

SOUTHEAST



LOUISE E. REINAGEL PHOTOS

Janet and Bill Grube, owners of Destiny Oaks of Ocala

Destined for Success

Bill and Janet Grube put roots in Ocala

BY MICHAEL COMPTON

BILL AND JANET GRUBE, owners of Destiny Oaks of Ocala, don't believe in luck. But as the name of their farm suggests, they do believe in destiny.

Success has come naturally for the Grubes, who established Destiny Oaks of Ocala in 2005 and today split their time between the Florida farm and their home in Indiana. Purposeful planning, not merely rolls of the dice, and a healthy dose of patience have paved the way for the positive results the Grubes are currently reaping in their breeding program.

With farm manager and veteran horseman Mike Helmbrecht playing a key role in the operation and helping to navigate the Grubes around the business, Destiny Oaks of Ocala is generating headlines these days with its penchant for turning out stakes horses.

Destiny Oaks of Ocala had one of its best days at the racetrack last year on Sept. 6 when Lucky Player captured the Iroquois Stakes (gr. III) at Churchill Downs and Quality Rocks won the Arlington-Washington Lassie Stakes at Arlington International the same day. The Grubes bred Lucky Player and sold him privately as a yearling, and they bred and own (in partnership) Quality Rocks.

Now 3, both stakes winners are Florida-breds. Jerry Durant's Lucky Player is a

son of Lookin At Lucky out of the Grubes' Storm Cat mare Janetsticktocats, and Quality Rocks is by Rock Hard Ten out of Elusive Virgin, by Elusive Quality.

While Bill and Janet rarely get to the racetrack to watch their horses run, they never miss a race on TV.

"It was great," recalled Janet of the stakes daily double. "We always hope for the best but expect the worst. We don't travel to watch our horses compete. We watch them on TV unless they are in a race close to home. We try not to get too excited before they run, but we were sitting on the couch anxiously waiting for those races. It was exciting.

"Too many times in this business the horses turn for home in contention and then back up in the stretch," Janet added. "That day they both went forward, and that's when we really got excited. That was a great day, for sure."

The memorable feat also meant a lot to Helmbrecht, whose brother, William, saddled Quality Rocks.

"It was a special day," Helmbrecht said, surveying the farm on a recent February afternoon. "We raised and trained her, and to watch my brother win a stakes with her made it that much more special."

The Grubes sold half of Quality Rocks to Wachtel Stable and Brous Stable a few days before the race at Arlington and she was transferred to the barn of Bill Mott after the Arlington-Washington Lassie.

Quality Rocks finished second in the JPMorgan Chase Jessamine Stakes (gr. IIIT) at Keeneland in October in her next start and with an engagement in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf (gr. IT) on tap, celebrity chef Bobby Flay (Flavor Racing) also bought into the promising filly.

Janet related that there is one distraction in having a celebrity chef as a partner in the horse, saying, "My friends keep asking me, 'When is Bobby Flay coming to the farm to cook for us?'"

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2015 LEADING SIRE IN FLORIDA



Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2015 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2015 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	WILDCAT HEIR (00, Forest Wildcat), Journeyman Stud	Died, 2015	97/13	0/0	0/0	(Chief Lion, \$36,250)	\$406,335	*518	27	1.44	1.49
2	EXCLUSIVE QUALITY (03, Elusive Quality), Journeyman Stud	\$2,500	49/5	1/1	1/1	(Sr. Quisqueyano, \$153,450)	\$258,391	227	7	1.13	1.15
3	WITH DISTINCTION (01, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$7,500	79/14	0/0	0/0	(Bet On Jack, \$21,044)	\$246,979	*419	10	1.16	1.20
4	TWO STEP SALSA (05, Petionville), Get Away Farm	\$7,500	25/5	1/1	0/1	(Conquest Two Step, \$120,000)	\$237,783	104	2	1.55	1.06
5	POLLARD'S VISION (01, Carson City), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$6,500	35/9	0/0	0/0	(Twentytwentyvision, \$40,320)	\$173,563	*588	17	1.39	1.27
6	KANTHAROS (08, Lion Heart), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	13/2	0/0	0/0	(Kantune, \$36,000)	\$147,260	64	1	1.45	1.28
7	IN SUMMATION (03, Put It Back), Ocala Stud Farm	\$2,500	24/4	1/1	0/1	(Calculator, \$60,000)	\$135,668	132	2	0.87	1.49
8	MONTBROOK (90, Buckaroo)	Died	33/6	0/0	0/0	(Dinner Time, \$18,790)	\$120,714	*880	49	1.52	1.53
9	MAGNA GRADUATE (02, Honor Grades), Woodford Thoroughbreds	\$3,000	27/3	0/0	0/0	(Middle Jewel, \$22,230)	\$99,267	*169	6	1.02	1.15
10	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), HallMarc Stallions at Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$4,500	33/5	0/0	0/0	(Catching Fireflies, \$30,000)	\$94,589	*341	3	0.98	1.17
11	REPENT (99, Louis Quatorze), Trinidad	N/A	32/4	0/0	0/0	(Raybern's Gold, \$19,530)	\$82,774	*487	25	1.13	1.18
12	HIGH COTTON (03, Dixie Union), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	29/2	0/0	0/0	(Tarp's Goal, \$18,240)	\$69,701	*210	4	1.07	1.33
13	BURNING ROMA (98, Rubiano), Prestige Stallions	\$6,000	21/3	0/0	0/0	(Sheer Drama, \$27,600)	\$69,507	*177	5	0.86	1.19
14	COOL COAL MAN (05, Mineshaft), Journeyman Stud	\$3,500	16/4	0/0	0/0	(Cool Man Walkin, \$21,600)	\$68,690	53	1	0.65	1.12
15	WEST ACRE (95, Forty Niner)	Died, 2012	11/3	0/0	0/0	(Watch Me Go, \$21,540)	\$65,775	335	14	1.38	1.20

Possible farm cookout aside, the Grubes maintain a 12.5% interest in Quality Rocks, who was 10th in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf to close her 2014 campaign. She finished second in the Sweetest Chant Stakes (gr. IIIT) at Gulfstream Park Jan. 24 in a solid seasonal bow.

Hopes remain high for Quality Rocks, who has finished off the board just once in five starts and has accumulated \$125,200 in earnings.

"It would be wonderful if she continues to develop," Janet said. "We are such small partners in her now that we don't really make many decisions with her. We pay our portion of the bills and just go along for the ride. But if she were to make it

somehow to the Longines Kentucky Oaks (gr. I), I'm sure we would make that trip."

Destiny Oaks of Ocala also bred 2014 graded stakes winner Edison, whom they sold privately as a yearling. That 2011 colt by Bernardini—Heart of Grace, by Exploit, sold again as a 2-year-old out of the Wavertree Stable consignment at the 2013 Fasig-Tipton Florida select sale, bringing \$950,000 from Demi O'Byrne, agent.

Owned by Fouad El Kardy, Bob Butz, and Rick Running Rabbit, Edison romped by 1½ lengths in last year's Canadian Derby (Can-III) at Northlands Park and also annexed the Harry Jeffrey Stakes at Assiniboia Downs.

The Grubes' first stakes winner, She's

Our Annie, will forever have a special place in their hearts. The 2006 daughter of Medaglia d'Oro—Girl Gone Crazy, by Roar, was named for the Grubes' daughter Annie who died in a 1989 car accident at the age of 14. She's Our Annie did her namesake proud, winning five of six career starts, including three consecutive stakes events in 2009 before retiring with earnings of \$142,080. She's Our Annie died in 2012 when she developed colic due to a bacterial infection after foaling a Cur-lin filly.

"It was extra special that she ran so well for us. We were lucky that she ran so well," said Janet. "That was a lot of fun, and Annie would have loved that. She's Our Annie kept getting hurt, and she had to have her races spaced apart. When you have one as nice as her you always think what could have been. She was at Oaklawn Park at the same time as Rachel Alexandra. It would have been fun for them to have raced against each other."

Married 45 years, the Grubes met on a blind date in 1969.

