

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Every step in the development of successful racehorses is important, but few are as important as the education they receive during breaking and training. With the yearling sale season in full swing, buyers are looking for the outfits that can put the best mental and physical foundation under their developing runners.

Training centers all around the country boast top-notch facilities, not only for turning yearlings into ready-to-run 2-year-olds, but also for rehabilitating runners when they come up sore or injured or simply need a freshening from the rigors of the racetrack.

Many of these expert centers and the experienced people who run them are profiled in the following pages.

BENCHMARK TRAINING

Benchmark Training Center, a facility that offers a European-style foundation for horses due to the background of Wales, Great Britain native and veteran horseman Gerwyn "Taffy" Jones, has been developing solid runners since its inception in North Texas 10 years ago.

The 100-acre Southwestern operation assists clients not only in conditioning young horses, but in selecting and purchasing the right runners for a particular program. Benchmark also offers rehabilitation services for older horses, race-track and medical/surgical layups, and sales preparation for horses of any age.

Due to its location near Quinlan,

Texas, about 40 miles east of Dallas, Benchmark provides easy access to all the racetracks in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas.

Jones, who is the owner and head trainer at Benchmark, started his racing career nearly 30 years ago in Wales. He worked throughout the East Coast before venturing to Texas 15 years ago. The European foundation and Eastern experience that Taffy brings to the table have helped Benchmark thrive in the Texas market.

Other key members of Benchmark's staff include veterinarian Dr. David Stephens, who operates Weems and Stephens Equine Hospital near Aubrey,

Texas; and farm manager Mark Brennan, also a longtime member of the industry who hails from Ireland.

Benchmark's features are highlighted by its 1/2-mile training track and starting gate, which enable young horses to become accustomed to racing life as well as layups to return to the track in top condition. The farm also has two large, modern-style barns with ample amenities, a Eurosizer exercise machine for conditioning, and spacious, three-acre paddocks.

Jones estimated horses that receive early training at Benchmark have an 80-90% win rate on the track. He believes the training center's stellar results are

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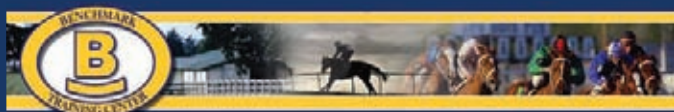
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Bennett & Assoc. photo



Michael Burns photo

2013 Santa Anita Derby-G1 winner, **Goldencents** (left) and July 7th Dance Smartly Stakes-G2 winner **Solid Appeal** both received their early educations at Webb Carroll Training Center.

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Our results speak for themselves:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Winners</u>	<u>Stakes</u>	<u>2YO winners</u>
2010	262	15 (6 graded)	32 (38 wins)
2011	325	25 (10 graded)	50 (54 wins)
2012	428	33 (9 graded)	47 (57 wins)
2013*	259	15 (7 graded)	5 (5 wins)

*Thru 7/21/13

the reason it attracts major clients from all over the country, including McKenna Thoroughbreds, Long Odds Racing Stable, and trainers Donnie Von Hemel, Bret Calhoun, and Steve Asmussen.

“Our percentage rate of winners has been a key to our success,” said Jones. “By word of mouth about the successful way we turn out horses, clients send them to us from all over the country. We get them ready to go to the track, and once they show up, they’re close to ready to start running. We have a reputation of doing a good job and producing a good product.”

BRETT BRINKMAN TRAINING

Brett Brinkman was born to be a horseman. Raised on Waldemar Farms near Ocala, Fla., Brinkman “lived and breathed” the horse business on the full-scale facility where everyone in the family was involved. Getting his start under his grandfather, a trainer at Louisiana’s Evangeline Downs, Brinkman gathered further experience in the employ of other operations, including Ocala’s Bridlewood Farm, where he worked for eight years, eventually managing three different divisions of the operation.

When the opportunity to strike out on his own presented itself, Brinkman grabbed it and has been working for himself since the early 1990s. “That first year I had mainly some ‘castoff’ horses, from people who had been in the industry a long time.

“But I was blessed and fortunate to have clients with well-bred stock. They gave me a shot, and from the six horses I had that first season, I ended up with a



DAVID YOUNG

Patience with young horses is key to a successful breaking program

graded stakes winner. It was a huge leg up that made everything possible.”

Brinkman’s success has continued over the two decades he’s been operating. Raising horses on his Mesa Verde Farm in Florida, Brinkman then breaks his charges in Louisiana, taking advantage of the facilities at Evangeline Downs Training Center. “We do all the ground work there; they learn to train in sets, and, most importantly, they get exposure to the day-to-day racing scenarios.”

