

READYING RUNNERS

Every step in the development of successful racehorses is important, but few are as crucial as the education they receive during breaking and early 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 purchases to transition them into talented runners.

Training centers 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, racetrack 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 Jones 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. The farm also has two large, modern-style barns with ample amenities, a EuroSizer exercise machine for conditioning, and spacious, three-acre paddocks that allow layups to return to the track in top condition.

Jones estimated horses that receive early training at Benchmark have an 80-90% win

ADVERTISING INDEX	
Benchmark Training Center	32
www.benchmarktc.com	
Carroll, Webb	33
www.webbcarroll.com	
Copper Crowne.....	34
www.coppercrowne.com	
Diamond D Ranch	36
www.diamonddthoroughbreds.com	
Wes Carter	36
wescartertraining@earthlink.net	
Woodford.....	35
www.woodfordtb.com	

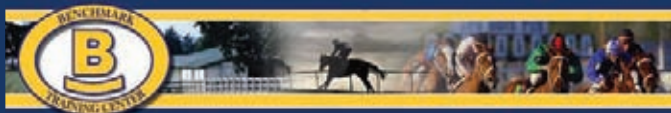
rate on the track. He believes the training center's stellar results are the reason it attracts major clients from all over the country, including McKenna Thoroughbreds, Long Odds Racing Stable, and trainers Donnie Von Hemel, Bret Calhoun, and Steve Asmussen.

"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."

WEBB CARROLL TRAINING CENTER

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top-quality runners under the supervision of Carroll, a third-generation horseman who founded the facility near St. Matthews, S.C.

Noted graduates include champions Solid Appeal, Fortune Pearl, Havre de Grace, and Preakness Stakes (gr. I) winner Shackleford, along with Santa Anita Derby (gr. I) winner Goldcents, and grade I winner Joyful Victory. In 2013 the center produced its best numbers to date: 449 winners, with an additional 28 stakes winners, with 13 graded victories.

Carroll, 68, 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. In 2012 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 furlong irrigated dirt oval, three-quarters-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 something we take pride in. I know what to do with young horses and what not to do, and the latter's most important."

WES CARTER TRAINING STABLE

When working with young horses, Wes Carter prides himself on strong communication with the horse's connections to make sure each horse develops its full potential.

With 30 to 40 horses at Wes Carter Training Stable near Bamberg, S.C., Carter said he can work with each horse.

"We're a small operation. We take personal care of them. We know each of them by their first name so to speak," Carter said. "We deal with each horse: mind, body, and spirit; the whole horse."

The 65-acre property boasts two barns, a swimming pond, a five-furlong track, and turf training. The training center works with young horses and with horses on lay-ups. Carter said lay-up horses often fare well in the pond as they work back into racing shape.

Carter, who has owned the training center for 26 years, said his operation works to evaluate each horse and never wants to rush a young horse that is not prepared for more aggressive training. He said the goal is to have young horses race in their 2-year-old seasons, but each Thoroughbred is evaluated to make sure it is ready for that challenge.

Carter said horses that are not ready to race in their juvenile season are given time to develop. He then makes sure the horse's connections are up to speed on the horse's progression.

"The main thing about me is that I'm honest," Carter said. "I will meet with clients and honestly tell them where a horse is. We have that integrity here to do the right thing for the horse."

"My philosophy is to do the best I can to get the horse to be the best that

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Coup de Grace

Wins the Oh Say S. at Delaware Park

Owned by Fox Hill Farms
Trained by Larry Jones

Ami's Holiday

2nd in the Queen's Plate at Woodbine

Owned by Ivan Dalos
Trained by Josie Carroll

Positive Side

2nd in the Arlington Sprint S.

Owned by Team Forster
Trained by Grant Forster

Saluda (2YO)

3rd in the Lynbrook S. at Belmont (first time out)

Owned by George Autry
Trained by Mike Dilger

Spadina Road

3rd in the Achievement S. at Woodbine

Owned by Rolph Davis
Trained by Bob Tiller

It's about results

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they can be.”