"Neither one of us was raised around horses," Janet said. "We met on a blind date and went to a movie. The next day Bill and my brother Pete went to Louisville for the Kentucky Derby. We began dating after the Derby, so in some way, horse racing played a role in our meeting. I love animals, and Bill does too."

The Grubes found their way to the Thoroughbred industry thanks to a business deal gone awry. The first horse in their lives was Strawberry Rush, a 1991 mare



She's Our Annie out in front in the 2009 Prima Donna Stakes at Oaklawn

GOADY PHOTOGRAPHY

Special Note For Sire Lists:

For 2014 lists: Include stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in North America (stallions exported prior to the 2010 breeding season are excluded), and have runners in North America. All available statistics listed for the Northern Hemisphere through December 31, 2014 (February 2, 2015 for 2015 lists). 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.) For 2015 lists: Earnings earnings include adjusted money from Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Adjusted earnings are put on par with average North American earnings from the previous year. For example, the average North American purse in 2014 is \$21,617 or 45% of the 2014 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 45% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 19%; Singapore by 54%.

*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.



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2015 third-fastest
Beyer number at 6F
105

Individual Horse Past Performances - Lifetime: Conquest Two Step

Conquest Two Step

Own: Conquest Stables LLC

Dk. b. or h. c. 4 (Mar) OBS/APR13 \$420,000
Sire: Two Step Salsa (Petionville) \$7,500
Dam: Homesteader (Pine Bluff)
Br: Manuel Andrade (Fla)
Tr: Cassie Mark E

Life	10	3	5	1	\$309,408	105	D.Fst	4	2	1	0	\$202,895	105
2015	1	1	0	0	\$120,000	105	Wet(223)	1	0	1	0	\$8,500	82
2014	7	1	4	1	\$143,575	98	Synth	3	0	2	1	\$51,513	96
							Turf(263)	2	1	1	0	\$46,400	81

31Jan15-65A	fst	8f	:211	432	55P1:08	4+ Pls VrbS-G2	105	7	4	3	2	1	1	Talamo J	L118	5:50	96-11	ConquestTwoStep1181	ScrtCirc1181	WildDwd1201	3rd into str, rallied 6	
26Dec14-85A	fst	7f	:23	451	1:08P1:20P	Malibu-G1	98	1	7	5	1	4	2	2	Talamo J	L118	72:80	96-13	ShredBelief123	ConquestTwoStep118	Chitu1181	Steadied 5/8, bid btwn 9
25Oct14-65A	fm	5f	:213	44	1:06P1:12P	3+ OC 40k/nlx-N	81	3	7	4	3	1	2	1	Talamo J	L120	*1:30	92-09	ConquestTwoStep120	USCitizen117	HorsLugh1191	3rd into str, up late 8
27Sep14-35A	fm	5f	:224	45	1:07	1:12P	3+ Alw 68984nlx	79	4	6	5	4	3	2	Talamo J	L118		77-08	BitysBambino1244	ConquestTwoStep118	QuiltyPin1221	Off bit slow, late 2nd
29Aug14-60mr	fst	1	:24	46	1:12P	1:36P	El Cajon100k	81	5	4	4	4	4	3	Talamo J	L118		Rd0W1224	Toowndytohro1174	ConquestTwoStep117	Off bit slow, up 3rd, 7	
10Aug14-40mr	fst	8f	:221	45	56P1:09P	3+ OC 40k/nlx-N	96	6	7	8	7	5	4	3	Talamo J	L118		100Scr124	ConquestTwoStep118	Hdfun121	4wd into str, rallied 8	
20Jun14-9CD	my	6f	:224	45	1:10P	1:17	OC 75k/nlx-N	82	3	5	8	7	6	4	Garcia Alan	L118		VaMajorc1181	ConquestTwoStep118	Duvi1201	Late gain mid-track 10	
26May14-7CD	fst	8f	:221	45	57	1:09P	OC 75k/nlx-N	73	6	1	1	2	4	5	Bridgmohan	L118		onDay1181	VivaMajorca1224	BigSmrSod118	Disputed pace, tired 8	
20Jul13-3WO	fst	6f	:22	44	57	1:10	Collin140k	73	5	5	3	3	2	1	Bridgmohan	L118		ConquestTwoStep117	TscnGtuy117	Bothered star, Lchsm 7		
21Jun13-4CD	fst	5f	:213	44	57	1:03P	Mid Sp Wt 38k	81	5	1	2	1	4	1	Bridgmohan	L118		RideOnCurlin118	Twng1181	Durled, chavd, 10th 8		

