



WEST COAST

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Bo Knows Horses

Bo Derek's positive effect on the California Horse Racing Board

BY LENNY SHULMAN

Bo Derek is talking about ways to enhance Thoroughbred racing's stature among the mainstream American public when it's suggested that the sport could use stars with the fame of, for example, Charlie Sheen to get involved in marketing racing to people unfamiliar with the sport.

"Our society is such that you can't make it popular without celebrities," she agreed. "It's sad."

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COURTESY BO DEREK

Bo Derek said she was born with an affinity for horses

Tried and True Sire Performance

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LEE THOMAS PHOTO

HEATSEEKER

Giant's Causeway-Rusty Back, by Defensive Play

Leading California Freshman Sire

Grade I winner tops the first-crop sire list with earnings of just over \$350,000 and nine 2-year-old winners from 5½ furlongs to one mile on dirt, turf and synthetic, including Woodbine stakes winner **SURTSEY** and **two other stakes-placed juveniles on dirt.**

Fee: \$5,000 Live Foal



RON MESAROS PHOTO

SWISS YODELER

Eastern Echo-Drapeau, by Raja Baba

Leading Sire of Two-Year-Olds

Two-year-olds by this perennial leading sire have earned nearly \$600,000 in 2012, and he leads all California sires by 2-year-old Average Earnings per Runner (\$36,395) and per Start (\$9,546) through 12/3/12.

Fee: \$3,000 Live Foal



RON MESAROS PHOTO

LUCKY PULPIT

Pulpit-Lucky Soph, by Cozzene

Leading California Third-Crop Sire

The dominant third-crop leader by California progeny earnings, **LUCKY PULPIT** ranks among the nation's top third-crop sires with an A-E Index of 1.73 and an Average Earnings per Runner of \$53,383.

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Derek goes racing with breeder/owner Chuck Fipke

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It's a line filled with irony, coming from one who has lived as a celebrity for decades. But stardom has little to do with the actress' involvement with horses. Derek is living proof that you can be born with the "horse gene" and that it will stay ingrained no matter where life takes you.

Horses have never been far from Derek's heart. She has put considerable time into lobbying in Washington, D.C., for a ban on horse slaughter. She serves as a special envoy to the Secretary of State on wildlife trafficking. And that concern for the health and safety of the horse led to her appointment four years ago to the California Horse Racing Board, where both her passion for the animal and her celebrity have been positives for the industry in California, which has been otherwise slumping over the past decade.

Derek grew up in the suburbs south of Los Angeles, closer to the beach than to any equestrian facilities. She didn't have the benefit of owning a pony in childhood or of riding each afternoon after school, but she was still horse crazy.

"My mom says from the time I was able to walk I was crawling up on my rocking horse," Derek said. "If we were taking a family drive and we passed a horse in a field, I would start carrying on and would have to look at it. I think some people are born with an affinity for horses."

Derek was also born with Hollywood-level good looks and was auditioning for acting roles by the time she was in her mid-teens. Her celebrated romance with filmmaker John Derek led to a stint in Europe in the early 1970s. A few years after returning to the States, she got her big break in films.

In 1979 Bo Derek landed the role as Dudley Moore's muse in the Blake Ed-

wards film "10." Derek's swimsuit and cornrows image from that movie led to her poster covering the walls of millions of adolescent males throughout the world and rocketed her to stardom. That success also furthered her association with equines.

"As soon as I made some money after making "10," I bought a ranch in Santa Ynez (Calif.) first thing and got some horses," she said. "Arabians and Quarter Horses. Then I went to Spain in 1982 and got to ride my first Andalusian, and that was it. That's the horse that hit the genetic markers in my brain; the horse I'd been dreaming about. They are hot-blooded and are the oldest saddle horses as far as being used for wars and various other purposes. And perhaps they are more attuned



Derek has served four years on the California Horse Racing Board

to humans than other breeds."