The Wes Carter Training Stable also takes advantage of the Aiken training center, located about 45 miles away. Carter noted the experience of working at Aiken allows horses to receive more of a racetrack atmosphere early on in their training.

COPPER CROWNE

Copper Crowne, Louisiana's Premier Training Center, is a unique, all inclusive, state-of-the-art training center in Central Louisiana. Its 6½-furlong, sand-based training track provides the ideal cushioned surface for galloping, breezing, and working equestrian athletes. As a Louisiana Racing Commission-sanctioned training facility, Copper Crowne provides official works and gate cards for Louisiana race preparations. Located within two hours of all the major Louisiana Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse meets, the facility will ensure horses the best race training and preparation possible.

The track maintenance philosophy and crew are unique to the industry. The track superintendent, Chuck Thomas, holds a current jockey's license and has more than 320 career wins. His first-hand experience with riding horses on the track then operating professional track maintenance equipment means trainers get optimum track preparation, depending on weather and seasonal conditions. Copper Crowne's year-round trainers claim the track surface preparation and care allows them to focus on their horses and not worry about track conditions, even after an extensive rain.

The full-service training center allows clients to bring a young horse to Copper Crowne to break, train, and condition for racing. They will be ready to compete in Louisiana's Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing pro-

grams. On-farm veterinary, equine surgery center, and equestrian rehabilitation facilities meet the demanding needs of professional horse trainers.

Copper Crowne's Central Louisiana location and close proximity to Equine Sales enables pinhookers to bring yearlings into an optimal sale preparation and training facility for local, regional, and national 2-year-olds-in-training sales. Mild year-round climate, meticulous track maintenance, and extensive facilities meet every sale preparation need.

Copper Crowne Training Center offers year-round boarding for trainers and their employees. The solid, well-constructed, 56-stall barns are designed with spacious stalls and 12-foot wide shedrows. Each barn contains two full baths and two hook-ups for washers and dryers. Offices, tack rooms, and additional storage rooms are available to meet the needs of large training organizations.

Horses relax in a peaceful, open, and airy environment and can be turned-out in paddocks next to the training barns. Indoor wash racks with hot and cold water, walking wheels, and centrally located tack rooms are ideal for training.

Copper Crowne offers trainers, owners, and pinhookers a premium value. The mission is simple: create an unparalleled equestrian center in Central Louisiana that combines breaking, training, race preparation, relaxation, rest, and recuperation to provide a one-of-a-kind training center for equestrian athletes.

DIAMOND D

Just as a university is flattered by graduates who make a name for themselves in the real world, a training center can earn a reputation by the quality shown by its graduates at the racetrack. Diamond D Racing Thoroughbreds

training center near Lone Oaks, Texas, can proudly point to 2009 Horse of the Year and fan favorite Rachel Alexandra with pride, having given the superstar filly her start as a yearling and early 2-year-old. Rachel isn't alone. Diamond D trainees have won more than 341 stakes races since the operation was begun in 1981 by Ed Dodwell, a racetrack trainer who tired of the travel and so started Diamond D an hour east of Dallas. Dodwell passed away a couple of years ago, but his son Jimmy (Scooter) has picked up the reins and continues the pattern of excellence started by his father.

In 2014, Diamond D graduates Promise Me Silver, Proceed, Fiftyshadesofgold, Aces N Jacks, Scooter's Choice, and Sir Genghis have already earned black type.

“Everything I know in the horse business, my dad taught me,” said Jimmy. “How to be patient and keep a close eye on the horses, and get up and be ready to get to work every day.”

Diamond D spreads over 185 acres, which allow the operation to break and train between 80 and 100 young Thoroughbreds each season as well as accommodate lay-ups. The facility features 84 stalls, seven pastures, and 17 paddocks. It also has a five-furlong training track that is 50 feet wide. It is one of the only privately owned training facilities in Texas that is licensed for official works and gate approvals.

“Our horses have a good reputation of being sharp and ready to break from the gate when they go to the racetrack,” Dodwell noted. “At the farm we can take the time with each of them and teach them how to handle the gate. At the racetrack they don't give you the time to really gate-break them, so it's important they get that experience here.”

