



at a glance  
with lance benson

# Full Monty for Felix IF YOU COETZEE ME NOW....

**The thought of any level of jockey travelling half-way around the world during his annual vacation, at his own cost, in order to spend two weeks being lectured on equine communication is far-fetched and a long-shot in the extreme. Such is the dedication of Felix Coetzee who has just returned from the Monty Roberts Ranch in California. His enthusiasm and passion for the Roberts philosophy is tangible and a refreshing change from the cynicism and whinging which too often dominates our everyday life in this game.**

Felix Coetzee is a guy, one would think, who really has very little left to prove in a star-studded career that has spanned almost thirty-five years. At the age of 49 he has seen the world, ridden winners on four continents, won the premier SA marathon event, the Gold Cup a joint record seven times with Charlie Barends, been South African Champion Jockey three times and Champion Apprentice twice and also won practically every Group race in the no-quarter-given bull-ring of Hong Kong horseracing. Not bad for a jockey who graduated from the South African Jockey Academy in 1979 and only rode here for thirteen seasons before taking the plunge and moving East in search of a dream.

He popped in at our offices at Greyville Racecourse on Friday after having flown up from the storm-hit Western Cape where he had settled his nineteen year old daughter Catherine into Theatre School at the V & A Waterfront. "Hell, this daughter of mine is crazy about singing and dancing. She wants to know absolutely nothing else. Mind you, she reminds me a bit of myself at a similar age - I couldn't sing or dance but I was fired up and very motivated. Suppose I can't really blame her then!", he chirped as he settled into my interview chair for what was going to be the most interesting two hour chat I have enjoyed for quite some time.

## A Natural

His late father, Hennie, was a trainer for many years - training great horses like Kentford and Mildenhall - and it was a natural move that the young slightly built Felix would take his chances as a jockey after having grown up in the beautiful surrounds of the Summerveld Training Centre. History shows that he was a natural horseman who had an affinity for the horse and judgement of pace second to none. He made a huge impact on the SA racing scene in the early eighties, riding initially for his father and then for his brother-in-law and current Harness Racing Chairman Dean Latimer - who at that time was a successful trainer at Summerveld. He spent some time with the late Theo de Klerk and then Terrance Millard in the Cape before a restlessness and an urge to see the world saw him spend a month in the United Kingdom in the late eighties. "Muis Roberts was a huge help and introduced me to so many influential people. I was only allowed to stay a month but enjoyed it and thanks to a meeting with the legendary Clive Brittain, I managed a ride in the Arc for Lady Beaverbrook. It was a huge day and what an atmosphere! I can still feel that sensation of being part

of it- even though I ran unplaced," he said with a faraway look on his face.

Back in South Africa, Felix was riding for Tony Millard in Gauteng during the 'Empress Club days', as he calls them, when he received a fax from a Hong Kong - based journalist by the name of Robin Park. It was a fax that was to inexorably change the course of his career forever: "Park explained in the letter that Brian Kan was looking for a stable jockey. I had been there previously on holiday and was friendly with the pioneering Bartie Leisher who did exceptionally well there. I flew out without delay to have another look and was extremely impressed by the professional set-up as well as the good stake money and low tax structure. I grabbed the opportunity and arrived full of anticipation and excitement. Looking back now, it was definitely not the right time to have joined the Kan stable and I battled to make an impact for five long years - and believe me they were long years! The turning point for me came a year after I left Kan - I joined Tony Cruz and things really took off from there. Great horses like Silent Witness, on whom I won seventeen races in a row, and the brilliant Lucky Owners, as well as Helene Mascot on which I won the Derby. That period of my career is well documented."



