

Derby Winners Take Root at Oakhurst

Dr. Jack and Cookie Root help Oregon's breeding industry

BY TRACY GANTZ



GARY ALLEN

Dr. Jack Root with Giacomo, the second Kentucky Derby winner to stand at Oakhurst

KIDS WHO LOVE animals usually go through a phase where they want to become veterinarians. In Dr. Jack Root Jr.'s case, his grandmother first suggested his eventual career.

"She had a little farm and had some cows but never had horses," said Root. "She told me when I was 5 or 6, 'Jackie, you need to be a vet.' I said OK, and that's what I did."

Root didn't just blindly follow his grandmother's advice. He discovered a love of horses and racing that led not only to a career as an equine veterinarian but also to the establishment of Oakhurst Farm near Newberg, Ore. He and his wife, Cookie, own and operate the Thoroughbred farm and stand several stallions.

Oakhurst's current stallion roster puts the farm in select company. Outside of Kentucky, it is the only farm featuring

two Kentucky Derby (gr. I) winners. Grindstone, winner of the historic race in 1996, arrived at Oakhurst for the 2010 breeding season, and Giacomo, the 2005 winner, joined him this year.

"I never thought that would happen, to have two Derby winners here," Root said.

Oakhurst and the Stronach family's Adena Springs multi-farm operation have partnered on bringing Giacomo to Oregon as part of an effort to boost the state's Thoroughbred racing and breeding industry. Frank Stronach's The Stronach Group owns Portland Meadows, and Giacomo represents one of several attempts being made to generate interest in Oregon.

"Breeding and racing in Oregon have kind of been suffering
(continued on page 46)

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

Harris Farms..... 45
www.harrisfarms.com

Paradise Road 47
www.paradiseroadranh.com

Follow the Money!



The All-Time Leading California-bred Money Earners **CALIFORNIA CHROME** and **TIZNOW** were bred and raised at **HARRIS FARMS**.



Lucky Pulpit



Unusual Heat



Smiling Tiger



Heatseeker



Clubhouse Ride



Desert Code



Tizbud



Lakerville

THE 2016 STALLION ROSTER

LUCKY PULPIT

AEI of 1.73 is 3rd-highest among **A.P. Indy**-line sires ahead of **Bernardini** (1.57), **Malibu Moon** (1.66), **Flatter** (1.60) and others. **Fee: \$7,500 LF**

SMILING TIGER

Grade I class over four stakes-winning seasons: 23 starts – 22 in stakes, 7 Graded wins (3 Grade I), 9 Graded placings (6 Grade I). **Fee: \$4,000 LF**

CLUBHOUSE RIDE

Mares booked for the 2016 season include Grade I winner **Warren's Veneda** (\$932,112). First foals arrive in 2016. **Fee: \$2,500 LF**

TIZBUD

Sire of GI champion **Tiz Flirtatious** (\$779,800), **Soi Phet** (\$529,936), **Ambitious Brew** (\$338,380) and 12 other six-figure earners. **Fee: \$1,500 LF**

UNUSUAL HEAT

The 2016 leading sire by California-bred progeny earnings, and sire of **Pacific Heat** (\$250,250), a stakes winner twice in 4 starts. **Fee: \$20,000 LF**

HEATSEEKER

Grade I sire was represented by **16% stakes** performers in 2015, including California-bred 2yo **Sambamzajammin** (\$132,560). **Fee: \$5,000 LF**

DESERT CODE

Sire of January Santa Anita allowance winner **Desert Thief** (\$170,946) and Wishing Well S. 3rd-place finisher **Bad Ju Ju**. **Fee: \$2,000 LF**

LAKERVILLE

Brilliantly-fast Santa Anita Graded-placed stakes winner of \$318,910 by **Unusual Heat**. See his first foals at Harris Farms. **Private Treaty**

Stud fees are payable when foal stands and nurses. All stallions are nominated to the Breeders' Cup.



