

POWER COUPLE

BY PAUL VOLPONI



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ADAM COGLIANESE

IT'S BEEN SAID that the total of a man is equal to the sum of his many parts. This appears particularly true in the case of trainer Tom Morley, 33, who has invested a lifetime into building the type of meaningful foundation that would support his dreams of happiness and success in both the racing industry and life.

This past summer at Saratoga, Morley, along with his bride of approximately two years, New York Racing Association paddock analyst Maggie Wolfendale, captured the first two graded stakes—the Honorable Miss Handicap (gr. II) and Ballerina Stakes (gr. I)—of his four-year training career with Haveyougoneaway.

On Nov. 5 both Morley and Haveyougoneaway made their Breeders' Cup debuts in the Filly & Mare Sprint (gr. I), where the 5-year-old daughter of Congrats finished seventh. At the time the mare was owned by Gary Barber and Becky Thomas' Sequel Racing, before being purchased at the Keeneland November breeding

Trainer Tom Morley, top, and his wife, Maggie Wolfendale, are expecting their first child by the end of the month

stock sale for \$1.1 million by Lake Villa Farm.

Like most other horsemen who seemingly burst onto the racing scene, Morley is anything but an overnight success.

“It’s been basically a 10-year apprenticeship for me,” said Morley, who grew up on a farm in Yorkshire, England, not far from York Racecourse. “If you’d have asked any of my friends in England if I could ever be successfully training racehorses in America—in a big city—they’d have given you odds of 100-1 against it. Maybe even 1,000-1. That’s because I’m as English as an oak tree, and as country boy as you can get. But life leads you down funny paths, and I feel very much at home here in New York.”

Racing seeped into Morley’s blood as a youngster. His mother was an equestrian who taught her children (Morley is one of five brothers, including two stepbrothers) to ride. His father and uncle owned and bred horses, and another uncle, David Morley, trained 1997 Ascot Gold Cup (Eng-I) winner Celeric.

Morley knew as an adolescent that he wanted to train racehorses. That ambition, however, would have to wait as another of Morley’s passions and foundation blocks suddenly fell into place when he visited Africa.

“My parents took us on a riding safari to Kenya. It was the holiday of a lifetime, and I fell in love with Africa,” said Morley, who has always been fascinated by languages and cultures. “There is no greater sunrise than an African sunrise, or a sunset. There are big skies, huge people, and amazing animals.”

During his gap year (the time between high school and university), as a present from his parents, Morley spent an entire year in Africa, traveling from country to country on a total budget of \$1,000. That provided Morley with an opportunity to immerse himself in the lives of the inhabitants there.

“When I was 18 years old, I was teaching at a primary school in Malawi. The kids were all walking many miles to school. The present I could give them was to buy the football (soccer) team 11 pairs



Haveyougoneaway winning Saratoga’s grade I Ballerina Stakes

of football boots,” said Morley. “In my time there I saw incredible poverty and witnessed amazing humility. There was also an incredible determination in a lot of those people.”

Returning to England, Morley became a pupil assistant to trainer Ed Dunlop at his Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, stable. He completed his studies at Newcastle University and then landed himself a much-coveted opening in the Darley Flying Start Program, since renamed the



Morley landed a coveted spot in the Darley Flying Start program

Godolphin Flying Start Program, sponsored by Sheikh Mohammed.

While participating in that intensive two-year management and leadership training program that specializes in the international Thoroughbred industry, Morley moved about the globe gaining valuable insights and day-to-day experience from established professionals.

“The program was of enormous benefit to me. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Sheikh Mohammed,” said Morley. “You travel from England to America to Australia to Dubai. You do law, nutrition, and spend six weeks on placements. I did time with (trainer) Eoin Harty, foaled yearlings for Godolphin, and studied business management. There’s simply no way to measure the knowledge I gleaned. You’re taught by the best. And some of the people I met there are now the ones buying my horses. They’ve become associates and great friends. It would have taken me a decade to gain that type of experience without Sheikh Mohammed’s help.”

