



BING CROSBY
£10,000 for Beau Vite . . .

Bing Crosby Wanted To Buy Beau Vite

Crooner's £10,000 Offer For Famous N.Z. Horse

as he has acquired the habit of taking two sleeps every day. This, an Australian veterinary told Mr. Stewart, gives complete rest to his heart.

There have been instances in New Zealand racing, of course, of horses winning important races in their old age. Snowfall won the Grand National at the age of 14 years, and Nukomai also won an important race at 14 years. Trotters have an even longer racing life.

As his habit of sleeping during the day would suggest, Beau Vite is no temperamental thoroughbred. He is easily handled, is gentle with children, seldom plays up at the barrier, and his only apparent vice is a craving for boiled sweets. And this is hardly serious compared with the unfortunate taste some racehorses are known to have for beer.

Looking Back

In retrospect, Beau Vite's performance in Australia stands out as the most remarkable since another New Zealand horse, Phar Lap, swept all before him some nine years back.

At his first two starts Beau Vite ran fourth, but the second time he made such a strong run in the straight that Mr. Stewart felt safe in advising his friends to be sure to "have a little bit on him" next time he started. Sure enough, he won, and proceeded to win five more races on end after that.

In the Melbourne Cup, which thousands of New Zealanders followed with bated breath, he was unlucky. Mr. Stewart doesn't make any excuses for him, but undoubtedly, he says, the check he received at a critical stage of the race, together with the bending of his shoe, proved just too much for him.

He started in one race after the Melbourne Cup, but he was a tired horse, and hardly did himself justice. However, Mr. Stewart can look back on three spectacular highlights to his visit: Beau Vite won three races on three successive days, breaking a record at each start, this feat being a world's record; he beat Phar Lap's time for the A.J.C. Craven Plate; he became the most publicised horse in Australia when he was shot at shortly before the start of the Melbourne Cup.



Spencer Digby photograph
RALPH STEWART
... but he wasn't selling

Busy Year Ahead

Beau Vite is thoroughly rested now, and the coming year will be a busy one for him. Apart from Beau Vite, however, Mr. Stewart has a colt coming along of whom he expects great things. He will go into work in February.

Mr. Stewart has been interested in racing nearly all his life, but it is only during the last seven years that he has owned horses. Others have been Vinco, Drachma, Dorak and Counter Lunch.

Mr. Stewart is an Australian by birth but he has been in New Zealand some 40 years, and there is one story of his early days in the flax milling business in the Manawatu that makes interesting telling.

He was managing a mill at Tokomaru when one day a young man who had also recently arrived from Australia turned up at the camp and asked for a job, his first in this country. He was small and stocky, wore a moustache turned up at the ends, and was serious and quietly spoken. Though he never became expert at the skilled work of cutting flax, he soon made his presence felt in the camp. He addressed meetings on every possible occasion, and would read far into the night by candlelight in his tent—politics, economics, sociology, anything he could lay his hands on.

He was Michael Joseph Savage.



BEAU VITE (T. McMenamin up)

IF Ralph Stewart hadn't thought Beau Vite was worth a good deal more than £10,000 to him, this remarkable horse would now be the property of film star and crooner Bing Crosby.

New Zealand racing enthusiasts who had watched Beau Vite's sensational series of wins in Australia were not surprised when they heard that an offer of £10,000 had been made for him. It was big money, but then Beau Vite had already at only four years, won £18,000 in stakes.

What they did not know, what has not been disclosed until now, was that Bing Crosby had made the offer.

As far as Mr. Stewart can gather, Crosby's interest arose out of a friendly wager with the owner of Seabiscuit, the outstanding galloper in the U.S. to-day. Crosby offered to produce a horse to beat Seabiscuit. "Very well," said Seabiscuit's owner, "go to it." So the wager was laid, and Crosby "went to it."

Bing Crosby, of course, is well known in California for his interest in racing. Not only is he the owner of a string of horses, but he has a very large interest in a racing track. His horses have done well. He has agents watching sales all over America, but this is the first time he has ever considered buying Australian or New Zealand horses.

But in spite of the tempting offer, Mr. Stewart wasn't selling. And small wonder. Quite apart from the satisfaction of owning an outstanding horse, Beau Vite has many years of racing ahead of him, and already there is a demand on him for stud purposes.

Sleeps Twice a Day

The length of a horse's racing life depends, of course, on many factors, but barring accidents, there is no reason why Beau Vite should not still be winning stakes in nine years' time. In fact, he may last longer than the average horse,

2ZB's "Saturday Spotlight"

Saturday night at 7.45 is "Saturday Spotlight" time at 2ZB, when Ian Mackay brings to the microphone a succession of interesting people. Last week he interviewed Mrs. Olive McDonald, of Wellington, who told of her many years' association with the famous old Church of St. Lawrence of the Jewry, the New Zealand church in London.

On Saturday, December 28, "Mac" will interview Ralph Stewart, owner of the racehorse Beau Vite, who made racing history in Australia some months back.