At the height of her celebrity post—"10," Derek was asked to write an autobiography, which ended up being titled *Riding Lessons: Everything That Matters in Life I Learned from Horses*. It was an interesting exercise for her, first because the title was a gimmick thought up by the publisher, and secondly because it was originally intended that a ghostwriter would pen the volume. Well, Derek went through a series of potential ghostwriters, all of whom "tried to make me so nauseatingly nice that I ended up writing it myself." And although the title didn't come from her, the essence of it resonates in her life. Many of the friendships she has made have come courtesy of her life around horses. And plenty of what she has learned about herself has also come through her interactions with them.

"Animals can teach us a lot about our instinctive behaviors and inclinations," Derek stated, "but horses especially because you don't win them over by just feeding them and petting them and putting pressure on them. It takes something more to develop a real relationship with them, to get them to leave their friends out in a grass pasture to come see you. That is a huge, huge compliment.

"This is what fascinates me most about racehorses and horsemen—I believe there is something magical about a trainer getting a horse ready for the races; to get them to love what they do. You can only get so much out of a horse through pressure. To get real brilliance, they have to want to do it. I find it so interesting compared to other disciplines and the things we ask of horses because running is the most natural thing we ask of them."

It is a rather long bridge to cross between being a horse enthusiast and participating in the world of politics and regulation that comes with sitting as a commissioner on a board such as the CHRB. It was certainly not a seat sought by Derek in any way, shape, or form. In fact, it was with some relief that her tenure on the John F. Kennedy Center board, to which she had been appointed by President George W. Bush, was coming to an end a few years back, along with some other time-consuming commitments.

"The last thing I wanted to do was get involved with any other boards," said Derek. "I don't know how anyone thought of me. The CHRB thing came from out of the blue. Someone from Gov. Schwarzenegger's office called me, and it was really difficult to say 'yes.' I was a fan of racing but didn't know much about it. But they said they wanted a woman and someone who would represent welfare and safety of the horse issues, as well as someone who would represent the fans. I hesitated, and they told me to just try it, and that I could always say 'no.'"

(continued on page 3604)

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Ranked Among the Top Seven by 2012 Cal-Bred Earnings

MARINO MARINI Storm Cat – Halo America, by Waquoit/ **\$2,500 LF**

- Combined 2012 progeny earnings of more than \$1.5 million, with 2012 stakes horses including \$200,000 Fleet Treat SW **STARLIGHT MAGIC** (\$334,900), multiple \$50,000+ SW **SHUDACUDAWUDYA** (\$325,729), 5-time Stakes-placed **Bleach Blonde** (\$307,638), etc..
- Sire of 10% Stakes Horses, including **MONEY LOVER** (\$159,706), **HOT FUSION**, **SILVER SENSATION**, **Miguel's Mascot** (NTR), **Queenie Marini**, etc.

#2 California Freshman Sire by Winners

McCANN'S MOJAVE 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.
- Sire of 4 winners from his first 6 starters!



Grade 2 Winner with Tactical Speed From a Classic Family

SIERRA SUNSET 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.
- Precocious 2YO, breaking his maiden at 4 1/2 furlongs by 5L second time out!
- One of two Cal-based sons at stud by recently pensioned **BERTRANDO**, California Leading Sire of 56 SWs. Out of a stakes-placed full sister to the dam of **G1 Belmont S.** winner **DA' TARA**.



Record-Setting G1 Performing Multiple Stakes Winner

SLEW'S TIZNOW 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** and 3/4-brother to the dam of 2012 **Group 1** Winner **THE HANGMAN**.



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California's #3 Active Sire by Average Earnings Index (AEI)

SOUTHERN IMAGE Halo's Image – Pleasant Dixie, by Dixieland Band/ **\$2,500 LF**

- Over \$10.5 Million in progeny earnings and sire of returning **Grade 1 SW SOUTHERN SPEED**, winner of the \$2,802,425 BMW Caulfield Cup (**Aus-G1**) by 1 1/2 lengths and who has won or placed in **FIVE Grade 1** events.
- Also sire of 2011 **G1**-performing, 5-time NYRA Graded SW **CALIBRACHOA** (\$666,040, **G3** Tom Fool H.-twice, **G3** Bold Ruler S., **G3** Toboggan H.-twice, etc.), 2012 \$150,000 SW **WINNING IMAGE** (\$330,837), returning SW **PINK CANDY** (\$149,633), SW **SOUTHERN FIREBALL** (\$171,789, NTR), etc.



