

FIRST STEPS

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.

5B FARM

Curt Bourque certainly knows horses. The affable Cajun has been around them all his life and had a successful career as a jockey, having won more than 3,000 races. Retired from the saddle in 2010, he now runs 5B Farm with his wife, Rachael, and they offer top-quality care and breaking and training services on their 44-acre farm near Opelousas, La.

"We just do it right by the horse," Curt said. "We just try to get 'em out the best way we can."

And he's been doing it the best way he can for a long time.

"I've always been around horses; that's where I first started," he said. "My dad

(Wilfred Bourque) always had a horse or two. That's all I knew, and then I rode for years. I've learned a lot from a lot of different trainers such as Al Stall Jr. and Lee Young. With the horses you learn from them and you learn with them."

Breaking at 5B includes young horses learning to be driven by hand in their 60-foot round pen, getting to the track properly, teaching them how to go through a starting gate, and then moving up to a gallop.

5B's experienced team provides daily care for newcomers and lay-ups alike, and their exercise and nutritional care are of the utmost importance.

In addition to the five-eighths-mile

training track, starting gate, and round pen, 5B offers large turnout paddocks with nice shaded areas for horses to cool out in. Bourque notes the turnout paddocks come in three-, four-, and 10-acre sizes.

Rachael, CEO of Quick Trim Weight Loss Clinic, has experience in management, public relations, bookkeeping, and billing. Like Curt, she's hands-on with the horses, including the mares and

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foals on the farm.

5B is conveniently located in Louisiana as Bourque notes they are right off I-49 and only 20 minutes north of I-10 at Lafayette.

“We do the best we can for the horse,” Bourque said. “We try to get a good mind on them and send them on their way so they can get to the track.”

AIKEN TRAINING CENTER

The Southeast United States is peppered with modern Thoroughbred training centers that offer state-of-the-art facilities for training the modern racehorse. But at the Aiken Training Track near Aiken, S.C., competition with other training centers is not the order of business. Established in 1941, the Aiken Training Track promotes its tranquil setting in which to train the future racehorse or give a rest to a horse in training.

The Aiken Training Track was founded by Fred H. Post. He decided to construct the track to train his flat horses and selected the location on Two Notch Road, surrounded by polo fields and near enough to the famous 2,000 acre Hitchcock Woods to take horses out on a hack.

The privately owned and operated Training Track hosts a one-mile track with a red clay base and sandy loam cushioned surface as well as a five-eighths mile sand track, which surrounds one of the country's oldest polo fields. Some of the trainers stabled at the historic facility train privately while some have public stables open to outside clientele.

In winter it a rare occurrence to have



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

Having seasoned and knowledgeable exercise riders are key to a training center's success

the track freeze because of the mild winter weather in South Carolina.

Among the amenities and services available on site are a six-stall starting gate, turf course access, a track kitchen, and a tack repair shop. Locally, there are also several tack and feed stores on hand to supply the stables.

Annually since 1942, the Training Track runs the Aiken Trials. The series of six races, primarily for juveniles, is intended to provide the young trainees with a full-scale live racing experience.

“The Trials give a bit of an edge to a young horse,” said Brett Stauffer, presi-

dent of the Aiken Training Track. “It’s certainly a growing and learning experience for green horses.”

Steeped in charm amid the horse community of Aiken, home to its own Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum, the training center was the winter home to racing legends such as trainer Mackenzie Miller, Woody Stephens, William Burch, and John Gaver, among others. Over the course of its seven-decade history, the Aiken Training Track has been home to 39 champions and Horses of the Year Capot, Tom Fool, Kelso, and Conquistador Cielo. This year’s winner



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of the Belmont Stakes (gr. I), Dogwood Stable's Palace Malice, has also called Aiken home.

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 five-eighths 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 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.

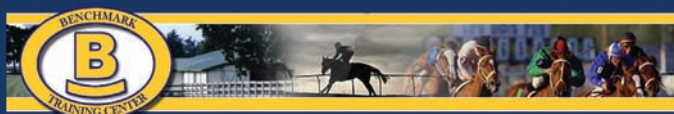
"But I was blessed and fortunate to have clients with well-bred stock. They gave me a shot, and from the six horses I had that first season, I ended up with a graded stakes winner. It was a huge leg up that made everything possible."

