

Friday, August 25, 2017

FROM ARROGATE TO ZENYATTA

The quest for a champion resumes at the
world's biggest yearling auction



The Keeneland September Sale – plus an exciting new Turf catalogue across town at Fasig-Tipton

US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

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Dreams are made of this

NOBODY can see them all. More than 4,000 yearlings across 11 sessions – and that's without the novelty Turf offering across town at Fasig-Tipton. The Keeneland September catalogue, strapped to his saddle, would stop Man o' War. And yet each volume is decorated with portraits that will cause footsore horsemen to rally, however long the day, to go see just one more horse.

The first, combining Books 1 and 2, features Arrogate, Always Dreaming, Abel Tasman, Lady Aurelia on the front. But even as you turn over you see, on Book 3, Cloud Computing, Lady Eli, Classic Empire and – oh, look, it's pointless to continue. Just keep going; keep going. Because you know there are champions out there somewhere. Page after page, shedrow after shedrow, farm after farm, consignor after consignor: it all looks feasible. Great blood, great horsemen. And you also know that the big players will miss at least some of them.

Nor is it as though this town

cannot sustain the weary. Some people become jaded by repetition, whether over a week or over decades. To others, however, the perennial dreams inspired by a yearling thoroughbred – that guy who just catches your eye, maybe just your eye; maybe he'll slip through the net – are reciprocated by some constancy, something that abides, in all those glorious old mansions; their shady verandas and great trees; their porticos and porches and shutters; the electric hum of cicadas.

There's always McCarthy's, of course. Or a quiet coffee someplace, maybe taking a few minutes also to absorb the views of the horsemen who kindly gave us their time for the pages that follow.

They offer much food for thought, for that moonlit stroll back from the bars and restaurants on Jefferson.

This is not a bad place to keep dreaming, always dreaming.

Buyers, sellers, dreamers: good luck to you all.

Chris McGrath,
bloodstock editor



Eyes on the future for outsider not afraid to take on old world order



Chris McGrath meets **B Wayne Hughes**, octogenarian owner of *Spendthrift Farm* and a man not afraid to challenge the breeding establishment

HE DOES not remember it, having barely been a toddler at the time; but nor will he ever forget it. The flight of the Okies, after all, remains indelible in the cultural heritage of America – and, among readers of *The Grapes Of Wrath*, far beyond.

“Ever see the film?” asks B Wayne Hughes. “That was us. We had a mattress strapped to the roof of the car. My dad was a sharecropper in Oklahoma. We came from the middle of the Dust Bowl to California. They hated us there, we were there to work.”

Only in America, perhaps, could a tale that starts in such straits end here, with a spry, strained octogenarian lolling easily in the boardroom of surely the most elegant offices of any Bluegrass farm, the richest man in Kentucky.

Wood panelling, sporting art, deep windows framing paddocks, mares, trees in the sunshine: it is the perfect consummation of an American dream. Yet somehow a saga that has so well conserved national self-mythology has a hero no less eligible for celebration in a very different America; for an America ruled by another plutocrat, another provocateur.

It comes as no surprise to read that the owner of Spendthrift Farm has been a generous Trump donor. For

here, too, is a man who has won the game and promptly insisted that the rules are all wrong.

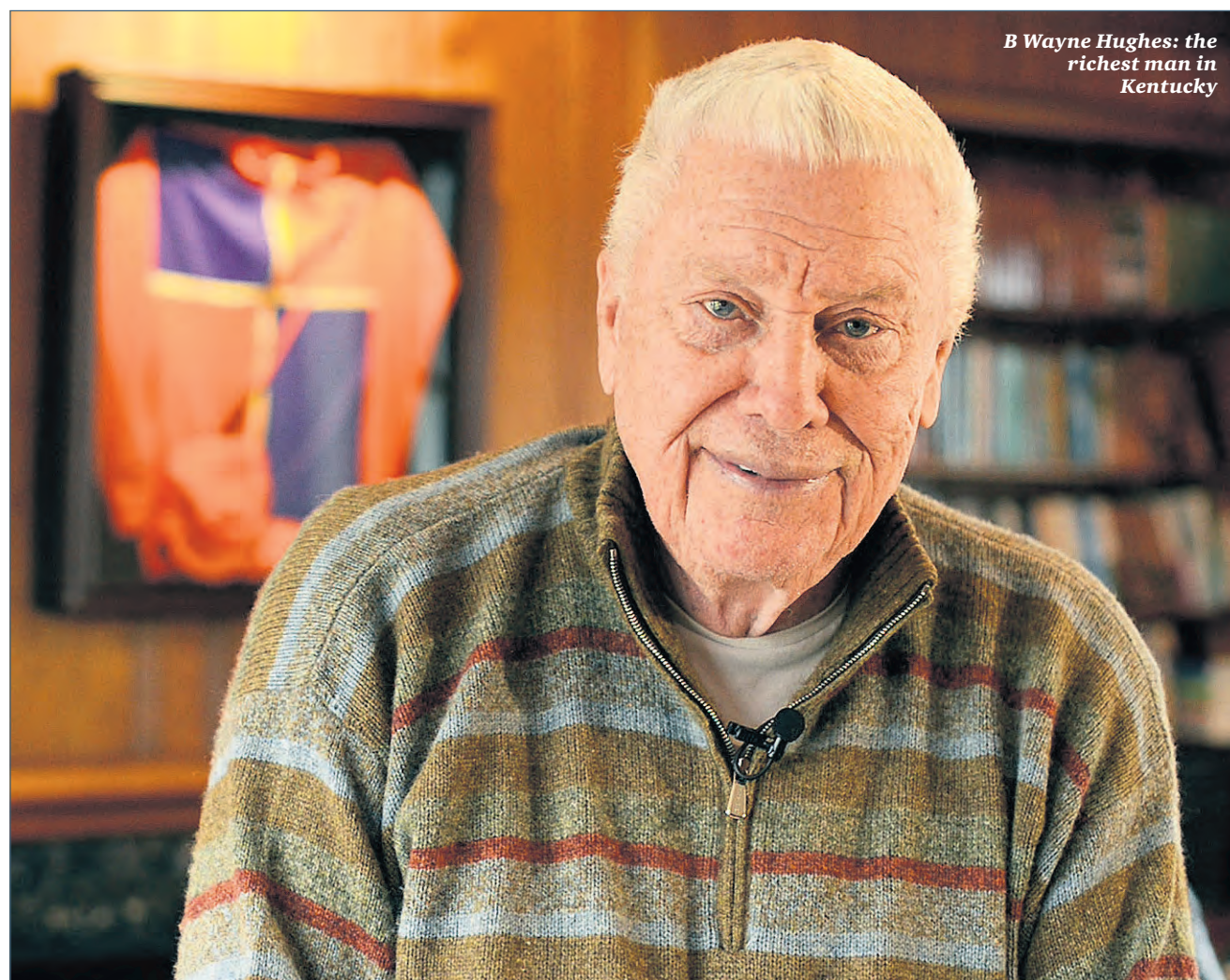
Accustomed to welcoming wealthy men seeking validation from the heritage and style of the turf – much as they might be expected to seek the White House, in fact – the thoroughbred business has suddenly found itself confronted by a plain talker who deplores many of its practices, and is telling its customers that they have been taken for a ride.

The incentive schemes he has introduced for patrons of Spendthrift stallions are considered innovative by admirers, suicidal by rivals. Either way, the net result is that he is now hosting an orgiastic number of matings: well over 2,000, in fact, every spring.

Cheerfully refractory, he cannot disguise his relish in establishment discomfort. “When you print all this crap I’m saying, I’m probably going to be written up as a nut,” he says, laughing. “But I don’t care anyway. I don’t give a damn.”

“What they gonna do to me? There’s nothing they can do. That’s what kills those guys. Drives them nuts. I mean, they try. They think they’re going to shut me down. All they’re going to do is make me angry.”

He laughs again. He knows the old counsel: don’t get mad, get even. It is not as though he



B Wayne Hughes: the richest man in Kentucky

entered the business inflamed by some sense of mission. In fact, he describes it as completely accidental.

Remembering his own childhood, in 2004 he thought how neat it would be for his grandchildren to take vacations in a place like this. And anyone taking a tour of Spendthrift can see that this was never just another self-made man seeking social legitimacy from a historic horse farm. Hughes turned over the mansion to the offices, instead favouring a modest cottage for his own residence.

MAYBE that kind of attitude helps you make a ton of money, as well as deal with it. “You know, I wasn’t ever adding up even when it was being made,” he shrugs. “You have to wait until the game is over.”

“But I don’t have a lot of pride about it. I think luck plays a role. Hard work plays a bigger role. We started a storage firm, my partner and I each put up \$25,000; today the market value is \$40 billion. It

►►Continues page 4

‘I don’t have a lot of pride about it. Luck plays a role. Hard work plays a bigger role. We started a storage firm, my partner and I each put up \$25,000; today the market value is \$40 billion’

B Wayne Hughes on rags-to-riches success

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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

►►From page 3

was a good trip, but I'm basically a guy who lives in the future, not the past.

"Look, I'm 83 years old. I'm buying yearlings, weanlings. I made an offer today to buy a stallion prospect. He won't breed until next year, it'll be four years before we begin to find out whether he's any good or not. So you'll say: 'Jeez, what the hell are you doing? – spending money on that!' But that's always been my mindset."

Sure enough, Hughes embarked on an entirely new business venture just four years ago. "Houses were selling below what it cost to build them," he marvels. "So I said: 'Well, there's two things can happen here: one, they're gonna increase in value; or two, no-one will ever build another house in America.' So now we've got 55,000 houses rented, and we're doing just great."

HUGHES blithely announces that he doesn't "know a damned thing about breeding" but his entrepreneurial instincts were fatefully provoked after he meandered into the bloodstock game.

He had built up a racing stable in the 1990s, and as a result had mares dotted around places like Lane's End and Three Chimneys. But now that he had this farm he decided he might as well bring them together there. And then he found that leasing the residue of the old stallion operation was not working out, and decided to take that on too.

"I didn't have any plan to go into the stallion business," he says. "I had a plan not to. But it's just how things worked out – differently from how I thought. Which, in life, is a pretty common event."

That ready chuckle again. "I like Kentucky, I like the people, I like the competitors; I'm very competitive, so I like all that stuff. I had Malibu Moon at another farm, a couple of other horses. I moved them here and all of a sudden I've backed into the stallion business by accident."

Two horses, Beholder and Malibu Moon, would have amply sufficed as a fresh start for the farm made famous in the Leslie Combs II era, with its gravestones carved with the names of Nashua, Raise A Native, Gallant Man. One a champion racehorse, recently retired to the broodmare band; the other a sire whose princely pedigree and Mayfly track career have together underpinned a spectacular rise from \$3,000 covers in Maryland.

In 2009, however, Hughes set in motion a revolution not just in the story of Spendthrift, but in the whole Kentucky bloodstock community as it tottered away from the financial crisis.

First came Share The Upside,



Sunrise at Spendthrift and (clockwise from right) the farm courtyard; early morning stroll; resident stallion Malibu Moon gets the wind in his hair

'I didn't have any plan to go into the stallion business. I had a plan not to. But it's just how things worked out'

a scheme devised to launch a couple of young stallions. Commit the stands-and-nurses fee for two seasons and you would get a lifetime breeding right. It helped to float a sire named Notional, but Into Mischief (who had started out at \$12,500) secured only nine such contracts in his first year. In all he mustered 42 named foals in that first crop, but seven were stakes winners and Into Mischief is now up to \$75,000.

Other farms were aghast, but Hughes had barely started.

Next came Breed Secure, which suspended any mating fee until the resulting foal was sold, at which point the breeder could pocket the first \$6,000 for a weanling, or \$12,000 for a yearling. Only then would the fee start becoming due, to the extent that it was covered by the price; and any surplus, thereafter, was profit for the breeder.

