



SOUTHWEST

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Crowne Jewel

Harold Forman's Copper Crowne wows 'em in Cajun Country

BY JASON SHANDLER

Perfect days are daily occurrences in sunny Puerto Vallarta, the popular resort town on the Pacific coast of Mexico. Especially if you own a 50-foot sailboat and a 30-foot fishing boat, each complete with a four-man crew and personal chef, and in the evening you wind down in your beautiful condominium on a private beach with friends and family, taking advantage of the priceless sunsets while standing on your balcony overlooking the ocean.

That was life for Harold Forman for more than two years—sport fishing four days a week, eating fresh seafood every day, and living an incredible life of leisure that most people can only dream of. That ideal life would have been enough for most retirees in their mid-50s, especially those who had accomplished as much as Forman during his ambitious and successful business career.

But suddenly one morning in 2007 as he fished in the Pacific miles away from civilization, Forman decided that catching blue marlin and yellowfin tuna wasn't enough for him anymore. Sitting on his sailboat "just doodling," as Forman puts it, he began jotting down on paper an idea that had been percolating for some time.

The idea was to build an equestrian training center, but not just any equestrian training center. This one would be the ultimate training center, complete with a 20,000-square-foot small and large animal veterinary clinic; state-of-the-art barns complete with offices and living quarters; spacious turnout paddocks; a 150x250-foot arena; a 6½-furlong



Harold Forman at his Copper Crowne Equestrian Center near Opelousas, La.

PHOTOS COURTESY COPPER CROWNE



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training track and a five-furlong turf training course sanctioned for official workouts; a luxurious 70-stall rehab facility; and foaling and boarding facilities available to hundreds of horses. The full-service facility would be on a historic and picturesque 200-plus-acre property with rolling hills, walking trails, and lush, tree-lined pastureland. And it would be situated in an ideal location, central to all of the major racetracks in Louisiana.

Forman had just the place in mind: the historic property formerly owned by owner/breeder John Franks near Opelousas, La. He had spent time on the farm decades before—in fact, taking his future wife, Sandi, there on their first out-of-town date—and had trained many of his horses there two decades before. It was the only place Forman had in mind for his grandiose plan.

And just like that, the idea for Copper Crowne Equestrian Center was born.

"I mapped out the whole idea on my boat, and I remember being at the airport and calling my friend of 30 years and our veterinarian, Dr. Sonny Corley, and telling him about it," recalled Forman. "I said, 'Sonny, I have a dream. Let's meet.' I drove to Lafayette, and we went through my plan. I was blessed that he and his wife, Ednadeen, had enough confidence in me to want to do it. They said, 'We're in.' And a couple of years later here we are."



The farm's original copper cupolas have been refurbished and are used at the entrance and on the barns

Building a Dream

Growing up in New Orleans, Forman was always a fan of Thoroughbreds and owned a small stable throughout most of his adult life, but for many years horses were just a hobby. Having been raised in the city, he had developed a love for construction. He started his own company, Olde Orleans Construction, in 1978 and developed a business model he eventually would incorporate when developing the idea for Copper Crowne.

"We were smart enough to understand that if you're going to create a business, you have to do it in a way that you can capitalize on all entities," said Forman, 59, whose most accomplished horse was two-time stakes winner Performing Pappy in the 1980s. "So we started a construction company, then grew into an architectural firm. But you can only generate so much money from a building project, so you have to capitalize on secondary (businesses).

2010 Leading Sires in Louisiana

State sire lists updated daily online. Go to <http://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/thoroughbred-breeding/sire-lists>

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in Louisiana (exported stallions are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through December 1, 2010. As supplied to The Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., earnings exclude monies from Japan and Hong Kong. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled stakes winners worldwide and any S.H.-foaled horses that won a N.H. stakes. *Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ♀ indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).