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

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ANNE M. EBERHARDT

Having horses handled helps with their demeanor and development

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 near Guthrie, Ky., located in the beautiful southwestern part of the state. They enjoy working 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, 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 more than 10 years ago. Campbell Farm typically keeps a small, experienced staff of three to six, depending on the time of year because they prefer to be hands-on at the farm.

The Campbells said the farm offers affordable rates and, its Kentucky location saves on travel expenses compared with facilities outside the state. They also provide transportation and are regularly in the Lexington area for drop-offs or pickups.

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

DERBY DAZE FARM

When you send your young horse for early breaking and training, you want to look for a facility with a history of launching the careers of successful runners. Derby Daze Farm near Ocala, Fla., boasts a sterling track record.

Florida champion Hooh Why learned her lessons at Derby Daze and learned

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them well. As a 3-year-old, Hooh Why went wire-to-wire in winning the Ashland Stakes (gr. I) at Keeneland, and a year later captured the Seaway Stakes (Can-III). Bred by Derby Daze's Gail Gee, Hooh Why has won or placed in 27 stakes and earned more than \$1.2 million. Stakes winner and grade I stakes-placed Beautician, the winner of more than \$630,000, is also a graduate of Derby Daze, along with grade I stakes-placed Theregoesjojo and stakes winner Rumbling Cloud.

Their success is no accident. Derby Daze offers a complete array of services and facilities on its 77 acres, including a half-mile irrigated racetrack with starting gate; four barns with 70 stalls; round pens, turnout paddocks, and an indoor track. Just as importantly, young prospects or layups benefit from the peaceful environment and the safe handling offered by Derby Daze's experienced staff.

Derby Daze has formulated a specific program to develop potential racehorses. Yearlings are introduced to tack and being backed in the familiar surroundings of their own stall. In the next step they visit the round pen to learn basics while bit-

ted and saddled. Derby Daze does not rush its students to the racetrack. The farm takes the time to move young horses to an in-

door track where they continue to learn lessons under saddle before going out to the main track. This extra time helps

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build confidence while also developing a horse's focus and ability to connect with their rider, promoting safety and soundness.

Derby Daze is also the place to prep a Thoroughbred for sales. Being located near the Ocala Breeders' Sales Co.'s auction site, Derby Daze is the perfect spot, both because it offers an ideal climate for winter and year-round training, plus horses can breeze at the nearby one-mile track in preparation for sales or races. Farm manager E.B. Gee Jr. and trainer Marcial Galan send Derby Daze graduates to the best sales throughout the country.

International bloodstock agent Anthony Goswell works closely with Derby Daze to assist clients in the public and private purchases and sales of bloodstock. Goswell has decades of experience as a sales inspector in Canada and New York.

Great climate, great staff, great facilities, and a program proven to produce top runners. Derby Daze has it all to ensure a horse reaches its highest potential.

DOUBLE INFINITY RANCH

Everything is big in Texas and things are getting even bigger at Double Infinity Ranch...just ask operator Brooke Bailey. Two new 30-stall barns are currently under construction to go along with their 16-stall barn. An equine swimming pool is also being added.

"We want to expand and grow and be a place anybody around the world would want to send their horses," she said.

Located about 80 miles east of Dallas, near Sulphur Springs, Double Infinity Ranch is in close proximity to several racetracks such as Lone Star Park (an hour, 45 minutes) and Louisiana Downs (2½ hours).

A year-round, full-service operation, Double Infinity Ranch will break and train yearlings, 2-year-olds, and offers great lay-up care for horses of racing age when they might need a little time away from the track.



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

The end result of a successful graduation from a training center is making it to the races

The goal at Double Infinity is to help owners take their equine investments to the next level and help Thoroughbreds to reach their optimal racing capabilities.

A brand-new, five-eighths-mile track with a safe sand and dirt composition has been constructed and training is overseen by veteran trainer Clifford Bailey. He starts breaking young horses by giving them plenty of time in the round pen, then moves on to the covered arena—which offers an advantage over most other training facilities in the area.

"It's big enough to barrel-race in," Clifford Bailey said of the arena. "It helps us with a controlled environment, and we don't have to worry about a horse getting loose and hurting itself."

An abundance of very good riders also gives the ranch a leg up on the competition when it comes to breaking young

horses. Double Infinity Ranch offers top-shelf equine nutrition and feeds high-quality vitamins to its horses.

"We put the proper foundation under them to help make them a winner," Brooke Bailey said.

Sales prep is another area of expertise at Double Infinity. The Baileys pride themselves in making sure horses are in proper condition and appearance so their clients can realize the full potential of their investments either at auction or through private sales. They teach the horses under their care sales etiquette and prepare them for the auction environment.