Multiple stakes winners Sadie’s Soldier and Break Up, multiple graded stakes winner Lunarpal, and Louisiana’s 2012 champion 2-year-old filly, Sittin At the Bar, are some of the horses that have gone through Brinkman’s program. Grace

Hall and Posse, graded stakes winners both, spent time during their formative periods under Brinkman’s tutelage.

Brinkman’s philosophy is straightforward—simple and thoughtful—and putting the horse’s learning first. “From day one we just start walking them toward where they need to be. Every day you try to avoid having a ‘bad day’ at all costs. You may not move the ball forward very much, but you avoid having a bad day that they will remember. You just have to try to have as many good days as you can.”

CAMPBELL FARM

Don and Kim Campbell operate a family-owned training facility, Campbell Farm in Guthrie, Ky., that enjoys working

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HALLWAY – multiple SW of \$508,000+

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From "just-broken" to "gate-ready" to horses returning after a layoff, Woodford Thoroughbreds can accommodate all levels of training, where each horse is individually cared for and looked over from top to bottom each day.

In 2013, yearling to 2-year-old pinhooks prepared and consigned by Woodford Thoroughbreds yielded an average 391% return above the purchase price.

On day one of the OBS March sale, Hip 120 sold for \$370,000, the second-highest priced horse of the session.

— STALLIONS —

BIONDETTI

Bernardini - Lyphard's Delta, by Lyphard

CROWN OF THORNS

Repent - Crowning Touch, by Thunder Gulch

REPENT

Louis Quatorze - Baby Grace (ARG), by Cipayo (ARG)

VINEYARD HAVEN

Lido Palace (CHI) - Princess Aloha, by Aloha Prospector

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FARM PHOTOS BY ANDI TAYLOR, BREEZE PHOTO BY LOUISE E. REINAGEL

with owners to develop individualized training plans for their young Thoroughbreds.

“Some of our young horses are getting ready for the track while others are being prepped for 2-year-olds in training sales,” Don Campbell said. “We try to do whatever the owner wants. We don’t just do one specific thing. We individualize the training program for the owner and the horse.”

The farm has enough features to meet diverse needs with its five-furlong dirt track, starting gate, Eurosizer, turn-out paddocks, swimming pond, 30 stalls, indoor arena, and outdoor jogging track. The farm can offer early training for about 100 Thoroughbreds a year.

The Campbells have been married for 30 years and have both worked with horses their entire lives, starting with show horses before the husband and wife team moved to Thoroughbreds a dozen years ago. Campbell Farm typically keeps a small, experienced staff of three to six, depending on time of year because they prefer to be hands-on at the farm.

The Campbells said the farm offers affordable rates and, with its Kentucky location, offers savings on travel expenses compared with facilities outside the state.

“As far as training, I can’t think of anything we can’t do here,” Don Campbell said. “Everyone talks about the weather



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

All successful training centers rely on experienced riders

in the South, but horses don’t get to run in the best weather all the time. They have bad weather down there too and miss days. Here we have an indoor arena, so they don’t miss any days. They can do something every day.”

The Campbells support after-care programs and frequently work with Horse Creek Thoroughbreds’ Gate to Great geldings, which prepares Thoroughbreds to be ranch horses or to work in other careers. The Campbells own Drake’s Dancer, who recently was selected to participate in the Retired Racehorse Training Project.

NANCY TERHUNE TRAINING STABLE

If you are wondering why many break-

ing and training operations are located in South Carolina, ask Nancy Terhune, who operates the Nancy Terhune Training Stable at Sandy DuBOSE Farm near Camden.

“The footing and the weather,” she said. “It gets cold enough to have the trees change and the horses know it’s winter and grow a winter coat, so it’s more natural for the horse. The footing? You don’t have to worry about hard ground; very seldom do you get frozen ground.”

Terhune has a wealth of experience to draw upon while

breaking and training young horses on the 65 acres of her training center. The five-eighths-mile track with starting gate has a safe mixture of sand and dirt and has been the starting point for several successful horses. Some of the star graduates of her program include Thorny Crown, a six-time stakes winner in the late 1990s; the Terhune co-bred and co-owned Aspenglow, a 14-time winner (four stakes wins) and runner up in the 2011 Barbara Fritchie Handicap (gr. II); and Dede McGehee’s St. John’s River, the Delaware Oaks (gr. II) winner and Kentucky Oaks (gr. I) runner-up in 2011.

