

THE YARD kicked off its December campaign with a winning double at Kempton on December 6. A game success for the juvenile Arisaig was followed up by a welcome second career success for the four-year-old Suffrajat.

Arisaig, a Harry Angel filly, was foaled in late April and won in good style on her racecourse debut at Chelmsford on October 5. Sent to Deauville a month later to contest the Listed Prix Zeddaan, she performed with credit, racing prominently despite a poor draw until weakening in the closing stages under Joe Fanning.

Racing in the colours of Chasemore Farm, Arisaig reappeared at Kempton in a novice fillies' event over seven furlongs, where she was ridden by William Buick. A field of 13 went to post for this race, which was run in thick, late afternoon fog.

Arisaig broke sharply from the stalls and set out to make all the running, pursued by D Flawless on her outer and Miss Sunset Strip towards the rails. Leading the field into the straight, Arisaig continued to lead narrowly from D Flawless, but, approaching the final furlong, that rival nosed ahead on the outer.

Despite being a quarter of a length down, Arisaig dug deep and began to claw back the deficit. At the post, she just managed to prevail by a nose in a head-bobbing finish.

In what now looks a smart piece of business, Arisaig was purchased by Johnston Racing for just 6,000gns at Book 3 of Tattersalls October Yearling Sale in 2022. She is out of the unraced Galileo mare, Magic Nymph, who was the daughter of the Group 1 Coronation Stakes winner, Balisada.

The double was completed when **Suffrajat** returned from a long lay-off to land the 11-furlong handicap. The four-year-old Golden Horn filly, owned by Deborah Finkler, Andrew Herd and Peter Holloway, won a Nottingham fillies' maiden as a juvenile but was then off the track for almost a year before

ROUNDUP

... of the yard's December winners

returning as a three-year-old.

Placed in an Ascot novice event on her return, she ran consistently enough, but after a run at Newcastle in January 2023 she was again absent until turning out at Kempton.

Partnered by Franny Norton, Suffrajat was one of 11 runners. She was slowly away, but Franny settled her in seventh, racing on the rail as Devizes and Gentle Whinny made the early running. Entering the straight, Suffrajat was in sixth position but began to make good progress. With others looking for the benefit of the cutaway, Franny made the inspired decision to switch his filly to the left.

Now clear to mount a challenge, Suffrajat finished best of all, outpointing the late challenger Ocean Heights by half a length.

Purchased for £34,000 by Johnston Racing at Goffs Orby Yearling Sale in 2020, Suffrajat is out of the Iffraaj mare, Liberating, who won a fillies' maiden at Cork on her debut as a juvenile. She was Listed-placed as a three-year-old and was rated in the high 90s.

Never Fear followed up her Wolverhampton win in mid-November with a game success in a Newcastle nursery on December 9. The No Nay Never filly, owned by the Eurolindy Partnership, was raised 4lb for this, her second outing at Gosforth Park.

Facing nine rivals, she was ridden by Jack Mitchell. Game Management made the early running, pursued by Fariha. Never Fear raced prominently, disputing third and fourth with Petra Celera. With two furlongs to race, Petra Celera took over in the lead as first Fariha and then Game Management fell away.

Flying Fletcher and Leveret came with dangerous-looking runs towards the stands side. Meantime, Never Fear stuck to her task, and in the closing stages she came to contest the finish with Petra Celera, just getting the better of a sustained duel to win by a nose.

Now the winner of three of her six starts, Never Fear is out of the Oratorio mare, Matorio, a three-time winner in France who was second in the Group 2 Prix du Muguet at Saint-Cloud over a mile as a four-year-old. She is a half-sister to the three-time winner, The Vegas Raider by Kendargent.

Wadacre Gomez landed his third win of



Never Fear, black cap, wins at Newcastle under Jack Mitchell



All smiles around Zandita at Lingfield, from the left: Charlie Johnston, Markus Graff, David Hickin, Franny Norton and Katie Williams

the year when comfortably winning a Chelmsford City handicap on December 11. Wadacre Stud's three-year-old colt by Brazen Beau won a Newcastle novice event over a mile and a quarter in April and has performed pretty consistently since then. He added a second win over the same distance in a Chelmsford handicap in August.

In the latest Chelmsford race, he faced six rivals and was partnered by his regular pilot, Franny Norton.

Sent to the head of affairs from the start, Wadacre Gomez made the pace from Phantasy Mac in the early stages and then from Boasty. Turning for home Carbis Bay and Clipsham Gold turned wide into the straight, but on the inner Wadacre Gomez was making the best of his way home.

CLEAR of his rivals a furlong from home, Wadacre Gomez just had to be pushed out in the closing stages to score from the other three-year-old Carbis Bay, beaten a length and three-quarters, with Phantasy Mac a further half a length back in third.

Home-bred by his owners out of the Martaline mare, Wadacre Gigi, Wadacre Gomez is clearly suited by a mile and a quarter at this stage of his career, but has already demonstrated that he stays at least 11 furlongs. There is stamina on the dam's side of his pedigree as damsire Martaline was a Group 2 winner in France over 14 furlongs.

Despite a less than ideal draw, **The African Queen** made it two wins from four career starts when making all the running to land a fillies' novice event at Wolverhampton on December 16.

The juvenile filly by The Last Lion, owned by John Brown and Partner, had made a winning debut at Brighton in July, before running down the field in the Listed Star Stakes at Sandown next time out on soft ground.

At Wolverhampton, 11 runners went to post for the fillies' novice event over a mile and half a furlong. In addition to The African Queen, the stable fielded newcomer La Fleur Petrus.

Jockey Franny Norton ensured The African Queen was

smartly away and they led in the early stages. Turning for home she continued to lead but the favourite, Bigtime Bridget, looked dangerous and began to challenge.

To her credit, however, The African Queen was not for passing and held off the favourite comfortably to score by a neck. La Fleur Petrus gave an excellent account of herself on this debut run, finishing well to take fourth, just a length behind the winner.

The winner is out of John Brown's Helmet mare, Burgonet, whom Mark trained to win three of her six races as a three-year-old in 2018.

The juvenile filly **Zandita** made an exciting start to her racing career when running out the impressive winner of a fillies' novice event at Lingfield on December 20.

The Calyx filly, owned by Markus Graff, was one of seven fillies who went to post for the seven-furlong race. Franny Norton was on board. The favourite, Tiaraqueen, set out to make all the running while Zandita broke well and raced in fourth or fifth, taking a keen hold.

Turning for home, Moonfire moved forward to challenge while Zandita came with a run, and as Tiaraqueen began to falter it became clear Zandita was finishing best of all. Taking over in front just before the furlong pole, Zandita kept on well to score by two lengths from Moonfire.

ZANDITA cost €26,000 as a foal and is out of the Aga Khan's Dalakhani mare, Zanolubiya. Zanolubiya was lightly raced, but won a fillies' maiden over a mile and a half as a three-year-old. She has been very successful in the paddocks; her Zannada, by Azamour, won the Group 3 Give Thanks Stakes at Cork over a mile and a half, while Zannadabad, by Iffraaj, won four times in France.

With plenty of stamina on the dam's side, Zandita promises to be even better as a three-year-old when she steps up in trip, but in the meantime this was a very promising first step in her racing career. ■