There are now 23 stallions on the Spendthrift roster (plus others at regional stations) and the great

majority stand at four-figure fees. If the stack-'em-high model is not to everyone's taste, it has become nearly impossible for other farms to compete at that level of the market without offering some equivalent incentive.

"Small breeders are the backbone of this industry," Hughes argues. "And they're most of them losing money, doing it out of love."

"We have one farm [breeding] here that was going out of business. They bred to Into Mischief, and got two

breeding rights for \$50,000; those are now worth \$900,000, not counting the [value of the] foals or anything else."

"Of course it doesn't work out every time. But these small farmers, they like the idea of having a shot. Because unless you're a rich person messing around, like I was for 20 years, it wasn't a good business model."

Does he hear how other farms rage about these initiatives? "I don't know why," he says. "Well – I do know why.

Because we're breeding a lot of horses here. And we're cutting into their income. We're making a small profit, not a lot – and not planning on making a lot. I like to have a business that's not losing money, and I'd like my customers not to be losing money."

"Look at Malibu Moon, how he just worked his way up. Really, it's all a gamble. So if you allow someone to gamble with you on a fair basis, you got a customer, and he's happy. Small breeders know we're not cheating. We're not buying horses for high prices, that we're already part of; we're not doing any of that nonsense. We're just a straight-up operation. What you see is what you get. There's no trick here."

NOW Hughes is exporting the schemes to his new farm in Australia. And, fortified by the expertise of farm manager Ned Toffey, he has been emboldened not to confine his pioneering instincts only to the economics of breeding.

After a successful experiment exporting a pregnant mare to sell her Tapit



foal in Australia, around 20 of the farm's band have been bred to Into Mischief, Malibu Moon and Temple City with the same idea in mind. And a reverse operation is already underway, eight or nine pregnant mares having been bought in Australia and flown to Kentucky after delivering their foals in order to be bred in the northern hemisphere.

"We like the idea they have more bone, they may look a little different," Hughes explains. "Then we'll look at the foals in Australia and decide whether to keep the mares. I have no idea how it will turn out – and at my age I may never find out."

"But turf and dirt and all that crap? All those horses, Nasrullah and the rest of them, they came off grass. You hear guys say: 'I wouldn't breed to a grass horse.' How the hell do they think this thing started? So there really isn't any rule. In the long run, if you want to be a successful breeding operation, you need to be in more than one hemisphere."

Hughes envies the infectious momentum of the Australian sport, perceiving a relative

torpor among leaders of the American industry – above all regarding television.

"Racing in this country is dying," he says bluntly. "Look at Santa Anita, one of our biggest racetracks, down to three days a week. I quit the Breeders' Cup board, I said I'm too old to be arguing with guys. The focus groups in there, every single person said the day was too long."

"So then they say we need these gaps between races, so [punters] have time to bet. But that's absolutely backwards from how television can get eyeballs on what you're doing."

"So I said: 'Look, people in Europe don't like coming all the way to California on hard tracks. So why not run the turf races on the east coast, and the dirt ones on the west coast – and then we could do it every 15 minutes? We buy half as much time, and we have a better programme. I couldn't get one person on the board to try it."

"I'm not going to say it's going to work, right, I'm not here to say this is a solution. But in general you should try things. And when you're failing, you have to. Guys playing poker on television,

getting paid for programme time? Bowling! Rolling a ball down there! They pay them too. Yet we're actually paying the television company to be on. And then we design our programme not for television."

"Have a think about that. It's insane. I love the sport, I love the people, I don't have any animosity. But I can't make it change. I'm not persuasive enough."

MOREOVER he has a strong suspicion that vexation with his message is sometimes taken out on the messenger. It is almost like the Californians and the Okies, all over again. For Hughes

remains suffused with an ancestral combination of perspiration and inspiration: ideas, or "idears" as Steinbeck's Okies have it.

"Got a lot of sinful idears, but they seem kinda sensible," says one. Comes the reply: "You're bound to get idears, if you go thinkin' about stuff."

And Hughes has never stopped thinking. Pondering the volume of mares bred at Spendthrift, for instance, he put up \$200,000 apiece for a couple of races at Churchill restricted to the resulting foals – the purse to be halved between owner and breeder. He was staggered when the races were refused black type status.

"We breed more mares than

most states," he reasons. "So these races would be more competitive than the state programmes, and they get black type. There was lots of betting, it was really good for racing. I can't think of any explanation other than prejudice."

"I'm not vindictive. It makes me sad. People are against us. We don't mark up our horses, we don't really have profits going in unless they can run. And it's hard on our competitors."

He allows himself a snigger. "There's that joke that the most expensive piece of land in the country is the winner's circle. So it's a fun thing, there really aren't any rules, we're just having a really good time."

"Good horses come from everywhere. I'm not saying the odds are the same. But most people can't [afford to] breed to a \$300,000 stallion and get a horse who's crooked. And then someone on high says this mare shouldn't be bred, or that mare. I mean, gimme a break."

"Maybe they'd like it the way it was in the past, when rich people were racing horses and everybody's having a good

time. Nothing wrong with that, that's okay with me. A lot of people get left by the sidelines on that programme. But it's a programme."

"Anyway, if they want to stay in business everybody will be doing what we're doing. And that includes everybody. Somewhere along the line. Unless they're at the very, very top – and they're very, very limited. But they won't stay there. And the reason is that some of the horses we put in are going to end up up there. It's happening."

"In the end it's numbers. You pay a bunch of money for a stallion, it's got the best chance. But his chances aren't 100 per cent. And another guy's chance isn't zero. They're closer together. So we'll see."

"We haven't been at it very long. We're never going to charge \$300,000 because that's just silly. For the guy paying it, and the guy asking for it. Because everyone deserves a chance to play in this pool. There's enough room for everybody."

A last laugh; possibly the last laugh. "And I'm going to have other ideas . . . I'm not out of them."

'I'm not vindictive. It makes me sad. People are against us. But if they want to stay in business everyone will be doing what we're doing. And that includes everybody'

B Wayne Hughes on his breeding philosophy

US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

ONLY THE BEST IS

Michele MacDonald with the thoughts of the leading consignors on their Keeneland September and Fasig-Tipton Turf Showcase Yearling Sales drafts

'She's gorgeous and she's one of those who knows she's special'

Brandywine Farm

The breeder and seller of two colts prominent on this year's Triple Crown trail, Gunnevera and Royal Mo, Brandywine Farm is consigning 74 yearlings to Keeneland September – spread from Book 1 through the last day of the 12-session auction. Clearly, there are horses for every shopper in this group.

Pam Robinson, who operates Brandywine with her husband Jim, points out that the farm has developed a strong record of raising talented racehorses even while sticking to a budget with most stud fees. Two fillies bred and offered by Brandywine late in last year's September sale are already stakes performers this season even after being overlooked by buyers.

That kind of success by Brandywine graduates is a primary reason why Spendthrift Farm has consigned its 2017 Keeneland Book 1 yearlings through the Robinsons, whose good fortune with race results this year has continued at auction. "We had a fantastic Saratoga sale and we're really looking forward to Keeneland," Robinson says, still celebrating the sale of a homebred Malibu Moon half-brother to Royal Mo for \$650,000 at the Spa in August. "We have four yearlings we bred by Into Mischief [at the Keeneland sale] and all are attractive, athletic types – well put together, balanced individuals."

Brandywine's Into Mischief yearlings are **hips 1642**, a colt out of a half-sister to the dam of Street Boss; **1968**, a filly out of the Medaglia D'Oro mare Cafe; **2664**, another colt from the family of Street Boss; and **2780**, a colt out of the Cape Town mare Cape Discovery.

Brandywine will also offer an Into Mischief filly on behalf of Spendthrift, which stands the stallion, as **hip 102** in Book 1. Produced by Argentine Group winner and American Grade 1-placed Teamgeist, the grey is a half-sister to Graded winner and Grade 1-placed House



Rules and to multiple Grade 1-placed Win the Space.

The other yearling Brandywine has for Spendthrift in Book 1 is **hip 46**, a Temple City filly who is a half-sister to stakes winner and 2016 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf runner-up Coasted.

Of other Brandywine-breds, Robinson says **hip 1677**, a filly from the first crop of well respected Pioneer of the Nile stallion Cairo Prince and out of a daughter of Grade 1-placed mare Fircroft, is a standout. "She's absolutely gorgeous and she's one of those who knows she's special," Robinson says.

Hip 2790, by Malibu Moon out of a sister to Grade 1 winner and Kentucky Derby third Danza, "is a 'wow' filly, a big, strong individual comparable to the colt we sold at Saratoga," Robinson says of the yearling bred with Spendthrift.

Not to be missed is **hip 2491**, a colt from the first crop of two-time Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile winner Goldencents out of Inceptive, a half-sister to the dam of the world's highest-rated racehorse in Arrogate.

"He's a super nice colt and I'd expect him to be well received," Robinson adds.

'We try to take the best horses we can find to Keeneland'

Eaton Sales

Momentum can be a key factor for any enterprise, even if only due to the inspiration and motivation fuelled by success already achieved.

With that in mind, Reiley McDonald and his Eaton Sales will enter the Keeneland September yearling auction and Fasig-Tipton's new Turf Showcase in a stronger rhythm than perhaps in any other year for the decades he has been in the business.

One reason for the upbeat mood is an electric Saratoga selected sale in August, during which Eaton sold ten yearlings for a robust average price of \$316,500. And another is a formidable consignment of no fewer than 150 catalogued yearlings for Keeneland, including some particularly special individuals in Book 1;

Hip 149, a War Front colt from Eaton Sales, is a half-brother to champion Take Charge Brandi (right)



this year and [the group] is highly representative of all our good consignments."

It is no wonder the Eaton roster is jammed with stellar pedigrees considering the breeders on whose behalf the company is offering horses: including the Coolmore partners; Don Alberto Corp.; David and Diane Nagle's Barronstown Stud; the Samac entity, affiliated with the family of Timmy Hyde; and Prince A A Faisal's British-based Nawara Stud.

Even at the smaller Fasig-Tipton auction, Eaton will represent an international group of breeders, with the consignment including two yearlings each for Calumet Farm and Don Alberto, plus one apiece for Naoya Yoshida's Winchester Farm and Irish-based Rhinestone Bloodstock.

Of all the yearlings, it is difficult not to focus on **hip 101** at Keeneland, a War Front colt out of 2013 American Broodmare of the Year and multiple Grade 1 winner Take Charge Lady. The colt is a half-brother to champion and young stallion Will Take Charge, Grade 1 winner and first-crop sire Take Charge Indy and Charming, dam of champion Take Charge Brandi.

"He's a big, strong colt, actually bigger and scopier than most War Fronts, and a correct, nice, clean individual," McDonald says.

The colt's full-sister is now a two-year-old and was sold as a weanling at the 2015 Keeneland November sale for \$3.2 million to the Whisper Hill Farm of Mandy Pope, who named the filly Lady Take Charge. She is unraced to date.

While Eaton is listed as breeder of the War Front colt, McDonald said a partnership owns Take Charge Lady and bred the colt as well as the mare's other foals.

"It contains five people," he says without identifying the owners. "They've basically, for simplicity's sake more than anything else, put us down as breeder. I bought her and I own a small percentage of her."

Eaton Sales, as agent, acquired Take Charge Lady for \$4.2m at the 2004 Keeneland November sale.

From the same prolific family, Eaton will also offer **hip 149** at Keeneland, a War Front half-brother to Take Charge Brandi and a brother to Coolmore's Courage Under Fire, second to stablemate Caravaggio in last year's Phoenix Stakes at the Curragh. Charming, the colt's dam, was herself a \$3.2m yearling and

raced in partnership by Michael Tabor before joining a Coolmore-affiliated breeding syndicate.

