

## WEST COAST

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# Roaring Back

*Smiling Tiger keys California upswing  
at Premier Thoroughbreds*

BY JACK SHINAR

**"MONEYBALL," THE NATIONAL** best-selling book and successful 2011 movie, showed it was possible for the low-budget Oakland Athletics to field a perennial playoff-caliber Major League Baseball team. But can A's general manager Billy Beane's successful strategy be adapted for a Thoroughbred breeding and racing operation?

That's the goal of some "dirt farmers from Pleasanton," as their trainer, Jeff Bonde, refers to the Premier Thoroughbreds team. Led by horse owner Phil Leberherz and blood-stock specialist Mersad Metanovic, a new breeding enterprise located in the heart of Northern California is planning to become a major player.

With California's breeding industry emerging from a slump, the timing is perfect, they believe, for a new game. The principals at Premier Thoroughbreds are using a moderate pricing model to build their approach for the Thoroughbred market over the next four or five years. The centerpiece of the plan is 2014 first-year stallion Smiling Tiger, a three-time

*(continued on page 65)*



JACK SHINAR



COURTESY FROM MESAROS/PREMIER EQUINE CENTER

Smiling Tiger will stand for \$5,000 at Premier Thoroughbreds; above, Phil Leberherz, a co-owner of Smiling Tiger, on his tractor at the farm

2 0 1 3

# Another Big Year for Harris Farms!



BENOIT PHOTO

**UNUSUAL HEAT** tops the General Sire list for the sixth time • **TIZBUD** sires his first Grade I winner • **HEATSEEKER** is a runaway leader among second-crop sires • **LUCKY PULPIT** 2-year-old **CALIFORNIA CHROME** rules in the \$200,000 King Glorious Stakes • **DESERT CODE** and **LUCKY J. H.** emerge as leading sires of 2-year-olds • Grade I millionaire **THORN SONG** enjoys a "Book Full" season.

*Pamela Ziebarth's homebred **Tiz Flirtatious** joins an impressive roster of **Grade I** winners bred and raised at Harris Farms.*

## UNUSUAL HEAT

*Nureyev-Rossard, by Glacial*

Eclipse Award Champion sire and 2008-2013 leading sire in California. His eight stakes winners in 2013 include 3-year-olds **Gervinho** (G2, \$422,140) and **Unusual Way** (\$588,360). **Fee: \$20,000 Live Foal**

## LUCKY PULPIT

*Pulpit-Lucky Soph, by Cozzene*

Barretts 2013 October Sale average of \$29,525 for eight yearlings is nearly 12X the stud fee and includes colts for \$67,000 and \$45,000. **Fee: \$2,500 Live Foal.**

## DESERT CODE

*E Dubai-Chatta Code, by Lost Code*

Breeders' Cup winner and millionaire ranked among California's leading Freshman sires by average earnings per runner. **Fee: \$2,000 Live Foal**

## LUCKY J. H.

*Cee's Tizzy-Lucky C. H., by A. P. Indy*

Breakout year for second-crop sire ranked at the top of the general and juvenile sire lists by average earnings per runner. **Fee: \$1,500 Live Foal**

## HEATSEEKER

*Giant's Causeway-Rusty Back, by Defensive Play*

Nationally-ranked 2013 second-crop sire with earnings of \$1.5 million, eight stakes horses, stakes winners **Surtsey** (\$239,589) and **Broadway Missile** (at 2) and recent Santa Anita MSW Seeking the West. **Fee: \$5,000 Live Foal**

## THORN SONG

*Unbridled's Song-Festal, by Storm Bird*

Grade I winner twice at one mile and his sire's only millionaire standing outside of Kentucky. His first-crop 2-year-olds will race this year. **Fee: \$2,500 Live Foal**

## TIZBUD

*Cee's Tizzy-Cee's Song, by Seattle Song*

Brother to **Tiznow** is the sire of \$779,800 **Grade I** winner **Tiz Flirtatious**, the leading California-bred earner of 2013. **Fee: \$1,500 Live Foal**

All stallions are nominated to the Breeders' Cup.

Stud fees are payable at foaling.

