

Hokkaido Selection Sale Review

The 2023 renewal of the Hokkaido Selection Sale was a massive success, with the gross showing a steady increase for the 5th consecutive year. With a staggering 91.9% clearance rate, they grossed ¥6,211,370,000(US\$44,366,928), selling a total of 271 yearlings to a ravenous market. This gross was a 16.35% increase from last year's record-breaking sale, breaking its own record. The average was ¥22,920,184(US\$163,715), up 12.9% from last year. The median was ¥18,700,000(US\$133,571), up 21.43% from the previous year. The atmosphere at the sale was genuinely electric despite the unusually sweltering heatwave rolling over Japan, and as the mercury rose higher and higher, so did the bids. It was the first time in over 22 years that a horse sold for over 100 million yen at the Selection Sale, which only highlights the strength of the current domestic thoroughbred market.

Hip 84, a Sinister Minister(USA) colt, was bought for ¥103,400,000(US\$738,571) by Yosuke Imafuku, the first horse to go above 100 million yen since 2001. Hip 48, a Kizuna(JPN) colt, nearly did the same, selling for ¥99,000,000(US\$707,142) by Tatsuya Akimoto. Fourteen other yearlings went over 50 million yen at the sale after tax was applied. The highest-priced filly was Hip 176 by Justify(USA), which Hajime Satomi bought for ¥52,800,000(US\$377,142).

New sire Saturnalia(JPN) ruled the day, selling all but one of his 17 cataloged yearlings, grossing ¥413,050,000(US\$2,950,357) with an average of ¥25,815,625(US\$184,397). His half-brothers Epiphaneia(JPN) and Leontes(JPN) were neck and neck in second and third place, having both sold seven lots. Epiphaneia(JPN) grossed ¥247,500,000(US\$1,767,857) and averaged ¥35,357,142(US\$252,551) while Leontes(JPN) grossed ¥233,750,000(US\$1,669,642) and averaged ¥33,392,857(US\$238,520). It must be rare for three half-siblings to sell this well in the same bloodstock market.

Sinister Minister(USA) has long been the king of the dirt, and now, as he nears the end of his career, his offspring seem to be getting more sought after. Five of his yearlings were sold at the sale, yet they grossed ¥229,900,000(US\$1,642,142) and averaged ¥45,980,000(US\$328,428), with one of those five being the sale topper, Hip 84. Declaration of War(USA) was imported from the United States to stand in 2019 and has since had a very promising start with his first crop, which is now three years old. This has translated into solid sales, with 11 yearlings sold grossing ¥226,050,000(US\$1,614,642) and averaging ¥20,550,000(US\$146,785). Henny Hughes(USA) has been under Sinister Minister(USA)'s shadow for the past few years, but he sold all eight of his lots this sale, grossing ¥210,100,000(US\$1,500,714) and averaging ¥26,262,500(US\$187,589). Versatile stallions like Declaration of War(USA) and Henny Hughes(USA), who can get winners on all surfaces and racing jurisdictions, are always popular in the Hokkaido sales market.

Each year the Japanese thoroughbred market has proved to be immune from the effects of the world at large as racehorses continue to be in high demand at all levels. Each sale feeds into itself, so the frenzy should continue in August for the 2023 week-long Hokkaido Summer Sale starting on August 21st.

\$US1=¥140



Hip 84, a Sinister Minister(USA) colt out of Carino Minoru(JPN) sold for ¥103,400,000(US\$738,571).