



Formal Education

Thoroughbred training centers have at their core the goal of educating young horses and getting them racetrack-ready. Several training centers offer additional services or provide dual roles—such as working with lay-ups and doing rehabilitation, breaking and training horses for 2-year-olds-in-training sales, or serving as satellite facilities where trainers keep their racehorses in condition outside the hustle and bustle of the backside of the racetrack. Training centers also contribute millions of dollars and thousands of jobs to local economies. What follows are a few stories about the facilities and what they have to offer, and the people behind some of the United States' and Canada's most successful training centers.

Circle T Farm

Danny Turner likes to refer to his Circle T Farm operation near Lexington as a family-run outfit and himself as a straight shooter when dealing with clients.

"I like to talk to them and find out what their goals are," Turner said. "I'll ask them if they're looking to race or looking to sell. A person can talk directly to me. He or she doesn't have to go through a bunch of people. I stay up-to-date with all my clients and tell them what's going on."

The farm, which is run by Turner, his three sons and a nephew, offers breaking,

foaling, training, prepping, and vanning.

Turner, who leases the Circle T property and operates on about 200 acres, started in the horse business in Central Kentucky as a young man. "My uncle was manager of Pharamond Farm, and I worked with the stallions," he said. "I also worked at Dixiana Farm under manager Terry Arnold, who's a good man. Before starting Circle T Farm, I owned a farm and leased one."

The Circle T client list includes individuals from Australia, California, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Located near the Fasig-Tipton sale grounds on Newtown Pike, the

farm is a short drive from Interstate 75.

Circle T does not have a training track but has the use of one at Victory Haven training center, which is located in back of Circle T. Circle T does offer a two-mile gallop.

Turner has updated Circle T since he took charge. "We put in new fencing, new waterers, and did some repairs to the barns," he said.

Turner is assisted on the farm by brothers Gayle and Robert Bowles, who have more than 35 years of combined experience in farm management. Turner's sons Cory, 17; Shawn, 13; and Jeremy, 10; help out with farm maintenance. Turner's nephew, Les Ritchie, works in the office, handling photos and pedigree research and designing and updating the farm's website.

Circle T is a short drive from Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital. One of the hospital veterinarians, Dr. Kevin Hyde, a reproduction specialist, is on the farm every day.

Not unexpectedly, Turner is in the breeding business. One of the 15 or so mares he owns alone or in partnership is Sentimental Tango, dam of graded winner Merengue, who is the dam of graded winner Point Determined. Sentimental Tango is in foal to Roman Ruler and has a Big Brown colt by her side.

—By David Schmitz

Copper Crowne Equestrian Center

Copper Crowne Equestrian Center near Opelousas, La., bills itself as a unique, state-of-the-art training center. But it's plenty more than that.

Located on 210 acres and scheduled to open Sept. 1, Copper Crowne not only offers breaking and training but other services such as foaling, boarding, and veterinary care.

"A mare can have a baby here and that baby can grow up and stay here until he or she is ready to go to the races," said operations manager Bob Schuler. "We offer spacious barns with 56 new stalls and 32-foot-high ceilings, as well as offices and living quarters. We have a 20,000-square-foot veterinary clinic with a full staff of veterinarians and surgeons.

"We put in almost seven miles of new board fencing and new roofs on all the barns that we were able to save. When all is said and done, the total project for everything will be worth five and a half million.



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“What we’re most proud about is that everyone involved in this venture is part of the Louisiana Thoroughbred industry. We’re local people who went to LSU (Louisiana State University). We’re not going anywhere.”

Harold Forman, the Copper Crowne owner and developer, is founder of an award-winning architectural firm and a successful construction company. Chief design consultant Steve Greene has designed and engineered track surfaces at such locales as Keeneland, Saratoga, Nad Al Sheba, Three Chimneys Farm, and WinStar Farm.

Harold Theriot, whose son is successful jockey Jamie Theriot, is the superintendent of the training track, which is 6½ furlongs. The elder Theriot learned his trade from Pierre Guilbeau, the track superintendent at the old Evangeline Downs near Carencro. Johnny Spears, who specializes in foaling, is the farm manager.

Copper Crowne is centrally located in the Pelican State. It is two hours to Delta Downs, two hours to Fair Grounds, 2½ hours to Louisiana Downs, and only five minutes to Evangeline.

Copper Crowne offers a unique ownership opportunity. “If a trainer stays for eight years, they’ll own the barn. Most trainers pay stall rent, and they don’t get to own anything. It will be like buying rather than renting,” Schuler said. *By David Schmitz*



The goal of most training centers is to get young horses ‘racetrack-ready’

ANNE M. LEBERHARDT

Evergreen Training Center

South Carolina is making a comeback. The state, which in the past has been overshadowed by sunny Florida as a hot spot for winter training and lay-ups for recovering racehorses, has been put back on the map by facilities such as Dr. Kurt Jaenicke’s 400-acre Evergreen Training Center

near Camden.

Evergreen, which was built in 1989 by the late prominent horseman C.N. Ray, was purchased by Jaenicke in 2005. A physician, Jaenicke grew up in Camden and decided it would be the perfect location for a training facility due to its year-round mild weather.

Designed by well-known racetrack maintenance guru Joe King, Evergreen boasts a one-mile dirt track that is 60 feet wide, as well as a seven-eighths-mile turf track with established sod. The facility additionally has a European-style two-mile turf gallop with gradual incline for conditioning and cross-country work.