Two other intriguing yearlings with international credentials in Eaton's Keeneland consignment are **hip 126**, a Bodemeister colt out of the Galileo mare Affectionately, who is a half-sister to Invincible Spirit; and **hip 151**, a filly by Japan's top sire and the world's leading stallion by progeny earnings in Deep Impact.

"On paper, he's got one of the best pedigrees in the book, yet he was bred on a cross with an American stallion, so it's highly unusual," McDonald says of the Bodemeister colt, who was bred by Nawara Stud in Kentucky. "He's a stunning, big, beautiful colt, which is why he's in Book 1."

The Deep Impact filly, bred by the Coolmore-affiliated Orpendale & Chelston in Kentucky, is believed to be the first yearling by her sire to be offered at public auction outside of Japan. She is out of Grade 3 winner Cherokee, by Storm Cat, a half-sister to Grade 2 winner Lil's Lad.

"She looks like an absolute speed demon in type," McDonald says.

Meanwhile at the Fasig-Tipton Turf Showcase, Eaton-consigned yearlings include **hip 9**, an English Channel colt bred by Calumet out of the unraced Galileo mare Bounding Away, a half-sister to European champion sprinter Fleeting Spirit.

McDonald is optimistic about the marketplace after observing keen competition for good horses at Saratoga. And while the War Front-Take Charge Lady colt he co-owns would give any seller high hopes, he said he focuses on doing the best job he can for clients.

"I'm excited every time I go to market. I get more excited about other people's horses selling than my own, which is partly my job and partly is the challenge of the whole thing," he says, pointing to the high quality of the horses who have been entrusted to Eaton for sale. "We're very fortunate to have great clients and to be involved with so many high-end operations."

'They have all the right stuff and we're very excited about them'

Four Star Sales

With a clientele including high-profile breeders with European ties, as well as significant American farms,



GOOD ENOUGH...



Four Star Sales is solidly established as a consistent top-tier consignor.

This year the agency,

overseen by managing partner Kerry Cauthen, has catalogued 135 yearlings to the Keeneland September sale

following a healthy Saratoga auction at which all six of its offerings were sold for a robust total of \$3,010,000.



A War Front brother to Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf winner Hit It a Bomb and Cheveley Park Stakes winner

Brave Anna is the headline horse of the draft. "He's a very sharp-looking colt, flashy with a great walk,

and he should appeal to just about everyone," Cauthen says of **hip 40**, bred in Kentucky by
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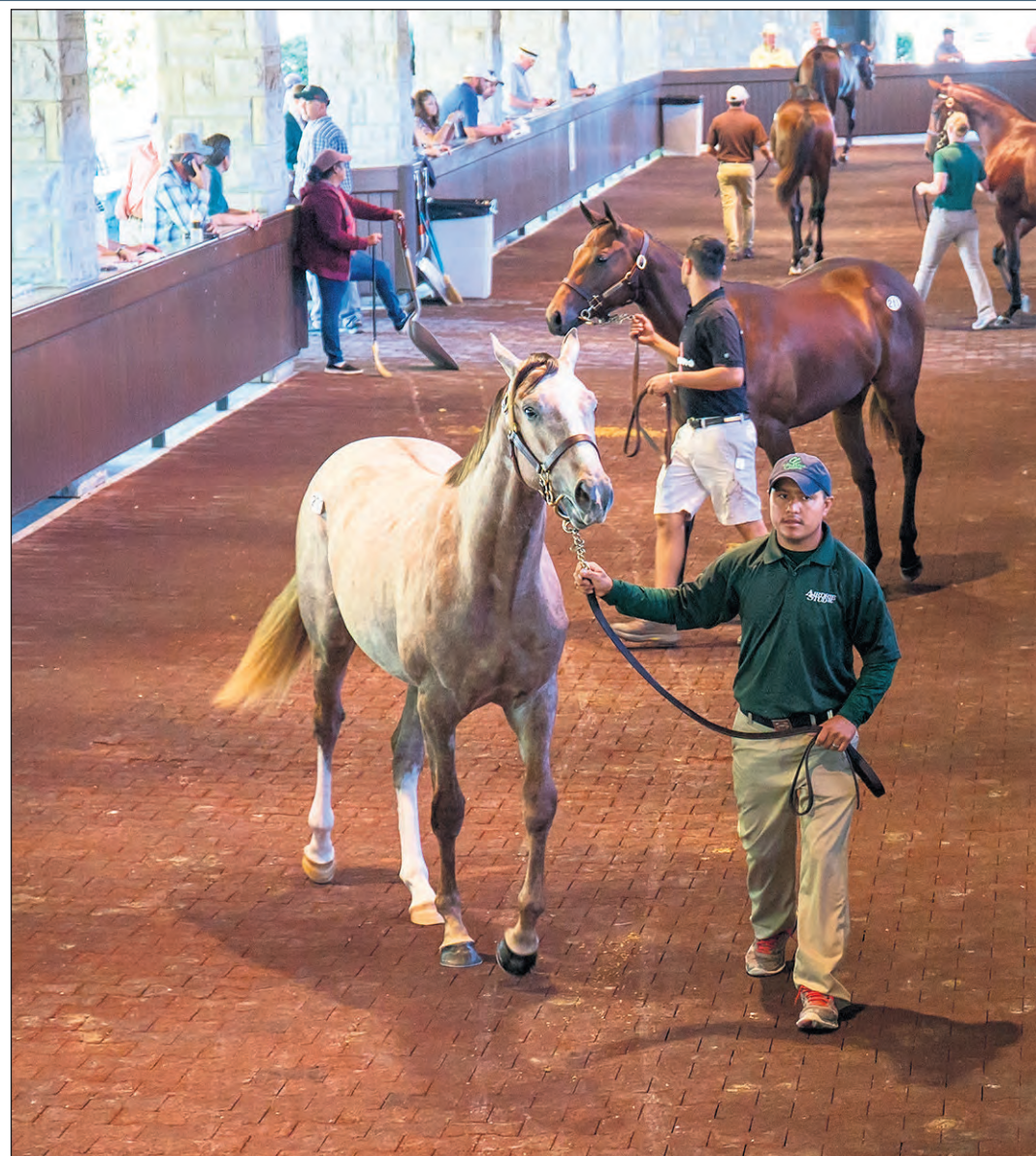
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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

KEENELAND SEPTEMBER BOOKS 1-4 LOTS WHO PREVIOUSLY PASSED THROUGH THE RING

Lot	Sex	Breeding	Price	Sale name	Buyers(s)
3	f	Medaglia D'Oro-Emma's Encore	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
5	c	Bernardini-Every Cloud	\$110,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
7	c	Union Rags-Favoritism	\$50,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Bloodstock Investments IV
12	f	Pioneerof The Nile-General Jeanne	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
14	c	Street Sense-Golden Sheba	\$285,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
19	f	More Than Ready-Heatherdoesntbluff	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
39	c	Speightstown-Lindy	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
48	f	Scat Daddy-Mekko Hokte	\$625,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
49	c	Tapit-Miss Besilu	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
56	c	Tapit-My Conquestadory	\$410,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	S. L. P. H.
59	c	Declaration Of War-Namaste's Wish	\$200,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Dr M lida
86	c	Tapit-Serena's Cat	\$1,050,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Baccari Bloodstock
88	f	Tapit-Siren Serenade	\$485,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
95	f	Frankel-Stormy Sunday	\$725,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
99	f	Ghostzapper-Sweet Awakening	\$140,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
111	f	Tapit-Wait Til Dawn	-	Fasig-Tipton Saratoga 2017 August Yearling	Withdrawn
116	f	Tapit-Wile Cat	\$500,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Jumping Jack Racing
124	f	Pioneerof The Nile-Above Perfection	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
165	c	War Front-Dynamic Feature	\$560,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Scott & Evan Dilworth
171	c	Curlin-Eden's Storm	\$325,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Baccari Bloodstock
176	c	Union Rags-Ellesmere	\$95,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
195	c	Curlin-Exotic Behavior	\$180,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	September Farm
205	c	Into Mischief-Fashion House	\$130,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	D. M. I.
211	c	Pioneerof The Nile-Fifth Avenue Ball	\$190,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Springhouse Farm
222	f	Distorted Humor-Floating Heart	\$70,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
223	f	Uncle Mo-Flowers Athefinish	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
228	c	Speightstown-Forest Legend	\$25,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
239	c	Gemologist-Frollic's Dream	\$260,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Cavalier Bloodstock
241	f	Will Take Charge-Fund Raiser	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
242	c	Scat Daddy-Funfair	\$260,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Hunter Valley Farm
267	c	Lemon Drop Kid-Go Forth North	\$210,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Clear Ridge Stables
277	f	Gemologist-Goodbye Stranger	-	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Withdrawn
290	c	Violence-Grand Slam Girl	\$30,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Blue Sky Stable
300	c	Into Mischief-Grey Traffic	\$100,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Northface Bloodstock
321	c	Ghostzapper-Holy Blitz	\$235,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Walnut Hill Racing
336	c	Bodemeister-I Love America	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
339	c	Into Mischief-Im Cruising Dixie	\$270,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Everest Bloodstock
345	c	Will Take Charge-Indulgence	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
356	f	Quality Road-Island Hop	\$95,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Cantrell Family Partnership
359	f	Street Sense-Ithinkisawapudycat	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
361	c	Hard Spun-Jaish	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
363	c	Speightstown-Jeanne's Honor	\$325,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
370	f	Uncle Mo-Judy Soda	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
376	c	Uncle Mo-Kanani	\$50,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Good Will Bloodstock
401	c	Curlin-Lady Alexander	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
403	c	Into Mischief-Lady Belsara	\$190,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Lincoln West Bloodstock
411	c	Curlin-Lady Solvig	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
415	c	Pioneerof The Nile-La Reina	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
419	f	Medag ia D'Oro-Laughing Lashes	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
424	f	Pioneerof The Nile-Leo's Pegasus	\$200,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Hunter Valley Farm
429	c	Blame-Lifeintheastlane	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
430	c	Malibu Moon-Life Lesson	\$260,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Roc Bloodstock
431	c	The Factor-Lightfoot Lane	\$50,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Pine Hurst Stables
436	c	Gemologist-Listen	\$195,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
445	f	Uncle Mo-Lotta Rhythm	\$75,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
459	c	Curlin-Magical Ride	\$360,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Cavalier Bloodstock
472	c	Elusive Quality-Manuka Honey	\$50,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Candyland Farm
474	c	Malibu Moon-Maria's Dane	\$160,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Alastar Thoroughbred Co.
499	f	Declaration Of War-Minishaft	\$80,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Silesia Farm
502	f	Quality Road-Miss Derek	\$25,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	First Finds



Lot	Sex	Breeding	Price	Sale name	Buyers(s)
511	c	Cairo Prince-Miss Sharondipity	\$45,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Equest Thoroughbreds
525	c	Arch-Mourette	\$90,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	D. M. I.
526	f	Majesticperfection-Move Clickly	\$85,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Redmon Farm
535	c	Malibu Moon-My Lady Lauren	\$105,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
541	c	Tiznow-Mystic Love	\$95,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Hunter Valley Farm
542	c	Uncle Mo-My Success	-	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Withdrawn
544	c	Declaration Of War-My Way	-	Fasig-Tipton Kentucky 2017 July Yearling	Withdrawn
546	c	Gio Ponti-Nadadora	\$27,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Equest Thoroughbreds
562	f	Cairo Prince-No Such Word	\$125,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Northface Bloodstock
568	c	Uncle Mo-Oh Carole	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
570	c	Bernardini-On A Lark	\$230,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Jumping Jack Racing
582	f	Speightstown-Our Khirsty	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
592	f	Into Mischief-Pashmina	\$85,000	OBS Co. 2017 Winter Mixed	Fox Hill Paso Fino Farm
612	c	Street Sense-Please Sign In	\$165,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Bloodstock Investments IV
617	c	Verrazano-Possibly A Ten	\$300,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Fox Fire Purchases
619	c	Kitten's Joy-Poupee Flash	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
621	c	Street Sense-Preach It	\$55,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
654	c	City Zip-Rare Event	\$110,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Taylor Made Sales Agency
657	c	Curlin-Real Clever Trick	\$260,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Wheels Up Partnership



