



# HIGHLIGHTS...

## Torquator Tasso yearlings take centre stage

By Alex Mair

**Following the deaths of the big four, *Adlerflug*, *Areion*, *Lord Of England* and *Soldier Hollow*, within the past few years, we have very big shoes to fill. That's why it is absolutely fantastic for German breeders and German racing in general that a great racehorse such as *Torquator Tasso* has been retired to stand in the country.**

Those are the words of racing and bloodstock writer Luis Kimmel of GaloppDaily.com, who has kindly outlined the mood in German breeding circles as **Torquator Tasso's** first sizeable batch of yearlings get ready to go under the microscope at the BBAG September Yearling Sale in Iffezheim today. There were encouraging signs for Gestüt Auenquelle's 2021 Gr.1 Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe winner when his Applewood Stud-consigned filly out of **Serienheilige (Holy Roman Emperor)**; a half-sister to **Soldier Hollow's** Gr.1 Preis der Diana winner **Serienholde** realised €110,000 at the Arqana August Yearling Sale last month, but this will be the first acid test of his credentials.

The need for new blood within the German stallion ranks is perhaps best illustrated by glancing at the standings in the race to be crowned Champion Sire this year. Of the top ten stallions at the time of writing, only **Polish Vulcano**, **Amaron**, **Best Solution** and **Isfahan** are active sires residing in Germany. The 2014 Gr.1 Deutsches Derby winner **Sea The Moon** has topped the list in his country of birth for the past two seasons, but he has called Lanwades Stud in Newmarket home for his entire stallion career. Between them, **Torquator Tasso's** sire **Adlerflug**, his former



Racing and bloodstock writer Luis Kimmel is one of many industry professionals in Germany eagerly awaiting their lauded Gr.1 Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe hero's first runners next year.

Gestüt Auenquelle studmate **Soldier Hollow** and Gestüt Etzean's **Areion** have won ten sires' titles and counting, while **Lord Of England** was a regular top ten finisher. The loss of so many totemic figures clearly leaves room at the top for some fresh faces.

Kimmel concurs, commenting: "If you look at the sires' list right now, you can clearly see the problem. **Soldier Hollow** is nearly €80,000 clear in first place without siring the Derby or Oaks winner, which is remarkable because those races carry so much prize money and often determine the outcome. Next on this list is **Polish Vulcano**, who sired the Derby winner **Hochkönig**, but he doesn't cover many mares, and then you have Gestüt Etzean's miler **Amaron**, and these aren't traditional staying types. The first typical German-style active sire, who was a 2400m horse and international Gr.1 winner, is **Best Solution** in ninth position. I really like him, but he hasn't sired a Group winner yet, just two Listed winners, so there is a huge gap."

Poised to step into that breach is **Torquator Tasso** - the first winner of Europe's premier all-aged race to be retired directly to Germany - and he has been exceptionally well supported since commencing covering duties in 2023. Kimmel continues: "Every year he has been at stud, he has been the busiest sire in Germany. Last year he covered 81 mares, the year before 85 and similar this year. Those are really big numbers and put him well ahead of **Japan** in second place. Also, because he produced great performances in Britain and France, he is able to attract breeders from abroad. He is by far the most expensive German sire at €20,000, so the fact that he still gets the most mares underlines how well received he has been."

With his grandsire being **In The Wings**, a familiar and reassuring influence for German breeders, **Torquator Tasso** holds obvious appeal, but the desire for more high-class stallions to stand in the



Lot 12 is a **Torquator Tasso** colt out of a full-sister to the Gr.3 winner **Arina (Soldier Hollow)** from Gestüt Auenquelle.



country is also driven by fundamental economic imperatives. Kimmel explains: “He is by **Adlerflug**, a champion sire, and from the **In The Wings** line, also the sire of **Soldier Hollow**, so he fits from the pedigree side. And from a financial standpoint, German breeders have been saying we need an established sire in the country. It’s much easier to take your mare and drive an hour or two to another stud in Germany, rather than have to travel thousands of kilometres to Newmarket or France to get your mare covered by an elite stallion.”

