



## INTERCEPTING JOHN STEWART

GOFFS SUPREMO **Henry Beeby** and his team will have their fingers crossed that the free-spending Resolute Racing founder, **John Stewart**, will get to participate at the upcoming autumn sales, rather than spending his dosh at Coolmore.

Former Toyota assembly line worker Stewart, who founded private equity firm MiddleGround Capital, went on a whirlwind spending spree in late 2023 at the US public thoroughbred sales but did not subsequently attend the Irish sales, claiming “**MV Magnier** intercepted us” beforehand.

In a recorded interview Stewart stated: “We would have come last year but me and **Gavin [O’Connor]** were over

there and MV Magnier from Coolmore intercepted us.”

According to Stewart, the two boys were on a tour of the famous Coolmore farm when the wily MV took the opportunity to sell some bloodstock.

“So, what happened was we ended up agreeing to buy horses and we spent all this money and then he [Magnier] goes to the Goffs sale and spends \$18m on the first day. This time, the Goffs people told me they want to get us before we get ‘kidnapped’ for their next sale.”

Stewart, through his bloodstock agent – O’Connor – had purchased his first horse, *Shiloh’s Mistress* (sired by Breeders Cup Classic winner *Vino Rosso*), for \$235,000 at the 2022 Keeneland September Yearling Sale. Since then, the moneybags, his girlfriend, **Chelsey Stone** (the pair met early last year) and O’Connor have been on quite the spending spree at the American autumn

2023 thoroughbred sales, splashing out an impressive \$25m.

O’Connor has previously filled various minor roles within the horse racing industry. His first foray into the horsey world was spending a breeding season at **Anthony and Chrissy O’Reilly’s** Castlemartin Stud, followed by a winter at Australia’s Widden Stud.

He also put in a few years as the stallion man at Winstar Farm

across the Atlantic, before assuming his current position two years ago as Resolute Racing’s bloodstock agent.

Stone, meanwhile, was recently appointed director of breeding and bloodstock for Resolute Farm, where the acquired nags now reside.

Picking up where they left off at the US sales last autumn, Resolute registered a significant impact on the European sales circuit last month. Stewart, participating online, saw off his



John Stewart

Tipperary ‘interceptor’, Magnier, after outbidding him to land the top lot on the opening day at France’s Arqana Sale – a €1.4m *Wotton Bassett* colt out of *Dardiza*.

Magnier had the last word, however, when he secured the sale topper – a €1.7m *St Marks Basilica* filly out of *Prudenzia* later that week.

Meanwhile, the minted Stewart has been spreading the love. An article on the website americasbestracing.net last week noted that the bio at the top of his profile on X makes clear what he believes to be one of his roles in the industry: “Thoroughbred racehorse fan and horse player first! Racehorse owner/breeder second.”

In the article, Stewart said: “The sport is too mysterious. We need to embrace the fans because the fans are the key to the sport.”

As a result, ahead of this month’s Keeneland September Yearling Sale, Stewart and Resolute held a “VIP Sweepstakes” on X and invited five lucky winners to join him, Stone and O’Connor for a tour of Resolute Farm in the build-up to the big sale.

The idea might catch on here.

## HEBERT PARK’S NEW NEIGHBOUR

LAST WEEK, Ballsbridge residents were greeted with a sign, erected on the ugly fencing fronting the controversial site on the edge of Herbert Park, announcing the 103 swanky new apartments that are to be erected there, years after the first planning application was submitted.

The good news for the well-heeled potential purchasers is that 40 Park will be “a one-of-a-kind collection of exquisitely designed residences on Herbert Park, Dublin’s most desirable parkside address”. Regular users of the public amenity are unlikely to be all that excited by the imminent arrival of a scheme “perfectly positioned to rival the world’s most luxurious residences”.

The most controversial aspect of the proposed high-rise development dates back to September 2020, when No 40 Herbert Park – the former home of Michael Joseph O’Rahilly (aka The O’Rahilly) – was demolished (with the acquiescence of council planners) when still under consideration for addition to the Record of Protected Structures. Tánaiste **Micheál Martin** had described the house as “iconic and historic”.

The company involved,

Derryroe Ltd, is split between members of the Kennedy and McSharry families, who developed the nearby Herbert Park hotel: **John, Geraldine, Brian, Ann and Ruth Kennedy**, and **Liam, Frank and Peter McSharry**.

They have made various alterations over the years to their plans, which have included extending the aparthotel on the site’s boundary.

The most recent planning application submitted to Dublin City Council (DCC), lodged at the start of this year, sought to add two storeys to the scheme’s largest (12-storey) apartment block, for which permission was previously granted, and the addition of one new floor to the permitted seven-storey block.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the archaeological impact assessment submitted on behalf of Derryroe and an associated company, Pembroke Pace Development Ltd, had little to say about the obliteration of 40 Herbert Park, stating merely: “Of note is No 40, demolished in 2020, where

The O’Rahilly (Michael Joseph) resided from circa 1909 until his death after being shot on Moore Street during the 1916 Easter Rising.”

The proposed development of over 100 luxury apartments



Development will ‘shrink’ the park

in leafy D4, adjacent to one of the city’s premier parks, presents the McSharrys and Kennedys with the opportunity to make a real killing. Prices for the units could

set records, which helps explain why they were willing to stump up a chunky €1.2m infrastructure levy applied by DCC.

Given the existing scale of the proposals, the attempt to add two floors, bringing the tallest block to a whopping 14 storeys, was always a bit of a long shot. Predictably, it attracted submissions from the Pembroke Road Association (PRA), which was signed off in February by Siobhán Cuffe, who died earlier this year.

Cuffe said the proposal would “shrink the park” and result in less useable space: “It will diminish the public amenity of Herbert Park that was a gift [by

the Pembroke Estate] to the citizens of Dublin. The usable part of the park will now shrink inwards... the windows of the new building will glare down on all park users.”

Maybe in an effort to contrast the plans of the Kennedy and McSharry families with those of the Pembroke Estate, Cuffe highlighted how the latter undertook “some of the most enlightened development and left a legacy to be celebrated and emulated.”

Cuffe also compared the new scheme to the likes of the (unloved) Ardoyne House, describing that 1960s 12-storey apartment block as “an outrageous imposition on the boundaries of the park”. But she noted that it is set back from Herbert Park by a considerable distance and placed at an oblique angle, stating: “It looks across the park and not into the park.”

In April, DCC refused permission to increase the height to 14 storeys for various reasons, including that the extra two floors would be “visually inappropriate in this predominantly low-rise location, adjacent to Herbert Park”.

It does beg the question: why did DCC consider the imposing 12-storey block appropriate?