



SOUTHEAST

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Finery at Vinery

*Florida training center under
Ian Brennan sends out winners in bunches*

BY LENNY SHULMAN

Sometimes it pays to be contrarian. While other operations have contracted over the past few years, Tom Simon's Vinery has gotten aggressive. It has supported its young stallions More Than Ready and Congrats and turned them into major success stories; it has enhanced its racing stable and come up with horses such as Kodiak Kowboy, a champion in both the United States and Canada who has now joined the Vinery stallion roster; and last year Vinery made its debut as a consignor of 2-year-olds in training at various juvenile auctions.

To achieve such success takes coordination among



Ian Brennan directs Vinery's successful Florida training center

WINNING IMAGES PHOTOGRAPHY/JOSEPH DORIO PHOTOS

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-The Blood-Horse MarketWatch, Feb. 2011



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2011 Leading Sires in Florida

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 Florida (exported stallions are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through March 2, 2011. 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)	2011 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	*A-E Index	*Comp Index
1	MONTBROOK (90, Buckaroo), Ocala Stud Farm	\$7,500	38/9	2/3	0/2	(Tackleberry, \$370,000)	\$629,429	*719	47	1.64	1.58
2	WILDCAT HEIR (00, Forest Wildcat), Journeyman Stud	\$10,000	82/20	2/2	0/2	(Breathoffreshheir, \$52,000)	\$504,164	*239	10	1.72	1.53
3	POMEROY (01, Boundary), Vinery Florida	\$5,000	30/10	4/4	0/4	(Pomeroy's Pistol, \$165,000)	\$497,310	*111	4	1.25	1.55
4	GRAEME HALL (97, Dehere), Winding Oaks Farm	\$5,000	69/14	0/0	0/0	(Duke of Mischief, \$100,000)	\$446,339	*279	16	1.58	1.37
5	WITH DISTINCTION (01, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	32/10	1/1	0/1	(Decisive Moment, \$156,000)	\$409,719	161	1	1.15	1.23
6	CHAPEL ROYAL (01, Montbrook), Signature Stallions	\$10,000	80/20	0/0	0/0	(Dahlgren Chapel, \$51,600)	\$402,314	*423	5	1.03	1.22
7	STRONG HOPE (00, Grand Slam), Winding Oaks Farm	\$5,000	62/20	0/0	0/0	(Cam On the Run, \$22,800)	\$325,331	263	1	0.89	1.89
8	CONCERTO (94, Chief's Crown), Ocala Stud Farm	\$3,500	40/14	1/1	0/1	(Dream Maestro, \$58,000)	\$323,604	*365	23	1.57	1.29
9	CONSOLIDATOR (02, Storm Cat), Journeyman Stud	\$4,000	64/20	0/0	0/0	(Fist of Rage, \$35,500)	\$317,738	*260	5	0.92	1.29
10	GREATNESS (99, Mr. Prospector), Randolph Thoroughbreds	\$2,000	32/9	1/2	0/1	(Wiredfortwotwenty, \$75,000)	\$312,589	*147	6	1.39	1.08
11	LEROIDESANIMAUX (BRZ) (00, Candy Stripes), Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$7,500	29/7	1/2	0/1	(Always a Princess, \$180,000)	\$289,014	*151	2	1.91	1.91
12	FULL MANDATE (99, A.P. Indy), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$1,500	72/14	0/0	0/0	(Kissa Melissa, \$47,700)	\$277,178	*308	3	0.87	1.07
13	PUT IT BACK (98, Honour and Glory), Bridlewood Farm	\$5,000	62/9	0/0	0/0	(Jessica Is Back, \$40,000)	\$241,737	*480	17	1.54	1.35
14	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$5,000	49/13	0/0	0/0	(Hidden Value, \$23,400)	\$217,609	190	0	1.09	1.33
