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MEETING DE  
DEAUVILLE  
BARRIÈRE

HIPPODROME  
DE DEAUVILLE - LA TOUQUES

FRANCE  
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DES ÉMOTIONS À TOUTE ALLURE

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EN DIRECT SUR  
EQUIDIA

Le Parisien

RFM

Press Release

Sunday 10 August 2025

MEETING DE DEAUVILLE BARRIÈRE 2025

Hippodrome de Deauville-La Touques

## French-bred Sajir dominates the ARC Prix Maurice de Gheest – Fonds Européen de l'Élevage after a magnificent finish



For most of the race, French runner Sajir — trained in Chantilly by André Fabre and carrying the colours of his breeder, Saudi Prince Ali Faisal — was last in the field. Irish jockey Oisin Murphy bided his time patiently, keeping his mount in hand before launching him wide on the outside in the straight. The race had been led from the outset by overwhelming favourite Lazzat, last year's winner.

When Sajir quickened, there was him... and then there were the others. Overtaking his rivals one by one, he made up the ground with ease before unleashing a decisive turn of

foot that put him out of reach. He crossed the line with nearly two lengths in hand. Behind him, Lazzat bravely held on to second place, resisting the strong late challenge of Woodshauna.

This win is highly symbolic for Prince Ali Faisal, as he also owned Sajir's sire, Make Believe, now a stallion in Ireland. Ali Faisal is among the most prominent owner-breeders active in Europe under the Nawara Stud banner. He has bred and raced champions who went on to become top stallions, such as Invincible Spirit, Kodiak, and more recently Mishriff, now standing at Sumbe in Normandy, which sponsors the Prix Morny (Group 1) at Deauville.

The win also gives André Fabre his first-ever Prix Maurice de Gheest, a rare gap in the record of France's greatest trainer of the last forty years — a man whose horses have won almost everything. The only French Group 1 still missing from his roll of honour is the Prix de l'Abbaye de Longchamp, the straight 1,000-metre dash on Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe day.

Another noteworthy fact: it is rather rare for three French-trained horses to sweep the first three places in a Group 1 over a short trip. That's exactly what happened today, with André Fabre (Chantilly), Jérôme Reynier (Calas-Cabriès) and Francis-Henri Graffard (Chantilly). France is on a roll, having already achieved this feat last year in the same race.

## Official Result

ARC PRIX MAURICE DE GHEEST – FONDS EUROPEEN DE L'ÉLEVAGE

1<sup>st</sup> SAJIR (O. Murphy)

2<sup>nd</sup> LAZZAT (J. Doyle)

3<sup>rd</sup> WOODSHAUNA (C. Soumillon)

Time : 1'15"09. Margins : 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  – Head – 1  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

## Quotes

### **Ted Voute, racing manager to Prince Faisal, owner of Sajir**

"This is an incredible day! I left Lexington (USA) a day early to be here. Sajir is a fantastic horse. He looked absolutely magnificent in the paddock, and was very calm despite the crowd and the heat. The whole team has shown great perseverance and today was his day! This is another Group 1 for Make Believe — the first was Mishriff, also bred by the Prince. It means a lot to him; he has always had faith in his stallion and supported him.

As for his future programme, this Group 1 win changes everything! He will likely retire to stud at the end of the year, but he still has a few months of racing ahead. He handles any ground. He's entered in the Prix de la Forêt, and also in the Prix de Meautry... We will think it over."

### **Jérôme Reynier, trainer of Lazzat (2nd) – Calas-Cabriès (13):**

"Lazzat ran his race. The horse I feared most at Ascot was Sajir, so when I saw he was a non-runner there, I was quite pleased as we didn't have to worry about him... Today, I was very confident, but I congratulate everyone connected with Sajir.



James Doyle felt he couldn't get the horse to relax. We'll check the tracking data, but he felt the horse was doing too much and using too much energy. He had a flat spot — something that rarely happens — but still picked up again to fight and take second.

He would be more comfortable on slightly softer ground; today it was still a bit firm. Autumn is coming and for him, the target will be the Champions Sprint Stakes at Ascot, as we know he likes easier going. It's a shame to lose the crown, but we were beaten fair and square. Sajir is a very good horse and now it's up to him to confirm. Initially, we were thinking of running the Prix de la Forêt and then the Champions Sprint Stakes, but James Doyle feels we shouldn't stretch him too much, or he might be even more outpaced than today."

**Francis-Henri Graffard, trainer of Woodshauna (3rd) and Rayevka (7th) – Chantilly (60)**

"Woodshauna ran a great race. Unfortunately, he got a bit upset in the stalls and lost some ground. The pace wasn't very strong and he ended up behind Topgear and Rayevka. But Woodshauna produced a terrific turn of foot — he really ran very well. He has a lot of speed, and Christophe thinks this is as far as he stays. He's a horse to bring back to 1,200 metres. It's amazing, he always runs his race. Today we took on a very strong field. Woodshauna is entered in the Sprint Cup (Group 1) at Haydock. That's an option. I'll discuss it with the owner and Christophe, who knows him well now.

Rayevka, I think, is best over 1,200 metres but no further. With the wide trip she had, she couldn't do much. She ran very well and we learned a bit more about her. She's a filly who needs 1,200 metres on good ground. I believe she will end up winning a Group 1."

**Contacts presse France Galop :**

**Hélène Dupuy** - Tel : 06 30 41 85 89

**Mail :** [hdupuy@france-galop.com](mailto:hdupuy@france-galop.com)

**Julien Dewaele**

**Mail :** [jdewaele@france-galop.com](mailto:jdewaele@france-galop.com)