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Lot	Sex	Breeding	Price	Sale name	Buyers(s)
683	c	Bodemeister-Rosalie Road	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
699	c	Into Mischief-Sailing Time	\$80,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Rexy Bloodstock
702	f	Curlin-Sallyport	\$140,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Candyland Farm
711	c	Tiznow-Schiaparelli	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
718	c	Violence-Seattle Qui	\$190,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Northface Bloodstock
732	c	Blame-She Cat	\$27,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
750	c	Animal Kingdom-Sirmione	\$57,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Michelle Redding
752	c	Quality Road-Sisti's Pride	\$90,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
762	f	Uncle Mo-Smarty Deb	\$170,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
774	f	Union Rags-Song Track	\$85,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Gary S. Broad
785	f	Bodemeister-Speed To Burn	\$75,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
786	c	Into Mischief-Spring	\$85,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Leo Bloodstock
800	c	Orb-Stick To Your Guns	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
802	f	Tapit-Storm Dixie	\$575,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
811	c	Hard Spun-Strut The Canary	\$60,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Fred W Hertrich III
813	c	Midnight Lute-Subsidized	\$62,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Rexy Bloodstock
815	f	Tiznow-Summer Applause	\$230,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
829	f	Curlin-Sweet Cat	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
840	c	Super Saver-Tactful Lady	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
844	c	Orb-Tally Ho Dixie	\$175,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Trabu Purchases
853	f	More Than Ready-Tare Green	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
862	c	Into Mischief-Teroda	\$125,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Taylor Made Sales Agency
882	c	Malibu Moon-Touch Magic	-	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Withdrawn
885	f	Lemon Drop Kid-Traveling Alone	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
889	f	Tiznow-Triune	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
899	f	Orb-Understated	\$105,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Not Sold
908	c	Uncle Mo-Veronica's Lake	\$40,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Equest Thoroughbreds
914	f	Medaglia D'Oro-Violent Beauty	\$295,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
915	c	Cairo Prince-Visavis	\$200,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Blue Sky Stable
919	c	Bernardini-Vole Vole Monamour	\$185,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
920	f	Scat Daddy-Voyage	\$160,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Northface Bloodstock
934	f	Tiznow-West Coast Swing	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
942	f	Fed Biz-Wild Summer	\$160,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Clear Ridge
952	f	Street Sense-Woodland Park	\$62,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Aynsford Holdings
958	c	Bodemeister-Yes She's A Lady	\$195,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	High Speed Stables

Continues page 17

G1 WINNER
LADY AURELIA

G1 WINNER
ROLY POLY

G1 WINNER
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30

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ROLY POLY
ROLY POLY
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HAWKBILL
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IT'S SOMEWHAT
LE BERNARDIN
PROMISING RUN
SECOND SUMMER
SIOUX NATION
SPIRIT OF VALOR
CARAVAGGIO
COOL COWBOY
DASHING BLAZE
MARKET TOWN
HAWKBILL
HOMESMAN
LAST KINGDOM
NOMORERICHBLONDES
SENGA
SPECTROSCOPE
TAAREEF
TAAREEF

Dubai World Cup-G1
Commonwealth Cup-G1
Doncaster Mile-G1
King's Stand S-G1
Al Maktoum Challenge R3-G1
Dubai Golden Shaheen-G1
Falmouth S-G1
Prix Rothschild-G1
Prix de Diane-G1
Keeneland Phoenix S.-G1
Princess Of Wales's S-G2
Ajax S-G2
Hollindale S-G2
Al Maktoum Challenge R1-G2
Al Rashidiya-G2
Godolphin Mile-G2
Norfolk S-G2
Minstrel S-G2
Lacken S-G3
Al Shinadagha
Epsom C
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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

Chris McGrath talks to Walker Hancock, who is proudly continuing a long family tradition at the iconic Claiborne Farm

FIXED beneath Runhappy's shiny copper name plate, on the door of his stall at Claiborne, are those of some previous residents. Each darker, with the years, than the one above. Unbridled. Easy Goer. Secretariat. Bold Ruler.

No pressure there, then. But if anyone can identify with Runhappy, it is Walker Hancock.

Pedigrees, round here, count for plenty. But so do precedents. So the fact that Hancock is still only 28, and has had the momentous responsibility of running this most historic of Kentucky farms for a couple of years already, is not quite as extraordinary as might otherwise be the case.

For one thing, the farm's young president has the seasoned hand of bloodstock manager Bernie Sams to share the day-to-day navigation; while his own father, Seth, is still available in the background for counsel. Seth

'You can't come in here at 25 years old and try to change the world'

knows exactly how it feels, after all, having famously been fast-tracked towards the equivalent role when himself only 23.

And the situation, then, was more traumatic: Seth's father Bull had been the formidable doyen of the whole bloodstock industry and his death created

a menacing vacuum. Seth responded in spectacular fashion, securing €600,000 for one of the first yearlings he consigned to Keeneland and syndicating Secretariat for €6 million. The fact that both these record prices proved to be good value – the yearling, as Wajima, became a



Walker Hancock: "You have to be innovative, to keep up with times"

champion; and Secretariat promptly embarked on one of the epoch-making sophomore campaigns – showed that Claiborne, in adjusting to the challenges of its own new era,

was actually doing the same for an entire industry.

In contrast, the transition to Claiborne's fourth generation – Bull's father, AB Hancock snr, established the farm in 1910

– has sooner been a matter of continuity. Hancock conducts himself with an impeccable blend of composure and humility, respecting the Claiborne heritage as a source

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of strength rather than intimidation.

"You can't just come in here as a 25-year-old guy and start trying to change the world," he says. "No-one will respect you. So I've just tried to be quiet, and listen, and learn from the best people I can: Bernie, my dad, Bradley [Purcell, farm manager], different people in the industry. So I feel I'm getting there, getting a pretty good handle on things.

"I'm blessed enough to have my dad around and bounce ideas off him. We kind of do this together, but he's trying to take a few more steps back each year, so I'm getting more and more responsibility.

"I've heard him say: 'Well, I did it – he can do it.' But these first couple of years have just been about getting my feet underneath me, getting a feel for how the whole thing works. As we go on, I hope I'll have a better gauge on things and will now be a bit more proactive."

Hancock had gone to the University of Florida to study animal science, but had otherwise been inculcated with the Claiborne way, by increments: sales prep, time with the racing stable, a stint as veterinary technician. But it was always made clear that he had the option, if that was what he wanted, to choose a

different path in life. That, Hancock says, only served to clarify his sense of vocation here. And the continuity he represents was complemented by the arrival, as the farm's first new sire under his aegis, of Orb.

CLAIBORNE foaled and raised, the 2013 Kentucky Derby winner had raced in the colours of Stuart Janney III and Ogden Mills Phipps – whose grandmother first boarded horses here with AB Hancock snr in the 1930s.

In the same way, Coolmore's commitment to the farm's premier stallion, War Front, extends a synergy that once saw Hancock's grandfather

offer Vincent O'Brien the chance to start over his training career in the US. For Hancock's new responsibilities have been matched, in tandem, by those increasingly devolving to MV Magnier at Coolmore.

"MV and I have become good friends over the past few years," Hancock says. "It's a great relationship we have, one that's going to be very valuable going forwards. But that's thanks to War Front, and what my dad's done with him. So hopefully I can reap those benefits. Of all the American farms – obviously outside of Coolmore and Darley – I'd say we have the widest international appeal and reach, and I think it's important to stay on top of that, to realise this is an ever more global market."

At \$250,000, War Front is priced for mares in quality not quantity but nor, evidently, would quantity suit him anyway. "We breed him twice a day, and that's what works," explains Hancock. "We keep his supply down and his demand high, and it's worked well so far. There's not going to be tons of War Fronts every year, that's why you're not going to see him top of the lists.

"But for what he has, he's a hell of a sire. Everyone wants to have a War Front. That's what we like to hear and that's what we're trying to do."

As Hancock acknowledges, even War Front's book of around 110 mares would have caused his grandfather to roll in his grave. "But things have

changed a lot since the days of 40-share syndicates," he says.

"Before ultrasound machines, for instance, it was hard to gauge when a mare was pregnant so you had to breed her three days in a row.

"That said, I truly think that 100 mares is a perfect number: you won't saturate the market, offspring will sell better, the breeders will be happy, the people racing the horses will feel they have something people want, you're making stallion prospects. So I think it's a benefit across the board.

"We can't have hundreds and hundreds of the same kind of offspring running. The standardbred business in this country faced the same problem ten years or so ago, they had to cut down on the number of artificial inseminations because in their biggest races five or six horses were by the one sire, and going forward that's not sustainable. You have to have variation in the gene pool, and doing so I think improves the breed's soundness and quality."

In at least one respect, however, it only feels wholesome to see the same traits recurring: with his long limbs, Hancock evokes his 6ft 6in great-grandfather; and

Claiborne youngsters enjoy an early morning frolic

in his words and thinking, the work since done by Bull and Seth. Runhappy can't read the plates on his door. Hancock, however, recognises that the pressures of the past are actually a privilege.

HE SAYS: "I know what's expected. I know what we're known for, I know our trademark: I really want to embrace that. Big shoes to fill, I know that. So all I can hope to do is keep it going.

"I know if Bull told you what he was going to do, that was what he was going to do. He was honest, he worked hard, this was his life and all of ours, so he put his whole livelihood into it. His motto was: 'Do the usual unusually well.'

"So I've tried to take hold of that – and to expand on it, without forgetting that's how we got started, that's what has always worked in the past. Yes, it's trying to find a balance. You have to be innovative, to keep up with times. It's an ever-changing landscape and you try to be proactive, rather than reactive. But you have to stay true to your roots as well, to what brought you here."

►► On page 23: Meet another young man taking forward a famous name in the Kentucky horse business



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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS



Chris McGrath discusses marching to a different bloodstock beat with the fertile mind of Hill 'n' Dale's John Sikura

OKAY Mr Sikura. I'll stick to the deal. We won't start with you; we'll start with your horse. You get embarrassed when people keep writing about John Sikura, keep asking his views on this and that. You hate the possibility of coming over as full of "self-serving braggadocio".

So, okay, we'll hold off for now on what makes this guy so interesting; on the way he marches to a different beat. But we really can't confine our attention only to Maclean's Music. In theory, I guess, you could spend an hour with John Sikura – absorbing the force of his character, the dynamism of his intellect – and leave John Sikura out of the interview. But that would be a bit like spending an hour with Franklin D Roosevelt and only writing about his stamp collection.

Luckily for us, Sikura's passion is also his business. And in discussing Maclean's Music, this penny black he has turned up at Hill 'n' Dale Farm, he cannot help but disclose the common margin of independence and acuity shared by John Sikura, farm owner, and John Sikura, human being.

Intuition, for instance. How else could he have taken a punt on a horse who made one start and then seemed to disappear from the face of the earth?

"Intuition?" he says. "Intuition evolves. There's a difference between that and being impulsive. That's rash, reactive, based on emotion; intuition is something deeper. It's like all the experiences of your life create a point of view, a reaction to things, and you try to pay attention to that."