Upon graduating the program, Morley landed a position with Jeremy Nose-da and later worked for trainer Eddie Kenneally. He worked with Kenneally’s strings in Palm Meadows (South Florida), Keeneland (Kentucky), and Saratoga (New York), before eventually becom-

ing enamored with the competition and high-level of racing and horsemanship on the NYRA circuit.

It was in the Empire State that Morley met Maggie Wolfendale, the daughter of Maryland-based trainer Howard Wolfendale.

"I'm just so incredibly lucky that she agreed to go out on that first date with me," said Morley.

The meeting and ensuing courtship were one of Morley's most important foundation blocks, with one more delivery still to arrive. The couple is currently expecting their first child in late

their baby, Morley had to ground Wolfendale from her normal routine of working five or six of his runners every morning.

"There was an accident on the training track one morning. Something totally unavoidable. I kept thinking that could have been my wife and unborn child," said Morley. "The next morning Maggie arrived at the barn and next to her name (on the set list) it read 'Pony.' I can't stop her from working horses forever, but I can for right now."

On a particularly hard day during her eighth month of pregnancy, Wolfendale was feeling rather low as a result of not

Wolfendale served as exercise rider. But, slowly, things started to come around. And Morley used his exceptional ability to communicate, both with horses and people, to grow his string and bring new owners to his stable door under a shingle that reads "Tom Morley Racing."

That stable now consists of 50 runners in two divisions, one stabled at Belmont Park and the other at Saratoga.

Much like the odds his childhood mates would have stacked against Morley ever residing in the big city, the odds also seemed stacked against the trainer's biggest on-track success—Haveyougoneaway.

Bred by Andy and Susan Beadnell out of One Wise Cowgirl, by Wiseman's Ferry, she was originally a \$50,000 weanling purchase at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky November sale in 2011. The following year she brought \$105,000 as a yearling at the Fasig-Tipton New York-bred preferred yearling sale. But a year later, after the untimely passing of owner David Greathouse, Haveyougoneaway was acquired at auction by Champion Racing Stable for \$1,200. That modest investment immediately returned dividends when Haveyougoneaway won a trio of listed stakes at Oaklawn Park and Remington Park.

The consistent visitor to the winner's circle then gained the attention of sharp-eyed breeder and pinhooker Becky Thomas (whose past successes have included grade I winners Fleet Indian, Kissin Kris, and Rightly So), who acquired Haveyougoneaway for a price "north of \$200,000."

"I have always been a huge supporter of the Godolphin (Flying Start) Program. They learn a lot there," said Thomas. "Tom is a phenomenal guy. We'd been friends for a while when the situation arose that I could send him this horse. She had won stakes, but only listed ones. I let Tom know that I was looking to get her some black-type for breeding purposes. We saw her as a broodmare prospect. I have long been a proponent of the New York breeding program and sent this horse there to run in New York-bred



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In the winner's circle at Saratoga

November.

"The thing with Tom is that he's so steady. Yes, it's horse racing. There are lots of ups and downs. But he's so steady. He can take a hit, take a punch, and keep on rolling," said Wolfendale, who with the help of her husband prepared the walls of their forthcoming nursery with African artwork. "Tom has a very positive outlook on life and knows the right things to say, whether it's to his staff or anybody in general. And the best thing about him is his sense of humor. He can always make me laugh and has a good heart as well."

Of course, after the first sonogram of

being able to enjoy her normal activities. That's when a surprise text from her husband lifted her spirits.

"He just reminded me of how far we've come in such a short period of time—our relationship, the house, the baby, building the business, winning stakes, and my own career (with NYRA)," said Wolfendale. "It was special and made me feel a whole lot better."

