

Keeneland Pedigree Nick Review: Identifying Thoroughbred Mares Carrying Foals with Promise

Given its discriminating qualities, the TrueNicks pedigree rating system creates opportunities for owners and breeders – both commercial and breed-to-race – by identifying prospects whose promising pedigrees might not be immediately apparent.

Savvy horsemen use TrueNicks to create their “short lists” of promising hips at a Thoroughbred sale. This approach is straightforward at yearling auctions, where each subject horse has only one rating – but it is more interesting, and indeed it can become more *profitable*, when applied to mares offered at breeding stock sales. With in-foal broodmares, it is possible not only to assess the quality of the previous foals that the mare has produced, but also to compare the siblings’ ratings with the rating of her carried foal, to judge if the mare has received her fair chance at stud. She may be sitting on a couple of recent foals that could give her a chance to shine in coming years.

For Keeneland’s January breeding stock sale, the team at TrueNicks identified several broodmares whose produce records revealed promising patterns, based on the nick ratings of their previous and current matings.

Starting from the full sales catalog, we refined the list of mares for research to what we considered the most commercially vulnerable – some might say *risky* – broodmare prospects. The mares we selected had from three to six foals, with the eldest ranging from 3 to 6 years old. These mares have had only one or two foals that have given them a live chance to be recognized as producers. The commercial reality is that their presence in a sale, especially a less-prominent winter sale, indicates they have failed to impress their owners sufficiently to avoid culling.

These mares do, however, offer excellent opportunity to identify value where others see none. Some 319 January sale mares met our criteria, but only a small subset are currently carrying a foal that is highly rated by TrueNicks. It is a fairly eclectic group: broodmares covered by stallions from Dynaformer to Evansville Slew; mares that were stakes-winners to runners that couldn’t get out of their own way on the track; broodmares from every conceivable family and sire line.

The following lists identify patterns of production for several of the 319 mares that bode well for their future breeding potential.

The Emerging Broodmare Sires

A couple of months ago, TrueNicks published a popular report titled [Top 10 Emerging Thoroughbred Broodmare Sires at the Keeneland November Sale](#). (If you haven’t downloaded your free copy, you can do so at www.BloodHorse.com/special-reports.) That whitepaper listed a number of stallions that we recognized as “emerging” damsires – as opposed to proven (and thus expensive!), or unproven, or failed broodmare sires. Drawing on that research gave us a good opportunity to identify a couple of January sale mares that we think look to be of great value.

Fourteen mares on our Keeneland January list not only are by these emerging broodmare sires, but have highly-rated young foals either on the ground or due in 2009. Here’s a quick overview of three of these mares that illustrates what a little research will uncover:

Our Majestic Cat (hip #170), a daughter of emerging damsire Tabasco Cat, is in foal to leading sire Tiznow. A twice-winning half-sister to the multiple grade I winner Schossberg, *Our Majestic Cat* started her career with the *B* rated Cherry Cosmo, who is yet to find the winner’s circle. Her next four foals, however, rate *A+* or better, giving real hope that there is a future stakes winner on the ground for this mare. Tiznow has