For further stallion and farm information, visit our website: [www.harrisfarms.com](http://www.harrisfarms.com)



## Harris Farms

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COMMITTED TO BREEDING QUALITY

# Rancho San Miguel

## 2014 STALLION ROSTER



Ranked in the Top Ten Active Sires by 2013 Cal-Bred Earnings

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

- Outstanding 2013 season with SIX Stakes performers, and one being the 3YO star **SWEET MARINI** (\$255,760), a 5¼-length Maiden Special winner in open company in only start at two, 4¾-length winner of the \$200,000 Fleet Treat S. over **Grade 2** Hollywood Oaks SW **DOINGHARDTIMEAGAIN**, plus placed in **Grade 3** Rancho Bernardo H. and \$250,000 Melair S.
- Sire of **11% Stakes Horses**, including 2013 Stakes Winner **GREGOR** (\$123,076).
- Sire of **10% \$100K+ earners** in his first four crops like 2012 SWs **STAR-LIGHT MAGIC** (\$334,900) and **SHUDACUDAWUDYA** (\$329,629).

California's #5 Active Sire by Average Earnings Index (AEI)

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

- First California-sired 2YOs are off to the races with SW **BETTER BET** (\$202,380), winner of the \$200,000 Golden State Juvenile S. on Breeders' Cup day at Santa Anita; **GLAMSQUAD**, 4½-length winner at Golden Gate first time out in open company; **YODELMESOMEMAGIC**, 2nd by a nose in open company to a Stakes filly; & **ZOOKS**, a little more than a length off the winner in a \$30,000 Stakes.
- His first crop, now matured to six, has average earnings over \$71,000 and has produced 11% \$100K+ earners, like **Grade 1** SW **SOUTHERN SPEED** (winner of \$2.9 Million and who has won or placed in FIVE **Grade 1** events) and **Grade 1**-placed **CALIBRACHOA** (5-time NYRA Graded winner of \$666,040).
- 2013 winners include **WINNING IMAGE** (\$530,137), now with 7 wins in East Coast Stakes and 11 career wins by nearly 40 combined lengths; SW **HIP FOUR SIXTYNINE** (\$142,777), with 3 straight wins including a 3¾-length victory in the \$75k Sam's Town S.



ALSO STANDING **Comic Strip / Onebadshark**

please visit [www.ranchosanmiguel.net](http://www.ranchosanmiguel.net) for more details on our stallions

# One of the Leading Thoroughbred Farms in California

BOARDING, BREEDING & FOALING / SALES PREP & REPRESENTATION / LAY-UPS & REHABILITATION

No Booking Fees for 2014 Seasons / Stud Fees are payable Oct. 1 of year bred

## HOME OF CALIFORNIA'S LEADING SIRES

### 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**.
- First crop will be yearlings in 2014.



### Among California's Leading Sophomore Sires

**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.
- 2013 juveniles sold for **\$95,000** at the Barretts March sale.
- Solid 80% of runners are hitting the board with big-time wins like 5½-length winner I'LL RUN THE SHOW, 5-length winner SEVEN STORMS, 4-length winner SWAYZE ROAD, and 4-length winner PIRATA LOBO

### Top TEN National Freshman Yearling Sire in 2013!

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

- Sire of **\$160,000 BARRETTS SALES TOPPING YEARLING** in his First Crop!
- The #1 Freshman Sire outside of Kentucky, ranked among the Top Ten nationally with a seven yearling average over \$53,000.
- 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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# 2013 LEADING SIRES IN CALIFORNIA