## Full Of Monty

In 2007, Felix and his good friend Dougie Whyte decided to travel to the States to satisfy their curiosity and fascination with the Wild West and Cowboys, by attending a Monty Roberts course at Solvang in the scenic Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara California. He explains that both he and Dougie returned home with their eyes and minds having been thrown wide open. Such was the impact that Felix, this time on his own, returned again this year to repeat the two-week course. He cannot say enough about the personal benefits: "I have never learnt so much about the horse and about myself. I have been absolutely blown away by Monty's knowledge and skills. Just to meet the man is something. Unlike most racing people, he is keen to share his knowledge and experience for the greater benefit of the horse. He wants the world to be a better place for humans and horses. He teaches that as flight animals, horses are masters of body language and this is where the secret lies. His approach is gentle and he believes in intrinsic learning - letting the horse teach itself as opposed to imposing our will upon him. At the age of seventy three, this guy is tough as teak and a genuine cowboy as legends taught us as kids," he waxes.

Felix went on to recount a story of how Monty Roberts tamed a wild mustang - which Felix himself rode (see pic of *Shy Boy* and Felix). "I rode the Mustang called *Shy Boy*. What a character - just like his master! I have changed my attitude to life and my approach to my riding. I have a renewed respect for the horse and now only go for the whip as a last resort - while still balancing the need to get the best out of my mount. The horse obviously has to do his best as punter's money and dreams are riding on him,

but if one thinks about it, as Tony Cruz used to believe, smacking him breaks his concentration."

Felix said that he would recommend the course to anybody interested in gaining a better understanding of themselves and animals. "I intend going back every year if I can. We can never stop learning about the horse."

Go to [www.montyroberts.com](http://www.montyroberts.com)

## Phumelela Shareprice

SHARE PRICES (1 Sept 2008)

date	close	high	low	volume
1 Sep	1250	1250	1250	695
29 Aug	1200	1250	1200	3.652
28 Aug	1250	1250	1200	5.250
27 Aug	1250	1250	1250	900
26 Aug	1200	1250	1200	4.710
25 Aug	1250	1300	1250	0
22 Aug	1250	1300	1250	12.710
21 Aug	1250	1250	1250	700
20 Aug	1300	1300	1300	0
19 Aug	1300	1300	1300	0
18 Aug	1300	1300	1300	0
15 Aug	1300	1300	1300	0
14 Aug	1300	1300	1295	40.748
13 Aug	1300	1300	1300	2.166
12 Aug	1300	1300	1300	1.000
11 Aug	1386	1386	1386	0

## A CAREER IN KOREA

Former Cape based Jockey Kenny Michel, who is employed by the Korea Racing Authority in Busan as their Riding Master, is visiting South Africa at the moment on a recruitment drive to find five top-quality work riders for a twelve month contract in Korea. Besides catching up on a fair amount of golf, he has encountered a lot of interest and has spoken to quite a few jockeys interested in the work. "The quality of life is good in Korea and the people are very pleasant. I am essentially looking for five solid hard working jockeys. I have already seen at least two guys who I am keen on and I will be flying to Gauteng this weekend to interview more applicants. The basic pay is USD3000 per month and accommodation and meals are provided. The KRA will pay for flights there as well as a return ticket on condition that the rider spends at least six months in Korea," he explained.

Qualified and interested parties can call Kenny on 084 3770675.

## AUSTRALIA

### Payne, Lloyd close to \$1 million

Former SA champ bags a winner and three places on a thrilling afternoon, writes JEFF ZERBST

David Payne and Jeff Lloyd came oh-so-close to a big win on Saturday, but Lloyd, back in form, did manage to clinch the daily jockeys' title.

Last Saturday's \$1 million Golden Rose (1400m) at Rosehill Gardens attracted a top field of three-year-olds and the David Payne-Jeff Lloyd combination came within a squeak of a thrilling victory. Payne sent out Stripper (15-2), Baci Amore (12-1) and Emperor Bonaparte (30-1) to tackle vaunted colt Duporth, who was backed in to 17-10 and was labelled a "good thing" by many.

Lloyd said Stripping could have won if the race had been run differently. "If she'd had something to follow a little longer, we might have done it," he said.

The ex-Durban jockey missed the break in the next race, the \$100,000 Sheraco Stakes (Listed) over 1100m but racing's gods were about to smile on him and Payne. Five-year-old mare Hairy (13-2), having her second run for the yard, got towed into the race by the fast-galloping pack, and when she saw daylight in the straight she shifted gear and made her rivals look like hacks. She won going away by half a length and had the stable's master tactician scratching his head.