| Rank | Stallion (Foaling Year, Sire), Farm Standing | 2011 Stud Fee | Rnrs/ Wnrs | Stakes Wnrs/ Wns | Rstrct SW/ BT SW | (Chief Earner, Earnings) | 2010 Earnings | Cumulative | | | |
|------|--|---------------|------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | | Foals | Stks Wnrs | *A-E Index | *Comp Index |
| 1 | YANKEE GENTLEMAN (99, Storm Cat), Le Mesa Stallions | N/A | 117/62 | 5/6 | 1/5 | (E Z's Gentleman, \$315,380) | \$2,750,031 | *230 | 12 | 1.53 | 1.35 |
| 2 | BRAHMS (97, Danzig), Elite Thoroughbreds | \$3,500 | 135/70 | 5/7 | 2/5 | (Sea Rescue, \$274,456) | \$2,418,515 | *500 | 13 | 1.11 | 1.10 |
| 3 | TENPINS (98, Smart Strike), Elite Thoroughbreds | \$3,500 | 104/50 | 2/3 | 1/2 | (Big Red Mike, \$740,640) | \$2,081,698 | *190 | 5 | 1.17 | 1.15 |
| 4 | LEESTOWN (94, Seattle Slew) | Died, 2008 | 181/70 | 2/4 | 1/2 | (Vickies in Town, \$150,450) | \$1,948,701 | 507 | 16 | 0.89 | 1.00 |
| 5 | IDE (93, Forty Niner), Clear Creek Stud | \$2,500 | 98/37 | 2/4 | 1/2 | (Shezacrazygirl, \$134,000) | \$1,392,727 | 426 | 15 | 1.25 | 1.13 |
| 6 | GOOD AND TOUGH (95, Carson City), Elite Thoroughbreds | \$3,000 | 76/33 | 4/5 | 4/4 | (Jemilyn, \$205,820) | \$1,364,672 | *330 | 15 | 1.28 | 1.19 |
| 7 | SNUCK IN (97, Montbrook), Matthews Thoroughbred Farm | \$2,000 | 100/45 | 2/3 | 1/2 | (Sneaking Uponyou, \$180,703) | \$1,254,546 | *257 | 5 | 0.92 | 1.00 |
| 8 | GOLD TRIBUTE (94, Mr. Prospector), Red River Farms | \$2,000 | 92/31 | 4/4 | 3/4 | (Nana Knows, \$142,680) | \$1,225,219 | *389 | 8 | 1.03 | 1.16 |
| 9 | SEFAPIANO (89, Fappiano), Landlock Equine Center | Died, 2010 | 62/28 | 2/4 | 1/2 | (Way With Words, \$196,910) | \$1,092,698 | 308 | 22 | 1.37 | 0.96 |
| 10 | RICHTER SCALE (94, Habitony), Chad & Pat White Farms | \$2,500 | 87/43 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Sir Galahad, \$80,000) | \$990,024 | 309 | 7 | 0.81 | 1.36 |
| 11 | TETON FOREST (01, Forestry), Elite Thoroughbreds | \$2,500 | 71/36 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Lone Cypress, \$115,700) | \$967,933 | *136 | 1 | 0.89 | 1.06 |
| 12 | SCRIMSHAW (00, Gulch), Millennium Farms at Moon Lake | \$2,500 | 56/37 | 1/1 | 1/1 | (Nomoreweforeddie, \$74,135) | \$948,719 | *117 | 2 | 1.00 | 0.96 |
| 13 | RUN PRODUCTION (00, Saint Ballado), Circle H Farms | \$3,500 | 31/21 | 3/4 | 3/3 | (Foreign Production, \$137,200) | \$904,448 | 57 | 4 | 1.73 | 1.10 |
| 14 | AFTERNOON DEELITES (92, Private Terms), Clear Creek Stud | \$2,500 | 79/28 | 1/1 | 1/1 | (Missy's Deelite, \$107,098) | \$810,996 | *529 | 23 | 1.20 | 1.46 |
| 15 | ROSSINI (97, Miswaki), Elite Thoroughbreds | \$2,000 | 96/32 | 3/3 | 1/3 | (Sakakawea, \$126,178) | \$801,705 | *413 | 9 | 0.69 | 0.86 |
| 16 | LYDGATE (00, Pulpit), Red River Farms | \$2,000 | 34/15 | 1/2 | 1/1 | (Do Dat Blues, \$116,300) | \$619,485 | *59 | 1 | 0.94 | 1.20 |
| 17 | EASYFROMTHEGITGO (99, Dehere), Ryder River Ridge Farm | \$2,000 | 53/25 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Gittiupgo, \$41,088) | \$569,481 | 111 | 1 | 0.76 | 1.05 |
| 18 | ROBYN DANCER (87, Crafty Prospector), Shady Lane Farm | Died, 2009 | 54/22 | 1/2 | 1/1 | (Smash Dancer, \$186,750) | \$552,481 | 632 | 23 | 1.12 | 1.34 |
| 19 | HONOR GLIDE (94, Honor Grades), Fanlew Farms | \$2,500 | 55/23 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Euroglide, \$46,120) | \$538,240 | 138 | 2 | 0.71 | 1.13 |
| 20 | SULTRY SONG (88, Cox's Ridge), Whispering Oaks Farm | \$1,000 | 56/27 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Smalltownman, \$76,358) | \$515,271 | *715 | 23 | 1.27 | 1.35 |
| 21 | ZARBYEV (84, Nureyev), Chad & Pat White Farms | \$3,500 | 45/17 | 1/1 | 1/1 | (Ladyzarbridge, \$61,200) | \$502,963 | *294 | 15 | 1.13 | 0.90 |
| 22 | NATIVE REGENT (92, Vice Regent), Elite Thoroughbreds | \$1,500 | 44/16 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Hefferman, \$74,420) | \$491,693 | 178 | 2 | 0.90 | 0.98 |
| 23 | MILLENNIUM WIND (98, Cryptoclearance), Fallen Oaks Farm | \$1,000 | 74/24 | 1/1 | 0/1 | (Sentimental, \$40,548) | \$490,949 | *227 | 3 | 0.56 | 1.35 |
| 24 | WILDCAT SHOES (01, Forest Wildcat) | Died, 2009 | 29/17 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Lady Wildlee, \$67,920) | \$490,627 | 62 | 0 | 1.12 | 1.06 |
| 25 | TIME BANDIT (96, Time for a Change), Heritage Stud | \$1,000 | 67/17 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Latch Lighting, \$41,485) | \$488,545 | 196 | 3 | 0.94 | 0.98 |
| 26 | LONE STAR SKY (00, Conquistador Cielo), Le Mesa Stallions | \$1,500 | 18/9 | 1/2 | 1/1 | (Fort Hood, \$231,400) | \$488,491 | 36 | 1 | 1.43 | 0.98 |
| 27 | PROUD AND TRUE (94, Mr. Prospector), 519 Thoroughbreds | N/A | 33/15 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Not too Proud, \$52,890) | \$477,396 | 205 | 4 | 1.09 | 0.95 |
| 28 | WOKE UP DREAMIN (00, Holy Bull), Millennium Farms at Moon Lake | \$2,500 | 49/23 | 2/4 | 0/2 | (Cashinin Ona Dream, \$69,339) | \$457,727 | 86 | 3 | 0.58 | 1.12 |
| 29 | FORD EVERY STREAM (99, Seeking the Gold), Clear Creek Stud | \$1,500 | 39/18 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (Classic Key Bridge, \$63,375) | \$429,762 | 67 | 1 | 0.62 | 0.91 |
| 30 | FINEST HOUR (94, Forty Niner), Camelot Farm | \$2,000 | 47/12 | 0/0 | 0/0 | (The Pipster, \$73,732) | \$408,841 | 273 | 4 | 0.69 | 0.79 |

