



Some mare over the rainbow, David Cassidy is horsing around. Back home, there's 25 studs and he's not one of them. Pony Walkman: Mike Gardner

FOALING IN

DAVID CASSIDY, the man who's broken a million hearts, has had his heart shattered many times over the last 12 years — by horses.

The ex-heartthrob of the early Seventies, currently enjoying a new lease of chart life with songs like 'The Last Kiss' and his latest hit 'Romance (Let Your Heart Go)', has had a 31-year love affair with our four legged friends. It's a passion that has sent his heart soaring as much as it's brought pain and tears.

"I can remember having pictures of horses on my wall from the age of three onwards," says David. "I used to build models of them and I was always drawing them. All my early reading was books like 'Black Beauty', my favourite, and 'National Velvet'.

"What really did it was the 'Million Dollar Movie' on TV — that's when they show the same film on a channel three times a day for a week. They showed 'The Home Stretch', starring Maureen O'Hara and Cornel Wilde. It was a corny, boring film but I fell in love with it. It was so romantic. When I was five or six we used to drive about half an hour out of New York City so I could ride a pony. Since then I've always had that passion."

AFTER QUITTING the music business 10 years ago, he retired to his Californian farm to indulge in his passion for horses. He now owns 25, which he breeds and races.

"Luck plays a large part in the business," he says. "I've had some die that weren't insured. I've paid out huge non-returnable stud fees — only to have the foal die or have the mare not foal at all. You can get around most problems of breeding good horses but sometimes they die or they break legs and have to be put down. You have to accept that they're animals and not machines. Many times I've been in tears over them but you have to be able to say 'let's look at tomorrow'."

His first heartbreak came with the first mare he bought — All Weather.

"She was the daughter of the top stallion in America at the time — Bull Lea. She was from his last crop and a top class mare. She was my favourite. I fell in love — you do sometimes. She caught an infection while she was pregnant and the foal died. The infection spread quickly and it got so bad she couldn't walk. She just lay there. It nearly killed me to see that we couldn't help her with all the equine medicines and drugs available. We had to put her down. It took me over a week before I could even think about a horse."

BUT CASSIDY'S sporting life has its triumphs as well. As in all good stories the underdog can produce the real romance of the game.

"I had a mare I loved," he says. "I bred her with this little unfashionable stallion and they produced Lord Of The Wind. He was not physically impressive at all — he was the runt of the litter. He was bought up around yearlings worth a quarter of a million dollars. We took him out on the gallops in March against our two best colts. They worked out over 3/4ths of a mile. He was five strides behind them to start and managed to beat them by over 10 strides. He's just a little machine. He's won over \$100,000 so far. It could have been more if he hadn't been unlucky in races where he hit the rails or got caught in race traffic."

But Cassidy still has fond memories of his first home-bred winner — Classic Clown.

"It's such a feeling to know that you've pulled it out of his mother's stomach; you've seen them through their sickness and coughs as a baby and then all the scratches, cuts and illness of them being a youngster. It's like bringing up a child."

Already Cassidy has been checking out the British racing scene. It included a secret trip to the Queen's stables at Newmarket and a guided tour by the Queen's trainer — a long time fan of David's.

Top American jockey Steve Cauthen has promised to take Cassidy onto the famed Newmarket gallops. Cauthen has also promised that he'll appear on stage with Cassidy during the latter's British tour in the autumn. At last, a real disc jockey!

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