

Motteraye getting in the spirit with victories in Classic trials

By Tom Peacock

SHOULD Lucie Lamotte and Gwenael Monneraye maintain the brisk start they have made with their expanded programme over the last four years, a Classic success should not be long in coming.

The Normandy-based couple (*pictured*), who introduced their La Motteraye brand a decade ago by consigning yearlings, can claim two of the recent trial winners as their own.

Youth Spirit is still standing as a Cazoo Derby prospect, with Andrew Balding and Ahmad Al Shaikh's Camelot colt landing the Chester Vase in good style.

His victory followed hot on the heels of that of Alenquer, who claimed the Sandown Classic Trial. A late withdrawal from the Dante, he still holds an entry in the King Edward VII Stakes at Royal Ascot.

"When we started we were only doing consignment because we were a small farm and we bought the second farm not long ago," said Monneraye.

"In the very first year we had [Listed Kachy Stakes winner] Exalted Angel - he was weaned at the farm - then we had Pao Alto, who won the Prix la Force and ran in the Jockey Club last year, now we've had two Classic trial horses, so it's good news.

"It seems like we are breeding Derby horses more



than shorter-distance but I don't mind - Derbys and the Arc de Triomphe, those are the races we care the most about."

Of Youth Spirit, who was bred by Ringfort Stud and Paul Hancock, Monneraye explains: "Lucie bought him in Goffs as a foal and when we resold him we didn't make any money at all, but it was my mistake.

"We sold him at the Arqana August Sale when I don't think he was ready for the sale, we should have sold in October and he'd have done much better. But a good judge bought him in Federico Barberini."

The couple have an even closer affiliation with Alenquer, who is registered for Gestut Romerhof as a son of the recently departed Adlerflug out of winning German mare Wild Blossom. He went through the ring for €18,000 as a foal at Arqana before making 80,000gns at Tattersalls Book 1.

"He was born and raised on the farm," Monneraye explains. "Gestut Romerhof is Michael Andree, he's also the Coolmore

representative of Germany and he always has one or two mares with us on the farm. A lot of people, even if they have a stud farm, they breed in France for the premiums.

"At the time of the sale, Adlerflug was not as popular as he is now, he has really had an impact in European racing in the last two years; sadly he's passed away of course.

"Michael knew all about him, he told me he'd be a good stallion. However, when he arrived at the sales as a foal, French people didn't really know much about the stallion, the pedigree of the dam was just okay and he was bought quite cheaply.

"As a foal and yearling he was very nice and I couldn't believe he was in Book 1 because of the pedigree, he made 80,000gns and he was a nice horse who is now a nice racehorse."

Whatever happens with the pair now - and Youth Spirit is a not unconsidered 20-1 chance for Epsom glory - Monneraye can reflect on a job well done.