**Torquator Tasso**’s top-class ability on the track is complemented by a pedigree of exceptional quality. Bred by Paul Vandeberg and born at Gestüt Erftmühle in Bergheim, he is out of the placed **Toylsome** mare **Tijuana**, who is also dam of the Gr.1 Grosser Preis von Bayern victor **Tünnes (Guiliani)**. **Tijuana** is a half-sister to the German Gr.2 winner and Stakes-producer **Tusked Wings** (also by **Adlerflug**), while the next generation of the pedigree features the Gr.3 Prix de la Porte Maillot hero **Tertullian (Miswaki)**, who went on to be crowned German Champion Sire in 2014.

The wider family is one that readers will be familiar with, but the bare facts still warrant repeating. **Torquator Tasso**’s fourth dam is Gestüt Schlenderhan’s celebrated broodmare **Allegretta (Lombard)**, whose tail line can be traced directly back to the 1949 Deutsches Derby and Preis der Diana winner **Asterblute (Pharis)**. Although temperament issues hindered her progress on the track, **Allegretta** went on to exert an astonishing influence on the breed through her exploits as a broodmare and has around 80 Stakes-winning descendants today. She is most famous for producing the 1993 Arc winner **Urban Sea (Miswaki)**; dam of turf legends **Sea The Stars** and **Galileo** and the Gr.1 2,000 Guineas winner and sire **King’s Best (Kingmambo)**; sire of the Gr.1 Derby and Arc winner and sire **Workforce**), while her other progeny included the French Gr.3 winner **Allez Les Trois (Riverman)**; dam of the Gr.1 Prix du Jockey Club winner and sire **Anabaa Blue** and grandam of the dual Gr.1 winner and sire **Tamayuz** and the dam of the German Gr.1 winner and sire **Anzillero (Law Society)**.

There is a double dose of **Allegretta**’s family in **Torquator Tasso**’s pedigree, as **Adlerflug**’s Preis der Diana-placed grandam **Alya** is her full-sister, and this pattern of inbreeding is a trait he shares with the likes of Derby winner **Masar (New Approach)** and Prix du Jockey Club and Arc winner **Ace Impact (Cracksman)**.

Long before there was talk of his own progeny entering the sales ring, **Torquator Tasso** was offered at BBAG as a yearling. The



**Torquator Tasso** became the third German-trained winner of the Gr.1 Prix de l’Arc de Triomphe when landing the spoils in 2021.

hammer came down at a bargain €24,000 in favour of Karl-Dieter Ellerbracke’s Gestüt Auenquelle and he was soon sent into training with Marcel Weiss. Unraced at two, he quickly made up for lost time the following season, taking second in the Deutsches Derby and winning the Gr.1 Grosser Preis von Berlin in Auenquelle’s black, red and gold livery during a stellar three-year-old campaign.

He returned at four to win the Gr.2 Grosser Hansa-Preis and Gr.1 Grosser Preis von Baden on his way to a stunning 72/1 victory in the Arc. Just the third German-trained winner of the Longchamp showpiece, following **Star Appeal (Appiani)** in 1975 and **Danedream (Lomitas)** in 2011, he defeated an outstanding field that included the likes of **Tarnawa (Shamardal)**, **Hurricane Lane (Frankel)**, **Adayar (Frankel)** and **Snowfall (Deep Impact)**. Sportingly kept in training as a five-year-old, he continued to display a high level of form, winning a second Grosser Hansa-Preis and finishing second in the Gr.1 King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes and third in the Arc behind **Alpinista (Frankel)**, before his retirement was announced towards the end of 2022.

There was inevitably a great clamour from studs around the world to secure the signature of **Torquator Tasso** at the



Gestüt Auenquelle offers **Lot 68**, a **Torquator Tasso** half-brother to the Listed winners **Delgardo (Best Solution)** and **De La Soul (Sea The Moon)**.



conclusion of his racing days, but Gestüt Auenquelle resisted the temptation to sell, and he became the most important addition to Germany's stallion ranks in a generation. He now seeks to build on the legacy of Auenquelle-based champion sires **Big Shuffle**, the Rödinghausen stud's mainstay in the 1990s and noughties, and **Soldier Hollow**, who was owned by Gestüt Park Wiedingen but stood at Auenquelle from 2012 until his death last year.