THE EMERGING SIRES

Hip	Mare	Sire	Dam	Broodmare Sire	Cover Sire	2009 foal	2008 foal	2007 foal	2006 foal	2005 foal	2004 foal	2003 foal
75	Hot Kitty	Tabasco Cat	Casino Babe	Golden Act	Flashy Bull	A		A+	C	NR	B	
170	Our Majestic Cat	Tabasco Cat	Bye the Bye	Balzac	Tiznow	A+	A++	A+	A++	B		
174	Pepper Rossi	Tabasco Cat	Overturned	Wavering Monarch	Strong Hope	A+	NR	B	C+			
259	Unbridled Dream	Unbridled's Song	Dixie Fine	L'Emigrant	Closing Argument	A++	A		C	D	B+	
418	Fearless Wildcat	Forest Wildcat	Scapegoat	Forty Niner	Macho Uno	A	A+	A+	A		A+	
512	Miss April Song	Unbridled's Song	Gravy Train	Sauce Boat	Good Reward	B+	B+		D	D		
700	Alleged World	Spinning World	Miss Alleged	Alleged	Grand Slam	B		B	A	A		B+
776	Diversa	Tabasco Cat	Andora	Conquistador Cielo	Mineshaft	B	A++	D	A+	A	A++	
864	Lady Biscayne	French Deputy	Noble Pursuit	Affirmed	Half Ours	A	A	A			D	A
1073	Zada Rae	Unbridled's Song	Yettajet	Tri Jet	Corinthian	A	A	A+	D		B+	
1123	Cat Out	Forest Wildcat	Pele Dancer	Raise a Native	Badge of Silver	D	A		A+	NR	A+	
1592	French Seduction	French Deputy	Positioned	Cannonade	Pure Prize	A		D	A	B	C	
1648	J's Crafty Cat	Tabasco Cat	Baby Jinx	Crafty Prospector	Closing Argument	NR	A		A	A	A	
2045	Kissin Princess	Kissin Kris	Alta's Princess	Screen King	Istan	C	C	C	C	A++	B	

No Rating (NR) indicates that the sire line cross has not had ample opportunity to calculate a valid nick rating.

previously sired champion Folklore and the highly-rated Tiz Wonderful out of mares from the Storm Cat line. This mare already has a Tiznow colt in front of her, so there may be a quick update before the full sibling this mare is carrying hits the sales ring.

Fearless Wildcat (#418) is a daughter of the ill-fated Forest Wildcat and is in foal to the underrated Macho Uno. Fearless Wildcat is a half-sister to two stakes winners and – at least from a TrueNicks perspective – has been beautifully mated, with her three live foals rating A or better. (The mare had one foal die as a weanling; it was also A rated) Fearless Wildcat is again in foal to a stallion that generates an A rating, so she has certainly been given every chance to succeed and while on a late cover (June 14, 2008), looks like an interesting play.

Zada Rae (#1073) is a daughter of the emerging broodmare sire Unbridled's Song, and is in foal to the young Gainesway stallion Corinthian. A half-sister to three stakes winners and to the dam of two other stakes winners, Zada Rae has a new 2-year-old by Dixie Union (A+), a short yearling by Forest Danger (A), and is in foal on an A-rated mating.

The A List!

Just six of the 319 mares that we initially started with have had *all* of their foals to date rate an A or better, while also carrying a 2009 foal that rates A or better – certainly an “A” list!

The mares in this select group are all by commercial sires, and all are in foal to commercial sires. Premium Hope, offered by Taylor Made Sales Agency, is worth some individual commentary. Her foals to date are:

2005 filly Hopeless Ness, by Prized. Unraced.

2006 colt (Unnamed), by Animo de Valeroso.

2007 Not mated.

2008 colt (Unnamed), by Anabaa.

2009 in foal to Any Given Saturday

THE A LIST

Hip	Mare	Sire	Dam	Broodmare Sire	Cover Sire	2009 foal	2008 foal	2007 foal	2006 foal	2005 foal	2004 foal
11	Elusive Thought	Elusive Quality	Closerthanyouthink	Ascot Knight	Any Given Saturday	A+		A	A	A+	
176	Premium Hope	Miswaki	Premium Red	Thirty Six Red	Any Given Saturday	A+	A		A		A++
288	Allencat	Storm Cat	Pharma	Theatrical (IRE)	Grand Slam	A++	A+	A+	A		
418	Fearless Wildcat	Forest Wildcat	Scapegoat	Forty Niner	Macho Uno	A	A+	A+	A		A+
469	Kreisleriana	Seeking the Gold	Kooyonga (IRE)	Persian Bold (IRE)	Giant's Causeway	A	A	A	A		
1091	Badinage	Alphabet Soup	Tangled Web	Flying Paster	Petionville	A++	A++	A++	A++		

Neither Prized nor Animo de Valeroso represent particularly commercial sires, but the resulting foals both rate well with TrueNicks, so their value cannot be understated.