Go to [BloodHorse.com](http://BloodHorse.com) for daily updated sire lists

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2014 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2013 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	UNUSUAL HEAT (90, Nureyev), Harris Farms	\$20,000	124/65	9/13	5/9	(Unusual Way, \$404,750)	\$4,901,713	*628	43	2.13	1.27
2	TRIBAL RULE (96, Storm Cat), Ballena Vista Farm	\$6,500	203/107	7/11	2/7	(Ethnic Dance, \$249,500)	\$4,810,195	530	34	1.34	1.16
3	EDDINGTON (01, Unbridled), Ballena Vista Farm	\$3,500	128/82	1/1	0/1	(Secret Circle, \$859,800)	\$3,662,437	*327	5	1.29	1.59
4	MINISTERS WILD CAT (00, Deputy Minister), Tommy Town Thoroughbreds	N/A	121/82	7/11	2/7	(Tiz a Minister, \$405,250)	\$3,526,137	242	15	1.10	0.97
5	BENCHMARK (91, Alydar), Ballena Vista Farm	\$5,000	117/68	8/12	1/8	(Points Offthebench, \$434,780)	\$2,834,839	686	41	1.24	1.13
6	KAFWAIN (00, Cherokee Run), Tommy Town Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	121/69	5/7	1/5	(Raging Daoust, \$203,300)	\$2,532,511	*453	21	1.14	1.28
7	BERTRANDO (89, Skywalker)	Pnsd	105/53	4/7	2/4	(Tamarando, \$455,120)	\$2,409,301	1044	58	1.35	1.51
8	OLD TOPPER (95, Gilded Time), Tommy Town Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	103/63	3/4	1/3	(Hail Mary, \$198,288)	\$2,047,923	498	22	0.96	0.86
9	SOUTHERN IMAGE (00, Halo's Image), Rancho San Miguel	\$2,500	85/55	3/5	2/3	(Better Bet, \$202,380)	\$1,853,150	*415	7	1.22	1.32
10	GOOD JOURNEY (96, Nureyev), Magali Farms	\$5,000	63/33	2/4	0/2	(Dancingtothestars, \$158,416)	\$1,744,639	*380	4	1.54	1.02
11	DECARCHY (97, Distant View), Magali Farms	\$3,000	95/43	1/1	0/1	(Stoney Fleece, \$92,676)	\$1,723,153	298	8	0.95	0.98
12	TIZBUD (99, Cee's Tizzy), Harris Farms	\$1,500	51/28	1/4	0/1	(Tiz Flirtatious, \$505,000)	\$1,595,921	146	4	1.18	0.93
13	HEATSEEKER (IRE) (03, Giant's Causeway), Harris Farms	\$5,000	58/34	2/2	1/2	(Surtsey, \$113,418)	\$1,451,879	*91	2	1.13	1.51
14	SALT LAKE (89, Deputy Minister)	Died, 2010	59/37	4/7	1/4	(Teddy's Promise, \$397,416)	\$1,357,026	*1224	58	1.41	1.40
15	SWISS YODELER (94, Eastern Echo), Lovacres Ranch	\$3,000	89/47	2/5	1/2	(Swiss Lake Yodeler, \$235,600)	\$1,353,443	712	28	1.02	1.07
16	LUCKY PULPIT (01, Pulpit), Harris Farms	\$2,500	47/27	3/4	2/3	(Rousing Sermon, \$218,342)	\$1,291,116	92	4	1.57	1.25
17	MARINO MARINI (00, Storm Cat), Rancho San Miguel	\$2,500	87/45	2/2	1/2	(Sweet Marini, \$219,100)	\$1,231,185	263	7	0.91	1.03
18	IN EXCESS (IRE) (87, Siberian Express)	Died, 2013	89/47	1/2	0/1	(Dixieland Blues, \$128,454)	\$1,222,853	986	63	1.57	1.39
19	VRONSKY (99, Danzig), Old English Rancho	\$3,500	42/20	1/1	1/1	(Somethings Unusual, \$107,976)	\$1,187,797	114	4	1.54	1.15