The first major step in upholding such legacies will come in the BBAG sales ring today. There were 18 representatives of **Torquator Tasso** in the original 210-strong catalogue, and only three of those yearlings have been withdrawn as we type. Whilst stressing that he is yet to inspect any of the yearlings in the flesh, Kimmel has picked out some top prospects amongst the draft. "Gestüt Auenquelle-consigned **Lot 12** will be the first **Torquator Tasso** yearling to go through the sale, and he is out of a winning **Soldier Hollow** mare. This is the family of this year's Gr.2 Grosser Hansa-Preis winner **Augustus**, who was placed in the Deutsches Derby last year and is also by **Soldier Hollow**. I think the influence of **Torquator Tasso** and **Adlerflug** could work very well with this colt.

"**Lot 68**, a colt out of **Delegation (Mount Nelson)** and also offered by Auenquelle, is another to watch. The half-brother **Delgardo (Best Solution)** was a favourite of mine at the sale two years ago and went on to be one of the favourites for this year's Deutsches Derby but was unplaced. However, he won an auction race at Hanover last week and will probably go for the Gr.1 Preis von Europa next. It's a very good family and the mare had another lovely yearling last year by **Soldier Hollow**. Also of interest is **Lot 150**, out of **Anna Mia (Monsun)**. This Gestüt Brümmerhof-consigned colt is a half-brother to the **Sea The Stars** filly who topped the sale in 2019 when sold to Godolphin for €820,000, which was the joint record until last year."

Outside observers might be forgiven for thinking that there is something of a race against time to unearth the next marquee sire in Germany, but Kimmel holds a slightly different view. He says: "On the one hand, we have the problem that we have no elite, proven sire at the moment, but on the other hand, it's exciting to see who will be the next big one, as we have many promising young sires, not just **Torquator Tasso**. **Alson** and **Rubaiyat** are not what we might call 'German-like', as they were good two-year-olds, **Alson** winning a Gr.1 in France and **Rubaiyat** managing to win Horse of the Year in Germany as a juvenile, but they are both very interesting.



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Gestüt Brümmerhof consigns **Lot 150**, a **Torquator Tasso** colt out of the Listed-placed **Monsun** mare **Anna Mia**. It is the family of the Gr.1 winners and sires **Adayar**, **Helmet** and **Epaulette**.

"I also really like the superstar of the past two seasons, **Fantastic Moon**. He is a cheaper and German-based option to access the **Sea The Moon** line, and I think he might have a great chance to be a champion sire one day because he really fits in. Then there is **Iquitos**, who managed to sire the Derby second **Mr Hollywood** two years ago from just five live foals from his first crop, and **Waldgeist**, who just had his first Gr.3 winner. He might have been a little bit underestimated when standing in Ireland, but he fits perfectly for German breeding, as he ran as a two-year-old, three-year-old, four-year-old and five-year-old and was very tough and won big races.

"Another name that might be less familiar to international readers is the 2017 Derby winner **Windstoss**. He stands at a fee of just €4,000 and had three yearlings sell last year at the BBAG September for an average of more than €70,000 and a top price of €120,000. All three looked phenomenal types, so he could be a little bit of a dark horse."

A quick chat with Luis Kimmel reveals the German stallion population to be in a healthier state than previously anticipated. However, there is no question that **Torquator Tasso** is the sire carrying the greatest burden of expectation, so a good start for his BBAG yearlings can provide impetus to the entire industry.



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**Torquator Tasso** saw off a high-class 'Arc' field to make history, finishing ahead of the Gr.1 Breeders' Cup heroine **Tarnawa (Shamardal, green cap)**, the Gr.1 Irish Derby and Gr.1 St Leger winner **Hurricane Lane (Frankel, white cap)** and the Gr.1 Derby winner **Adayar (Frankel)**.