“The facility is second to none—the horses don’t come out of here with suspensory injuries or bowed tendons, and I think that is a reflection of the track,” said Jaenicke of Evergreen, which is overseen by veteran horseman Mike Rahaim and his wife, Rose. “Even in crummy weather, you can use the turf gallop and the dirt track, and if it’s raining, you can always do a light gallop in the shedrow of the barns. You have options at the facility, so you don’t really miss training days.”

Jaenicke, who resides in Ashland, Ky., has a handful of horses in training as well

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as a broodmare selected by his key bloodstock adviser, Murette Farrell.

"It blew me away what a beautiful place it is," said Farrell about Evergreen, which has three barns and 90 stalls. "It's very much horse oriented—there is no concrete anywhere; there are lovely walkways to and from the track, and the grass course is surrounded by trees. It's just so picturesque, and it's a calm, serene environment. It's a great place to develop young horses."

Bill Entenmann, who has sent horses to Evergreen the last four years and campaigned grade I winner Artie Schiller, explained the reasons he prefers Wintergreen over other training facilities.

"The ground never freezes there, and we have mostly grass horses," said Schiller, who keeps around 10-15 horses at Evergreen. "It's also got a three-mile turf gallop, it's always good ground, and we can turn our horses out there. It's a really nice place—the best-kept secret out there."

By Esther Marr

San Luis Rey Downs

San Luis Rey Downs, which was built to serve as a full-fledged racetrack in 1969 but was shuttered by the then-governor of California due to its proximity to Del Mar, is now known as one of the most prominent training centers on the West Coast.

The 202-acre facility, located near Bonsall in northern San Diego County, has a one-mile dirt main track with a training track built inside of it. Amenities include a swimming pool, Equicizers, an arena, equine scale, mechanical hotwalkers, paddocks, round pens, and all-weather trails. There are also a track kitchen, administration building, tack shop, and feed store on site.

While San Luis Rey has the facilities for breaking young horses, the training center is used more for developing runners that are already racing.

"We have an official clocker, starters, gate crew, track veterinarian, and our works show up in the *Daily Racing Form*,

so that's the big advantage of San Luis Rey," said Leigh Ann Howard, who has managed the facility since 2001 and has worked there since she was a fledgling trainer in 1975. "We're kind of an in-between (facility) from the farms that do the breaking to the racetrack, where they race all the time and there's all that stress."

San Luis Rey Downs has a 24-hour security team that allows no unlicensed people

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on the grounds. The training center employs approximately 200, with about 300 horses boarded on the grounds.

San Luis Rey Downs, which is open for training year-round, is the only auxiliary training track continuously approved by the California Horse Racing Board since 1984, meaning horses can ship from the facility and run the same day.

A co-op of around two dozen trainers that functions under the name San Luis Rey Racing leases the 500-stall facility from Magna International Development, which bought San Luis Rey from Frank Stronach's Magna Entertainment Corporation in 2007.

In past years many notable horses have been developed at San Luis Rey, including Kentucky Derby (gr. I) winners Fusaichi Pegasus, Sunday Silence, Gato Del Sol, and Ferdinand, plus Horse of the Year Azeri.

More recently trainer Carolyn Costigan, who conditions this year's Woodbine Oaks Presented by Budweiser winner Roan Inish, kept her stock there.

"(San Luis Rey) is more for the discerning trainer that enjoys training and giving the horse what he wants," said Howard. "We're a racing facility...our goal is to (train horses) to race and earn money."

—By Esther Marr

Robert Scanlon Training Center

The list of grade I winners, champions, and/or classic winners broken and trained by the Robert Scanlon Training Center is staggering, even to the casual horse racing fan:

Unbridled's Song, Artax, Song-and-prayer, Songster, Stevie Wonderboy, Sarava, Lion Heart, Rags to Riches, Bernardini, War Pass, and Afleet Alex are only some of the stars that spent their early days at the 125-acre farm just outside Ocala near Williston, Fla. The property, bought in 2000, includes a three-quarter-mile dirt training track, 160 stalls, 20 round pens, and abundant turnout space, and is an ideal place for young Thoroughbreds to begin their career or for rehabs.

David Scanlon operates the facility with his mother, Connie, and along with a skilled team of managers, grooms, and riders, they have continued the successful business started by the late Robert Scanlon, a former New Jersey-based racetrack trainer who moved to Ocala in 1989 to begin his career in pinhooking and raising horses. Scanlon, who in March 2005 consigned a then-world-record 2-year-old for \$5.2 million at the Fasig-Tipton Florida select juvenile sale, died later that year.

"The most important things I learned

from my dad were to be consistent with each horse; to develop a good routine with them, but to also treat every horse individually," said David Scanlon. "You have to taper each program to each specific horse."

As a child, Scanlon spent much of his time on the backside of Monmouth Park learning from his father. After attending college, he joined his family in Florida in the early 1990s.

"I grew up around horses and really missed it when I was away from them," said Scanlon, who does the training while his mother handles the business end of the operation.

With a terrific reputation built on a proven track record, Scanlon Training Center has been attracting some of the top names in the sport for some time. Among their list of clients are Darley, Coolmore, and Jess Jackson. It also does most of the breaking for Nick Zito.

In peak season, Scanlon has about 170 horses on the farm.

"We have about 14 riders at our peak. And we have a groom for every five horses," Scanlon said. "We use the best materials and have a really good, experienced staff. We've been doing this a long time, and I think you can see that in our product."

By Jason Shandler

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