WORKS: • Jan23SA 5f fst :58 1/29 Jan16SA 5f fst 1:00 H @64 Dec18SA 5f fst 1:01 H 21/20 Dec6SA 8f fst 1:01 H 21/20

Conquest TWO STEP

Winner of the Palos Verdes S-G2 1/25



BRIS Speed Ratings
Top Weekly Stakes Races

Horse	Sire	Race	BRIS Speed
Conquest Two Step	Two Step Salsa	Palos Verdes S-G2	100
Unifalun	Palpi	H. Allen Jenkins S	107
Upstart	Faster	Lanholm South Holy Bul S-G2	105
Lechte	Madaglia d'Oro	Tampa Bay S-G3	101
Spirit Rules	Tribal Rule	Donald Wilfredo Calterra Cup Sprint S	100
Avenare	Grand Reward	Arcade S-G2	99
Star Harbour	Indian Charlie	Pelican S	99
Barbodes	Speedy Seven	Hutcheson S-G0	99
Lady Shipman	Mulhempas	OBS Sprint S	98
Lord Nelson	Palpi	San Vicente S-G2	98
Pure Tactics	Pure Prize	Clockar's Corner S	87
The Great War	War Fleet	StRock S	87

On the board in nine of 10 starts including second by a neck to Eclipse award nominee SHARED BELIEF in the Grade 1 Malibu Stakes at Santa Anita 12/26/14 (\$420,000 2-year-old at OBS/APR13)