"And that's the hard thing, I believe, in the horse business. Not to get the mentality everybody else has; to be singular, to depend on your point of view. But you can't be so eccentric that you're not in the marketplace. So that's a bit of a challenge. Because you can be so unique, in your own approach, that the only one who ****ing understands it is you. That doesn't mean you're superior. It just means you're speaking a language nobody can speak – and therefore you've no-one to talk to."

"If I had free rein, if I could guarantee 100 mares for any horse, there would be a lot of different horses I could bring here. I can't do it because I wouldn't get the support and couldn't buy 400 mares for



four stallions and say: 'Watch, I'm going to prove a point.' The only point I'd prove is that I used to be in business."

He sits in his spacious office at the farm, feet on the desk, dark curls receding. Think Bill Murray; not in a sentimental role. Sikura used to play ice hockey back in Canada, not a game for shrinking violets. All around are trophies and photos, testament to the champions he has raised here since setting out – against far steeper odds than many now realise – in 1994.

The one he treasures most, the one he views as the industry equivalent of Academy Award for Best Picture, is the 2007 Broodmare of the Year plaque for Better Than Honour, dam of consecutive Belmont winners in Jazil and Rags To Riches.

And now, out of left field, the farm has a young sire who has made the most startling contribution of all to what has proved to be year of the rookie in Classics either side of the ocean. In the shadow of his studmate Curlin, the pair standing at fees of \$150,000 and \$8,500 respectively, from his first crop Maclean's Music produced Preakness winner

'The majority of people in the horseracing business make decisions based on predictability, the history of the equation'

John Sikura discusses not being afraid to follow his own initiative and judgement

Cloud Computing – having been taken to market by Sikura on the back of a single maiden success. True, he clocked an unprecedented Beyer for a debutant. But it still took a leap of faith.

"The majority of people in the horse business make decisions based on predictability, the historic of the equation," Sikura reflects. "This horse ran really fast, once. And then disappeared. And he's by Distorted Humor, we don't really know if he's a sire of sires. He's got a fast, active pedigree but I don't see an elite Phipps family under his first dam. Easy to be dismissive. And, if you were, you'd be right 99 times out of 100."

"There's really no reason for the marketplace to share your enthusiasm when other choices

provide a lot more certainty. I did have a very strong feeling about the horse, and my feeling about that horse or different things we do is based on 30 or 40 years of experiences and emotions and observations. So when you get this intuition, it's not blind, not superficial. It's something you feel deeply."

"Maybe you don't expect other people to share that point of view. Because they have no need to. If I didn't know how hard and expensive it is to get a prospect, I wouldn't have bought a horse like him. But I felt he was as talented as any horse there's been in a long time."

"He's a beautiful physical type and I thought he'd suit a lot of mares. It's a great partnership, with Barbara Banke and Stonestreet, we

have their support. So there's lots of reasons why it made sense. And if it didn't work out? Well, I've done other deals that hurt more than this one would have done."

SIKURA is reluctant to reprise an analogy with Danzig. But he recalls how his favourite sire, in his Canadian youth, was Vice Regent – who likewise built a towering stud career on flimsy racetrack foundations. As a brother to Viceregal, he could trade on a pedigree to complement his physique; much like Malibu Moon, in fact, or Fairy King in Europe. But the big clue, in this instance, was the sheer physical exuberance of Maclean's Music.

"Every once in a while they'll turn out to be one of those exceptional athletes that reproduces himself, a genetic gem," Sikura says. "Unfortunately, if they don't get into a professional marketplace, they breed nine mares somewhere – and four are stakes winners but by that point you've missed the boat. So your job is to get foals on the ground and then it's up to them – to get through the

rigours of racing, to be tough and run."

"You don't have a lot of control: the training environment, who buys them, and so on. So I knew the one thing we had to do was to give this horse a representative sample size, and make it so you wouldn't have an excuse. We bred a lot of mares to the horse, we claimed fillies, we encouraged clients; there was really a crusade going on here, and he bred over 100 mares each year. That was a real feat – and fortunately it worked out."

"That's not to sound smart, because we bred really good mares to Zensational too! And then you find yourself selling the crop after he's been banished, trying to get \$4,000 for a nice yearling out of a good mare."

One of the farm's mares who gained no more from Zensational than any other partner she has tried to date was Quick Temper, a 16-year-old daughter of A.P. Indy. Yet she was able to produce a Preakness winner for Maclean's Music. Sikura recalls Cloud Computing as a fairly anonymous yearling until, in the last month before



Keeneland, blossoming more suddenly than any he had ever seen.

"I remember saying on more than one occasion that this was our best yearling – but I was kind of embarrassed by that," Sikura laughs. "Your best yearling? Supposed to cost a million!"

As it was, Cloud Computing did not elude the sharp eye of Mike Ryan, who signed a \$200,000 docket for the colt. A full brother is on his way to the same sale, as hip 1391, and

Maclean's Music would seem guaranteed a hike in both fee and quality of mares next spring. As Sikura notes, he had already made a big impression before Cloud Computing surfaced in February.

All in all, it has been an impressive project – all the more so, given Sikura's belief that the market for stallions at this end of the market has been fatally skewed by the kind of incentive scheme extolled by B Wayne Hughes of Spendthrift in the opening feature of this supplement.

"I believe the market for a \$10,000 horse in Kentucky has been eliminated," Sikura declares, while stressing his regard for Hughes as an innovator. "If you're going to stand that horse you have to have owner support, the people you did a deal with; and you have to support him with your own mares, and your own clients. To the extreme. Seventy-five per cent of his book starts here, on this farm with our partners.

"I wouldn't speak to anyone else's approach. Each has their own. But if I have to buy a stallion for \$1 million; and give seasons away; and give breeding rights away; and you don't pay me for two years? If that's the way I have to make my \$1m horse, I'm not interested – and I don't know how I could get anyone to partner with me on that proposition.

"But in every business you learn how to adapt – or you're considered intractable, a person of the past. It's here to stay, obviously consumers like it or it wouldn't succeed. So that's the way it is: don't have an opinion, find a way to work around it, a way to succeed on your own terms in the new market reality."

It is how breeders adapt to an ever-changing

environment, after all, that determines who best lasts the course. Over the years Hughes has learned how to read the lie of the land, and ploughed his own furrow accordingly. His contention that a racemare with little family will sometimes "start her own pedigree", for instance, very much echoes the way he talks about the infectious physical buoyancy he detected in Maclean's Music.

"There have been great mares who had no pedigree but because of their talent, their physicality, they've been prolific," Sikura says. "Pedigree's important, but become too snobbish about it and I think you'll miss a lot of opportunities. There's something about hybrid vigour, about racetrack performance. You can't exclude all those elements for strictly royal blood. It has to perform too – it's only royal through performance. And I think pedigrees have their moments, they go dormant, then every so often they hit a rich vein."

He well knows the role of serendipity too. When he found Candy Ride in Argentina, the horse hadn't even made the metropolitan circuit. Sikura was on a fishing

►Continues page 14

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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

‘The only lessons not forgotten are the hard ones. If it didn’t hurt too bad, you’ll try it again’

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trip and instead hooked this unexpected monster, won over by his sheer athleticism. “A machine, a horse of a decade,” he raves. “He won the Pacific Classic with his head turned sideways, looking at the crowd. He galloped away from Medaglia D’Oro for fun.”

For various reasons, both Candy Ride and Medaglia D’Oro only passed through Hill ‘n’ Dale on their way elsewhere. “Taught me a good lesson: always control your destiny,” Sikura says ruefully. “Good life lessons make you tougher, more resilient, you bounce back. The only lessons not forgotten are the hard ones. If it didn’t hurt too bad, you’ll try it again.”

He speaks advisedly. Sikura’s life changed forever the day he was called to the front of a plane, just after landing at Heathrow, on his way to Tattersalls. They told him his father was dead: an automobile fire. Off the record, he shares something of the appalling sequence of subsidiary disasters that spiralled out of this catastrophe. Suffice to say that “everything you can imagine in 20 years happened in five days”.

And that’s when he took on the farm, “on a dance and a promise”. The financing was beyond precarious. Trading in the family’s little farm, he still needed millions. He had no credit, so the vendor had to co-sign in order for Sikura to find the money to pay him. For three years the grieving young man lived over a barn, washing his clothes in the sink, heating

gas station meals in a microwave. He bought a season to the ageing Mr Prospector, with no guarantee; sent him Daijin, a Deputy Minister mare (ah! Vice Regent again); and sold the foal privately for seven figures.

“Which was a life-saver,” he says. “And I bought Better Than Honour, and sold Better Than Honour; and I bought her back, and I sold her again. She was hugely significant. The stallion market was in decline, I bought a bunch of stallion shares.

“A very good friend of mine, Ted Burnett, agreed to fund me. He said: ‘I believe in you, go buy whatever you want, we’ll be partners’. Danzig, A.P. Indy, a huge portfolio. And that became a big reason I was able to pay for the farm, and move forward. The ups and downs were tough. But when the business was desperate, when people were fleeing, we paid every dime; we paid everybody in full.”

WHEN the father died, then, something vital lived on – something you hear in the tone, the rhythm, of the son’s conversation: a sense of purpose, an aversion to glib evasions. As you listen, you sense that there is something going on here worth pursuing; something that gains validity from something other than the vast sums of dough that happen to be at stake.

His grandparents came here with nothing, after days of plenty in Bratislava. All their wealth, all their privilege, all their property had been taken



away; with a labour camp looming next. So they came to Vienna, with Sikura’s adolescent father, and waited to see who would take them first: Australia, the US or Canada. They landed in Nova Scotia, with no English; given five dollars, and told good luck.

“My father said that’s the last time anyone gave me anything,” says Sikura. “In my house I have a box about half the size of this desk. And it has their name on it. That was the life possessions of my family, in a little steamer box.

“That’s what they came with. And, as he grew up, every day he’d be sitting at the kitchen table with a pencil and a lined piece of paper, and he’d figure out the income. Every day an

opportunity. Hey, he sold cars, he washed dishes, he had a gym, he worked, he worked. Whatever it took, you know.

“And he was always so appreciative to be in a country

where they couldn’t tell you what to do, where to go. You’re on your own: just leave me alone and let me work. And I always had that, from him, that feeling of freedom. I’m proud I was born in Canada, and that my roots are there.

“But I do feel here – for the good, and sometimes the bad – it’s the ultimate freedom. You can do whatever the hell you want. You can be somebody, you can be nothing. You can smoke pot all day and not get out of bed. But if you have a passion, and you have an opportunity – be it created, or

‘Your whole life you can control your work ethic. You can never control talent. So the harder you work the more you’ll achieve’

John Sikura on what drives him to make his Hill ‘n’ Dale Farms the best it can be



Hill 'n' Dale Farm in Kentucky looking resplendent with the sun peaking through the trees and (left) owner John Sikura; (previous page) the stable block and Classic sire Maclean's Music



given to you – in this country you can achieve a lot of things.”

Sorry, Mr Sikura. We're really looking at you, now, and not your horse. But we're all learning something as a result. Because the frauds, the followers, the faint-hearted – they will never beat a smart guy like this. And that should give everyone hope.

“We've had success,” he concedes. “But others have had more. So you try to keep humble, try to create more. We want to develop families, want people to look at a page and

say: ‘Well, that’s a Hill ‘n’ Dale pedigree’.

“Not so someone can say you’ve done a great job. But because selling a horse feels good for a day, and owning one feels good forever. Although selling also validates: tells you what the marketplace thinks of what you have, what you need to adjust.

“Thoroughbreds? They’re not like dogs who are bred so they don’t shed hair. These are bred to race. But a lot of people are in the horse business to be in two years: freshman sire, multiple return on stud fee, get

sold, on to the next. I’m not critiquing that as wrong. It’s free enterprise.