20	STORMIN FEVER (94, Storm Cat), Golden Eagle Farm	\$3,500	73/30	0/0	0/0	(Meinertzhageni, \$105,300)	\$1,100,005	*679	27	1.18	1.40
21	ROCKY BAR (98, In Excess), E. A. Ranches	\$2,500	59/36	5/8	4/5	(Lazy Daisy May, \$124,781)	\$1,001,864	102	14	1.03	0.86
22	CINDAGO (03, Indian Charlie)	Died	32/22	0/0	0/0	(My Cinsation, \$117,480)	\$845,904	64	2	1.46	1.39
23	ATTICUS (92, Nureyev), Magali Farms	N/A	44/23	1/1	0/1	(Atta Girl Alma, \$139,570)	\$821,599	445	14	1.06	1.45
24	AFFIRMATIVE (99, Unbridled)	N/A	32/13	1/2	1/1	(Warren's Veneda, \$300,064)	\$807,234	86	2	1.14	0.78
25	GAME PLAN (93, Danzig), E. A. Ranches	\$2,500	38/23	0/0	0/0	(Mel's Game, \$126,531)	\$740,588	424	23	0.85	0.80
26	SUANCES (GB) (97, Most Welcome), Rancho Temescal	\$1,500	31/16	0/0	0/0	(Sassy Suances, \$99,658)	\$710,543	110	1	1.01	1.11
27	TERRELL (00, Distorted Humor), Shalem Farm	Died	58/31	0/0	0/0	(Hanserella, \$60,750)	\$661,505	159	3	0.58	0.92
28	AWESOME GAMBLER (04, Coronado's Quest), Lovacres Ranch	\$5,000	43/14	1/1	0/1	(Willie B Awesome, \$82,412)	\$647,778	94	2	1.15	0.78
29	GLOBALIZE (97, Summer Squall), Victory Rose Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	31/15	1/1	0/1	(Life Is a Joy, \$131,330)	\$645,767	159	5	0.81	0.78
30	PERFECT MANDATE (96, Gone West)	Died, 2012	36/21	1/1	0/1	(Kilat, \$88,120)	\$586,902	298	12	0.91	1.23
31	PRIME TIMBER (96, Sultry Song), Legacy Ranch	\$3,500	33/16	0/0	0/0	(Modern Child, \$102,783)	\$543,920	224	5	1.12	1.25
32	SEA OF SECRETS (95, Storm Cat), Victory Rose Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	73/28	1/1	0/1	(Lil Cheyenne, \$36,170)	\$528,116	*447	21	0.89	1.09
33	POPULAR (99, Saint Ballado), Cottonwood Creek Ranch	N/A	28/14	1/2	0/1	(Halo Dolly, \$234,360)	\$507,907	76	2	1.06	0.95
34	CEE'S TIZZY (87, Relaunch)	Pnsd	39/21	0/0	0/0	(Tiz a Kiss, \$69,400)	\$505,867	733	39	1.61	1.15
35	♠ SQUARE EDDIE (06, Smart Strike), Vessels Stallion Farm	\$7,500	13/5	1/2	0/1	(Sprouts, \$171,490)	\$473,045	24	1	1.82	0.96
36	LUCKY J. H. (02, Cee's Tizzy), Harris Farms	\$1,500	16/9	1/1	0/1	(Alpine Luck, \$166,284)	\$453,516	41	1	1.23	1.31
37	DON'TSELLMESHORT (01, Benchmark), Running Luck Ranch	\$2,000	31/21	1/1	1/1	(Jedi Mind Trick, \$142,078)	\$429,797	72	1	0.64	0.72
38	HIGH BRITE (84, Best Turn)	Died, 2010	46/21	0/0	0/0	(Real Bright Boots, \$33,200)	\$429,376	*935	46	1.03	1.17
39	TANNERSMYMAN (98, Lord Carson), Woodbridge Farm	N/A	44/26	1/1	0/1	(Prime Issue, \$60,740)	\$428,871	134	3	0.65	0.80
40	PEPPERED CAT (00, Tabasco Cat), Daehling Ranch	\$2,000	19/11	0/0	0/0	(Pepnic, \$101,782)	\$416,133	30	0	1.24	0.75
41	STORMY JACK (97, Bertrando), Brazeau Thoroughbred Farms	\$1,500	56/29	0/0	0/0	(Quinnette, \$40,176)	\$413,720	174	3	0.62	0.75
