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## Star Thoroughbreds Begins Season with Flemington Win

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Star Thoroughbreds started the 2025–26 racing season on a high when Crossbow, a three–year–old gelding by Better Than Ready, scored a decisive victory in Melbourne’s season–opening Benchmark 70 over 1410 metres at Flemington. Trained by Chris Waller, Crossbow won by 1.25 lengths in his fourth career start, suggesting promising potential for more prestigious spring targets.

Denise Martin, director of Star Thoroughbreds syndicates, commented that it was “an eye–catching win with a progressive horse” and noted that Chris Waller is considering

Crossbow for a next run at Moonee Valley. If that performance is strong, they may aim higher.

Crossbow's sire, Better Than Ready, is firmly established as Queensland's champion stallion for 2024 and 2023. He has produced 14 stakes winners, including Apache Chase, Port Lockroy, and Chrysaor, and his progeny earnings in Queensland alone topped A\$9.4 million for the 2023–24 season. He ranks among Australia's top sires by number of winners and has a strike rate exceeding 65 percent, making him a prolific source of early–maturing and high–performing horses.

Another key development for Star Thoroughbreds is the imminent trial of their standout mare Aeliana at Randwick. Aeliana is poised for a return in the Group 1 Winx Stakes on 23 August. By Castelvechio, she captured the ATC Derby in autumn following Group wins in the Carbine Club Stakes and Reginald Allen Quality. She also finished runner–up in the Thousand Guineas and Rosehill Guineas before her decisive Derby victory.

Star Thoroughbreds will also offer Olentia, another Group–winning mare, in the upcoming Magic Millions Virtual Sale on Tuesday. Olentia was bought for \$310,000, has earned close to A\$1 million, and is expected to fetch a seven–figure price, continuing Star's pattern of strong returns on investments.

Martin said the previous season was solid but believes the current roster holds even greater potential, highlighting patience, experience, and selecting under–the–radar prospects as their model. She pointed to Espiona, Invincibella, and Chrysaor as examples of high–earning horses acquired for under \$200,000.

Aeliana's pedigree is noteworthy. Purchased for \$180,000 at Karaka, she was held back from racing until her three–year–old season. Since debut she has won multiple Group races and shown strong progression. Martin remarked that early in her two–year–old season she did not appear to be Group 1 calibre, but by late in that season they recognized her potential.

With more than 50 horses in work and 22 recently purchased two–year–olds, Star Thoroughbreds appears well positioned for another successful campaign. Their strategy of targeting value and patiently developing talented horses continues to pay off as they embark on the new season.