

Hanley cont.

But only an innate talent would have identified and maximised the potential of **Lidanna (GB)**.

She came along a couple of years after McDonnell's death, just around the time Hanley moved on to a yard on the Curragh. He bought her for two distant cousins, both priests, and their nephews: together they had 10 grand for a foal. (Some collection plate, that Christmas!) Hanley couldn't find anything he liked for that money, at the foal sales, but then he went to the one-day yearling sale at Tattersalls in December and fell for a filly by a hardy Danzig sprinter named Nicholas.

"We broke the budget for her: 13,000 guineas," Hanley recalls with a smile. "So I had to take a leg. I brought her back to Ireland, broke her, and started training her. She was third first time out at the Curragh, and was then a tick off the track record at Tipperary, eased down. One of the priests said: 'They bet the hell out of her!'"

Hanley bounced her out a week later to finish second in a Group race at the Curragh, and put her away.

"When she came out in the spring she won a Listed race at Tipperary despite a terrible trip," he recalls. "Missed the break, stumbled, and still got up and won. I mean, she was a tiger. Then I ran her in the [G3] Greenland S., against the colts. Mick

Kinane sat her at the back the whole way, she relaxed beautifully, and bolted in by three lengths. So she was the breakthrough filly for me."

Surely Hanley must have wondered what he had brought into the Thoroughbred game that other trainers were missing?

"Well, we had just a small bunch of horses and there was me and one other guy," he says with a shrug. "I knew how they went to the feed tub, how much they were leaving, how they were carrying their weight. We were watching their legs, and keeping them happy out for a pick of grass in the afternoon." **Cont. p6**



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