

## **ON SONG ISLAND FOR VASE VICTORY**

Jersey Horse Racing Preview

By MARK JOHNSON

The JT Rewards & Liberation Brewery 2019 Warwick Vase Handicap, arguably the most competitive race run so far this Channel Islands racing season, is the centre-piece of the Jersey Race Club's five-race Spring Bank Holiday Monday card at Les Landes Racecourse in St Ouen - first race 2:30.

Nine runners are due to go to post for the featured "Warwick Vase", run over a mile-and-a-quarter at 3:40, with the mare **ISLAND SONG** looking to defy top-weight and follow up her impressive Jersey debut win earlier this month.

A winner five-times in the UK last summer (at distances ranging from 1m1f up to 1m4½f) the 8 year-old was claimed by current connections - she is now trained by Aly Malzard for leading local owner Geoff Somers - after finishing third at Compiègne, in France, late last month.

**ISLAND SONG** made an immediate impact on the local racing scene beating Moayadd 10 lengths on 12 May, over 1m4f, when she showed a really impressive turn-of-foot to quicken away from her rivals early in the home straight.

The handicapper put her up 6lbs for that victory but, given the authority of that win, the rise hardly looks draconian. Freddie Tett, who has an early lead in the 2019 Channel Islands Jockeys Championship with 3 winners already this season, will be aboard **ISLAND SONG** as he was last time out.

Main danger on Monday may be the 2016 winner of the "Warwick Vase" **BENOORDENOUT** (Philip Prince booked to ride for Tony Le Brocq) who finished 28 lengths behind the selection last time out but now gets a 9lbs pull in the weights. Stablemate **SALVE HELENA** has run a couple of very solid races since moving to Jersey and looks another to consider while **HARD TO HANDEL** has already finished runner-up three times this year but is on a 28 race losing run.

Possibly the classiest race on Monday will be the finale - the Green Island Restaurant Handicap (4:50) over 1m6f. **BOWL IMPERIOR**, the 2017 C.I. Champion Race Horse and a winner over hurdles at the last meeting, represents the same owner/trainer/jockey team as Island Song. He is certainly a major player here but he is also an out-and-out stayer (the 2m1f Handicap Hurdle he won on 12 May was run at furious early pace) and this may be more of a tactical affair.

His stable companion from the Aly Malzard yard **WINKLEVI** may be able to control the race from the front under four-time Channel Islands Champion Jockey Mattie Batchelor. **WINKLEVI**, winner of the prestigious Clarendon Handicap here last August, can be forgiven a disappointing seasonal return to action on Easter Monday having found the ground a bit too firm that day when beaten by another rival on Monday **WHITE VALIANT**.

Neil Mulholland became the first ever UK-based trainer to be crowned Channel Islands Trainers Championship when he landed the title in 2014. At the last meeting, on 12 May, he showed he still knows exactly the type of horse that is required to be effective at Les Landes by sending out two winners and two seconds from just four runners.

The two winning stable representatives reappear at this fixture and both must have a great chance of following up. **MAN OF THE SEA** bids for back-to-back wins over 5½f in the YKTR Handicap (3:05) with **FRUIT SALAD** and **SING SOMETHING** possibly rating his biggest dangers while **MOLLIANA** (gutsy winner over 1m1f last time) runs in the Windsor House Handicap (4:15) where her task has been made easier by the late defection of Grey Panel with a Vet's Certificate. **BROWN VELVET** and **WILLIAM BOOTH** look her main rivals now.

Five-time French Chase winner **BAL AMIE** can beat hurdling debutant **GABSTER** in the La Verte Rue Associates Maiden Hurdle (2:30).

Selections:

2.30	1	<b>BAL AMIE</b>
3.05	6	<b>MAN OF THE SEA</b>
3.40	1	<b>ISLAND SONG</b>
4.15	6	<b>MOLLIANA</b>
4.50	2	<b>WINKLEVI</b>