Freshman Sire with First Winner from First Starter

STORM WOLF Stormin Fever – Exclusive Rosette, by Ecliptical/ **\$2,000 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.
- Second-crop yearling brings **19-Times** his fee at Barretts October sale.

First Foals Yearlings in 2013

THE PAMPLEMOUSSE Kafwain – Comfort Zone, by Rubiano/ **\$2,500 LF**

- Santa Anita Graded stakes-winning miler by 2012 Top-3 California Sire **KAFWAIN**.
- Won 3 of 5 starts, including the **G3** Sham S. by 6L (**107 Beyer**) and **G3** San Rafael S. at one mile.
- Out of a half-sister to the dam of 2YO **G1 SW STORMELLO** (\$700,100) and **2012 G2 Del Mar Derby SW MY BEST BROTHER** (\$346,090).
- Precocious female family of **G2** Arlington-Washington Lassie S. winner **SPECIAL WARMTH**.



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“Everything happened so quickly; it was hilarious. Background check. Confirmation. A week afterward I was sitting as a commissioner on the CHRБ board at a meeting at Del Mar. I sat there for six hours and grew a bit concerned because there were a bunch of race dates and wagering issues, but nobody had once mentioned the horse. I figured this wouldn’t be for me.”

It may have started slowly, but in the ensuing years Derek has found plenty of issues that have piqued her interest and ways to advance the welfare of the racehorse, all the while being open to learning the intricacies that make up the racing world.

“I was the Clarence Thomas of the board the first couple of years,” she said, referring to the Supreme Court Justice who famously didn’t say a word from the bench for many years while on the Court. “I wanted to learn all I could, and now I feel I’m ready to take on issues I feel passionate about.”

The board is well served by people who lack any agenda except the advancement of the horse, and for that Derek has proved a big positive for the CHRБ. Looking at the Salix (also called Lasix) issue, for instance, she acknowledges that there are valid arguments on each side, noting that the drug is both performance-enhancing and therapeutic.

“I think people more expert than I will pursue this and work something out,” she said. “This public fight going on about Lasix is really damaging public perception regarding racing. It’s confusing and gives the impression that the sport has a drug



Derek with jockey Rafael Bejarano

problem. I think it’s great Breeders’ Cup ran the juvenile races without Salix this year.”

While medication issues take up a lot of oxygen in the racing room, Derek is confident the sport is largely clean in that area. In California she gives credit for that to the University of California-Davis, which handles drug testing in the state and has long been hailed for its top veterinary school.

“We are a sport run by humans, so there will always be people trying to take an edge when there is money at stake,” she noted. “People cheat at horse shows where all you get is a ribbon. But I feel good that

we are clean in that regard. That’s not our biggest problem in welfare.”

One issue that is slated to be tackled in California early next year concerns claiming-race rules. Derek feels strongly about removing the “hot potato philosophy” from the claiming game, whereby trainers and owners are constantly looking to turn over horses in claiming events that are injured and would be better served with rest than racing.

“The claiming game has a reward system built into it that offers incentives to enter a compromised horse,” she said. “I know this is the way it’s always been, but that doesn’t make it right.”

The plan Derek backs would void any claim made for a horse that has to be put on the vet’s list after the race in question. That rule would discourage entering horses that have severe problems likely to show up during the running of a race.

BENNETT & ASSOCIATES PHOTOS

“We have worked with our veterinarians on this, and it would affect about 30 horses a year in California,” Derek said. “It doesn’t stop the business of buying and selling horses, like some say. If an owner still wants to buy that horse, they can do so privately. But something has to give. This change will be beneficial to the safety and welfare of the horses and riders. That is something I feel strongly about.”