“Myself, I have to be committed. My primary challenge and motivation is to have my own horses, and feel the plain or pleasure of my decisions. I want to be vested in what I’m doing. If you get up and worry every day, and you’re here seven days a week, in the end if it’s successful I’d rather own the horse than charge five per cent. Even that you have to negotiate!”

The day-to-day battles of his calling, then, are evidently

enough to consolidate gains of character forged in far greater adversity. So what does the son of his father tell his own children?

“I tell my kids you’re blessed with one thing you can get from me,” he says. “You’re not superbly talented. You have a little bit of ability. What you have to have is a superb work ethic. Which is great, because your whole life you can control your work ethic. You can never control your talent. So the harder you work the more you’ll achieve.

“The odds are always against

you. If you breed to the best sire, well, they don’t get 12 per cent stakes winners any more. The simple math is that 90 per cent of the time you’re breeding to the best sire in the world, you don’t win a Listed race. That’s tough. Performance is very erratic. Performance, in the inherent genetics of thoroughbreds, is far below other animals. And that’s one of the allures, the challenges.

“If you breed two champion dogs together, one puppy in that litter is going to be a champion. A champion mare may never have a maiden

winner. Mate a certain type of cow to a certain type of bull, they can tell you how much the calf is going to weigh. It’s robotic.

“We’re very hit-and-miss. So it’s always going to be an unknown. Sometimes the \$4,000 horse is the best horse. You can’t buy the game. You look at a powerhouse like Coolmore: the assets, the pedigrees, the stallions. They’re going to create champions every year. You’re never going to beat them, January-to-December. But you can always beat them at least once.”

US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

FUTURE STARS OUT



►►From page 7

Evie Stockwell, who raced Hit It a Bomb and Brave Anna, from the Sadler's Wells mare Liscanna.

Four Star's other Book 1 yearlings are **hip 68**, a Scat Daddy colt whose second dam is Galileo's Grade 3 winner Dress Rehearsal; and **hip 16**, a Declaration of War colt bred by Coolmore partners who is a three-parts brother to Intelligence Cross and Warning Flag.

"They have all the right stuff and we're excited about them," Cauthen says. "The Scat Daddy colt belongs to Ben Sangster, who is a longtime client, and he's come along fantastically. The Declaration Of War is an extremely strong and powerful colt, and he looks like the kind who could run on anything."

Four Star will follow up Book 1 with a strong field of entrants in Book 2. **Hip 175** is another colt from the final crop of Scat Daddy and he's a

half-brother to multiple Grade 2 winner D'Funnybone.

Hip 224, a chestnut colt from the first crop by Australia, will be offered by Four Star on behalf of Dixiana Farm. Cauthen says he has seen the colt from his early days since Four Star sold Dixiana owner Bill Shively the dam, Fly Past, who is from the Juddmonte family of Flintshire.

"He's continually gotten better each time I've seen him. He's really developed and has a great walk," Cauthen says.

Hip 437, a colt from the initial crop by American champion Will Take Charge and a half-brother to Kentucky Oaks winner Plum Pretty who was bred by Three Chimneys Farm and Besilu Stables, has been "a real star as a physical from the first day", and Cauthen adds: "It's hard to believe how he continues to get better."

Hip 831 is another notable colt in the Four Star

consignment. By Malibu Moon, he is a half-brother to multiple Grade 1 winner and sire Colonel John and was bred by Susan Casner.

"He's a big, strapping, good-looking colt. He's correct and has a lot of substance," Cauthen says.

Four Star also has six yearlings entered in the new Fasig-Tipton Turf Showcase sale, including a pair for Calumet Farm by its European- and American-raced stallions Red Rocks and Musketier.

'Buyers might find themselves in a one-stop shopping situation'

Gainesway

After setting the pace for all consignors at the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga selected yearling sale with 18 horses sold for \$8,105,000, Gainesway enters the Keeneland September yearling auction with 195

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horses catalogued, including 16 in Book 1.

Overall, the Keeneland group has so much potential says Gainesway's Michael Hernon, that "buyers might find themselves in a one-stop shopping situation" when they visit the operation's barns.

"We're having a lot of success on the racetrack with graduates of our consignments," says Hernon, who is duly seeing increasing interest in horses offered to the market by the farm. Some of those graduates include 2016 Belmont Stakes winner Creator, Godolphin's Eclipse scorer Hawkbill, and Grade 1 winners Practical Joke and Klimt.

In addition to a strong group of horses for the Keeneland September sale through Books 1, 2, 3 and 4, Gainesway also has an advantage that no other consignor can claim.

"It's always helpful to have Tapit in your back pocket," Hernon quips. America's record-breaking leading sire, who stands at Gainesway in Lexington, has 44 yearlings in the Keeneland catalogue, the largest bloc being consigned by Gainesway, which has 14.

Gainesway has also worked to assemble some promising pinhooks for the sale, a strategy that proved very successful at Saratoga, while continuing to cultivate a client base of elite breeders that includes Coolmore partners, Don Alberto Corp., Stonestreet Farm and Three Chimneys Farm.

While the market remains somewhat polarised, it is "very good for the premium product", Hernon observes.

"There's buoyancy at the upper end of the market, but you have to have a good physical and a good vet report – that's what people are looking for," he says, adding that he hopes the continued success by American-breds at Royal Ascot could help spur more interest from European buyers.

Some of the standouts in

Gainesway's Keeneland September consignment include the only yearling by Frankel in the catalogue. **Hip 95**, a filly by the Juddmonte superstar bred by Kendall Hansen from the Sir Cat mare Stormy Sunday, is a half-sister to champion Hansen (a son of Tapit).

"The Frankel filly's half-sister by Tapit, who we sold [for \$600,000 as a yearling in 2015], just won at Del Mar and the mare had a colt by Tapit this year who is very appealing," Hernon says.

The Tapit yearlings going to Keeneland include **hip 80**, a half-brother to British Group 2 winner Red Duke. The bay colt, bred by Gainesway, has Group 1 winner Bint Pasha, by Affirmed, as his second dam. Another Tapit

colt, **hip 115**, is a half-brother to Grade 1 winner Wickedly Perfect and was bred by Gainesway with Mandy Pope's Whisper Hill Farm.

Along with the Tapit yearlings, Gainesway has consigned five offspring of international sire War Front. **Hip 81**, a colt out of Irish Group 3 winner Say, by Galileo, was bred by the Coolmore partners.

Hernon relates that a filly by War Front, **hip 17**, is another notable offering. Bred by Three Chimneys and Besilu Stables, the filly is a half-sister to Grade 1 winner Malibu Prayer and to millionaire multiple Graded winner Valid.

"She's a pretty, athletic, correct filly," Hernon says. "I'm delighted with the physical

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KEENELAND SEPTEMBER BOOKS 1-4 LOTS WHO PREVIOUSLY PASSED THROUGH THE RING

Lot	Sex	Breeding	Price	Sale name	Buyers(s)
966	f	Scat Daddy-Accusation	\$160,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	September Farm
972	c	Into Mischief-Air France	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
976	c	Arch-Alb	\$32,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1029	f	Scat Daddy-Barometer	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1031	c	Take Charge Indy-Bauble	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1041	f	Scat Daddy-Beloveda	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1047	c	Paynter-Big Promise	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1050	f	Violence-Block	\$40,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Al Bell
1057	c	Into Mischief-Boom Town Girl	\$100,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	JSM Equine
1068	f	Bodemeister-Bryan's Jewel	\$140,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Villa Roja Bloodstock
1076	c	Distorted Humor-Cambiocorsa	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1078	c	Verrazano-Candy Cat Can	\$40,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Twin Peaks Racing
1094	c	Cairo Prince-Central Moves	\$165,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Machmer Hall
1099	c	Scat Daddy-Charming She Is	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1100	c	Quality Road-Charming Tale	\$75,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1102	c	Uncle Mo-Chasetheragingwind	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1104	f	Blame-Chausie	\$50,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1118	f	Quality Road-Closing Range	\$160,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1120	c	Will Take Charge-Co Cola	\$100,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Al Bell
1139	f	Giant's Causeway-Cotton Blossom	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1142	c	Street Sense-Court Dress	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1153	f	Will Take Charge-Cukee	\$135,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1154	c	Street Sense-Curlina	\$95,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1157	c	Tapit-Daisy Devine	\$350,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1166	c	Lemon Drop Kid-Dattts Awesome	\$70,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
1167	c	Cairo Prince-Dattts Lady Di	\$110,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Machmer Hall
1185	c	City Zip-Doe	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
1190	c	Union Rags-Do The Danse	\$100,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Northface Bloodstock
1192	f	Exchange Rate-Downtown Drifter	\$70,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Pelican Farm

FASIG-TIPTON TURF SHOWCASE LOTS WHO PREVIOUSLY PASSED THROUGH THE RING

Lot	Sex	Breeding	Price	Sale name	Buyers(s)
1	c	Gio Ponti-Beautifulballerina	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
4	c	Temple City-Birdie Birdie	\$55,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
16	c	Declaration Of War-Changethechannel	\$3,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	A. P. Racing
23	f	The Factor-Dances With Ashley	\$30,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
29	c	The Factor-Dovie	-	Fasig-Tipton Kentucky 2017 July Yearling	Withdrawn
31	f	Data Link-Druidess	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
37	f	Animal Kingdom-Final Sense	\$32,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
41	c	Temple City-Giant Redwood	\$4,500	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Not Sold
55	c	Distorted Humor-In Bloom	\$100,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Chuck Allen
55	c	Distorted Humor-In Bloom	-	Fasig-Tipton Kentucky 2017 July Yearling	Withdrawn
58	f	Declaration Of War-Indy Penance	\$50,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Mike Abraham
62	c	The Factor-Jane's The Name	\$25,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Checkmate Thoroughbreds
63	f	Arch-Golden Causeway	-	Fasig-Tipton Saratoga 2017 August Yearling	Withdrawn
75	c	Tapizar-Lady Siphonica	\$32,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Genesis Racing
83	c	Tizway-Love To Score	\$17,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Cobra Farm
91	f	More Than Ready-Maude S	\$67,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Fedamore Stable
101	f	War Front-On Parade	\$400,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	SF Bloodstock
109	c	Gio Ponti-Promulgation	\$5,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
125	c	Declaration Of War-Shehadmefromhello	\$10,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
128	c	Data Link-Sky Fraulein	\$27,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
134	f	First Samurai-Starlite Starbrite	\$6,000	Keeneland 2017 January Horses of All Ages	Robert C Francis
134	f	First Samurai-Starlite Starbrite	-	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Withdrawn
145	c	Discreet Cat-Truly Blushed	\$15,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
151	f	Exchange Rate-Vesper Cat	\$47,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Peter Pugh
152	f	War Command-Visit Copenhagen	\$22,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
168	c	Malibu Moon-Article Rare	\$70,000	Keeneland 2016 November Breeding Stock	Not Sold
170	f	Declaration Of War-Autumn Ash	\$37,000	Fasig-Tipton Kentucky 2017 Winter Mixed	Not Sold

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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

Raise a glass to a success story that like fine wine is getting better with age



Nancy Sexton talks to Barbara Banke, who is continuing the work of her late husband Jess Jackson at the burgeoning Stonestreet Farms

LADY AURELIA'S agenda is such that her presence in Europe's top sprints has become sooner a matter of expectation than hope.

It is a programme of the highest ambition – sending a three-year-old filly on regular trips across the Atlantic to

compete on the elite stage – but one that encapsulates the enterprising approach of her breeder and part-owner, Barbara Banke of Stonestreet Farms.

What began as a hobby for Banke's late husband Jess Jackson rapidly developed into something far greater. In its relatively short history, Stonestreet has campaigned numerous Graded stakes winners, notably champions and fan favourites Rachel Alexandra and Curlin. It also exerts an influential hand in the American stallion industry and possesses an elite broodmare band.

