



WEST COAST

Bounce-Back Year

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Vessels Stallion Farm enjoys resurgence after tragic 2010

BY TRACY GANTZ

Kash Vessels held his 25-day-old daughter while sitting in the office of Vessels Stallion Farm shortly before Christmas.

"Her name is Kendall Grace Vessels," Kash said. He then explained how his daughter received her middle name, pointing to a black and white photo of Frank Sr. and Grace Vessels on the office wall.

Frank Sr. and Grace were Kash's great-grandparents and founded the Vessels program, which began as a Quarter Horse farm near Long Beach, Calif. They expanded to include Los Alamitos, a major Quarter Horse racetrack that flourished under the next generation, Frank Jr. and Millie Vessels.

Frank Jr. and Millie's son, Scoop, bought and developed property near Bonsall, Calif., east of Del Mar, that he turned into the current Vessels Stallion Farm before his untimely 2010 death in a plane crash. The 1,300-acre property is today a major Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse operation.

The Vessels name is legendary in Quarter Horse racing. But Thoroughbreds have also permeated the program's history. It began with the Thoroughbred stallion Beduino, a major contributor to Quarter Horse racing bloodlines, on through Magical Mile, Free House, and pensioned In Excess, to the present day with Paul Reddam's stallions Square Eddie and Momentum.

Reddam has embraced California racing and breeding. The enthusiastic Canada native, who has made California his home since 1979, owns a fleet of runners, most



Vessels Stallion Farm manager Kevin Dickson, left, and Kash Vessels

TRACY GANTZ PHOTOS

CALIFORNIA'S GOLD STANDARD

The Harris Farms Roster 2012

PULPIT's Leading Second-Crop Sire LUCKY PULPIT



2011 General and 2-Year-Old Sire Category Leader

The leading second-crop sire of 2011 by **A.P. Indy's** leading sire of sires **Pulpit**, **Lucky Pulpit** is California's 2011 General Sire list leader by average earnings per start (\$6,724) and his average earnings per runner of \$35,236 ranks him a close second to **Unusual Heat**.

The leading sire of 2-year-olds by average earnings per runner (\$36,770) and start (\$10,214) in 2011 for the second consecutive year, **Lucky Pulpit** is the sire of G1-placed two-turn stakes winner **Rousing Sermon**, the top-earning Cal-bred 2-year-old of 2011.

Lucky Pulpit was bred to 100 mares in 2011. **Fee: \$2,500**

PROVEN LEADING SIRE AND RACE PERFORMANCE IN CALIFORNIA

UNUSUAL HEAT

California's leading sire of G1 winners and four-time leading sire by progeny earnings: 2008-2011.

Fee: \$20,000 Live Foal

THORN SONG

Millionaire son of **Unbridled's Song** and multiple wire-to-wire G1 winner. First foals arrive in 2012.

Fee: \$3,500 Live Foal

LUCKY J. H.

Graded winner of \$632,065 on the board in 15 of 20 starts in Southern California. First foals are 2-year-olds of 2012.

Fee: \$1,500 Live Foal

HEATSEEKER

G1 millionaire and four-time record setter by **Giant's Causeway** will have first-crop 2-year-olds racing in 2012.

Fee: \$6,500 Live Foal

TIZBUD

Sire of undefeated Hollywood Park stakes winner **Tiz Flirtatious**, three for three, \$116,800 at 3, 2011.

Fee: \$2,500 Live Foal

SINGLETARY

Stakes-winning daughter **Logical Single** (\$211,788) set 91 Beyers on on turf/synthetic surfaces in 2011.

Fee: \$1,500 Live Foal

SWISS YODELER

Eclipse Award Champion sire and perennial leader by progeny earnings on general and 2-year-old sire lists.

Reduced Fee: \$4,000 Live Foal

DESERT CODE

Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint winner and millionaire grandson of **Mr. Prospector**. First foals are now yearlings.

Fee: \$2,000 Live Foal

STORMY JACK

Sire of California Horse of the Year, world record setter and Santa Anita G1 winner **Bob Black Jack**.