42	CYCLOTRON (00, Grand Slam), Old English Rancho	N/A	15/11	0/0	0/0	(Cyclometer, \$96,160)	\$411,009	40	1	1.79	1.46
43	♠ DIXIE CHATTER (05, Dixie Union), Ballena Vista Farm	\$5,000	28/10	2/4	1/2	(Architecture, \$134,269)	\$397,949	43	2	0.72	1.02
44	GREY MEMO (97, Memo), Ridgely Farm	N/A	28/13	0/0	0/0	(Adelicate Miss, \$102,530)	\$397,518	75	0	0.74	0.72
45	MOMENTUM (98, Nureyev)	N/A	35/18	0/0	0/0	(One Mo, \$49,860)	\$380,589	185	1	0.57	1.03
46	SOUVENIR COPY (95, Mr. Prospector)	N/A	48/15	1/1	0/1	(Lottf, \$40,022)	\$366,753	483	13	1.02	1.17
47	TEN MOST WANTED (00, Deputy Commander)	Died, 2013	34/12	0/0	0/0	(Lady On the Run, \$66,250)	\$360,006	170	2	0.68	1.19
48	LIGHTNIN N THUNDER (01, Storm Cat), Fruitful Acres Farm	\$3,000	21/15	1/1	1/1	(Super Jetset, \$69,955)	\$343,813	178	8	0.89	1.11
49	MCCANN'S MOJAVE (00, Memo), Rancho San Miguel	Died, 2013	34/16	1/1	1/1	(Wings of Mojave, \$39,870)	\$342,958	60	1	0.47	1.10
50	IRON CAT (95, Storm Cat), Geocel Ranch	Died, 2013	22/14	0/0	0/0	(J and S Express, \$96,684)	\$333,334	144	6	0.85	0.97
51	SILIC (FR) (95, Silery), Pacific Coast Thoroughbreds	Died, 2013	22/9	0/0	0/0	(Wild in the Saddle, \$92,398)	\$325,646	*160	2	0.97	0.92
52	BIRDONTHEWIRE (89, Proud Birdie)	Pnsd	13/4	0/0	0/0	(Soul Candy, \$83,412)	\$325,490	*263	10	1.29	1.35
53	COMIC STRIP (95, Red Ransom), Gray's Farm	\$2,500	29/15	0/0	0/0	(Kukuluka, \$34,706)	\$323,386	302	12	0.78	1.17
54	WESTERN FAME (92, Gone West)	Died	15/10	1/2	0/1	(Follini, \$128,722)	\$320,346	289	14	0.90	0.83
55	MUQTARIB (96, Gone West)	Pnsd	10/6	2/2	0/2	(Ourwestcoastghost, \$93,092)	\$309,892	*275	6	0.65	0.91
56	CAPSIZED (96, Summer Squall), Running C Ranch	N/A	26/11	0/0	0/0	(Power of Nine, \$34,760)	\$304,432	119	2	0.69	0.86
57	SIBERIAN SUMMER (89, Siberian Express)	Died, 2011	29/10	0/0	0/0	(Siberian Laughter, \$83,870)	\$298,374	*402	14	1.01	0.88
58	COUNCIL MEMBER (02, Seattle Slew), Special T Thoroughbreds	\$4,000	22/11	0/0	0/0	(He's Not too Shabby, \$88,690)	\$298,242	42	0	0.66	1.00
59	OLYMPIO (88, Naskra)	Died, 2011	21/8	0/0	0/0	(Olympic Blue, \$161,200)	\$283,692	*517	30	1.10	1.28
60	FLAME THROWER (98, Saint Ballado)	N/A	30/16	1/1	0/1	(Starship Nova, \$36,465)	\$281,213	*238	3	0.70	1.05
61	DEPUTY COMMANDER (94, Deputy Minister)	Died, 2009	32/13	0/0	0/0	(J. Pa, \$73,075)	\$280,283	*564	24	1.16	1.53
62	ANZIYAN ROYALTY (00, Anziyan), E. A. Ranches	\$2,000	14/8	0/0	0/0	(My Slew, \$98,676)	\$273,178	47	0	0.59	1.04
63	♠ TIME TO GET EVEN (04, Stephen Got Even), Lovacres Ranch	\$2,000	17/7	0/0	0/0	(Time for Angie, \$98,660)	\$273,087	23	0	0.68	0.63
64	♠ DESERT CODE (04, E Dubai), Harris Farms	\$2,000	12/5	0/0	0/0	(Moving Desert, \$136,640)	\$259,446	28	0	1.08	1.29
65	SINGLEINARY (00, Sultry Song)	N/A	28/13	0/0	0/0	(One Amour, \$32,012)	\$253,136	103	4	0.56	1.14

### Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in North America (stallions exported prior to the 2009 breeding season are excluded), and have runners in North America. All available statistics listed for the Northern Hemisphere through December 31, 2013. 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.)

\*AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX AND COMPARABLE INDEX: Lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned 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; 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 AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX higher than their mares' COMPARABLE INDEX.

(continued from page 60)

grade I winner of more than \$1.4 million for Lebherz and co-owner Alan Klein.

"We're more into function than form," said the 60-year-old Lebherz, a successful owner of health insurance businesses who is bankrolling the breeding operation on 40 acres southeast of Stockton in an area better known for Quarter Horses. "We're going to get our numbers right, and we're going to try to make sense out of all this stuff. We don't need to have a stallion barn that looks like a house because we're marketing to somebody. We're going to take care of our stallions properly. We're going to do our breeding the right way. We're going to take care of the babies, feed them right, not chintz on the things that matter, and we're going to create a manufacturing plant.

"Then we'll figure out how to make money out of it somewhere down the line," added Lebherz.

The jovial Lebherz began in racing as an owner in 1995 but has had little involvement in horse breeding until now. At the tail end of a year in which he had major successes with stakes winners such as She's a Tiger (a half sister to Smiling Tiger), Majestic Stride, Distinctiv Passion, and Unusual Way, he is obviously enjoying the ride with a new venture.

"I'm a business guy who likes horses," he said. "We raised our kids on a horse ranch for 20 years in the Bay Area, near Stanford. I wasn't really involved in the horses, but my wife (Sharon) was. This is fun to try. I've got a good team, I think. We'll see, but we've got a way of going around here. It's got to be fun. But that doesn't mean we don't work hard. We've got to work smart, but we have a good time. A lot of people get all upset and freaked out (by the horse business), but it's supposed to be fun.

"We're putting this thing together; it's a four-to-five-year process," Lebherz added. "You watch what happens. We're definitely going to make mistakes. We're going to screw up. We all know it. We talked about it. We all know we're going to have bad things happen. We just carry on. And learn. We're going to fail our way to the top."

As for Smiling Tiger, Lebherz said the fledgling stallion has gotten quite a bit of notice well in advance of his first covering. Metanovic said his goal is to have 100 broodmares for Smiling



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An underwater treadmill is one of the amenities at Premier Thoroughbreds

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# 2013 LEADING SIRES IN WASHINGTON ➤ Go to BloodHorse.com for daily updated sire lists

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2014 Stud Fee	Rnrs/Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/Wns	Rstrct SW/BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2013 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>PARKER'S STORM CAT</b> (00, Storm Cat), Gibson Thoroughbred Farm	\$2,000	53/26	1/5	0/1	(Ben's Cat, \$505,350)	<b>\$1,105,719</b>	*226	4	1.22	1.11
2	<b>MATTY G</b> (93, Capote)	N/A	81/39	1/1	0/1	(Nico Suave', \$105,881)	<b>\$671,901</b>	*501	18	0.82	0.99
3	<b>CAHILL ROAD</b> (88, Fappiano)	Died, 2010	69/39	0/0	0/0	(Royal Moses, \$51,110)	<b>\$591,165</b>	*654	31	0.94	1.13
4	<b>HE'S TOPS</b> (93, Seattle Slew), Woodstead Farm	\$1,000	36/24	2/6	0/2	(E Z Kitty, \$183,026)	<b>\$476,101</b>	281	13	0.56	0.66
5	<b>PRIVATE GOLD</b> (00, Seeking the Gold), El Dorado Farms	\$1,000	39/24	2/3	1/2	(Dallon's Gold, \$42,888)	<b>\$376,427</b>	130	7	0.49	0.59
6	<b>YOU AND I</b> (91, Kris S.)	Pnsd	34/24	2/4	0/2	(Chu and You, \$87,884)	<b>\$363,871</b>	*490	22	1.07	1.34
7	<b>SECRET ROMEO</b> (98, Service Stripe), Southall Farm	\$1,000	15/9	1/1	1/1	(Brandys Secret, \$187,172)	<b>\$363,304</b>	55	3	1.01	0.80
8	<b>RAISE THE BLUFF</b> (03, Pine Bluff), El Dorado Farms	\$1,000	25/18	1/1	1/1	(He's Not Bluffin, \$63,726)	<b>\$285,241</b>	57	2	0.45	0.49
9	<b>POLISH MINER</b> (97, Danzig)	N/A	18/10	0/0	0/0	(Miner's Tune, \$69,695)	<b>\$254,440</b>	161	1	0.95	0.96
10	<b>LIBERTY GOLD</b> (94, Crafty Prospector), El Dorado Farms	\$2,000	24/13	3/4	0/3	(Jebrika, \$67,024)	<b>\$251,413</b>	167	9	0.41	0.61
11	<b>FREE AT LAST</b> (89, Wild Again)	N/A	30/15	1/1	0/1	(Special Summer, \$42,550)	<b>\$224,539</b>	451	25	0.55	0.74
12	<b>KATOWICE</b> (87, Danzig)	Died	24/9	0/0	0/0	(Perfect Finish, \$35,200)	<b>\$151,287</b>	409	19	0.80	1.01
13	<b>TRICKEY TREVOR</b> (99, Demaloot Demashoot), Allaire Farms	\$1,250	17/7	0/0	0/0	(Finding More, \$57,004)	<b>\$130,296</b>	29	1	0.49	0.45
14	<b>NACHEEZMO</b> (00, Carson City), Don Munger Farm	\$1,000	30/15	0/0	0/0	(Camp Pendleton, \$20,233)	<b>\$122,649</b>	46	1	0.24	0.32
15	<b>MAKORS MARK</b> (97, Son of Briartic)	N/A	6/3	0/0	0/0	(Love Makor, \$37,329)	<b>\$107,202</b>	46	1	0.44	0.79

Tiger's initial season at stud, a big number in California.

