

PUNDITS' PICKS OF THE DAY

THE ONES TO WATCH OUT FOR ON GOLD CUP DAY - FRIDAY 16TH MARCH



RUBY WALSH



NINA CARBERRY



FRANK HICKEY



PADDY POWER

TRIUMPH HURDLE

★ **Ruby Walsh:** I don't know why people have taken against **Apple's Shakira**. She's got great course and ground form. She is a worthy favourite.

★ **Nina Carberry:** **Apple's Shakira** hasn't done anything wrong this season. It'll be interesting to see if she shows up again.

★ **Frank:** I am really excited about **Apple's Shakira**. She will relish the strong pace that the Triumph almost always produces.

★ **Paddy:** Oh baby when you jump like that, you make a punter go mad. So be wise and keep on reading the signs of the bookies. My tips don't lie – **Apple's Shakira**. Waka waka.

COUNTY HURDLE

★ **Ruby Walsh:** **Sandsend** is interesting. He'll run a big race in this too.

★ **Frank:** Willie Mullins has won this race 4 times in 8 years and he could well improve that record here with **Meri Devie**.

★ **Paddy:** I've always said that you can trust a Russian, so I'm going for **Ivanovitch Gorbatov**.

ALBERT BARTLETT NOVICES HURDLE

★ **Frank:** **Talkischeap** is likely to be an outsider here but he looks like the type that will relish the relentless pace of an Albert Bartlett.

★ **Paddy:** Who doesn't love the thought of automated boxing-robots acting out a Rocky-style affair? Great film, great horse: **Real Steel** to steal it.

GOLD CUP

★ **Ruby Walsh:** I think **Definitly Red** is the value on slower ground, hovering around 16/1.

★ **Nina Carberry:** Now that **Sizing John** isn't going, **Native River** can take it.

★ **Frank:** **Killultagh Vic** is very inexperienced for the test of a Gold Cup but he is super-talented. I think he can finally give Willie Mullins a first Gold Cup win.

★ **Paddy:** In theory it's a three-way shootout, but there's class throughout this field. **Might Bite** could be just too strong.

FOXHUNTER CHASE

★ **Ruby Walsh:** **Wonderful Charm** ran well last year. Paul Nicholl's put him up as his best bet of the week. **Foxrock** around the 7/1 mark will have to have a chance.

★ **Nina Carberry:** **Burning Ambition** has the most to improve, so if he does improve he'll be hard to beat.

★ **Frank:** **Caid Du Berlais** has plenty of Cheltenham form, and seems sure to play a big part in a race where **Burning Ambition** looks the biggest danger.

★ **Paddy:** **Wonderful Charm** was a nickname given to me by my first girlfriend, so I have nostalgic leanings for that one. But I think **Burning Ambition** has what it takes.

MARTIN PIPE HANDICAP HURDLE

★ **Nina Carberry:** It's going to be a very hard race to pick a winner from. But I'm going with **Sire Du Berlais**.

★ **Frank:** **Sire Du Berlais** was eye-catching at Fairyhouse, grabbing second without being given too hard of a ride.

GRAND ANNUAL

★ **Ruby Walsh:** I thought the horse that won it last year could go and win again, **Rock The World**. I think he has a great chance.

★ **Frank:** **Don't Touch** It hasn't been in the best of form in two runs this year but one suspects that he was being aimed to peak for the Grand Annual all along.