When Morley went out on his own as a trainer in 2013, there was no grand procession to bring him horses. The barn began with one solitary runner and one bridle. Morley was not only the horse's trainer, but the groom as well while

races to build up some purses and get some money back on her purchase price.”

That plan worked to perfection, and beyond.

In Haveyougoneaway’s first start for Morley, the May 30 Critical Eye Stakes at Belmont Park, she finished a solid second to Bar of Gold. Four weeks later, in the Dancin Renee Stakes, a sharpened Haveyougoneaway simply inhaled the leaders through the sandy Belmont stretch to win for fun beneath jockey Kendrick Carmouche.

“It was extremely impressive. I thought she had the stamp of a graded stakes horse when I saw that. Rarely do you see dirt horses accelerate the way she did,” said Morley.

Moving on to the Saratoga meeting, Morley had a choice to make for his ultra-fit mare. She could again face restricted company and be the 3-5 morning-line favorite in the Union Avenue Stakes against New York-breds, or be 10-1 in open company in the Honorable Miss.

“Becky had given me the challenge of finding some graded earnings. So I told her we’ll enter both races and see how much speed signs on for the Honorable Miss. As soon as the entries hit my desk, I rang up Becky and said, ‘If there’s a chance for us to get black type, it’s here in the Honorable Miss.’ That morning I had Haveyougoneaway vanned up from Belmont. She was in her stall at Saratoga by 10 o’clock that night.”

Wolfendale played devil’s advocate, questioning her husband’s logic.

“Wouldn’t you rather be odds-on in the Union Avenue, honey, than double-digits in a graded stakes?”

“I’m afraid she had to eat her words this time,” said Morley.

Haveyougoneaway sat a perfect stalking trip beneath Carmouche before storming five-wide into the lane and running down Paulassilverlining to score a determined neck victory, getting six furlongs in 1:09.94.

“Our barn had only been going a few years. To win a graded stakes anywhere, your first, means an awful lot. But to win it at Saratoga on opening weekend took

a lot of pressure off,” said Morley, whose shedrow was suffering from a virus at the time. “I think it even meant more to Maggie than to me. Grade II stakes are wonderful things. But grade Is, they’re the races that make you shudder.”

Exactly one month later Haveyougoneaway entered the starting gate in the Balerina at seven furlongs. This time Hall of Fame rider John Velazquez was in the irons.

The field of 10 included the heavily favored Carina Mia and 2015 Breeders’ Cup Filly & Mare Sprint winner Wavell Avenue.



Morley gets hosed down while patting Haveyougoneaway

The pacesetters carved out a lightning-quick half-mile in :45.54. Stalking on the outside, bidding her time in fourth position, was Haveyougoneaway. Morley’s mare was poised to surge through the long Saratoga stretch.

“Johnny gave her an absolute peach of a ride. We got a great tow into the race off of that second quarter. We were sitting chilly at the quarter pole. I knew we were getting a piece of it. But not until the last three strides did I know we were going to win,” said Morley, whose runner scored a half-length victory over By the Moon in 1:21.63.

“After the race all I wanted to do was find my wife, who was in a flood of tears

and running onto the track. Most of it was a blur to me, and my assistant actually hosed me down while I was giving my horse a pat.”

Morley’s racing stable is thriving today. But instead of being overtaken by the moment, he has kept a keen eye focused toward tomorrow.

“I want to do things the right way. I want longevity for my horses. I’m one of the worst with first-time starters. I use their first race as a progression,” said Morley of his training philosophy. “I try to be as European as possible about it. I tell myself, ‘Take your time. Make sure you

look after them. They’ll be good later.’

“Being in this business is difficult enough. Both Maggie and I are very good at going home and not having it consume our lives,” added the trainer/husband and soon-to-be father.

There’s little doubt that Tom Morley and Maggie Wolfendale have a shared vision for the future. And if the couple, along with their growing family, continues on their current path of hard work and dedication, the open road ahead, whatever it brings, will probably suit them just fine. **B**

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