*A-E and COMPARABLE INDEX: The lifetime Average-Earnings Index indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned, on the average, in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00. The Comparable Index indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AEI higher than their mares Comparable Index.

"For example, while buying carpet and flooring for our company, it gave us a chance to develop a niche for interior design. So we started selling flooring and draperies to clients during the building process, and then we did the same thing by starting our own concrete company, landscape company, and mortgage and title companies. We owned all of the entities that people needed, so they could come in our door and utilize all of the companies we owned. It was a nice way to increase our profit structure."

Over the next 18 years Forman, with help from his sister, Sandy, who was his business manager, blossomed into one of Louisiana's premier real estate developers, designing more than 200 projects that included shopping malls, office buildings, and residential areas. He also owned a string of hotels for many years before selling them off. In 1996 Forman was fortunate enough to retire a wealthy man.

"I've been blessed," said Forman, who married Sandi in 1986 and has a daughter, Sarah. "The best thing was to be able to enjoy a career that I had a passion for, not just have a job. I always enjoyed being creative."

Creativity was exactly what Forman needed when he began mapping out the idea for Copper Crowne. For the past six years he had an eye on the property, located just north of Lafayette in the Cajun country of Opelousas, which is world-renowned for its production of cooking spices. In the horse racing world the region is the birthplace of many of the sports' premier jockeys, including current stars Calvin Borel, Robby Albarado, and Kent Desormeaux.

Situated a quarter-mile off Interstate 49, Copper Crowne sits on land previously owned by Franks, a four-time Eclipse Award winner as leading owner and a top breeder. After Franks died in December 2003, the farm was sold, and by the time Forman became interested, it was in need of refurbishment. Still, Forman was well aware of what it had to offer.

"I met Mr. Franks three or four times, and he was a special individual," Forman said. "He was a first-class individual and true gentleman, and you could see it in the farm. And the man that was the mastermind behind the property 40 years ago, Lee Young, did a great job of developing a property that had everything from rolling hills to beautiful oak trees, to a place that grows grass like you've never seen before."

"The people of Opelousas are like none other; there are no strangers here. We wanted to be in this area because of that and because of the location. The location is the key to this property. It's two hours from Fair Grounds, two hours from Delta Downs, two and a half hours from Louisiana Downs, and two minutes from the new Evangeline Downs. Our dream is to be the hub of racing for all of Louisiana."

Together with his business partners, the Corleys and Meaghan Gilhooly, and a team of architects and planners, the massive project broke ground in March 2008. Copper Crowne is based around the spectacular veterinarian clinic, which is located on the first 50 acres of the farm, adjacent to the training facility.