“We start them out, in some people’s opinion, a little on the slow side,” Terhune said of her breaking regimen. “We just try to keep them quiet and happy and jog them in figure eights and spend some time with that lesson to give them a good steering wheel and gradually start some cantering and some galloping. I don’t like to rush them.

“If they want to rush them for a sale or something, then they’ll be better off going somewhere else because I don’t think that is the right thing to do,” she said.

She also believes horses need plenty of turnout time and individualized work to build strong cannon bones, mold well-developed muscles, and have fewer injuries down the road.

“It’s good for babies because we’ve got a lot of nice, big turnout paddocks. And after they train—or before they train—we can kick them out and they can eat some grass and be a horse for a few hours. It’s better than a training center when they have to come back in and get shut up in a stall for 23 hours a day.”

WEBB CARROLL TRAINING CENTER

In business for nearly three decades, Webb Carroll Training Center continues to turn out top-quality runners under the supervision of Carroll, a third-generation

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horseman who founded the facility near St. Matthews, S.C.

Noted graduates include champions War Emblem and Havre de Grace and Preakness Stakes (gr. I) winner Shackleford, along with Santa Anita Derby (gr. I) winner Goldencents, and grade I winner Joyful Victory. In 2012 the center produced its best numbers to date: 428 winners, 33 of them stakes winners, with nine graded victories.

Carroll, 67, is the hands-on impetus behind the success of a program best-known for breaking and training 2-year-olds, although the facility also rehabs injured horses. His training methods are measured and patient, designed to help young runners adapt to the racetrack. Last year alone, the program produced 47 2-year-old winners.

"Giving them time to be the best they can be, that's what it's all about," Carroll said. "Experience means everything. The more we can show them along the way, the better off they come out of here. I like to send out a sane, sound, fit, educated horse with a lot of bottom and leave something in the tank for someone else to carry on with."

A simulated track environment at the 50-plus-acre training center prepares young horses for their careers: a seven-eighths-mile irrigated dirt oval, three-quarter-mile irrigated turf course, starting gate with an experienced crew, small and large turn-out paddocks, a swim facility, and an eight-horse exerciser provide a broad range of conditioning opportunities.

"When I started out, I wanted to do some special things with horses that other people didn't do," said Carroll, who learned horsemanship from his father, W.W. Carroll. "I knew some things I got from my father and veteran horseman Odie Clelland, and applied them to my methods. We look out for the working man who has a few horses or the big operation that has a lot of horses—we treat them all the same."

Among Carroll's keys to success are a nearly 40-member staff, a sterling work ethic, and a preventative approach to conditioning.

"We stop with horses when they need to be stopped with," he said. "Before immaturity or little problems magnify into career-stopping or threatening incidents, we try to nip them in the bud."

Carroll noted he is not a "one-man band," lauding the skills of his assistant trainer Travis Durr, who has been a strong part of the program for five years, and a capable crew that has been with him for 20-plus years. "Travis is an excellent horseman. Both of us live no more than four or five minutes from the center. It's



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

Comfortable facilities in any weather keep horses in training happy

something we take pride in. I know what to do with young horses and what not to do, and the latter's most important."

WEBSTER TRAINING CENTER

Depth of experience, top-rate facilities, and a willingness to customize training regimens to suit its clients makes Webster Training Center one of the country's premier breaking and training facilities.

Caroline and Rob Webster have been

running the 70-acre Reddick, Fla., training center for the past eight years but their association with the land has a longer history. Caroline Webster first stepped onto the property 25 years ago when it was Doug Henderson's Marablu Farm. She had just gone out on her own as a private trainer and was working for someone who had leased the farm.

"I love it so much here, I came back and bought the training center part of the

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farm,” she said. The operation features a three-quarters of a mile dirt track and a five-furlong turf course, 40 paddocks including several smaller “surgery” paddocks for rehabilitation, a total of 80 stalls in barns with wide shedrows, and a quarantine barn.

Rob Webster is a native of Canada who essentially grew up at Woodbine. He has been a jockey and an assistant for Canadian Hall of Fame trainer Jim Day. The quality of the Websters’ knowledge has attracted a solid base of long-time clients including Mary Sullivan, the owner/breeder of multiple grade I winner Get Stormy (Stormy Atlantic—Foolish Gal), who was raised, broke, and made race-ready entirely on the Websters’ farm.

Bonner Young, a longtime client of Barclay Tagg’s and the owner/breeder of grade I winner Bit of Whimsy, is another Webster Training Center loyalist.

Caroline Webster said Tagg and other trainers, like Mark Frostad, have continually steered horses their way because of their willingness to follow trainers’ preferences.