Being Bo Derek has its advantages in the rough-and-tumble world of horse politics. Historically, whatever position, on whatever issue, the CHRБ takes a stand on has resulted in relentless griping and name-calling from one aggrieved side or another, and has led many a commissioner and di-

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Winners in 2012 include allowance performer Smooth Tango (\$182,555).

Sound, **NORTHERN DANCER**-line GSW who raced competitively in Graded stakes company through age six.

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**2012 California Sires
By Stakes Winners**

Sire	Stks Whrs	Stks Wins
Unusual Heat.....	9.....	12
Tribal Rule.....	7.....	8
Ministers Wild Cat.....	6.....	11
Kafwain.....	5.....	10
Salt Lake.....	5.....	7
Benchmark.....	5.....	6
Bertrando.....	5.....	5
Swiss Yodeler.....	4.....	8
Southern Image.....	3.....	5
Rocky Bar.....	3.....	4
Old Topper.....	3.....	3
Popular.....	2.....	6
Marino Marini.....	2.....	3
Vronsky.....	2.....	3
Atticus.....	2.....	2
Redattore (BRZ).....	2.....	2
Terrell.....	2.....	2
Tizbud.....	2.....	2

rector to briefer-than-expected tenures.

"For some reason I get a pass on everything," Derek said with a chuckle. "It's like I don't exist. Even when I take on issues at meetings, it's as though I wasn't there. Everyone gets quoted but me, and I'm thrilled about that."

Asked if anything has surprised her about her time on the board, Derek mentioned the long hours of work the job entails. But after a life in show business, there is little left that would shock her.

"Sometimes I feel myself getting upset about an issue and how people react to it," she said, "but you have to learn how crazy and defensive everyone gets. It's racing. It's like running off and joining the circus. If anything, I'm impressed most with the people I'm involved with."

And the job has some fringe benefits for a horse-crazy girl. She gets to pick the brains of trainers such as Bob Baffert and John Shirreffs. ("I treasure every moment I get to talk about horses.")

She continues to travel around the world to racing events in Europe and Australia, wondering if North America can expand the popularity of racing beyond the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands

(gr. I) and bridge the gap between normal racing days and the big events.


"I think we could be more mainstream," she noted. "When we do the main events, people come. But on a national scale, that is going to take work and re-education. Look at Breeders' Cup—it's the best horse racing there is on an international level, and nobody in California knows what it is. The brand awareness doesn't exist among the public. Maybe there's someone out there who can brand it and get it going."

Someone like, say, a celebrity?

Derek said when her CHRB term is up two years from now, she will be happy to

ride into the sunset, and move on to something else. That won't include racehorse ownership, however.

"I have a hard enough time feeding my riding horses," she said. "I get my racehorse fix being on the board and spending so much time at the track and living vicariously through so many friends when their horses win. I won't ever leave being around racing."

For an appointment that came from left field, Derek is leaving a positive mark on the sport that may surprise early skeptics. Beauty may be skin deep, but a love of horses goes all the way through to the soul. 

2012 California Sires By Winners

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Tribal Rule	160	94
Benchmark	125	82
Kafwain	134	73
Old Topper	128	68
Ministers Wild Cat	113	66
Bertrando	120	54
Unusual Heat	113	54
In Excess (IRE)	111	54
Unbridled Energy	90	52
Swiss Yodeler	102	50
Marino Marini	95	46
Southern Image	91	45
Stormin Fever	77	41
Decarchy	100	40
Salt Lake	82	40
Sea of Secrets	90	36
High Brite	62	36
Deputy Commander	57	33
Redattore (BRZ)	78	32
Terrell	56	31
Good Journey	58	28
Freespool	65	27
Roar	46	27
Cee's Tizzy	51	26
Globalize	39	26
Lucky Pulpit	39	25
Perfect Mandate	51	24
Rocky Bar	36	24
Tizbud	49	23
Siberian Summer	44	23
Momentum	53	22
Game Plan	39	22
Atticus	49	21
Flame Thrower	42	19
Popular	33	19
Stormy Jack	44	18
Capsized	33	17

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