15	D'WILDCAT (98, Forest Wildcat), Vinery Florida	\$8,500	47/15	0/0	0/0	(Gloomy I'm Knot, \$23,505)	\$201,219	215	6	1.71	1.39
16	WEST ACRE (95, Forty Niner), Stonehedge Farm South	\$2,500	19/5	1/1	0/1	(Watch Me Go, \$36,820)	\$193,640	288	10	1.41	1.22
17	ROAR OF THE TIGER (99, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	Died, 2010	53/11	0/0	0/0	(Storm Island, \$19,705)	\$193,591	*234	2	0.82	1.24
18	SUAVE (01, A.P. Indy), Vinery Florida	\$4,500	30/6	0/0	0/0	(B G Suavecito, \$31,500)	\$186,283	*122	1	0.82	1.34
19	INDIAN OCEAN (02, Stormy Atlantic), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,500	40/9	0/0	0/0	(Ocean Princess, \$27,110)	\$180,192	*165	1	0.83	1.36
20	SARAVA (99, Wild Again), Bridlewood Farm	\$1,500	23/6	1/1	0/1	(Gladding, \$90,000)	\$166,340	131	1	0.66	1.30
21	BLACK MAMBO (99, Kingmambo), Bridlewood Farm	Died, 2009	48/9	0/0	0/0	(Big Push, \$29,400)	\$163,690	*165	2	0.96	1.34
22	CONCORDE'S TUNE (89, Concorde Bound), Ocala Stud Farm	\$2,500	43/6	0/0	0/0	(Hold On Smokey, \$28,752)	\$151,626	434	25	1.23	1.15
23	CITY PLACE (00, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$3,000	22/8	0/0	0/0	(Escrow Kid, \$50,250)	\$147,868	137	5	1.62	1.11
24	ACT OF DUTY (00, Mr. Prospector), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,000	35/9	0/0	0/0	(Aldomear, \$43,110)	\$142,235	*107	1	0.80	1.27
25	MASS MEDIA (01, Touch Gold), Journeyman Stud	\$2,000	15/6	1/1	0/1	(Manicero, \$45,000)	\$140,789	62	2	1.67	1.18
26	BURNING ROMA (98, Rubiano), Rising Hill Farm	\$5,000	41/9	0/0	0/0	(Newyorkjoe, \$16,950)	\$134,702	127	2	0.75	1.38
27	HALO'S IMAGE (91, Halo), Bridlewood Farm	Died, 2010	43/7	0/0	0/0	(Halo Hollie, \$31,800)	\$129,361	*520	18	1.31	1.35
28	THREE WONDERS (97, Storm Cat)	Died, 2008	47/6	0/0	0/0	(Diced N Sliced, \$27,200)	\$128,474	276	5	1.04	1.15
29	DONERAILE COURT (96, Seattle Slew), Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$3,000	36/5	0/0	0/0	(Sporting Art, \$51,600)	\$127,692	*600	21	1.14	1.37
30	STRAIGHT MAN (96, Saint Ballado), Signature Stallions	\$6,000	25/5	0/0	0/0	(Dee's Rose, \$28,260)	\$120,243	323	11	1.10	1.19
31	GIMMEAWINK (00, Elusive Quality), Bridlewood Farm	N/A	34/6	0/0	0/0	(Gimmealife, \$18,840)	\$118,658	*143	1	0.88	1.17
32	B L'S APPEAL (97, Valid Appeal), Randolph Thoroughbreds	\$2,000	41/7	0/0	0/0	(St Patricks Appeal, \$17,488)	\$116,397	187	2	1.06	1.25
33	MARQUETRY (87, Conquistador Cielo), Stonewall Farm Ocala	Pnsd	37/10	0/0	0/0	(Count On Lou, \$17,355)	\$113,177	*873	34	1.16	1.45
34	PROUD ACCOLADE (02, Yes It's True)	Died, 2009	20/3	0/0	0/0	(My Charming Clyde, \$27,120)	\$105,406	*94	3	1.58	1.29
35	INVISIBLE INK (98, Thunder Gulch), Rising Hill Farm	N/A	12/5	0/0	0/0	(Beckham Bend, \$34,200)	\$99,520	*98	2	0.64	1.27
36	UNBRIDLED TIME (98, Unbridled's Song), Signature Stallions	\$3,500	27/5	0/0	0/0	(More Is Better, \$34,800)	\$97,062	186	1	0.79	0.97
37	IMPERIALISM (01, Langfuhr), Get Away Farm	\$5,000	12/1	1/1	0/1	(Master Dunker, \$70,000)	\$93,146	83	1	1.07	0.95
38	ADCAT (95, Storm Cat)	N/A	14/2	0/0	0/0	(Bricat, \$42,000)	\$87,154	*184	4	0.97	0.88
39	BWANA CHARLIE (01, Indian Charlie), Journeyman Stud	\$2,500	27/2	0/0	0/0	(Bravo Romeo, \$13,000)	\$78,139	109	1	1.46	1.11
40	MARCIANO (98, Two Punch), Rising Hill Farm	\$1,500	11/4	0/0	0/0	(Marciannie, \$35,280)	\$75,918	54	0	1.18	1.17