With a combination of attention to detail and the team's years of experience, owners can rest assured their horses will thrive under the farm's superior service.

"The bottom line is, we don't miss," said Clifford Bailey.

EQUINE AQUATRAK

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SNEAKING UPONYOU - Multiple stakes winner; 2nd, Hilton Sprint S. at Tampa, Apr. 6. Record: 7-7-7 in 36 starts (\$353,919, **3 to 7**, 2013).

RUMBLING CLOUD - stakes-placed winner at 2, stakes winner at 3 (\$314,416, **2 to 7**).

GOOD BETTER BEST - 2nd by a head in the \$125,000 Steady Growth S. at Woodbine June 17.

Record: 3-6-1 in 14 starts (\$262,683, **2 to 5**, 2013).

Marcial Galan, resident trainer / Anthony Goswell, bloodstock agent

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vide a variety of options to fully customize sessions to suit the needs of the equine. At full capacity the tank can hold 1,000 gallons of freshwater or 500 gallons of saltwater and the unit is equipped with safety features such as non-slip entry and exit ramps and treadmill belt, and emergency evacuating valves.

Aquatic treadmills offer the opportunity for a full range of motion and increased stride while minimally impacting limbs and joints compared with traditional exercise. Even compared with swimming, the AquaTRAK allows for warm-up and cool-down periods not usually possible when fully submerged in a pool. Additionally, the AquaTRAK supports and engages the equine's core muscles, developing strength and avoiding placing any undue pressure on the vertebrae, a risk when swimming.

Conditions that have been shown to benefit from AquaTRAK therapy are arthritis and paralysis; gait and coordination disorders; muscle atrophy; hip dysplasia; tendonitis and laminitis; ligament injuries; joint conditions; and overall deterioration and loss of range of motion. Horses recovering from injuries have been shown to recover 50-60 times faster with hydrotherapy.

The option of cold saltwater therapy, also known as cryotherapy, uses the combination of the water's temperature and salt concentration to treat and prevent lower leg injuries. Water chilled to approximately 42°F minimizes heat and inflammation, provides analgesic pain management, and inhibits enzyme degeneration of injured tendons. Salt concentration acts as a hypertonic poultice as well as having a natural healing effect on wounds. Water density increases with salt concentration, which, in turn, increases pressure to aid fluid and waste dispersal.

As a conditioning tool, the AquaTRAK is ideal for easing a horse back into exercise or as a complementary component to the training regimen. In addition to building strength, it also helps increase flexibility and prepares the equine athlete for a safe return to full training. Varying the level of the water used also helps target specific muscle groups for sculpting and shaping. Horses being readied for the sale ring at any time of year can be prepped with sessions in the AquaTRAK. Young horses especially can be made to look their best without inflicting unnecessary stress on their still-developing frames.

Veterinarian-approved, the U.S.-manufactured AquaTRAK is ideal for therapeutic and rehabilitation centers, training barns, and private facilities. It is easily installed indoors with the assistance of a plumber and an electrician; replacement filters and parts are easily and economically obtained through pool supply stores nationwide.

WEBB CARROLL TRAINING CENTER

Webb Carroll Training Center continues to turn out top-quality runners and the proof is in the numbers. In 2012 the center produced their best numbers to date: 428 winners, 33 of them stakes winners, with nine graded victories. As of Aug. 13, 2013, the center has produced 289 winners and 21 stakes winners, 10 of which are graded. Some of racing's brightest stars such as champions War Emblem and Havre de Grace and Preakness Stakes (gr. I) winner Shackleford are graduates of his program.

Webb Carroll, a third-generation horseman who founded the facility near St. Matthews, S.C., has been in business for nearly three decades.

A simulated track environment at the 51-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

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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. The proof had to be in the pudding. 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 his diligent staff, a sterling work ethic, and a preventative approach to conditioning. His right-hand man and assistant trainer, Travis Durr, heads a 40-person team—some of which have been with him for more than 20 years—that work hard to meet the day's challenges.

"Travis is an excellent horseman," Carroll said. "Both of us live no more than four or five minutes from the center. It's something we take pride in. I've been blessed in this game to have this opportunity, and I don't take it lightly. I know what to do with young horses and what not to do, and the latter's most important."

Webb's 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. He also has an excellent track record with rehabbing injured horses.

"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." **BH**



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