

Popular Mundry returns as a trainer, hoping to steal the Thunder again

Alan Aitken

Former top rider Torsten Mundry was a popular character during his successful stints in Hong Kong, and the German looks to be filling out nicely into the newer role as a trainer that has brought him back to Sha Tin.

Durban Thunder will be one of the outsiders in the Hong Kong Cup and Mundry (pictured) says he is just hopeful of a surprise result as he has done well to be travelling and competing so soon after starting the new phase of his racing life.

"I've been training for three years now. I've had seven Group winners and many black-type winners and I've got over 50 horses, so it's not too bad," Mundry said, before adding with a laugh: "Being a trainer? I always knew it looked like hard work when I was a jockey, but it's only when you do it that you see just how much work."

"But I love the horses. I love to be successful in racing. It's a virus - what can I do? I have some big important owners and that is very important in Germany as the country's economy is going quite well but the racing economy is not as healthy."

Mundry's highlight moment here was winning the Group One Champions Mile on Figures at long odds for



David Oughton in 2004, and the place carries good memories. "I have been back with a horse for the internationals since I rode here, and I love coming back," said Mundry, who would like to think he can build on those memories with Durban Thunder. The winner of six from 13 starts scored at Munich in July before blotting his copybook with last place behind rival Byword in the Prix Dollar in October.

"When I got him he was a maiden at the end of his three-year-old season and, as a four-year-old, he won a listed race and a Group Three for me," he said.

"This year is my second season with him and I'm convinced he is still going up. When he won his Group One in Munich, he beat a very good Irish horse called Famous Name and for me he is one of the best horses in Germany behind, of course, Dane-dream.

"He had a long break before the race in France and I have trained him especially for this one," Mundry said. "It's a very tough race but he looks good and I'm hopeful. Normally in Germany he leads, but he doesn't have to. He leads because there is not much speed in our races and he has a big stride and I would rather see him in front where he can stretch out comfortably, than in behind horses."



Torsten Mundry won the 2004 Champions Mile at Sha Tin on Figures.