*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.



Champion sprinter Kodiak Kowboy received his early lessons at the Vinery training center

various far-flung factions of the organization, and a crucial link in the chain is the training center Vinery established seven years ago at its Florida farm near Summerfield. The training division is responsible for getting both Vinery- and client-owned 2-year-olds prepared for either the racetrack or auction, as well as providing lay-up and freshening service for older horses that are injured or just needing a break between racing seasons.

"Once we committed to racing as much as we have, it was (owner) Tom Simon's vision to be completely hands-on with our horses," noted Vinery president Tom Ludt. "With the investments you make in stallions and then supporting them and breaking horses, Tom's vision was to build our own facility and do it right."

Running down the roster of horses that have come off the farm's training division leaves little doubt that the operation is humming along as planned. Besides Kodiak Kowboy, 2009's champion sprinter in

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BENNY THE BULL D'WILDCAT J BE K KANTHAROS MAIMONIDES MUSKET MAN POMEROY SUAVE



The Aquasizer at Vinery allows horses to return to the races quickly

the States, a champion in Canada, and the earner of better than \$1.5 million, other 2-year-olds that have taken their cues at Vinery include grade I winner Victor's Cry, grade II winner Friesan Fire, grade I winner Laragh, multiple grade I winner and \$1.9 million earner Pure Clan, and 2010 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Filly Turf (gr. IIT) winner More Than Real. Pretty good lineup.

Ian Brennan is the man charged with directing the Florida training operation, and in a real sense he was born to the job. Brennan hails from Newbridge, County Kildare, Ireland, alongside the Curragh racecourse. His father, Liam, rode and trained there, and Ian followed in the footsteps of his older brother, Niall, now a major pinhooker based in Florida. Both brothers rode over fences, as did their father, and have been learning about horses from around the time they could walk.

"Our father taught us all the basics," said Ian Brennan, "and from an early age working with horses was pretty much all I wanted to do."

Although he stopped getting on horses shortly after taking the Vinery job, Brennan thinks the riding experience he garnered over decades aids him substantially in his training work.

"Anybody that has ever ridden and trained, I think, has a better feel for the horse," he noted. "Just standing trackside, you have a better view of how they're travelling when they go by. In our case there was so much horsemanship involved in how we were brought up—we were mucking stalls, grooming, the whole lot. Back in Ireland you weren't just a jock; you did everything. If it weren't for that part of it, I don't think I'd be where I'm at right now. It was a huge help, a big factor.

"I'd love to get back to riding, but we're just too busy here. You'd miss too much if you were riding at the same time you were training. I do miss it though."