When the vet clinic opens for business in mid-December, it will include a small animal clinic with a surgery center, a large animal clinic with two surgery centers and special units for exams, recovery, and a pharmacy. The large animal clinic will have 11 veterinarians and a board certified surgeon.

"Our goal is to have a premier and complete facility that people can foal, examine, rehab, turnout, and have surgery in," said Corley, a veterinarian of more than 30 years. "We wanted it to be convenient for the needs of everyone."

The convenience of the vet clinic and the spacious rehab facility and arena that sit alongside are major reasons trainers such as C.J. Woodley have moved their stables to Copper Crowne.

"To have the veterinary facility less than a minute from where I train my horses is ideal," said former jockey-turned-trainer Woodley, who currently has 56 horses on the grounds. "I don't have to haul my horses to LSU or anywhere else. It's a tremendous convenience."

While the vet clinic is the foundation for Copper Crowne, which is named for the farm's original copper cupolas that were refurbished and are now used at the entrance and on the barns, the training facility on the main property is the area where horsemen spend most of their time. The main attraction is the 70-foot-wide training track that Forman had built at the cost of \$2 million. Complete with inner and outer safety rails and starting gates, the sand- and clay-based footing has drawn rave reviews from horsemen since the track opened Sept. 1. Forman could have refurbished the existing track that had been on the property, but like the rest of the place he decided to go first class.

"I was smart enough to understand that as beautiful as the facility is, without a top-class training track we had nothing," he said. "We assembled a team, led by Steve Green from Kentucky, and leading engineers and construction companies from around the country. We were fortunate enough to have the records of the track profiles from Fair Grounds and Churchill Downs and created the (surface) blend from that."

Al Pike, a veteran trainer of more than 30 years, is among those who are impressed with the new racetrack.

"It's the finest racetrack I've ever trained on," said Pike, who recently moved his stable from Texas to Louisiana. "My main

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business is getting horses ready to sell, and I can do it a lot better now. The horses just love it. They glide over it. They come off the track with smiles on their faces.”

Harold Theriot, father of jockey and Louisiana native Jamie Theriot, is the track superintendent. He participates in monthly meetings with horsemen to ensure that everyone is satisfied with the conditions. The inner turf training track, which encircles a 10-acre lake, will be completed in 2012.

If the training track is to the liking of the horsemen, the 270-plus horses on the grounds are equally as pleased with the living arrangements at Copper Crowne. Forman built six, 56-stall barns and has four more under construction.

The barns have tall roofs that offer maximum ventilation and each stall has an open, airy design so horses can see out of all four sides. Indoor wash racks have hot and cold water, and modern amenities for horsemen include full baths and offices in the living quarters.

“My horses relax here so much better,” Woodley said. “It’s just the way the stalls are designed. They like being able to see what’s coming at them.”

Being the creative businessman, Forman offers a lease-to-own option in an effort to draw more horsemen to Copper Crowne for the long term. Under terms of the business plan, trainers who rent stalls at the facility for at least eight years are eligible to own the barn and a piece of the property.

“It’s an asset that the trainer can leave their family,” said Forman, who is having a house built on the farm. “It’s an opportu-



The training track at Copper Crowne is 6½ furlongs

nity to have ownership and for us to get quality people here.”

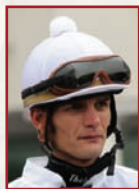
The lease-to-own option is just another feature that helps make Copper Crowne a unique equestrian facility whose mission is to balance nature, horses, and people to provide the best care, training, and boarding facilities.

“Our goal was to create an extremely modern facility that is not just a training center but a complete service facility where people can get all of their veterinary needs met, be able to foal the mare, raise the baby, have qualified trainers break the young horses, train them, get them ready for the sale or the track, rehab them, and board them. They won’t have to leave the facility,” said Forman.

“To see the master plan come together has been so exciting and incredibly rewarding—more than any other project I’ve ever done.”



Born and raised in Louisiana, I’ve had the opportunity to ride at the top tracks around the world. On my visit to Copper Crowne Training Center, I was amazed by the quality of the new training track. Coming through the gates, was like entering a first-class Kentucky farm. — *Kent Desormeaux, Hall of Fame Rider*



An incredible, all-around facility. The spacious barns and the track, without question, are the best in the Southwest. Adding a dedicated track superintendent with over 20 years experience, Harold Theriot, “my dad,” and you have a winning combination. Congratulations!

— *Jamie Theriot, Two Time Breeders Cup Winner*



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Stallion Awards are paid based on a stallion's progeny finishing first, second or third in an allowance, handicap or stakes race in Louisiana or in a stakes race outside of Louisiana.

* Breeders' Awards change to 20% April 1, 2011.



LOUISIANA THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 24650, New Orleans, LA 70184

800.772.1195 • 504-947-4876 • www.louisianabred.com ltba@louisianabred.com