"He was a terrific racehorse," said Leberz. "He had 23 races at the highest level...I think we were driving (Bob) Baffert crazy. He must have thrown \$10 million of horses at us, something like that. I mean, for real, Tiger just kept on doing it. I mean Bob's a great, great trainer and it was a lot of fun to have the competition with him. But it was really great to compete with him our way.

"Which is, we're not the guys that buy the Gucci horses with the flashy pedigree," Leberz said. "We have to look for athletes. That's what we think our strength is. We're more the 'Moneyball' strategy. And it works for us."

Metanovic, ironically, met Bonde and Leberz while vetting Smiling Tiger for a possible purchase by another client when the colt was a 2-year-old. The purchase never happened, of course, but they be-

came friends and Metanovic has been their primary bloodstock partner ever since. Metanovic, 42, comes from a computer hardware/software background in Silicon Valley while working for established companies as well as several startups. But he became interested in horses attending the races with his father at Bay Meadows and eventually found his niche.

"Since then, I've got a great deal of, as I say, the Harvard school of horse racing. Between Phil and Jeff, I've learned a lot," Metanovic said.

"The bloodstock part of it, that's what I enjoy the most, truly," he added. "I love going to the sales. I love going in and trying to find the diamond in the rough for not much money. Phil has put a name on it, the 'Moneyball of horse racing.'"

Metanovic gives a brief primer on what that entails.

"We try to find the horses that are, for the money, a good value. We concentrate on

the yearlings. We love the OBS sale (Ocala Breeders' Sales Co.); we love going to the Keeneland (September yearling) sale; we love going to the Fasig-Tipton yearling sale. We spend a lot of money vetting our horses. We want a horse that has a nice, big throat, and our horses have to have clean joints. That's the most important part.

"Of course, we want the athletes, but we choose to buy (the progeny of) any type of sire," said Metanovic. "We're not shy on buying sires. That comes through (Bonde), where I learned that. You cannot know where your next big horse is going to be, who his daddy or who his momma is going to be. You've just got to find the athlete. So that's what we do."

Bonde, 59, is coming off his biggest campaign in 2013 with 80 winners from 357 starts (22.5% strike rate) and total purse earnings of more than \$3.2 million. In the past four years or so, he has been successfully able to extend his reach into Southern



Majestic Stride, one of six 2013 stakes winners co-owned by Phil Leberz, winning the Vernon O. Underwood Stakes (gr. III)

### 2013 California Sires by Stakes Winners

Sire	Stks Wnrs	Stks Wins
Unusual Heat	9	13
Benchmark	8	12
Ministers Wild Cat	7	11
Tribal Rule	7	11
Rocky Bar	5	8
Kafwain	5	7
Bertrando	4	7
Salt Lake	4	7
Southern Image	3	5
Lucky Pulpit	3	4
Old Topper	3	4
Swiss Yodeler	2	5
Dixie Chatter	2	4
For Really	2	4
Good Journey	2	2
Heatseeker (IRE)	2	2
Marino Marini	2	2
Muqtarib	2	2

BENNETT & ASSOCIATES

California, especially with juveniles. Once under the radar in the bigger market, the Pleasanton native rarely starts a 2-year-old anymore that is not among the favorites.

"I call him my trainer savant," Leberhz said.

Premier Thoroughbreds is located alongside Premier Equine Center. New to its current site, Premier Equine Center recently installed a prefabricated stallion barn on the property. They have leased 30 acres that adjoin the main site, mainly to provide pasture land for grazing and are negotiating on a 40-acre parcel a couple of miles away to board additional horses, including mares and foals, as the farm grows.

Premier Equine Center began as a rehabilitation and lay-up facility near the bucolic community of Oakdale nearly six years ago.