Fee: \$1,500 Live Foal



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Elegant entrance to the 1,300-acre Vessels Stallion Farm near Bonsall, Calif.

trained by Doug O'Neill or Ben Cecil. He has put together 20-25 broodmares, with his breeding operation overseen by Ed Freeman, who trains horses for Reddam at nearby San Luis Rey Downs training center.

Reddam also sponsors Hollywood Park's CashCall Futurity (gr. I), the 2011 edition won Dec. 17 by Liaison, a son of the recently deceased Indian Charlie. By In Excess, Indian Charlie was born and raised at Vessels.

Momentum played a role in the 2011 CashCall Futurity card. Reddam hosted a group of people in the Turf Club, including caddies from his golf club. A son of Momentum named Bud I Crushed It won a race that day, paying \$173.40.

"I used to own the horse and named it for a golfing buddy of mine," said Reddam. "He's not a very good golfer, but every time he hit a ball and you asked him what he thought of the shot, he'd say, 'Bud, I crushed it.' The caddies knew the story, and when they saw the horse, they bet on him."

Momentum, a son of Nureyev—Imprudent Love, by Foolish Pleasure, won the 2001 Native Diver Handicap (gr. III) at Hollywood and finished second in the 2002 Hollywood Gold Cup (gr. I) and second in that season's Pacific Classic (gr. I) at Del Mar. His first crop reached the races in 2008, and his winners include Pacific Heights Stakes winner Catsalot.

Square Eddie joined Momentum at the farm in 2010. Scoop Vessels oversaw Square Eddie's first season, but he never had a chance to see any of the stallion's foals. That August, Scoop died in a plane crash while he and a friend were traveling to Montana for an annual fishing trip.

His family—wife, Bonnie, and their sons, Kash, Colt Vessels, and Bryan Lenfers—were devastated, as were Scoop's

many friends in both the Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse industries. Scoop knew countless people through his stints as president of the American Quarter Horse Association, president of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association, and member of The Jockey Club.

Less than four months after the accident the farm's champion Quarter Horse stallion, First Down Dash, died at age 26. The sire of six All American Futurity winners, First Down Dash is arguably the greatest sire in the history of Quarter Horse racing.

Those two losses made 2010 a very tough year for the farm, which today is run by the Vessels Family Trust. Kevin Dickson is the farm manager.

"With Dad gone, we've gone into more of a team management effort—Kevin; Bonnie; Bill Thead, who is our vice president; and myself," said Kash.

Kash, 31, has a degree from the University of Arizona Racetrack Industry Program, which his grandfather, Frank Jr., co-founded with John Goodman. Kash interned at Del Mar and has worked in various capacities at Vessels.

Dickson has been with the farm since 1994 and has been the farm manager for about seven years. Born in Quanah, Texas, Dickson mentored under Gary Carpenter, who was his neighbor, and attended Colorado State University. Dickson at one time managed a string of Thoroughbreds in New Zealand for trainer Graeme Rogerson and later worked at the Bob Moore Farms in Oklahoma before coming to Vessels.

Though Dickson was initially brought aboard to help with First Down Dash and the Quarter Horse program, his hiring occurred at about the time Vessels began branching out more seriously into Thoroughbreds. In Excess stood his first season there in 1995.