In the mid-1980s Brennan began coming to America during the European off-season and exercised horses in Chicago for eventual Hall of Fame trainer Carl Nafzger. Beginning in the early 1990s, Brennan helped

VINERY STABLES Graded Graduates	
PURE CLAN	KODIAK KOWBOY
MANI BHAVAN	AWESOME ACT
ZAFTIG	LANTANA MOB
LARAGH	VICTORS CRY
MORE THAN REAL	MUSKET MAN
LE MI GEAUX	BIG TRUCK
LAUGHING LASHES	FRIESAN FIRE
LIAM'S DREAM	PATHFORK
LONG LASHES	ATONED
DOREMIFASOLLATIDO	SOCIAL QUEEN
SANDER CAMILLO	WINCHESTER
HOUSE OF GRACE	

An impressive list of graduates

his brother by piloting 2-year-olds in Niall's consignments in under tack shows, the breezes that precede 2-year-old auctions. Ian decided in 1996 that North America was where he wanted to plant roots. He worked for his brother, riding and doing some training until 2004, when he decided to hang out his own shingle at Starting Point,

a training facility near Ocala. It wasn't long before others took notice. Brennan began at Starting Point with five horses. By the end of his first season there, he was overseeing 50, bolstered by not only his brother, but bloodstock agent Mike Ryan and Augustin Stables head George Strawbridge Jr., who sent him stock. Not long after that, Vinery approached him, asking him to take the job steering its training operation. Since the organization allowed him to bring his own clients along, Brennan accepted the position.

The transition from riding to training went seamlessly.

"It wasn't a difficult shift once I got into it," said Brennan. "I'd been doing some training for Niall at the sales, so it wasn't completely new. I'd been breaking young horses and working with older ones. The only difference was I started doing it for myself. When you're on your own, it can get a little scary, but Mr. Strawbridge and Niall and Mike got me going. And when the Vinery job came, I thought it was the right time and a good opportunity."

Older brother Niall credits the siblings' success to the foundation they received back home.

"Growing up with our father, we didn't know anything except how to do it right, and you take that with you," said Niall Brennan. "The principles you live and work by were instilled into us—integrity, work ethic, good horsemanship, and common sense."

The Vinery Florida facility, which includes a stallion division, encompasses 230 acres. Brennan has at his disposal a seven-furlong dirt racetrack and a six-furlong turf course. There is also an Aquasizer, which allows horses to "swim" at various speeds and is employed for horses coming back from injury or preparing to return to the races after lay-ups. The farm hums from September through May, when 110 horses are on the grounds and 43 staff members oversee them. About 25 of those horses belong to Vinery; the rest are clients'. Some 20-35 horses remain in the summer months before the place fills back up.

"The Vinery surface is fantastic," said Ryan. "It's not sandy like some places in Florida, and the turf course is magnificent. We had More Than Real over it last year, and Silver Medallion breezed on the turf before he went to the Calder sale. Laragh and Mani Bhavan were there. I've had a lot of nice horses come off of there. It's a special place, and Ian and his staff do an outstanding job."

Added Ludt, "We made a major commitment to the training track. The dirt track is seven furlongs, but it's built more like it's a mile. The turns are more gradual because you don't want tight turns when you're dealing with immature, young horses. Same with the turf course; it's built like

**2011 Florida Sires
By Winners**

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Wildcat Heir.....	82.....	20
Chapel Royal.....	80.....	20
Consolidator.....	64.....	20
Strong Hope.....	62.....	20
D'wildcat.....	47.....	15
Full Mandate.....	72.....	14
Graeme Hall.....	69.....	14
Concerto.....	40.....	14
Value Plus.....	49.....	13
Roar of the Tiger.....	53.....	11
Marquetry.....	37.....	10
With Distinction.....	32.....	10
Pomeroy.....	30.....	10
Put It Back.....	62.....	9
Black Mambo.....	48.....	9
Burning Roma.....	41.....	9
Indian Ocean.....	40.....	9
Montbrook.....	38.....	9
Act of Duty.....	35.....	9
Greatness.....	32.....	9
City Place.....	22.....	8
Halo's Image.....	43.....	7
B L's Appeal.....	41.....	7
Leroidesanimaux (BRZ).....	29.....	7
Three Wonders.....	47.....	6
Concorde's Tune.....	43.....	6
Gimmeawink.....	34.....	6
Suave.....	30.....	6
Sarava.....	23.....	6
Wagon Limit.....	19.....	6
Mass Media.....	15.....	6
Doneraile Court.....	36.....	5
Unbridled Time.....	27.....	5
Straight Man.....	25.....	5
West Acre.....	19.....	5
Invisible Ink.....	12.....	5

a seven-furlong track. We cut no corners, and the results show that.