Anabaa is of course a world-class sire, and Any Given Saturday is a high-class son of Distorted Humor – Animo de Valeroso's better known half-brother! – so Premium Hope has some chance at producing a superior runner, especially with her latter foals.

One last note before moving on: It's interesting that Fearless Wildcat (#418) makes the "A" list in addition to her mention above as a daughter of an emerging broodmare sire.

Slow Starters

The A List highlights mares that earn high ratings with commercial foals both on the ground or in the works for 2009. Another set of mares within our select group could easily be termed the "slow starters."

The first few foals from these six mares rated poorly on the TrueNicks scale, but for each mare, her foal at foot and her in-foal cover are A rated or better.

The royally-bred Futures Market (#428) is a good example to use here. Her first two foals are a C+-rated, unraced 3-year-old by Tale of the Cat, and a D-rated Awesome Again 2-year-old filly that fetched just \$2,500 at the Keeneland September sale last year.

While Futures Market has had a less than glorious start, she has some real value from both a pedigree and a commercial perspective: her 2008 Johannesburg filly rates A, and Futures Market is offered with an A+-rated Malibu Moon cover.

SLOW STARTERS

Hip	Mare	Sire	Dam	Broodmare Sire	Cover Sire	2009 foal	2008 foal	2007 foal	2006 foal	2005 foal	2004 foal
577	Recapitalize	Saint Ballado	Whimsical Wolf	Wolf Power (SAF)	Flower Alley	A	A+	D	D		
976	El Portal	Exit to Nowhere	Samalex (GB)	Ela-Mana-Mou (IRE)	Wando	A+	A+	C	C	C	
324	Cafe Concerto	Tremolino	Charmie Carmie	Lyphard	Powerscourt (GB)	A+	A+	NR	D	D	
428	Futures Market	Unbridled	Tricky Game	Majestic Light	Malibu Moon	A++	A	D	C+		
2319	Dynamite Cocktail	Dynaformer	Tutu	Corwyn Bay (IRE)	Horse Chestnut (SAF)	A++	A+	D	D		
1646	Jewel of the North	Polish Numbers	Lady Muskoka	Regal Classic	Unbridled Energy	A++	A++		D		C+

THE TURNAROUNDS

Hip	Mare	Sire	Dam	Broodmare Sire	Cover Sire	2009 foal	2008 foal	2007 foal	2006 foal	2005 foal	2004 foal	2003 foal	2002 foal
775	Delicias Blues	Grindstone	Magic Blue	Cure the Blues	Forest Grove	A	D	D	NR				
1147	Comme Il Faut	Lac Ouimet	Remember the Day	Settlement Day	Horse Chestnut (SAF)	A	D	C	NR	C			
1271	Los Altos	Robin des Pins	Beer and Bananas	Nostrum	Action This Day	A	D	D	C	C			
1772	Southern Rain	Siphon (BRZ)	Twilight Zone (NZ)	Noble Peer (NZ)	Swain (IRE)	A++	NR	NR		NR			
2179	Ste. Adele	St. Jovite	False Security	Full Partner	Limehouse	A+	D		C		NR	C	D

The Turnarounds

Mares that have had all their foals to date rate a C or less are in a more precarious position. These mares really do need a couple of solid matings to try and turn their fortunes around! We've identified a group of mares that fit this criteria and that are currently carrying their first foal that rates A or better.

One such offering is the well-bred St Jovite mare Ste. Adele (#2179). Her produce record to date (with TrueNicks rating) reads:

2002 filly Silver Monarch, by Wavering Monarch. 4 wins, 3 to 5, \$19,388. **D**

2003 filly Etcetera, by Slew City Slew. 8 wins, 2 to 5, 2008, \$78,668. **C**

2004 colt Karakorum Cobra, by Mongoose. Winner at 2, \$36,216. **No Rating**

2005 No report.

2006 gelding Saeroun Vicar, by Vicar. Sent to Republic of Korea. Unraced. **C**

2007 Not pregnant

2008 colt (Unnamed), by Victory Gallop. **D**

While her first five foals have not rated well, and indeed have not got near stakes performance, Ste. Adele is in foal with an A+ nick rating. This is a mare that could end up producing stakes-quality performers with some well-structured matings such as her current match with Limehouse.