Scoop Vessels and Mike Pegram were

2011 California Sires By Winners

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Tribal Rule.....	142.....	83
Benchmark.....	152.....	78
Old Topper.....	151.....	78
Kafwain.....	146.....	77
Southern Image.....	103.....	67
Swiss Yodeler.....	131.....	64
Marino Marini.....	102.....	63
In Excess (IRE).....	115.....	59
Unusual Heat.....	120.....	57
Bertrando.....	114.....	55
Salt Lake.....	104.....	54
Sea of Secrets.....	98.....	49
Ministers Wild Cat.....	85.....	49
Aragorn (IRE).....	91.....	48
Giacomo.....	83.....	48
Deputy Commander.....	92.....	43
Stormin Fever.....	107.....	42
Decarchy.....	85.....	42
Olmodavor.....	68.....	39
Freespool.....	79.....	36
High Brite.....	70.....	36
Siberian Summer.....	62.....	35
Roar.....	53.....	34
Momentum.....	68.....	33
Perfect Mandate.....	54.....	33
Atticus.....	64.....	30
Redattore (BRZ).....	71.....	29
Cee's Tizzy.....	60.....	29
Ten Most Wanted.....	55.....	27
Terrell.....	54.....	26
Lit de Justice.....	53.....	24
Valid Wager.....	45.....	24
Rocky Bar.....	35.....	24
Safe in the U S A.....	33.....	24
Globalize.....	43.....	22
Popular.....	28.....	22
Game Plan.....	48.....	20
Comic Strip.....	40.....	20
Western Fame.....	40.....	19
Gotham City.....	37.....	19
Capsized.....	32.....	19
Good Journey.....	38.....	18
Muqtarib.....	35.....	18
Tannersmyman.....	30.....	18
Flame Thrower.....	43.....	15
Singletary.....	36.....	15
Lucky Pulpit.....	25.....	15
Richly Blended.....	25.....	15
Beau Genius.....	35.....	14
High Demand.....	32.....	14
Iron Cat.....	26.....	14
Tizbud.....	36.....	13
Rio Verde.....	33.....	13
Vronsky.....	24.....	13
Snowbound.....	27.....	12
Behrens.....	26.....	12
Stormy Jack.....	38.....	11
Dixie Dot Com.....	20.....	11
Suances (GB).....	27.....	10
Mud Route.....	26.....	10
Sought After.....	22.....	10
Crafty C. T.....	21.....	10
Bartok (IRE).....	20.....	9
Our New Recruit.....	17.....	9
Takin It Deep.....	16.....	9
One Man Army.....	15.....	9

Power Pedigree Plus \$150,000 Incentive Program



Ballena Vista Farm Welcomes RECAP Storm Cat – Tranquility Lake, by Rahy

Full brother to multiple G1 winner **After Market** ranked among the leading Freshman Sires of 2011.

Full brother to G1 millionaire **Courageous Cat** and record \$9.7 million Keeneland yearling **Jalil** (G2).

Identical sire/dam sire cross as **Giant's Causeway**: by **Storm Cat** out G1 winner/millionaire **Tranquility Lake**, a half-sister to two-time leading juvenile sire **Benchmark**.

\$150,000 Breeder Incentive Program

for foals conceived in 2012 and racing in 2015

\$50,000

to the registered breeder of the first stakes winner (min. purse: \$55,000).

\$100,000

to the registered breeder of the first Grade I stakes winner.

2012 Fee: Complimentary to Approved Mares.

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STACY PIGOTT

Vessels is home to stallions Momentum and Square Eddie (above)

friends, and after In Excess spent a year at another California farm, Scoop bought half of the stallion from Pegram. An Irish-bred son of Siberian Express—Kantado, by Saulingo, In Excess in 1991 won the grade I Metropolitan Handicap, Suburban Handicap, Whitney Handicap, and Woodward Stakes consecutively in New York. In Excess and Kelso are the only horses ever to win all four of those races.

“This is our very first attempt at standing a Thoroughbred stallion for Thoroughbred mares only,” Scoop Vessels said about In Excess in 1996. “Right now California needs a horse like In Excess.”

In Excess flew to the top of the California sire lists from the very beginning and remained high on those lists throughout his stud career. His foals include Indian Charlie, winner of the 1998 Santa Anita Derby (gr. I) and third as the favorite that year in the Kentucky Derby (gr. I).

In Excess was pensioned after the 2011 breeding season and continues to enjoy life at Vessels at age 25. Dickson said the stallion has four mares scheduled to foal in 2012.

Though In Excess will no longer be breeding mares, Vessels has high hopes for Square Eddie, whose first foals have just turned yearlings.

