

Hokkaido Autumn Sale Review

With the Hokkaido Autumn Sale's conclusion on October 20th, it is a wrap for the 2020 Yearling sales season in Japan. Despite all odds, the Japanese market has continued to be the most resilient thoroughbred marketplace in Japan, with each sale this year not only overcoming the virus but, in most cases setting records in the process. While the rest of the world reels from the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, the domestic market held strong. The only proof that this was not an ordinary sales year came in the COVID-19 safety protocols every sale put into place to protect consigners and buyers alike.

The Autumn Sale had a spotlight on it this year in the form of the 2018 graduate and G1 Kikuka Sho contender Babbitt(JPN) by Nakayama Festa(JPN). He won G2 St. Lite Kinen back in September, setting him up to be one of undefeated Triple Crown hopeful Contrail(JPN) by Deep Impact(JPN)'s biggest threats. Babbitt(JPN) goes into the G1 Kikuka Sho with a four-race win steak that includes two graded stakes victories, both of which came after the Japanese Derby. He will take to the lead and not look back, making him a new kind of rival for Contrail(JPN) to contend with.

The 2020 Autumn Sale saw a rebound from a dip in the market last year, grossing ¥1,259,940,000(US\$11,886,226), a 23.1% increase from 2019. A total of 365 yearlings sold for a record-breaking 78.3% clearance rate. The average and median ¥3,451,890(US\$32,565) and ¥3,190,000(US\$30,094) also saw a significant increase from 2019.

The sale topper, Hip 198, was an Espoir City(JPN) filly out of Koyu Nomichi(JPN) that sold to Yujiro Inutsuka for ¥12,100,000(US\$114,150). A close second was Hip 174, a Pas de Trois(JPN) colt out of Ocean Lady(JPN) that was bought by Narutoshi Hasegawa for ¥11,220,000(US\$105,849). This sale only had six horses go over the ¥10,000,000 mark, but that is considerably higher than the two that crossed that threshold in 2019.

Asia Express(USA) by Henny Hughes(USA) enjoyed the most profit in the sales ring this time around with all eight of his yearlings selling, grossing ¥45,430,000(US\$428,584) and averaging ¥5,678,750(US\$53,573). He currently has a promising filly in the NAR, Solo Unit(JPN), who won the JPN2 Edelweiss Sho at Monbetsu against JRA company just a few days prior. It is a promising start for the young stallion's first crop. Asia Express(USA) stands at Yushun Stallion station for ¥1,200,000(US\$11,320) alongside his sire Henny Hughes(USA).

Also popular was World Ace(JPN) by Deep Impact(JPN). He had 13 out of 13 sold to gross ¥45,100,000(US\$425,471) and average ¥3,469,230(US\$32,728). World Ace(JPN) is the multiple graded stakes-winning full brother to 2019 G1 Kikuka Sho winner World Premier(JPN) and half brother to multiple G1 placed and 2020 G1 Kikuka Sho starter Weltreisende(JPN) by Champion Dream Journey(JPN). With a pair of open class two-year-old winners last year and a NAR stakes winner this year, all from his first crop, this young son of Deep Impact(JPN) has proved versatile early on. World Ace(JPN) stands at Arrow Stud for ¥700,000(US\$6,603).

Espoir City(JPN) was a champion dirt horse in his day, racking up nine G1s and JPN1s during his long career. He has proved a powerhouse in the NAR circuit, even siring a possible contender for this year's Kentucky Derby with JPN1 Zen Nihon Nisai Yushun winner Vacation(JPN) last December. With four crops to race, he continues to improve in his

area of expertise, with 149 winners from 196 starters. With that perspective, seeing his six lots gross ¥41,800,000(US\$394,339) and average ¥6,966,666(US\$65,723) makes complete sense with numbers like that. Espoir City(JPN) by the late top dirt sire Gold Allure(JPN) stands at Yushun Stallion Station for ¥1,000,000(US\$9,433).

Dunkirk(USA) 's Meisho Tensui(JPN) impressed buyers with his solid win in the JRA Listed Green Channel Cup at Tokyo Racecourse earlier in October. That high profile plus Dunkirk(USA) 's current stats of 114 winners from 206 runners was reflected well at the Autumn Sale where he sold 13 of the 14 that went through the ring. His offspring grossed ¥41,690,000(US\$393,301) and averaged ¥3,206,923(US\$30,253). He stands at East Stud for ¥1,200,000(US\$11,320).

Japan's racing industry has been fortunate in the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Though responding to the pandemic early on with vigilant safety protocols at racetracks, training centers, and sales, they have managed to escape much of the hardships that other industries have endured this year. The diligent efforts have allowed the Japanese racing industry as a whole to maintain a healthy cycle of life: betting, high purses, and buying horses. Hopefully, with a new year just on the horizon, the success of 2020 will have brought with it lessons to ensure an equally successful 2021, despite the challenges that it too will like hold.

All Stallion data is current through October 23rd, 2020.

All Prices include consumption Tax.

US\$1 = ¥106.00



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