

MAKING his handicap debut, **Demilion** roared home to a comfortable success in a

Wolverhampton contest on January 5.

The grey Roaring Lion colt, owned by Susan and John Waterworth, had three runs as a juvenile at the end of last year, finishing his campaign with a promising third at Lingfield on December 22. Allotted an opening handicap rating of 74, Demilion faced five rivals at Wolverhampton in a race over nine and a half furlongs, and was ridden by Joanna Mason.

He broke well, but had to settle for a rails berth, travelling in third as Outrace and Hadley Park led into the first bend. The field was tightly grouped, and as Ramz made some progress approaching the final bend, Demilion looked in danger of being caught in a pocket.

He was a little wide into the bend just as Hadley Park overtook Outrace. But once in the clear, Demilion powered home, hitting the front a furlong out and pulling clear of his field in the final half-furlong. At the post, he had won by two and a quarter lengths from Outrace, with Ramz taking third, beaten a further neck.

This was an impressive win for Demilion, who is out of the Teofilo mare, Cascading. As a three-year-old, the dam won a maiden fillies' event over the Derby course at Epsom and was Listed-placed when third in the Chalice Stakes at Newbury next time out. She was also a half-sister to National Defense, the Champion French Two-Year-Old colt in 2016. A €67,000 purchase by Johnston Racing at Goffs Orby Yearling Sale in 2021, Demilion is a half-brother to two winners, Gran Sabana (by Kingman) and Fiordland (by Invincible Spirit).

The three-year-old **Sax Appeal** made a successful seasonal debut at Southwell on January 18. The Saxon Warrior colt had just one run as a juvenile last term, but it came at the last possible opportunity. Sent to contest a novice event over seven furlongs at Lingfield on December 31, the colt was sent off as favourite but ran too green to do himself justice and finished in midfield.

At Southwell, he was one of seven runners who went to post

ROUNDUP

... of the yard's January winners

for a restricted novice event, this time over a longer trip of one mile three furlongs and 23 yards. Franny Norton took the ride.

Sax Appeal raced in second on the outer before taking the lead with around half a mile still to race. Turning for home, he held a narrow advantage, but as Oyamal launched a challenge on his inside, Biscoff Joe improved from the rear to come with a run on the wide outside.

To his credit, Sax Appeal didn't flinch and kept on strongly. Indeed, he forged clear of his challengers from the furlong pole, allowing Franny the luxury of being able to ease him down in the final 50 yards. At the winning post, Sax Appeal had won by five and a half lengths from Biscoff Joe, who just denied Oyamal of second place by a nose.

Sax Appeal is out of the Oasis Dream mare Isobel Archer. A half-sister to the Prix Jean-Luc Lagardere (Group 1) winner Naaqoos, Isobel Archer was trained in France by Andre Fabre for Sheikh Mohammed, and although she herself didn't win, she has produced two winners in Bow And Arrow, a four-time winner by Iffraaj rated in the high 90s, and Liberated Lady, also by Iffraaj, who won races at Wolverhampton and in the US.

The debutant **French Invasion** lit up a mile and a half novice event at Kempton Park on January 19, striding clear of his rivals to score by six lengths in scintillating style.

OWNED by Simon Munir and Isaac Souede, the Le Havre colt was snapped up by Johnston Racing as part of Book 1 of Tattersalls October Yearling Sale in 2021 for 55,000gns.

However, it's fair to say that things didn't go entirely to plan at first. Charlie Johnston takes up the story. 'We had him in

training as a two-year-old and liked him, but he suffered an injury on the gallops and therefore his previous owner decided not to retain him going forward. When he was only making 12k at the HIT sales, we decided to buy him back given his good pedigree and physicality, and in the hope his injury wouldn't be an issue this season.'

Unraced as a juvenile, French Invasion was sent to Kempton to make his debut

In a restricted novice event which had attracted a field of eight, including stablemate A Little Respect. Super Mo, who had followed our subsequent Group 1 scorer Dubai Mile home at Kempton last August, was sent off a strong favourite.



Demilion wins under Joanna Mason
at Wolverhampton

Ridden by Jack Mitchell, French Invasion broke well and was steadied into midfield before moving into third as Super Mo led Burdett Road into the straight. Travelling on the rail, French Invasion took advantage of the cutaway to launch a devastating run on the inside, using his long stride to burst clear of the field in the final furlong and pass the post six lengths clear of Barrel Aged, with Come Musica half a length back in third.

Winning jockey Jack Mitchell was impressed by the winner.

‘Oh, he’s a smashing horse – look at the size of him!’ he said after the race.

‘He was a bit green early on, but when the gap came, he lengthened like no other. I was very impressed.’



French Invasion wins under Jack Mitchell on his debut

FRENCH Invasion is by the Prix du Jockey-Club winner Le Havre, out of the Monsun mare Jumoo, herself a half-sister to the Queen Mary Stakes (Group 2) winner Maqaasid. The colt is a half-brother to five winners, including the Group 3 winner Raheen House, the Australian Group 1 winner Shraaoh, and the Listed-winning filly Born With Pride.

Jilly Cooper chalked up her fourth career success when streaking clear in the closing stages of a Wolverhampton handicap on January 27.

The Lope De Vega filly, a four-year-old owned by Johnston Racing, was making her first start of 2023 at Wolverhampton having won twice last year. Last seen racing over a mile at Lingfield, she stepped back in trip to seven furlongs at Wolverhampton and had a favourable draw on the inside of a field of eight runners. Oli Stammers took the ride.

On paper, this looked a very competitive event as the five-year-old Algheed was seeking a four-timer while the six-year-old Starshiba had won three of his five races in

December and January to date. The early pace was not strong, and as a result Algheed and Rishes Baar in particular took a strong hold. Oli was content to allow Jilly Cooper to race in third, on the inside rail and tracking Algheed.

As the field approached the final bend, Algheed was still in front, while Ballyconneely Bay was being pushed along on her outer. Algheed left a gap on her inner when straightening up for home, and Jilly Cooper made a decisive move into that gap in the closing stages before pulling away in the closing stages to score by a length and a quarter from Starshiba, who collared Algheed for second close home.

Although Jilly Cooper has run with credit over a mile, she does seem ideally suited by seven furlongs and her record over that trip at Wolverhampton now features two wins and a second from three runs.

She also seems to run well for Oli, who appreciates that she appears to perform well when produced with one sustained run at the end of her races. ■

Joe's all set to return to the track

JOE FANNING is edging closer to a return to race riding after a lengthy absence from the track through injury.

The popular jockey has been on the sidelines since sustaining injuries to his shoulder when unseated by Braes of Dune in a Musselburgh handicap at the end of June.

He said: ‘I suffered a spiral fracture of



the humerus in the fall, so I had my arm strapped up for 12 weeks. The muscle wasted a bit and I am trying to get that back now.’

Joe, 52, has been working hard on rehab and has been visiting Jack Berry House three times a week.

The good news is that Joe has been back in the saddle on the Kingsley Park gallops. He’s taking things steadily but there is light at the end of the tunnel. ‘All the fractures have healed well and it’s just about getting the muscle back now,’ he said.

Joe will be keen to add to his impressive tally of winners as soon as possible. It’s worth noting that in January 2022, he rode eight winners for the yard from 34 rides, at a strike rate of 23.53%.