“We have some phenomenal babies on the ground,” said Dickson. “They have good size; a lot of scope and frame to them out of some very well-bred mares of Mr. Reddam’s.”

Those mares include multiple stakes winner Repo and stakes-placed Tangle, who finished second in the Yellow Ribbon Stakes (gr. IT).

Square Eddie won the 2008 Lane’s End Breeders’ Futurity (gr. I) and finished second in the Bessemer Trust Breeders’ Cup Juvenile (gr. I). In between his two previous breeding seasons at Vessels, the horse returned to the racetrack, though he is now officially retired from racing

with earnings of \$856,019.

“Square Eddie has had as many comebacks as Sugar Ray Leonard,” said Reddam.

In his final comeback the son of Smart Strike—Forty Gran, by El Gran Senor, broke Santa Anita’s dirt track record for 6½ furlongs when he was clocked in 1:13.11 in January 2011.

Reddam first began doing business with Vessels when Momentum went to stud.

“My racing manager, Jamie McCalmont, looked at several places in California,” said Reddam. “He thought the people at Vessels were very good horsemen.”

Square Eddie’s speed may make him attractive to Quarter Horse breeders as well. Vessels has previously stood Thoroughbred stallions to both breeds.

Magical Mile, winner of the 1989 Hollywood Juvenile Championship (gr. II), and For Really, a multiple graded winner in New York, were bred to Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse mares.

Frank Vessels Jr. started the family in Thoroughbreds when he imported Beduino from Mexico. A whiz at match races, Beduino was a 1968 son of Romany Royal—Jo-Ann-Cat, by Rejected. The stallion influenced the Quarter Horse racing breed through such offspring as Chicks Beduino, sire of multiple champions.

“Beduino died in the early 1990s and is buried on the farm,” said Dickson. “We have one daughter left, a champion producer. The First Down Dash/Beduino cross was like Mr. Prospector/Northern Dancer. It just worked, over and over again.”

That last Beduino mare, 21-year-old Moon Arisen, produced a First Down Dash daughter named Your First Moon, a champion grade I winner who earned \$750,726 on the track for Vessels. Your First Moon’s foals include 3-year-old Stray Cat, a Quarter Horse son of leading Thoroughbred sire Storm Cat. Vessels owns Stray Cat in partnership with country singing star Lyle Lovett.

**2011 California Sires
By 2-Year-Old Winners**

Sires	2yos	2yo Hrs	2yo Wnrs
Tribal Rule	111	46	22
Kafwain	54	25	12
Giacomo	62	31	12
Aragorn (IRE)	44	21	10
Marino Marini	56	20	8
Southern Image	51	16	8
Stormy Jack	53	15	8
Roar	17	9	7
Swiss Yodeler	31	14	7
Decarchy	60	16	7
Bertrando	72	21	6
Old Topper	49	17	6
Ministers Wild Cat	66	24	5
Lucky Pulpit	23	10	5
Awesome Gambler	35	15	5
Unusual Heat	53	19	5
Sea of Secrets	39	16	5
Popular	24	7	5
Singletary	12	6	4
Benchmark	31	8	4
Capsized	26	9	4
Perfect Mandate	33	5	4
Rocky Bar	11	6	4
Our New Recruit	21	7	4
Olmodavor	29	11	4
In Excess (IRE)	45	12	4
Salt Lake	25	9	3
Gotham City	29	7	3
Tannersmyman	26	6	3
Safe in the U S A	10	4	3

**2011 California Sires
By Stakes Winners**

Sire	Stks Wnrs	Stks Wins
Tribal Rule	8	12
Ministers Wild Cat	6	8
Kafwain	5	10
Benchmark	4	6
Rocky Bar	4	6
Bertrando	4	5
Giacomo	4	5
Decarchy	4	4
Sea of Secrets	3	8
Unusual Heat	3	8
Southern Image	3	5
Old Topper	3	4
Salt Lake	3	4
In Excess (IRE)	3	3

Other Thoroughbred stallions to have stood at Vessels primarily to Quarter Horse mares include Quick Action (Carson City—Indian Sunset, by Storm Bird), a stakes winner at Aqueduct and Monmouth Park. Quick Action sired One Quick First Down, who won the 2010 Los Alamitos Two Million Futurity (gr. I) for Vessels.