"The next step was to hire good people, and Ian has done an outstanding job leading the division. You know you're successful when it's expensive to board there and we still turn away many people each year. We built the facility for Vinery horses and allow the open stalls to be filled by clients. But we never built it to be a large commercial operation, so we won't be expanding it."

"Florida has certainly proved to be a fine place to raise a horse," said Brennan. "You don't miss much training in the winter because the weather is so good, so it's a great place to break a horse. The grass is super, particularly in the summer."

Brennan said that by March he generally has a good idea of which 2-year-olds are likely to shine, although he added one never knows to what extent.

"You get a pretty solid feel for them and can tell the owners that they've got a shot with one," he said. "Although you can tell a good one, you don't know how good. I couldn't tell you there was going to be a Breeders' Cup winner here last year."



Brennan uses his experience as a rider to help him train

Brennan takes his cues from the owners of individual horses when determining how much training to put into each.

"Some clients and Vinery itself like to get out early and run," he said. "Vinery wants them out helping their sires. The ones going out to the racetrack early, I won't train them much differently than I train the sale horses. They'll be on the same schedule. Over the winter we figure out the ones that can make it early and the ones that need more time. The early ones I'll push on with, and I'll back off the others."

"Usually with the later 2-year-olds we'll have them half-mile fit when they head out in April, breezing here before they go to the racetrack. Earlier ones will go out at the end of February or early March if we think they're Keeneland (April meet) or Churchill Downs (May) horses, and we'll have them going along three-eighths or breezing a half before they leave."

"The horses going to sale, I don't believe in over-pushing them because I don't think that's right. I'll bring them along—you have to have them very sharp—but I won't be breezing them in :10 and change here before they go to auction."

Up-and-comers aren't the only horses that take advantage of the Vinery facilities. Veteran racehorses in need of some R&R, usually over the winter months from November to February, are finding their way there as well. This winter alone Brennan has overseen accomplished runners such as stakes winner Trappe Shot, grade III victor Winslow Homer, grade II winner Havre de Grace, grade III winner Awesome Act, grade II winner Friesan Fire, and grade I-placed Joyful Victory. Musket Man, earner of better than \$1.2 million and who is just beginning his stallion career, would often repair to Vin-

ery between races for owner Eric Fein.

Havre de Grace, Joyful Victory, and Winslow Homer are owned by Rick Porter, whose first partnership with Vinery was with Kodiak Kowboy right at the time the training center opened.

"I send horses there to get them freshened up," said Porter, "and everything that has come out of there has come out better than when they went in as far as overall conditioning and attitude. All of my trainers have been happy with the condition of the horses they get from there. The facility is great, and Ian does an outstanding job."

Other prominent clients of the facility include Susan and John Moore, Earl Macke, Mill House, Morris Reegan, and Hurricane Hall.

Brennan said most of the older horses go through a program that takes two to three months.

"If they're back for a break and we're freshening them up, we'll turn them out in a round pen for a few days," Brennan stated, "then in a small paddock for a few hours a day. We'll give them a month of that and then start walking on the Aquasizer for a week, then jog on it for a few weeks. Then we'll start them back under tack breezing on the racetrack. It depends on their trainers or owners, but usually they'll want them breezing a half or five-eighths before they leave. So it's a two- or three-month process. Horses love it, especially if they've had a tough campaign and need a break. We let them be horses again for a couple of months, and it really freshens them up."

For his own personal freshening up, Brennan, married with two daughters, enjoys soccer, golf, and fishing. Florida would seem the perfect spot, then, not only for the horses he cares for, but for the Irish native as well. 🍀