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2015 Stud Fee	Rnrs/Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/Wns	Rstrct SW/BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2014 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	WILDCAT HEIR (00, Forest Wildcat), Journeyman Stud	Died	225/140	8/11	0/8	(Daring Kathy, \$347,531)	\$6,222,106	*503	27	1.44	1.49
2	WITH DISTINCTION (01, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$7,500	191/112	4/3	0/4	(Decisive Moment, \$170,727)	\$4,457,864	*407	10	1.16	1.20
3	EXCLUSIVE QUALITY (03, Elusive Quality), Journeyman Stud	\$2,500	108/53	3/5	1/3	(Holywell, \$415,025)	\$2,410,621	*208	7	1.13	1.15
4	POLLARD'S VISION (01, Carson City), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$6,500	110/54	3/5	2/3	(Mister Pollard, \$246,603)	\$2,208,992	*511	17	1.39	1.27
5	REPENT (99, Louis Quatorze), Trinidad	N/A	99/54	1/3	0/1	(Saythreehailmary's, \$135,100)	\$2,136,949	*475	25	1.13	1.18
6	MAGNA GRADUATE (02, Honor Grades), Woodford Thoroughbreds	\$3,000	79/47	5/5	3/5	(Jessica's Star, \$347,600)	\$2,004,871	*141	6	1.02	1.15
7	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), HallMarc Stallions at Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$4,500	91/51	1/2	0/1	(Long On Value, \$333,338)	\$1,636,031	*332	3	0.98	1.17
8	TWO STEP SALSA (05, Petionville), Get Away Farm	\$7,500	48/28	1/1	0/1	(Dance With Fate, \$524,800)	\$1,624,133	82	1	1.55	1.06
9	GREATNESS (99, Mr. Prospector), Prestige Stallions	\$6,000	53/32	1/3	0/1	(Good Lord, \$192,155)	\$1,460,265	*197	8	1.45	1.03
10	MONTBROOK (90, Buckaroo)	Died	84/39	0/0	0/0	(Schivarelli, \$161,750)	\$1,430,406	*871	49	1.52	1.53
11	HIGH COTTON (03, Dixie Union), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	80/40	0/0	0/0	(Tarp's Goal, \$99,430)	\$1,262,569	*165	4	1.07	1.33
12	IN SUMMATION (03, Put It Back), Ocala Stud Farm	\$2,500	65/31	1/1	0/1	(Puntrooskie, \$134,400)	\$1,168,632	100	1	0.87	1.49
13	HEAR NO EVIL (00, Carson City), Journeyman Stud	\$2,500	39/19	3/7	0/3	(Sing Praises, \$408,370)	\$1,139,897	80	6	1.87	1.50
14	BURNING ROMA (98, Rubiano), Prestige Stallions	\$6,000	58/32	1/1	0/1	(Sheer Drama, \$96,080)	\$1,015,499	*175	5	0.86	1.19
15	† KANTHAROS (08, Lion Heart), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	31/18	1/2	0/1	(Mr. Jordan, \$139,215)	\$868,968	48	1	1.45	1.28
16	CONCORDE'S TUNE (89, Concorde Bound)	Died, 2011	46/29	1/1	0/1	(Wicked Tune, \$94,350)	\$835,133	486	29	1.26	1.12
17	SWEET RETURN (GB) (00, Elmaamul), Ocala Stud Farm	\$3,500	41/17	0/0	0/0	(Sweet Abandon, \$159,380)	\$699,486	81	0	0.69	0.87
18	AWESOME OF COURSE (00, Awesome Again), Journeyman Stud	\$5,000	27/11	1/1	1/1	(Twotwentyfive A, \$203,038)	\$681,232	74	6	2.49	1.39
19	BENNY THE BULL (03, Lucky Lionel), Bridlewood Farm	TBA	36/22	1/1	0/1	(Libby's sluckycharm, \$66,413)	\$654,947	56	1	0.95	1.04
20	ROAR OF THE TIGER (99, Storm Cat)	Died, 2010	38/19	0/0	0/0	(Voodoo Spell, \$102,320)	\$648,961	*307	7	0.86	1.17
21	HALO'S IMAGE (91, Halo)	Died, 2010	33/19	0/0	0/0	(Blonde On Blonde, \$78,417)	\$583,670	*554	22	1.30	1.29
22	BLACK MAMBO (99, Kingmambo)	Died, 2009	21/12	2/2	1/2	(Grande Shores, \$173,468)	\$563,844	*185	4	0.95	1.27
23	WEST ACRE (95, Forty Niner)	Died, 2012	33/20	1/1	1/1	(Vespertini, \$51,530)	\$544,734	331	14	1.38	1.20
24	INDY WIND (02, A.P. Indy), Journeyman Stud	\$2,000	27/15	0/0	0/0	(Perfect Wind, \$57,445)	\$509,297	44	1	1.08	1.12
25	THE GREEN MONKEY (04, Forestry), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	19/13	2/2	1/2	(Green Doctor, \$171,024)	\$504,988	33	3	1.19	1.01

by Northern Jove—Believer, by Believe It.

“Originally my husband had a business deal with some people who owed him money but were short on cash,” Janet explained. “So they suggested giving us a 50% interest in a racehorse. That sounded like fun to us, so that’s what we did. It was something different.

“A little bit later we owned all of her and decided to go ahead and breed her,” Janet added. “We got a couple of horses out of

her and then we bought a couple of more mares and it grew from there. After that, we went looking for a warmer climate in the winters, and we decided to try this (breeding horses). We thought the horse business seemed fun and figured we would give it a try.”

When it came time to board and breed Strawberry Rush, the Grubes sent her to Helmbrecht at his Woodbridge Farm in Kentucky. The move began a fruitful rela-

tionship for both parties. A lifelong horseman, Helmbrecht was a jockey growing up. He trained horses at the racetrack after that and in addition to owning and operating Woodbridge had stints at Taylor Made Farm and Gainesway Farm.

When the Grubes decided to expand their operation and purchase a farm, the couple looked south. Bill knew Ocala was horse country, and with Helmbrecht’s help discovered the Ocala property that would become Destiny Oaks of Ocala.

“It took us a year and a half of searching in this area to find the farm,” said Bill. “This was Janet’s pick. It was her favorite place. She loves it here.”

The Grubes purchased the 55-acre property in 2005 and handed over the day-to-day reins to Helmbrecht. Among the people that Helmbrecht relies on in overseeing the private operation is daughter Joclyn, the assistant farm manager, and Eric Chavez.