Devon Lane, an allowance-winning son of Storm Cat—To the Hunt, by Relaunch, also stood at Vessels for a while. River’s Prayer, a Thoroughbred daughter of Devon Lane bred by Vessels, won eight sprint

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2012 STALLION ROSTER



McCANN'S MOJAVE ~ Outstanding First Foals 2YO's 2012

Memo – Joni U. Bar, by Nordic Prince/ **\$3,000 LF**
(consideration to approved mares)

- Record-setting, multiple Graded stakes winner of \$1,513,565.
- All-surface stakes winner with graded scores at 6.5F, 8.5F, and 9F (NTR)
- Defeated 90 SWs including 54 Graded/Group winners and 15 Grade 1 Winners.

SIERRA SUNSET

Grade 2 Winner with Tactical Speed from a Classic Family

Bertrando – Toot Sweet, by Pirate's Bounty/ **\$2,500 LF**

- Four-time stakes winner with scores in Oaklawn's **G2** Rebel S. (**99 Beyer**), the \$125,000 California Cup Juvenile S., the Alamedan H. at 1 1/16 miles (**101 Beyer**), and the Bay Meadows Juvenile S. by 8 lengths.
- \$25K for first Graded Stakes winner and \$10K for first overnight Stakes winner in United States. Payable to owner of mare at time of breeding. Discounts available for A+ or better nicks and multiple mares.



SLEW'S TIZNOW

Record-Setting G1 Performing Multiple Stakes Winner

Tiznow – Hepatica, by Slewpy/ **\$2,500 LF**

- Won on dirt and synthetic, including Del Mar's El Cajon S. at one mile by 3 lengths and Hollywood Park's War Chant S. at 1 1/16 miles in a **record 1:40.34**.
- Saratoga maiden winner and 2nd in Keeneland's **G1** Breeders' Futurity at two.
- In his final start, posted a **102 Beyer** in Hollywood Park's G2 Californian S.
- Full brother to Multiple Graded stakes winner **SLEW'S TIZZY**.

STORM WOLF ~ Attractive First Foals 2YO's 2012

Stormin Fever – Exclusive Rosette, by Ecliptical/ **\$2,500 LF**

- Graded SW full brother to **G1**-performing GSW **MISTY ROSETTE**.
- Won 3 of 5 starts, including the **G2** Lazaro Barrera Memorial S. by 6L in **1:22 1/5**.
- Posted a **104 Beyer** breaking his maiden at Santa Anita and a **101 Beyer** winning an allowance there in 1:09 flat.



No Booking Fees for 2012 Seasons / Stud Fees are payable Oct. 1 of year bred

ALSO STANDING: **Comic Strip** / **Marino Marini** / **Onebadshark** / **Sought After** / **Southern Image** / **The Pamplemousse**

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The farm's memorial to Cal-bred star Free House

stakes, including the 2007 Las Cienegas Handicap (gr. IIIT), and earned \$921,958.

In the land of Quarter Horse racing, however, Devon Lane gets distance horses. Pathological Liar won the Dec. 4 Gold Rush Derby at Los Alamitos at 870 yards. Jeannie Knuchell and Caitlin Smith, a veterinary student and a high school student, respectively, bred Pathological Liar from a Devon Lane season that Scoop Vessels donated to the girls.

Following the success of In Excess, Vessels stood Free House, bred and raced by John Toffan and the late Trudy McCaffery. The California-bred son of Smokester—Fountain Lake, by Vigors, was McCaffery's favorite horse. He earned more than \$3 million while winning such races as the Santa Anita Handicap (gr. I), Santa Anita Derby, and Pacific Classic Stakes, in some cases defeating champion Silver Charm.