The Synthetics

Another angle worth investigating for value is mares that are in foal to, or have foals at foot by, leading All Weather sires. As more tracks convert to synthetic surfaces, stallions have begun to emerge whose progeny have proved especially adept at racing on all-weather tracks. Having a yearling to sell by one of these stallions could prove a fortuitous move.

Fortunately, *The Blood-Horse* produces a [Leading All Weather Sires list](#) that is updated daily. The Top 10 leading sires of 2008 were Street Cry (IRE), Bold Executive, Tiznow,

THE SYNTHETICS

Hip	Mare	Sire	Dam	Broodmare Sire	Cover Sire	2009 foal	2008 foal	2007 foal	2006 foal	2005 foal	2004 foal	2003 foal	2002 foal
442	Great Plains Lady	Peaks and Valleys	Frans Lass	Shanekite	Elusive Quality	D	D	D	A	C		D	B
469	Kreisleriana	Seeking the Gold	Kooyonga (IRE)	Persian Bold (IRE)	Giant's Causeway	A	A	A	A				
996	Show Me the Wire	Beau Genius	Speier's Girl	Subpet	Point Given	A			NR	NR	A++	NR	
166	Ontheqt	Mazel Trick	Confidential	Smarten	Tiznow	NR	NR	B	NR				
170	Our Majestic Cat	Tabasco Cat	Bye the Bye	Balzac	Tiznow	A+	A++	A+	A++	B			
999	Silk Sails	Ocean Crest	Ailsa	Crafty Prospector	Tiznow	A+	A	A	C+	A+	A	B	
2078	Mimi's Cafe	Snow Chief	Downtown Grill	Spectacular Bid	Unusual Heat	B	D	A++	A++		D		

Elusive Quality, Giant's Causeway, Unusual Heat, Point Given, Trajectory, Smart Strike, and Unbridled's Song.

Seven mares within our select group are in foal to one of these stallions. Interestingly, both Kreisleriana and Our Majestic Cat, who have appeared on previous lists, also appear here.

What is more notable is that all three are in foal on A rated or better matings!

The List We Can't Publish

The final list is one that we can't – or, more accurately, *shouldn't* – publish. These are mares whose matings to date have not generated a single TrueNicks rating better than a C+ and – what is worse – who are currently in foal with coverings that rate C or lower!

Included in this list are mares by Carson City, Dixieland Band, Saint Ballado, and Silver Hawk – so we are not talking about obscurely-bred mares. In fact, the list includes two stakes-winning mares that have been mated to some very high-priced stallions. It really is the *What were they thinking?!?* list, but it is worth looking at, even with a small sample size, to show how poor mating decisions can show even the best of mares in a poor light.

These 11 mares – who shall remain nameless, to protect Thoroughbred breeders both innocent and guilty – have produced 41 foals between them. Of those 41 foals, 22 are of racing age (3+ years old in 2009) and 11 have raced, but only five have won (22.7% winners to foals of racing age). The *highest* earner has amassed only \$79,000 in prize money. It almost goes without saying that there is not a stakes winner among them.

Unfortunately for these 11 mares, we don't hold out a lot of hope that their fortunes can be turned around for the commercial market – but for those auction attendees who breed to race, the mares could represent value. Their matings to date have not been what is required to produce black-type offspring, but with some judicious matings the fortunes of these mares could be resurrected for future produce.

Off to the Sales

Knowledgeable breeders have many opportunities to find value at the Keeneland January auction and other mid-winter breeding stock sales. Armed with the facts, even a large catalog can be narrowed down to a short directory of promising mares. Who's on your list?