

Several old friends, including Frankie Dettori, return to Meydan this week, but it will all be new for Epsom-based trainer Simon Dow who has his first Dubai runner in Hombre Rojo, who takes on some big guns in the Group 3 UAE 2000 Guineas.

Hombre Rojo will make his first start on the dirt on Thursday, but has been in fine form in England, winning his last three starts, all at Lingfield on the all-weather.

“It’s unbelievable to be here, this is what we do this for,” said the trainer, who saddled 21 winners in the UK in 2015. “I’ve just seen Hombre Rojo for the first time [since arriving] this morning, but he’s loving it out here.”

The son of Intikhab makes his dirt debut in the Guineas, but Dow is hopeful that this won’t be a problem from the widest draw in seven. “It’s a small field, so as long as he breaks well, hopefully it will be OK. He did look a bit ‘shouldery’ cantering on it just now, but he’s often like that in his slower paces.”

Dow might well have picked a shrewd moment to make his Meydan debut, as the Guineas lacks a stand-out contender and it might be worth taking a chance on another UAE debutant, **Qurbaan** [Meydan, 17.55], who worked well last week on dirt under Paul Hanagan and is unbeaten in two starts in France. Rouleau, who flashed home in the trial last time behind Steady Pace, is the danger, while Market Rally is another who shaped well last time.

By contrast, the UAE 1000 Guineas looks one-sided and it will be a shock if anything turns the tables on impressive prep race winner **Polar River** [Meydan, 15.00], while Tom Dascombe’s useful **Calder Prince** showed tenacity in defeat last time and can take the much more competitive Meydan Classic trial [Meydan, 16.10.]

The evening’s real puzzler is a cracking renewal of the Group 3 Al Shindagha Sprint, which features last year’s winner Reynaldothewizard against Hong Kong-trained Group I winner Rich Tapestry and Kiaran McLaughlin’s well-regarded UAE newcomer **Marking** [Meydan, 16.45]. The latter, whose stable managed two wins and a third from just four runners last week, is just the pick after his excellent Grade I Malibu Stakes second behind US Champion Sprinter Runhappy at Santa Anita.

The two turf handicaps are typically competitive, but the chances of the down in grade **Mujaarib** in the mile and a half event are obvious, with Mike De Kock’s seven-year-old probably overdue a win. In the closing nine furlong handicap, the drop in trip for **Dormello** [Meydan, 18.30] is a surprise, but he was unlucky last time and makes each way appeal here, in a race in which Musaddas is also respected.