Free House died at age 10, but in his abbreviated stud career his foals included stakes winners House of Fortune, Freesgood, and Fantasy Free. He is buried at

Vessels under a plaque that McCaffery had placed there, reading in part: "Nothing in life brought me more joy than you."

The farm includes a half-mile training track and a training barn. Dickson said that they prep horses for both the track and sales. They can get recorded works on young horses at San Luis Rey, which Scoop and his mother, Millie, once owned.

Raising both Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses poses unique challenges. Dickson said that once the young horses are weaned, he separates the Thoroughbreds from the Quarter Horses.

"There are nutritional differences between Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses," Dickson said. "Thoroughbred babies grow faster. We have a specially formulated weanling ration, and we feed the Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses differently based on their rate of growth."

Of the farm's 1,300 acres, about 300 are devoted to horses. The rest is used for crops such as avocados and citrus, as well as the raising of cattle. Part of the farm

2011 Washington Sires By Winners

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Matty G.....	102.....	50
Tribunal.....	67.....	39
Cahill Road.....	67.....	36
Parker's Storm Cat.....	63.....	35
He's Tops.....	56.....	29
You and I.....	57.....	28
Free At Last.....	55.....	26
Private Gold.....	49.....	24
Liberty Gold.....	42.....	23
Slewdledo.....	37.....	22
Polish Miner.....	44.....	20
Delineator.....	46.....	18
Katowice.....	28.....	18
Storm Blast.....	23.....	12
Petersburg.....	25.....	11
Polish Gift.....	18.....	11
Secret Romeo.....	18.....	11
Klinsman (IRE).....	18.....	10
Outing.....	15.....	10
Nacheezmo.....	19.....	9
Trail City.....	20.....	8
Chumaree.....	16.....	8
Stolen Gold.....	16.....	8

is also available for corporate events and weddings.

But it is horses for which Vessels will always be known. The family continues to have ties with Los Alamitos racetrack, though they sold it in 1984. They partner with Dr. Ed Allred, current head of the track, in holding a major Quarter Horse yearling sale there every year. Vessels also markets Quarter Horses at the Ruidoso sale in New Mexico and Thoroughbreds at Barretts in California.

"We've had one of the best years we've ever had in 2011," said Dickson. "We sold a Quarter Horse filly at Ruidoso for \$630,000, which was a record for a filly. We had the record for 24 hours until Corona Chick's very last foal sold for \$650,000."

Dickson said that the farm has a couple of In Excess youngsters that may sell in one of the Barretts 2-year-old sales in 2012. Vessels' previous Barretts sale horses include River's Prayer and Excessive-pleasure, a grade III winner of \$1,081,615.

The farm has also been active at Keeneland. At the 2011 November breeding stock sale, they sold the In Excess mare Excessively Wicked, dam of 2010 Bob Benoit California Cup Juvenile Stakes winner Slammer Time and a half sister to champion The Wicked North, for \$85,000. At the 2009 Keeneland September yearling sale, Vessels sold Slammer Time for \$120,000.

Dickson said that the focus is on quality over quantity.

"Scoop designed the farm around the horse," said Dickson. "It was made to raise horses. It's river bottom with great soil; irrigated land with tons of grass. If I die and come back as a horse, this is where I want to be." 🐾



SPARKS PHOTOGRAPHY

INFORMED

TIZNOW's First Graded Winner at Stud in California and his Top-Earning Son Standing outside Kentucky.

Del Mar and Hollywood Park G2 Winner of \$521,349

Defeated **Grade I** winners **Awesome Gem, Bullsbay, Champs Elysees, Dakota Phone, Global Hunter, Macho Again, Mast Track, Misremembered, Rail Trip, Tiago** and **Well Armed** in single season graded stakes action at Santa Anita, Churchill, Hollywood Park and Del Mar.

A May foal, **Informed** was a \$500,000 Keeneland yearling purchase by Robert and Beverly Lewis.

Lowest fee among **Tiznow's** graded stakes-winning sons at stud.

Entering Stud in 2012: \$2,500LF payable at foaling



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