proper Spanish stallion line."

"I've raced one that I thought was good called All Iron, who won a Listed race in France [the Derby du Midi at Bordeaux Le Bouscat] third time up. He got injured but hopefully this coming year he'll be back."

"But there are three or four that might come good. He's got the best three-year-old in Spain this year [Tetuan], who won the Derby."

"That was a big deal because you wouldn't expect him to breed mile-and-a-half horses, and he's a proper horse for next year."

"He has also got a very promising and unbeaten two-year-old who won again recently called Another Rose. So there is plenty to look forward to."