“Mike is a great guy. He had just lost his wife and was looking for a change at the time, and we agreed that we would buy the farm, and he would manage it for us,” said Janet. “He has been very instrumental in the success of our business. Mike and Bill decide all the breedings every year, and they go over mares and stallions together.



From left, Bill Helmbrecht, his daughter Joclyn, and Eric Chavez

UNDEFEATED 2YO / WON OR PLACED IN STAKES AT 3, 4 AND 5
GRADED STAKES-WINNING HALF-BROTHER TO #1 FRESHMAN SIRE OF BLACKTYPE RUNNERS

BRETHREN



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to
SUPER SAVER

#3

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#6

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STALLIONS



Yearlings at Destiny Oaks of Ocala spend very little time in the barn

company that produces hydrocarbon and fuel products, the best part of the Thoroughbred business arrives every foaling season.

“I like watching the babies show up,” Bill said. “That’s my favorite part of all of this.”

The Grubes own 50 head, nine of which are in training at the racetrack. Coming off an exciting year, the Grubes do not harbor grandiose expectations of success when it comes to the horses they breed and race. But like most others involved in the Thoroughbred business, the thought of winning the Kentucky Derby is worth entertaining.

“There’s always a dream,” Janet said. “I have a blank space here at the house at the end of a hallway. Everyone asks me what I plan to do with that area. I tell them that’s where my Kentucky Derby winner’s circle picture is going. Winning the Breeders’ Cup would be nice too. If you’re good enough at math, you know your chances are pretty slim to win those types of races, but you can always dream. You never know.”

Even though their original business model has been tweaked through the years, the level-headed Grubes are enthusiastic about the future of their operation.

“We’ve had our share of horses that we thought were going to turn out a certain way and then didn’t,” Janet said. “It’s very special when horses turn out the right way. To me, I hate to say luck because I don’t really believe in luck, but sometimes that’s the only way to explain when everything comes together. You get the right trainer, you enter in the right race at the right time and things just work out.”

Perhaps it’s luck. Or maybe it’s destiny. **BH**

He has been very patient in teaching us the business. He’s the best.”

Welcoming visitors to Destiny Oaks of Ocala is a tree-lined drive reminiscent of a bygone era.

“This place has that old ‘Gone With the Wind’ look and feel to it with all the moss and the big oak trees,” said Helmbrecht. “This land has good soil, and we never run out of grass. It’s easy to raise horses here. They get to be horses outside. Our horses spend very little time in the barn.”

Said Janet, “The minute I drive through the gate I feel tension leave my body. It’s a lovely farm. It’s a great place for our kids Jennifer and Bill and our grandkids to spend time. They’re not exactly crazy about the horse business like we are, but they love the farm.”

The original business plan called for a breeding operation geared to producing young horses for the market. A few years after buying the farm, however, a dismal economy made selling horses for a profit at public auction easier said than done.

“We don’t go into anything unless we think we can be successful,” Janet said. “Everything was going along pretty well until 2008 came along. We thought maybe we got into the business at the wrong time, but we have learned a lot through the process. We stayed the course. We never do more than we can afford to lose, so we don’t buy too many horses. You have to be prepared to lose in this game, so we try never to do too much. We know that’s how business goes, up and down cycles. You always hope you can weather the down times and get back on top. We are still kind of waiting for prices to come back.

“When we started, our business plan

was to own some mares and sell the babies,” Janet continued. “Things don’t always go to plan, and sometimes the horses don’t sell for what you want them to sell for, so we are prepared to bring them home and raise them ourselves. We don’t have to own them and race them to get enjoyment out of watching them run. It’s pretty special and satisfying to know that we bred the horses we’re watching at the track.”

Helmbrecht added, “The plan is always to point to the sales, but if I see that one is not correct enough for the sale market, we’ll put them into training ourselves. Once they win everyone thinks they are beautiful.”

For Bill, who serves as chief executive officer and vice chairman of Calumet Specialty Products Partners, a Fortune 500



The training track at Destiny Oaks of Ocala

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