

Cup Bid On Daytona Red's Radar

A trip to Riccarton is the long-term plan for the progressive stayer Daytona Red.

The four-year-old won three races during his last campaign and was turned out after an impressive performance to claim top honours at the expense of the highly-regarded Felaar in the Listed New Zealand St Leger (2500m) at Trentham.

"He's been back in work for a week and his main goal will be the New Zealand Cup," trainer Shaune Ritchie said.

"He can handle some wet tracks so that makes it easier to get him ready."

Ritchie has also welcomed another promising stayer back into the fold with Excalibur in light work.

"He doesn't handle wet ground so we'll potter along with him and go along slowly," he said.

"The Counties and Waikato Cups will be races on his radar and maybe the Wellington Cup."

Excalibur made impressive progress through the summer with a hat-trick of distance wins at Ellerslie, Pukekohe Park and at Hastings to earn a Group One start in the Auckland Cup (3200m).

He finished eighth, but only three lengths from the winner Ladies First, and was then given a break.

"He's putting together a very good record over ground," Ritchie said.

Meanwhile, younger stablemate Owen Patrick atoned for a previous failure when successful last time out at Hawke's Bay.

"He was very disappointing at Te Awamutu, but I think I had him underdone and he was right for Hastings," Ritchie said. "He'll get a lot of confidence from that."

"He ran against some nice three-year-olds in the spring and was competitive. He might have another run or two before he goes out and I think he's premier grade quality."

- NZ Racing Desk | Pic Trish Dunell