

MULBERRY COULD PROVE FRUITFUL FOR GREGG

MULBERRY RACING IS THE LATEST SLOT HOLDER TO JOIN THE TAB EVEREST AND THE FLEDGING BRAND IS HOPING IT IS THE START OF SOMETHING BIG

WORDS: RAY HICKSON IMAGES: BRADLEY PHOTOGRAPHERS



Jedibeel (Tyler Schiller) powers to the post in claiming the Group 2-Challenge Stakes at Royal Randwick



Mike Gregg with his grandson and racing manager, Lachlan Sheridan

Mike Gregg is no stranger to making a shrewd investment. As the TAB Everest's newest slot holder, under his Mulberry Racing brand, Gregg is throwing himself into the big leagues while at the same time laying the foundations to build a racing empire around him.

Mulberry Racing's gold and black colours are best known for being sported by Group 2-winning sprinter Jedibeel, a horse on the fringe of TAB Everest class and one he bought with trainer Brad Widdup before implementing the data-based approach he hopes will one day find him a champion.

Not only does Gregg rely on traditional methods of selecting a Thoroughbred, his team has built a data system designed to give an extra edge in a game where split inches can mean millions.

"We've gone into racing reasonably seriously with a team of data scientists," Gregg said.

"We're doing that on the basis we think we'll increase our chances of choosing elite horses.

"Hopefully we're going to have a horse good enough to race in the Everest, whether it's this year or another year.

"Like any big race that's where you want your horses to be racing."

When one of the 12 slots in the \$20 million Group 1-TAB Everest (1200m), run at Royal Randwick on

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October 18, was vacated by The Star early in 2025 it occurred to Gregg that he should consider getting involved.

He's a well-known businessman having ridden a wave of success, among a number of ventures, with his early investment in WiseTech Global which is a software company that listed on the stock exchange in 2016 with a \$1 billion valuation.

Mulberry Racing is run on the ground level by Gregg's grandson Lachlan Sheridan, who acts as racing manager.

It also has a board and Gregg said investing in TAB Everest was discussed before it was concluded the idea made for a good investment and they should put in a submission for the slot, which they were ultimately awarded.

It's a big early win for Mulberry and Gregg, whose total number of named horses owned is under 50, and he's excited to see what unfolds in 2025 as they look to grow into the future having made significant purchases at yearling sales through the year.

"I think it's a fantastic initiative by Racing NSW. It's the biggest sprint race in the world and it's a credit to Racing NSW for having the guts to do it," he said.

"We run Mulberry Racing as a proper business with a board of directors chaired by my business partner at Shearwater Capital, Zac Zavos. The board thought investing in the Everest made business sense given our aspirations.

"We will be holding an Everest event with our business partners Capital Brief and some of their subscribers before the Everest and one lucky attendee will win 1% of Mulberry Racing's prizemoney from the Everest. It should be a fun night."

The first horse Gregg owned was called The Grundler, he won two races from 10 starts with those wins coming in 2021.

A couple of years prior he selected Hawkesbury-based Brad Widdup to be his Sydney trainer, more or less because he liked how the trainer presented his business.

In early 2021 they bought a Savabeel colt at the Inglis Classic Sale for \$190,000 and that horse became Jedibeel, who graduated to Group 2 winner when taking out the Challenge Stakes at Randwick in March.

"I chose Brad because of his extensive racing experience plus his quiet ambition and confidence," he said.

"Jedibeel was chosen simply because I loved his dad Savabeel and Brad really loved the yearling. No great science involved but it has worked out well. Everyone in Brad's stable and my family, love Jedi.

"I've enjoyed a punt over the years, I got one horse then a second one and a few more. Then I wanted to add a bit more discipline to what we were doing.

"I was looking for a trainer that I could talk to, who held the same values. Someone who would treat the horses well.

"We have a lifelong responsibility for the horse when we buy it and we want to see it looked after. Brad has those values and he's a good bloke and a straight talker.

"We've become good friends and good colleagues."

The name Mulberry Racing came seemingly from almost as leftfield as Gregg's interest in investing in racing and in the TAB Everest.

It's derived from a champion Italian trainer and breeder of over 100 years ago called Federico Tesio, who built his operation on the site of a mulberry tree farm from which he produced champion after champion.



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So how does the data-focused approach work for Mulberry Racing?

Lachlan Sheridan says it's about leaving no stone unturned in an effort to find that special racehorse. If there's an edge in technology, he'd like to think they can uncover it.

"We look at everything," Sheridan said. "We have a data focus throughout the process, all the way from picking our initial shortlist and looking at pedigree.

"We have pedigree people as well. Brad inspects the horses and we use vets and scopes and check the heart.

"We're working on trying to utilise technology and data available to refine the process and make it as easy for Brad as possible.

"It's such a big thing now in every industry and it hasn't been tapped into enough, I think, in the equine industry.

"We're trying to embrace as much as we can to gain those one per cent advantages."

Clearly, as in the business world, Gregg is playing a long game when it comes to horse racing and the TAB Everest.

Sure, he'd love to be the one to hold the sparkling trophy aloft on centre stage at Royal Randwick.

Whether it's as winning owner with one of his own horses racing in the slot in the future or as the winning slot holder standing alongside connections of a horse they'd handpicked to run in the race the feeling will probably be the same.

If it's with one of his own horses, though, of course it'd be special for different reasons.

"It'd be a justification of our confidence in the software and the technology, and Brad, and it would be vindication of the investment," he said.

"I don't want to jinx us and get too far ahead of ourselves. If we do win the race, whenever it is, it would be fantastic but I don't want to get too excited too early." **RNSW**