Champions Dayatthespa and My Miss Aurelia; Grade 1 winner Rachel's Valentina, the only daughter of Rachel Alexandra; and the dams of Lady Aurelia, top sprinter Runhappy and recent Haskell

Invitational winner Girvin are just some of the names among the 76-strong group.

When Jackson passed away in early 2011, Banke could easily have taken a softer approach to Stonestreet. Instead, however, she did the opposite – and now sits at the helm of one of the turf's most upwardly mobile and international operations.

Nor does her attachment to racing stop with Stonestreet itself. In recent years Banke has served the American Jockey Club, Breeders' Cup, Thoroughbred Owners and

One speedy lady: Stonestreet homebred Lady Aurelia runs away with the Queen Mary Stakes on her first visit to Royal Ascot as a two-year-old last season



Breeders Association, National Racing Museum and Hall of Fame and Keeneland's advisory board of directors.

"I was an attorney," says Banke. "Then I met my husband and transitioned into the horse business. I had no real experience with racing or horses, although I'd done a bit of riding."

"Jess had had a breeding operation in California with his uncle but when he passed away in the 1970s Jess didn't have the time to pursue it and so left the business."

A lawyer by profession, Jackson was by then producing premium Chardonnay out of a converted pear-and-walnut orchard he had purchased

in Lakeport, California. By 1981, he was making his own wine. The end result, released by Kendall-Jackson, was a high-quality product at affordable prices and appreciated by the market. In time, Jackson would own approximately 25,000 acres of Californian land.

JACKSON stepped down as chairman of Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates in November 2003 and suddenly had time on his hands. And with it, that early interest in racing was reignited.

"In 2003, Jess was driving me crazy and I said to him: 'Why don't you go and get a hobby!'" says Banke. "And he did; he purchased a racehorse, then a few more, and a few more and then a breeding



Stonestreet's primary base is the Kentucky farm that stretches over 1,800 acres of Bluegrass land



farm. We were off to the races, as it were.

"In the beginning, he wanted to create something that would work economically. He had a plan – but then he was very impatient."

Stonestreet's primary base is the Kentucky farm that stretches over 1,800 acres of Bluegrass land. Ocala, Florida, is home to a training centre overseen by Ian Brennan. The broodmare band ranges from America to Australia, while the horses in training include several in Europe – led by recent Minstrel Stakes winner Spirit Of Valor, owned in partnership with Coolmore.

Not long after its formation, the big winners rolled in. There was Forest Music, who won the Grade 2 Honorable Miss Handicap following her purchase in June 2005. She went on to foal smashing

'He purchased a racehorse, then a few more, and a few more and then a breeding farm. We were off to the races, as it were'

Barbara Banke on how her late husband Jess's hobby transformed into so much more

debut winner Maclean's Music, sire of Preakness winner Cloud Computing from his first crop.

In time the homebreds pulled their weight, among them My Miss Aurelia, who was champion two-year-old filly of 2011 by virtue of her wins in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies and Frizette Stakes; 2011 Preakness Stakes runner-up Astrology; 2012 Frizette Stakes winner

Dreaming Of Julia; and last season's Santa Margarita Stakes heroine Tara's Tango.

All the while various auction purchases – invariably made with the assistance of John Moynihan – also enhanced Stonestreet's standing, notably Grade 1 winner Carpe Diem, who was raced with WinStar Farm; triple Grade 1 winner Cavorting; the ill-fated top sprinter Rock Fall; and

►►Continues page 20

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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

Idyllic scenes in the bluegrass and (inset) Stonestreet Farms owner Barbara Banke with Curlin, one of ten stallions the operation has an interest in



►From page 19
undefeated Grade 2-winning juvenile Kantharos.

Stonestreet, however, will always be inextricably linked with two real stars of the American sport: Curlin, the first horse to surpass \$10 million in earnings and now one of Kentucky's most sought after stallions; and Rachel Alexandra, the first filly in 85 years to win the Preakness Stakes.

The daughter of Medaglia D'Oro has not been covered since suffering complications after delivering her second foal in 2013 – but that was Bernardini's daughter Rachel's Valentina, who won the 2015 Spinaway Stakes and is now in foal to Curlin.

"Forest Music, the dam of Maclean's Music, was probably our first big horse," says Banke of the daughter of Unbridled's Song. "She raced a lot and all over the country, she was very tough and very fast."

"Then we bought into the wonderful Curlin. He trained every Monday, never missed a day, and retired completely sound. He was wonderful to go to the races with because you never had to worry about him."

Curlin retired to Lane's End Farm in 2008 as the winner of seven Grade 1 races for Steve Asmussen – the Preakness Stakes, two runnings of the Jockey Club Stakes, Breeders' Cup Classic, Dubai World Cup, Stephen Foster Handicap

'Curlin had such speed and durability, which he throws to his progeny. His stock are intelligent, they like to work'

and Woodward Stakes – but switched to Hill 'n' Dale for he 2016 season. Over the past three years he has sired six Grade 1 winners and stood the past season for \$150,000.

"He had such speed and durability, which he throws to his progeny," says Banke. "His stock are intelligent, they like to work and they hold up."

CURLIN is one of ten stallions in whom Stonestreet holds an interest. John Sikura's Hill 'n' Dale Farm also stands the aforementioned Maclean's Music – a "potential successor to Distorted Humor who throws a good, well-balanced type" says Banke – and Kantharos, who was shipped up to Kentucky after making a

favourable impression with his first Florida-bred crops.

Carpe Diem, by Giant's Causeway, stands at WinStar

Farm and has his first foals on the ground; while interests are also held in the high-flying Adena Springs father-and-son pair of Awesome Again and Ghostzapper. Then there is Jess's Dream, the Curlin colt out of Rachel Alexandra named in honour of Jackson who won his only start at Saratoga. He stands in Florida at Ocala Stud.

For now, however, the star is very much Lady Aurelia. Stonestreet bred the daughter of Scat Daddy out of Puerto Rican Horse of the Year D'Wildcat Speed and sent her to the 2015 Keeneland September Sale where she

was knocked down for \$350,000 to George Bolton and Peter Liedel.

"Lady Aurelia was always a very attractive filly, a very good representation of her late sire," says Banke. "I'm a commercial breeder and do sell. I have to sell some horses – I didn't want to sell her but needed to."

"George has been a partner in some of my horses and he liked her. Then Peter came in. So we formed an informal partnership."

LIKE every Stonestreet runner, Lady Aurelia spent her formative weeks under tack at the training centre in Ocala before heading to Wesley Ward, who has saddled her to win the Prix Morny, King's Stand and Queen Mary Stakes.

"I'm proud of it, Ian Brennan does a terrific job," says Banke of the centre, which has also handled the early careers of current leading three-year-old fillies Unique Bella and New Money Honey. "It was owned by Vinery and I'd been sending my horses there. When it came up for sale I didn't want to let that go, so I purchased it."

"I created an uphill gallop for Lady Aurelia and some of our other horses. It also has a very nice turf track and a safe dirt track. There's all kind of options for them."

"Ascot was always part of the plan for Lady Aurelia. She would leave her workmates behind at Wesley's and then she broke the track record on dirt first time out at Keeneland. But we didn't know what to expect when we went to Ascot for the Queen Mary. It was fantastic – she showed such tremendous speed."

"And now she'll rate, which is important. The first time she went to Ascot we thought: 'Well, she just needs to be let go'. Johnny Velazquez was very good with her in the King's Stand, we were lucky he was there after Frankie [Dettori] got hurt."

"And then we almost did it again the next day with Spirit Of Valor at 66-1 when he was second in the Jersey Stakes."

Spirit Of Valor, trained by Aidan O'Brien, is the headline act of the European string; while the operation has made notable recent inroads in



Spirit Of Valor: trained by Aidan O'Brien and owned in partnership with Coolmore, the Jersey Stakes runner-up is the headline act of the European string



Australia, thanks to Group 1 winner Miracles Of Life, purchased alongside her dam Dazzling Gazelle for A\$900,000 at the Teeley dispersal at Magic Millions in 2014. Kept in training, Miracles Of Life went on to win the Group 1 William Hill Classic the following year for Stonestreet.

Group 1 winner Bounding, purchased for A\$1.9m at the 2016 Magic Millions National Broodmare Sale, is another jewel within the Australian broodmare band.

"We have shares in a few horses in Europe and I'm interested in developing that side of the operation," says Banke. "I like British racing and I like turf racing for the purpose of my breeding operation. I like fillies who sprint on the turf."

"In Australia I have Miracles Of Life, her Medaglia

D'Oro yearling filly, and her dam Dazzling Gazelle, who has a Fastnet Rock two-year-old filly. There are also a couple of horses in training and I'm hopeful they'll do something."

B ANKE'S enthusiasm for international racing, particularly in Australia, is tangible. "I have two wineries in Australia," she explains. "Our wine-maker in Australia, Peter Fraser, rides and he said why didn't we think about racing in Australia? So we had a look."

"We bought Miracles Of Life and her dam out of the Teeley dispersal. Miracles Of Life went on to win a Group 1 for us, which was wonderful."

"The racing out there is fabulous. The grandstands are new but beautiful and there's a lot of interest from the general public. There's a lot we can

take out of it to apply to American racing."

She adds: "There are many good points relating to the future of American racing. Yes, there is still a hierarchy of tracks in America, but the major tracks – Del Mar, Saratoga, Keeneland – are all doing well."

"And NBC has been broadcasting all the major European races in the US. Their broadcast from Royal Ascot was well received. I

think there are pointers to be taken from Royal Ascot as a meeting."

However, the issues remain. "We're active in thoroughbred aftercare and I'd love to see uniform medication reform," she says. "It's about marketing the sport. Anything that enlarges the fan base. There are lots of ideas and hopefully some of them will move the needle on the fan base."

Next month the farm will once again be participating in

the Keeneland September Sale, with Banke no doubt keeping a keen eye on proceedings in her position on the advisory board of directors alongside the role of vendor and potentially buyer.

S TONESTREET'S sales season is already off to a flyer thanks to a Curlin colt out of Grade 1 winner River's Prayer who jointly topped the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga Sale when sold for \$1m to Eric Fein.

Among the Keeneland yearlings on offer are the half-siblings to Grade 1 winners Girvin (a colt by Shanghai Bobby), Dreaming Of Julia (filly by Curlin out of Grade 1 winner Dream Rush), Drill (colt by Tapit), Taris (colt by Tapit) and Trinniberg (filly by Giant's Causeway) as well as the progeny of Grade 1

winners Ask The Moon (filly by Medaglia D'Oro) and R Heat Lightning (colt by Giant's Causeway).

"The American sales have some great prospects for European racing," she says. "The results this year have borne that out and I encourage people to take a look."

In Banke, American racing has a deeply passionate and knowledgeable owner, one who has made waves during a relatively short period yet seemingly could have participated in the sport for decades.

"Everything was in very good shape when Jess passed away," says Banke. "And I'm supported by a terrific team. Our family really enjoy it. It's been so rewarding, a wonderful experience. Racing is just a wonderful sport."

'I'm supported by such a terrific team. It's been so rewarding, a wonderful experience. Racing is just a wonderful sport'

Barbara Banke on the rich legacy she took on at Stonestreet and a continuing love affair

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US SEPTEMBER YEARLINGS

QUALITY OFFERING

»From page 17
progress she's made. She'll get a lot of repeat inspections."

'We keep hearing lots of good things about them from breeders'

Lane's End

With an array of accomplished international breeders as clients and a cavalry of blue-blooded horses, William S Farish's Lane's End is perennially a leading consignor at the Keeneland September Yearling Sale.

