

MEETING DE
DEAUVILLE
BARRIÈREDU 2 AU 30
AOÛT 2026HIPPODROME DE
DEAUVILLE - LA TOUQUESENTRÉE
DÈS 5 €GRATUITE POUR LES - 12 ANS*
*1^{ère} CATÉGORIE ENTRÉE GÉNÉRALE, DANS LA LIMITE DES PLACES DISPONIBLES

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Press Release

9 August 2026

2026 MEETING DE DEAUVILLE BARRIERE

**French colt Samangan wins the ARC
Prix Maurice de Gheest –
Fonds Européen de l'Élevage –
In memory of Louis Romanet**

On Sunday, French racing celebrated its first Group 1 victory—the highest level of competition in horseracing—at the 2026 Meeting de Deauville Barrière, with victory for three-year-old **Samangan**, owned by the Aga Khan Studs and trained in Chantilly by Francis-Henri Graffard, in the ARC Prix Maurice de Gheest – Fonds Européen de l'Élevage – In memory of Louis Romanet.

The race is run over the 1,300-metre straight course at Deauville-La Touques Racecourse, an unusual distance that requires both considerable natural speed and sufficient stamina.

Horses that excel over this trip are known as flyers—somewhere between sprinters and milers.

Samangan enjoyed an excellent trip under his jockey Mickaël Barzalona, racing just behind the leaders **Afandy** and **True Love**, the Irish favourite. He took the lead 300 metres from the finish, where he was challenged by another French runner, **Stolen Kiss**. It was a superb duel, with the three-year-old gaining the upper hand before holding off the powerful late finish of the British-trained **Division**, who had taken some time to find a clear run.

Samangan recorded his first Group 1 victory, having finished fourth on 12 July in the Haras de Fresnay-le-Buffard Prix Jean Prat against his fellow three-year-olds, albeit over 1,400 metres. He delivered another prestigious success for his connections, the Aga Khan Studs, and for his trainer Francis-Henri Graffard, who had already been honoured on Saturday evening at the Gala des Courses as France's leading owner, breeder and trainer for 2025, each award represented by a sculpted Cheval d'Or.

This year's Prix Maurice de Gheest paid special tribute to Louis Romanet, who passed away last March. A major figure in French and international horseracing, Louis Romanet devoted his life to the organisation and governance of thoroughbred racing. His career formed part of an exceptional family tradition. Over the course of a century (1907–2007), three generations of the Romanet family led France's racing institutions: first the Société d'Encouragement, responsible for Flat racing, where his great-uncle Maurice, his grandfather René and his father Jean succeeded one another; then, from 1995 onwards, France Galop—which brought Flat and Jump racing under a single governing body—headed by Louis Romanet himself until his retirement in 2007. Louis Romanet also chaired the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities for many years.

The official result

1st SAMANGAN (M. Barzalona)

2nd DIVISION (J. Doyle)

3rd STOLEN KISS (A. Pouchin)

Margins: Short head – short head – $\frac{3}{4}$ length. Time: 1'16"40

Connections' reactions

Francis-Henri Graffard (trainer of Samangan, 1st) – Chantilly Training Centre (60)

"I am very pleased for the stable. He is a colt we have always held in high regard. Things did not go as planned at the beginning of the season, but he also needed to gain experience. His previous races have toughened him up, and this victory is the result of the experience he has been able to acquire. Today, he was able to produce his effort in a very composed way, without rushing. His next target could be the Qatar Prix de la Forêt, provided the ground is not too testing for him. He is a Group 1 winner and exceptionally well bred, so he has earned his place at stud as a stallion. My job is done!"

**Nemone Routh (racing manager of the Aga Khan Studs, owner of Samangan, 1st)
– Chantilly Training Centre (60)**

"Mission accomplished. We are absolutely delighted to see him win again in this fashion. When you win a Group 3 and a Group 2 at two, you can only dream of winning a Group 1—it is the natural next step! At the beginning of the year, he was not at his best, and a few days before the 2,000 Guineas, his results were not good, so he did not go to Newmarket.

He is very straightforward, and today he enjoyed a good trip behind Afandy and showed great courage at the finish. He can probably stay a little further. We have entered him in the British Champions Sprint Stakes as well as the Prix de la Forêt, bearing in mind that he is more effective on fast ground, as was the case today."

Maureen Haggas (representing the stable of her husband William Haggas, trainer of Division, 2nd) – Great Britain

"He ran very well. There probably simply wasn't enough pace for him, but he finished like a rocket and ran an excellent race."

Richard Brown (manager of Wathnan Racing, owner of Division, 2nd) – Great Britain

"He has good form over 1,200 metres and finished very strongly today, even though there was not much pace. Earlier in the year, we had considered running him over 1,400 metres. I simply think pace is essential for him. He needs them to go fast. Today, there just wasn't any pace, which is not something that happens very often in a Group 1 sprint."

**Pauline Chehboub (representing Gousserie Racing, co-owner of Stolen Kiss, 3rd)
– Calas-Cabriès Training Centre (13)**

"Once again, you cannot fault him. He has run a superb race over 1,300 metres, finishing behind three-year-olds who benefit from a weight allowance. We really thought he might do it! The way the race unfolded left him just a little further off the leaders than ideal, but even so, he ran remarkably well. He keeps knocking on the door at Group 1 level, and I hope he manages to win one. He is entered in the Sprint Cup at Haydock on 5 September. We will discuss it with our partner Louis Baudron and his trainer Patrice Cottier."

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