The stable also did well in the day's last race when four-year-old mare Hurried Choice (4-1) kept on well to finish a half-length third behind favourite Typhoon Zed (7-2) in the Gr. 3 Concorde Stakes (1100m).

A popular bet in Sydney is the Jockeys' Challenge. You bet on a jock to score most points in a 3-2-1 system. Lloyd (10 points) came up trumps on Saturday, ahead of Hugh Bowman and Corey Brown (9 each).

[www.freeracer.co.za](http://www.freeracer.co.za)



## US Gr3 2nd for Tiger Ridge

KENT S. (G3) Delaware Park, August 30, \$501,500, 3yo, 9fT, firm, 1:52.54.

1 - ADRIANO, 116, Ch. c. 3, A.P. Indy iSD—Gold Canyon, by Mr. Prospector.Owner, Donald A. Adam; brdr, Courtlandt Farm (Ky.); trainer, William I. Mott; jockey, Kent J. Desormeaux. \$300,000. Lifetime: 11-4-1-0, \$713,680.

2 - ROMAN TIGER 116, B. c. 3, Tiger Ridge—Sunny's Freckles, by Sam's Sunny Hour. Owner, Dennis J. Manning; breeder, Bowling & Dodd (Fl.); trainer, Dennis J. Manning. \$100,000.

3 - MR MACCOOL 118, Ch. c. 3, Giant's Causeway iSD—Glory's Light, by Halo. Ownr, Donamire Farm; brdr, Donamire Farm (Ky.); trnr, David Fawkes. \$55,000. Margins: 1/2, 1/2, 3/4; Odds: 2.40, 53.50, 18.40.

Also ran: Seeyouinthecity 116 (\$30,000), Wesley 120 (\$15,000), Deal Making 116 (\$300), Ablaze With Spirit 116 (\$300), El Aleman 116 (\$300), Sagaponack 116 (\$300), Luck Money (Ire) 118 (\$300).

## French SW for Daylami

CLAIREFONTAINE-DEAUVILLE, France, 3rd, August 30, Alw, Grand Prix Petits Princes, \$42,546, 3yo, 2,200mT (10.94fT), good, 2:17.50.

1st—MAHAATHEER (IRE), B. f. 3, Daylami (Ire)—Al Ithithar (Ire), by Baraatha (Ire). O—Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid al Maktoum; B—Shadwell Estate Co. Ltd. (Ire); T—Freddie Head. 7-2-1-1, \$57,395.

2nd—MONTAGNE LOINTAINE (IRE), B. f. 3, Numerous iSD—Memoire (Fr), by Sadler's Wells. O—Ecurie Wildenstein.

3rd—LADY MB (FR), B. f. 3, Golan (Ire)—Blaine, by Lyphard's Wish (Fr). O—Charles-Eric Mimouni.

Margins: 2 1/2, head, 2.

## French Gr3 win for Tiza

PRIX DE MAEUTRY-LUCIEN BARRIERE (Fr-G3) DEAUVILLE, France, August 31, \$117,368, 3&up, 1,200mT (5.97fT), good, 1:09.90.

1st—TIZA (SAF), 127, B. g. 6, Goldkeeper—Mamushka (SAf), by Elliodor (Fr). Owner—J. C. Seroul and R. Pliersch; Breeder—Daytona Stud (SAf); Trainer—Alain de Royer-Dupre. \$58,684.

2nd—INXILE (IRE), 124, B. g. 3, Fayruz (GB)—Grandel (GB), by Owington (GB). \$23,474.

3rd—MARIOL (FR), 131, B. g. 5, Munir (GB)—La Bastoche (Ire), by Kaldoun (Fr). \$17,605.

Margins: 1, 1 1/2, nose. Also ran: Stern Opinion 124 (\$11,737), Salut l'Africain (Fr) 124 (\$5,868), Isanos (Fr) 120, Derison 127, Lumiere Noire (Fr) 124, Calbuco (Fr) 127, Loyalist (SAf) 127.