

the modern melbourne cup

New books on racing abound at this time of year - some passable to good, some with the same paper value as a losing betting ticket and some that are both informative and entertaining.

Danny Power's *The Modern Melbourne Cup*, thankfully, falls into the latter category. While the timing of his run can't be faulted, one could pose the question as to whether we need another book on a race that is 152 years old and, quite frankly, has had more ink dedicated to it than any other sporting event.

Fortunately, Danny - who has nearly 40 years industry experience and is the proverbial fount of knowledge on all things thoroughbred - has taken a different tack.

There is no dwelling on the deeds of Archer, Carbine, Phar Lap, Rising Fast, Rain Lover and co. and, indeed, as the name would suggest, the book focuses

entirely on the last 20 years - from Vintage Crop's groundbreaking win in 1993 to the 2012 chapter where the first eight horses across the line were all bred in Europe.

For as much as the Melbourne Cup is a reflection on our national identity, the race is now truly global - a race that is sought by Sheikhs and royalty every bit as much as Northern Territory school teachers. A quest for billionaires and billions.

The *Modern Melbourne Cup* explores the triumphs and the stumbles, how the internationals are holding sway because of our breed's need for speed, the diminishing influence of New Zealand, the French connection, the Japanese, the Germans and the horses that run on oil.

If you enjoy the Melbourne Cup - and isn't that all of us? - then this is a very good read. Out now in all major bookstores. ■