Yet this year is going to be particularly special for the organisation, according to Farish's son Bill, who oversees the farm's sales and stallion business. The first offspring of Frankel's multiple Group 1-winning brother Noble Mission will be presented at the world's largest yearling marketplace and Farish hopes that buyers will react with enthusiasm.

"We're obviously very excited about the first foals by Noble Mission, and we keep hearing lots of good things about them from other breeders," Farish says. "It's going to be fun to see how they're received, and we're cautiously optimistic."

Lane's End has consigned 260 horses for the 12-session Keeneland sale, including 18 by Noble Mission. Overall, the stallion is represented by 45 yearlings in the catalogue; and another 13 at the inaugural Fasig-Tipton Turf Showcase yearling auction.

Hip 433, a bay colt out of French stakes winner Limonar – a daughter of Street Cry and a half-sister to Grade 1 winner Talco – is an attractive individual by Noble Mission, Farish says. Bred by Vincent Viola's St Elias Stable, a co-owner of Kentucky Derby winner Always Dreaming, the colt is a half-brother to stakes winner and Gimcrack runner-up Mokarris.



Lane's End will send yearlings to the Keeneland ring for many prominent breeders, including four bred by the Niarchos family's Flaxman Holdings who are catalogued in Book 1. Among that group is **hip 109**, a War Front colt who is a half-brother to Irish champion Pathfork and whose dam, the stakes-winning Sadler's Wells mare Visions Of Clarity, is a half-sister to champion and sire Spinning World.

"He's a really nice colt. On pedigree alone he's a standout, but he's also a very nice individual," Farish says. "Maria [Niarchos Gouaze] is selling some really nice prospects this year."

Another notable Niarchos-bred yearling in the Lane's End consignment is **hip 163**, a colt from the final crop by Scat Daddy and out of the Dynaformer mare Dreams Of Fire, a half-sister to Derby winner Kris Kin.

The first horse Lane's End

has in the Keeneland catalogue also has international connections. **Hip 3**, a Medaglia D'Oro filly out of Grade 1 winner Emma's Encore, by Congrats, was bred by German-based Dr Christoph Berglar, the breeder of champion Novellist and also owner of Stonereath Stud in Kentucky.



American-based clients for this sale include WinStar Farm and G Watts Humphrey, and both have notable yearlings in Book 1.

Hip 113, a filly by Pioneer of The Nile bred by WinStar, is a half-sister to Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf winner New Money Honey. **Hip 148**, a colt by War Front who is the first foal produced by Smart Strike's Grade 1-winning daughter Centre Court, represents Humphrey.

'Scat Daddy filly is a superstar physical, she's exceptional'

Taylor Made Sales Agency

It's become virtually impossible to imagine an American bloodstock sale without the presence

Hip 113 is a Pioneer of The Nile half-sister to Breeders' Cup scorer New Money Honey (left) from Lane's End

of the Taylor Made Sales Agency, which time after time presents consignments featuring both large numbers of horses as well as some of the top sellers at all the major markets.

Taylor Made has dominated the Keeneland September Yearling Sale over the last decade, leading all consignors eight times by turnover and sending almost 3,000 horses through the ring whom buyers have acquired for a staggering total of about \$339 million.

If there was betting involved as to the results of this year's September sales, Taylor Made would be a prohibitive favorite to continue that trend.

The catalogue reveals that Taylor Made has consigned 448 of the 4,139 total yearlings this year, or about 11 per cent; the second largest consignment, from Lane's End, numbers only 260 horses. Taylor Made accounts for an even larger portion of the Book 1 yearlings, with 25 of the 167 consigned, or 15 per cent.

"What our goal has been is to have quantity of quality," says Mark Taylor, vice-president of marketing and public sales for the organisation he operates with his brothers Duncan, Frank and Ben. "We're a family business and we have a big family, so we can handle a lot of customers."

Taylor Made has revised its approach to Book 1 slightly this year, emphasising individuals with outstanding physicals as well as promising bloodlines rather than just flashy pedigrees alone, Taylor says.

Since this is the world's largest yearling marketplace, results "dictate how economics play out" for breeders for the entire year and thus can be crucial for the industry's overall health, he notes. Keeneland has redesigned its format for Books 1 and 2 and launched a sellers' and owners' bonus plan to spark auction action, and Taylor says his family's agency is

keen to assist in those efforts, particularly with a larger-than-typical percentage of horses in Book 1.

Looking at the consignment, Taylor pointed to **hip 27**, a War Front colt bred by China Horse Club who is the first foal out of multiple Grade 1 winner Lotapa, by Afleet Alex, as one of its potential stars.

"This colt is really special," Taylor says. "I've probably seen over 2,000 yearlings since January and this horse is right up there at the top. He's elite."

Hip 49, a Tapit colt who is the first foal of Grade 1-placed Miss Besilu, by Medaglia D'Oro, is another yearling Taylor cited as outstanding. Miss Besilu is a half-sister to Horse of the Year Saint Liam – who sired another Horse of the Year in Havre De Grace before his tragic death after only one season at stud – as well as to the dam of multiple Grade 1 winner Gun Runner.

"This is a stallion's pedigree and this is just a really nice colt – he's so athletic," Taylor says of the yearling bred by Three Chimneys Farm and Besilu Stables.

Hip 83, a Scat Daddy filly out of a stakes-placed English Channel half-sister to Irish Group 1-placed Traffic Guard, is "a superstar physical," Taylor says. "She's so exceptional." He adds that she makes him think of two other Scat Daddy fillies Taylor Made sold as yearlings, Acapulco and Con Te Partiro, both of whom went on to win stakes races at Royal Ascot.

Taylor Made also leads all consignors at the new one-day Fasig-Tipton Turf Showcase, with 29 yearlings catalogued for that auction.

Some of the agency's standouts there are **hip 92**, a Medaglia D'Oro half brother to Grade 1 winner Finnegan's Wake; **hip 130**, a Distorted Humor colt out of 1,000 Guineas winner Sleepytime who is a half-brother to a pair of British Group winners; and **hip 142**, a Godolphin-bred colt by Animal Kingdom out of Grade 1 winner Tout Charmant.

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‘Follow the herd in this game and you had better have deep pockets’

Chris McGrath talks to **Gatewood Bell** about the successful European raids with his US-breds sourced cheaply at the sales

TO THINK there was a time when European horsemen disparaged their American cousins as insular. Nowadays it is they who themselves lack adventure, hardly any still prepared to try a turf-bred horse like Sakhee on the dirt at the Breeders' Cup; and it is the Americans who are rolling the dice over the Ascot grass.

Two of the pioneers, Scat Daddy and Wesley Ward, have a common link in Gatewood Bell. The young Lexington bloodstock agent put together a syndicate to race a Scat Daddy filly he bought as a yearling a couple of years ago. Sent to Ward, Con Te Partiro won the Sandringham Handicap at the royal meeting in June, and has since shown Grade 1 calibre when beaten under two lengths in the Del Mar Oaks.

"Thirty years ago everybody was coming over here from Europe to buy our best bloodlines," Bell says. "You'd like to think we're starting to balance things out a little bit, with War Front and Scat Daddy."

"It's fun being part of it, being able to come over and compete with you all on those grand stages, including with American-breds you brought back over."

"I think Tepin opened people's eyes. Ten years ago it was impossible for the Americans to win a race at Ascot. Then they could, but only with two-year-olds over five furlongs. Then Undrafted won, a five-year-old – and it was: 'Yes, but it's still sprinting.' But this year Wesley had two winners and they

were both three-year-olds. And our filly in a handicap, going a straight mile!"

On one level, Bell is a natural candidate for such experimentation: young, easygoing, someone who thinks a bunch of guys are going to have more fun – win, lose or draw – with the Ascot pageant than in trying to win a Grade 3 at Churchill. But his instincts are actually rooted in Bluegrass lore.

His grandfather founded Jonabell Farm, raised Never Say Die and Damascus, and was for years a pillar of the Kentucky horse business. And when his father Jimmy sold Jonabell in 2001, Sheikh Mohammed kept him on as president.

That sale, of course, scotched any hope that Gatewood would take the farm into a fourth generation. As a man carving his own path in life, however, he has proved



Gatewood Bell (left) with trainer Wesley Ward: the young agent's grandfather founded the historic Jonabell Farm

receptive to opportunity – whether at Ascot or, as a corollary of integrated transatlantic bloodlines, at the inaugural Turf Showcase at Fasig-Tipton.

"I think it's cool," he says. "I shop in Books 3, 4 and 5 at Keeneland, and that's where some of those horses would have been – usually because of their sires, as much as anything. But most of the big European buyers have already gone by then, so you could find some value."

"Some people are complaining, sure, but to me that's an advantage. Because I'm going to go out there and look at them. They're there to be bought, and what are you gonna do? You're not gonna

see them all [at Keeneland] anyway."

An open mind, however, is no less receptive to the past than to change. "I grew up on the farm, and my grandfather was still in the office a lot," Bell recalls. "He wasn't a man of many words but when he talked, you listened."

"Although I've probably learned more about him from other people, from how much they admired him. It wasn't necessarily even his horsemanship, just the way he treated people. He always did what he said he was going to do, he was a handshake kinda guy."

"And then when we sold the farm, just being around Dad and all the people at Darley,

just by tagging along I got exposed to stuff you couldn't buy. A lot of it is keeping your mouth shut and paying attention to people you think are smart, picking up little pieces here and there. And then just don't be afraid to be wrong."

"Follow the herd in this game, you'd better have deep pockets. So put yourself out there, and if you're right, you're right; and if you're wrong, well, you're wrong."

In six years since setting out, Bell has made a habit of getting things right. Having gained track experience with Kiaran McLaughlin, and as agent for Fernando Jara, he cut his teeth in bloodstock with a cousin.

FALLING in with Ward, Bell bought a couple of cheap ones, ten and 14 grand: one became a black-type winner. Soon he turned up Gypsy Robin for \$27,000, a dual Grade 2 winner and runner-up in the Grade 1 Test Stakes. Next came Undrafted, a millionaire Royal Ascot winner for \$50,000.

And then came the day at Keeneland, two years ago, when he bought not just Con Te Partiro but Mastery: a seven-length Grade 1 winner at two, and automatic favourite for the Kentucky Derby in the few seconds before he broke down after a dazzling reappearance this spring. At \$425,000, he had been the biggest sales punt yet: one sponsored by Everett Dobson, who had raised the stakes for Bell with a commission to find a handful of colts with elite potential.

"It was very lucky, I'd say we'll have a few knockout years ahead!" Bell exclaims

modestly. "I love [sire] Candy Ride, and the horse was bought off people who raise a horse the way I'd like to."

"The guy just had a presence about him, he walked out of the stall and I was just in love. He was immature, but he was big, and I thought: 'If he grows into that frame? With the way he walks?' He was just one athletic dude."

Bell shakes his head as he reflects that they could easily have exhausted their budget in half a dozen frustrating turns as underbidders. It was late in the day, Dobson had left town. "I was sitting there in the front row, actually in my grandfather's old seat," Bell recalls.

"I never sit there, but the same bid spotter has been there years and years. And I said: 'I'm going to give this one a swing.' He'd never seen me bid that much before, and he was looking down and was like: 'You sure?'"

The bittersweet Mastery story had a gratifying sequel, in negotiating the horse's arrival at Claiborne. But Bell knows the odds against a repeat, even at that privileged level of the yearling market. "I'm not sure those come around every year," he says. "It's not even a matter of finding him or not, because they're not even there."

But you never say die in this game. He knows that, thanks to one of the great Jonabell graduates. "Legend has it my grandfather went into the tack room and got his flask of bourbon and gave the foal a jolt, to get its heart back beating," Bell says. "And that's how he got his name."

But few names, in this part of the world, could resonate more than the surname he was born with himself.



Con Te Partiro returns to the winner's enclosure after her Sandringham Handicap success



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