Facility owner Pat Grohl started it with his girlfriend, Amie Allen, whom he met when both competed in rodeo as students at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo; he was a team roper; she, a barrel racer. The rehab facility now includes three Eurosizers, a cold-water spa, vibration stall, underwater treadmill, and covered pool for recovering equines. Working in cooperation with a number of veterinary clinics, Grohl eventually attracted some clients from Golden Gate Fields, including Bonde, Leberhz' only trainer.

Grohl said the rehabilitation operation, after about 10 years of struggle, is doing well. To handle the breeding side of the show, he retained Graham Bell, whose impressive résumé includes several years with trainer John Veitch and Calumet Farm, as well as Sabine Farm in Ocala, Fla., with the late Joe Greeley. He was most recently at Frank Stronach's Adena Springs near Williston, Fla.

"It's small now, but it's going to be big," said Bell of Premier Equine Center and Premier Thoroughbreds. "It's multiplying every week, which is good. With the recession, a lot of people had to get out (of the breeding business). But it's coming back, slowly but surely. It might not ever be what it once was, but it was probably a little phony to begin with and things have a way of cleaning up. Smiling Tiger has been drawing rave reviews from everyone."

Metanovic will manage the matings for Smiling Tiger. He did some shopping at the Keeneland November breeding stock sale and has a number of well-bred mares—purchased in foal in the \$50,000-



COURTESY RON MESAROS/PREMIER EQUINE CENTER

Sway Away will stand for \$2,500 in 2014

\$60,000 range—to ensure that he'll have some good ones for Smiling Tiger in 2014. Now stabled at Premier Equine, they will be augmented by those being supplied by Leberhz and other partners in his large racing circle.

"We have a great vision for this place, and we're just going through the steps to make sure it happens," said Grohl. "To manage Smiling Tiger and his breeding the way it needed to be handled, we needed a separate staff."

Premier's roster includes three other stallions in addition to Smiling Tiger, who will stand his first season for \$5,000. The others are Rebel Stakes (gr. II) winner Sierra Sunset (\$2,500); Sunland Derby (gr. III) victor Twice the Appeal (\$1,500); and multiple grade II stakes-placed Sway Away (\$2,500), a son of Afleet Alex. All were trained by Bonde, with all but Twice the Appeal owned in partnership by Leberhz. But the big gamble is on Smiling Tiger.



COURTESY KATHY HIGGINS/PREMIER EQUINE CENTER

Pat Grohl, left, started Premier Equine Center with Amie Allen

A Kentucky-bred son of the Storm Cat stallion Hold That Tiger, out of the good producer Shandra Smiles, by Cahill Road, Smiling Tiger was a Moneyball type for Leberhz and Klein, who acquired him as a \$40,000 yearling at the Washington Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Association's September 2008 sale. The sturdy chestnut, bred by Dr. Rodney Orr, earned \$1,480,704 with nine wins—including grade I victories in the Bing Crosby and the Ancient Title stakes and Triple Bend Handicap—and 10 placings. Including a pair of third-place finishes in the Breeders' Cup Sprint (gr. I) in 2010 and 2012, he won or placed in 18 of 22 stakes tries.

Because of her bloodlines, Metanovic stepped out of his Moneyball persona a bit to spend \$150,000 for Smiling Tiger's half sister She's a Tiger, by Tale of the Cat, at the 2012 Keeneland September yearling sale through consignor Warrendale Sales. She won the Del Mar Debutante (gr. I) during the summer and was first under the wire by a nose in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (gr. I) before being disqualified for drifting out in deep stretch.

That decision will probably always rankle Leberhz, who admitted to cursing one steward after the verdict was announced. He said he was surprised he wasn't fined.

"We won the Breeders' Cup," he insisted in a tone that is only half-joking. "I don't count that (the disqualification). I ordered up the winner's circle photo, and I photo-shopped it. I made my own trophy. And I have the winning picture right there in my (trophy) cabinet. I don't agree with what they said, so I'm not playing by their rules—in my house. So they can do whatever they want to. We won."

Smiling Tiger's supporters are emphasizing his durability, noting that he never had an orthopedic procedure during his career.

"Four years, he won every year," Metanovic said. "You don't see that longevity. He was all racehorse. His sister (She's a Tiger) comes along and duplicates him and may end up actually doing more than him. That tells us the bloodline is very potent, and I think everyone is excited about him being a stud here in California."

Leberhz puts it another way: "The thing about these two horses is their attitude. When they walk out on the track, they're just going to kick everyone's ass and that's all there is to it. You can see it in their eyes." **BH**