Diamond D graduates go to top trainers like Bret Calhoun and Donnie Von

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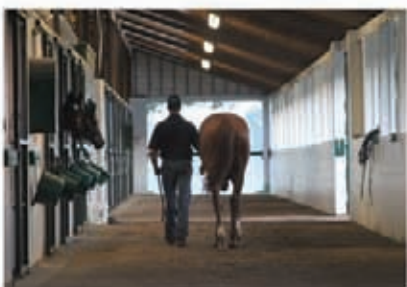
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OBS MARCH '13 / HIP 239



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This is the breaking and training ground of dual Eclipse Award winner **BEHOLDER** (2012 champion 2yo filly and 2013 champion 3yo filly); and 2014 Grade 2 winners **CAIRO PRINCE** and **STOPCHARGINGMARIA**.

In 2013 and 2014, yearling to 2-year-old pinhooks prepared and consigned by Woodford Thoroughbreds yielded an average of nearly 400% return above the purchase price.

OBS March '13, Hip 120 sold for \$370,000, the highest price on day one and 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

SOLDAT

War Front - Le Relais, by Coronado's Quest

CURRENCY SWAP

High Cotton - Echo Bluff, by Pine Bluff

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Matt Lyons, General Manager 859.361.1647 / John Gleason, Trainer 352.812.0811

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Hemel. Yearlings come to the farm in September and are broken until spring. After getting their lessons in the fall and winter, the youngsters are turned out for 60-90 days, then Diamond D's staff gets them back up and ready to go to the races. When the 2-year-olds head out to the racetrack,

they're up to breezing half-miles.

As for Rachel, Dodwell said, "We had her dam (Lotta Kim), who was a stakes horse, so we thought Rachel had the talent for that. But I couldn't have told you she was going to win the Preakness (Stakes, gr. I). Nobody knew she had the that kind of heart till later on."

WOODFORD

With top-notch facilities spanning more than 1,304 acres in Central Kentucky and Central Florida, Woodford Thoroughbreds offers a broad range of quality services and two safe environments for horses of all ages and training levels.

In Florida, an 80-stall training center features a five-furlong dirt track complete with a six-stall starting gate. There is also a 1½-mile European turf gallop at the training division—a unique and well-maintained surface that allows young horses to take part in group training while aiding older runners in the recovery process after surgery. Ample turnout space and several round pens, along with a walker, provide youngsters and those undergoing rehabilitation with everything they need to get ready for the races.

The viewing stand at the Florida training track offers air-conditioned comfort for connections who want to watch their horses, and the 14-barn farm has a guest house for clients who come to visit. The farm also stands five stallions, and its training and yearling sales prep program has given a start to top contenders such as Cairo Prince and Stopchargingmaria.

Woodford Thoroughbreds general manager Matt Lyons said the program at the Florida branch has developed under the supervision of farm trainer John Gleason, who came to Woodford last season with more than 18 years in the industry. Prior to his Woodford engagement, Gleason spent 12 years breaking Overbrook's horses with Brian Rice at Woodside Ranch.

"I've been so impressed with John's level of horsemanship," Lyons said. "He tailors a training program for each particular horse and he's very hands-on with the breaking and training."

Gleason puts extra emphasis on gate work with young horses as part of their solid foundation.

"They go to the gate most days, either walking through going to work or coming home," Lyons said. "When trainers get them, we get a lot of nice feedback about how good they are in the gate because it's part of their lives from when they start training."

In Kentucky, 304 acres with five barns and 92 stalls make up Woodford's main breeding operation. Small paddocks keep foals safe and near their mothers, while larger fields allow yearlings to engage with each other as part of their vital development.

Lyons said the farm has continued its expansion into the 2-year-old marketplace, a foray begun in 2013.

"We had some very nice pinhooks this year, which were encouraging," he remarked. "Our training program also allows us to put the progeny of our stallions into the market and sell them as 2-year-olds." **BH**

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