“Barclay likes a lot of gate work and



Acclimating to track conditions

ANNE M. EBERHARDT

some want us to use the turf course more,” Webster said. “They have specific programs they follow and these horses will wind up in their care, so we are very willing to adjust our program to theirs.”

Besides breaking and training, the Websters handle lay-ups and rehabilitations from injuries or surgeries. They also have clients, like William Schettine, who will send weanlings to their farm to just grow up until they are ready for training. Webster Training Center can be a home away from home because the Websters built an apartment above one barn for their clients. From a balcony, they can watch their horses on the track.

“We have had so many of the same clients for so long, they’re family,” said Caroline Webster. “And they love the opportunity to stay here on the farm and be with their horses.”

WES CARTER TRAINING STABLE

When Wes Carter established his training stable near the town of Bamberg, S.C., a dozen years ago, he did so knowing that he had learned horsemanship from the best.

Carter either galloped or broke horses for Lucien Laurin, trainer of Secretariat and Riva Ridge; Ray Smith of Elloree; Jane Dunne at Holly Hill; and legendary trainer Mac Miller.

The Wes Carter Training Stable continues a tradition of educating young horses the right way, with no shortcuts.

“We break them a little different than most people,” said Carter. “We break ours where you can lead them over to a bale of hay and get on them by yourself; you don’t have to be legged up or have someone holding their head while you’re getting on.”

“All the way through the process we spend more time with them. When we get a horse out to do something with him, we spend at least a half hour with each individual; most people spend 15 minutes with them and they’re back at the barn getting a bath.”

To insure such care, Carter limits the number of horses he takes to 40 and also makes sure to hire only people with whom he is familiar and who he knows can do the job. The facilities at the farm are also key to raising a horse correctly. In addition to the 3/4-mile training track, the farm offers grass fields and 11 paddocks spread over 30 acres. Also, there are 700 acres of woods for trail riding along 20-foot-wide cutout trails. The horses can enjoy swimming in a “swimming hole” as well.

“My philosophy on training a horse is to make them think it’s their idea to do what I want them to do,” said Carter. “You can’t force them to do stuff. I get a

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lot more run out of horses if they are enjoying what they're doing. They progress quicker, their careers last longer, and they stay sound if they're happy running."

When the horses have advanced through their training, Carter ships them to the training centers in either Aiken or Elloree, where they work with other horses and get their gate cards. That process is advanced back at the farm, which boasts a four-stall starting gate.

"When they leave here, they're well-educated," Carter noted. "They'll walk right in the gate, and they'll break and run and go straight. They go to the racetrack and speak for us."

WOODFORD THOROUGHBREDS

Providing quality service and offering a safe environment for horses are the top priorities at Woodford Thoroughbreds. And with top-notch facilities in Central Kentucky and Central Florida, the team can cater to the needs of the most discriminating clientele.

The training division in Florida features an 80-stall training center with a five-furlong dirt track—with a six-stall starting gate—and 1½-mile European turf gallop. Young horses and the older ones on the comeback enjoy ample turnout space and there are several turnout round pens, a walker, and "everything you'd need to get them ready for the races," according to Woodford Thoroughbreds general manager Matt Lyons.

The viewing stand at the training track offers air-conditioned comfort to view the horses, and the farm also has a guesthouse for clients that come to watch their horses train.

Key to the operation that was formerly under the Cloverleaf name is its new farm trainer in Florida, John Gleason.

Gleason has been in the industry for more than 18 years and spent the last 12 years with Brian 1/2 at Woodside



Many horses already have their gate cards when they leave for the track

Ranch, which they used to break all of the horses for Overbrook Farm.

"We were lucky to have the opportunity to bring him over," Lyons said. "He's a wonderful horseman. He has a show horse background and just knows how to get a horse ready. He just started for

us, but he's already got yearlings broke to the pony and jogging around the farm and going out to the track. A lot of guys wouldn't even think about doing something like that—that's just natural horsemanship."

Woodford Thoroughbreds also made its first foray into the 2-year-old marketplace in 2013, and Lyons reported their pinhooking venture had a 391% return rate. At the Ocala Breeders' Sales Co.'s high-flying June sale Woodford Thoroughbreds produced a filly that worked the fastest three-eighths of the sale in :33 flat.

"We want to let people know if they send us a horse, we can take it all the way; if we don't get it done at the yearling sales, we can continue to the 2-year-old sales," Lyons said. "There are very few people who consign yearlings that are also consigning 2-year-olds. We're doing both, and we're going to build on what we did in our first year in the market." **BH**

**Don't miss our next
Breaking & Training
Section in the
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