Harris Farms

John C. Harris, President • David E. McGlothlin, Horse Division Manager • Dr. Jeanne Bowers, Resident Veterinarian
27366 W. Oakland Ave. • Coalinga, CA 93210 • Tel: (800) 311-6211 or (559) 884-2859 • Fax: (559) 884-2855
www.harrisfarms.com • E-Mail: davemcglathlin@harrisfarms.com

2015 LEADING SIRES IN CALIFORNIA

Go to BloodHorse.com for daily updated sire lists

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 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	BLUEGRASS CAT (03, Storm Cat), Ballena Vista Farm	\$7,500	249/143	5/9	0/5	(Bluegrass Singer, \$182,360)	\$5,600,570	*683	25	1.24	1.85
2	TRIBAL RULE (96, Storm Cat)	Died, 2014	168/101	6/8	3/6	(Spanish Queen, \$423,600)	\$4,182,910	638	31	1.31	1.09
3	LUCKY PULPIT (01, Pulpit), Harris Farms	\$7,500	127/57	0/0	0/0	(California Chrome, \$2,100,000)	\$4,014,048	*240	3	1.72	1.22
4	UNUSUAL HEAT (90, Nureyev), Harris Farms	\$20,000	120/69	3/4	2/3	(Bobby Z Man, \$158,084)	\$3,474,822	*711	40	2.01	1.25
5	EDDINGTON (01, Unbridled), Ballena Vista Farm	\$3,500	90/44	3/3	1/3	(Secret Circle, \$1,240,000)	\$3,009,523	*371	9	1.30	1.51
6	SQUARE EDDIE (06, Smart Strike), Ocean Breeze Ranch	\$25,000	61/40	3/4	1/3	(Found Money, \$286,100)	\$2,458,355	86	5	1.67	0.92
7	DECARCHY (97, Distant View), Magali Farms	\$4,500	79/44	4/4	4/4	(Kiss At Midnight, \$273,180)	\$2,402,410	343	12	1.04	0.97
8	MINISTERS WILD CAT (00, Deputy Minister), Tommy Town Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	96/48	1/3	0/1	(Singing Kitty, \$267,800)	\$1,708,351	298	14	1.04	0.95
9	VRONSKY (99, Danzig), Old English Rancho	\$6,500	53/30	2/2	1/2	(Poshsky, \$150,360)	\$1,656,305	155	7	1.52	1.10
10	STREET HERO (06, Street Cry), Oak Creek Farm	\$3,500	71/41	2/2	0/2	(Gabriel Charles, \$264,600)	\$1,597,572	*170	4	1.08	1.00
11	SOUTHERN IMAGE (00, Halo's Image), Rancho San Miguel	\$2,500	73/38	2/5	0/2	(Smokey Image, \$297,600)	\$1,502,091	*469	7	1.11	1.23
12	BERTRANDO (89, Skywalker)	Died, 2014	74/37	1/4	0/1	(Stryker Phd, \$197,430)	\$1,487,117	1066	51	1.32	1.48
13	PAPA CLEM (06, Smart Strike), Legacy Ranch	\$5,000	83/38	2/2	1/2	(Mischief Clem, \$139,977)	\$1,420,845	156	4	0.88	1.18
14	U S RANGER (04, Danzig), Rancho San Miguel	\$3,000	126/47	0/0	0/0	(Trigger Finger, \$79,191)	\$1,414,314	*240	2	0.58	1.44
15	BENCHMARK (91, Alydar)	Pnsd	84/42	1/1	1/1	(Frandonjudge, \$102,035)	\$1,352,866	717	29	1.21	1.11
16	STORMIN FEVER (94, Storm Cat), Rancho Temescal	\$2,500	77/38	1/1	1/1	(Just Google Me, \$147,750)	\$1,340,467	*743	26	1.15	1.36
17	KAFWAIN (00, Cherokee Run), Tommy Town Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	76/44	0/0	0/0	(Head South, \$166,374)	\$1,306,972	*521	18	1.10	1.25
18	HEATSEEKER (IRE) (03, Giant's Causeway), Harris Farms	\$5,000	55/23	2/2	2/2	(Heatseeker Sharon, \$137,900)	\$1,268,455	*140	8	1.12	1.35
19	MARINO MARINI (00, Storm Cat), Rancho San Miguel	\$2,500	78/41	1/1	0/1	(Marino's Wild Cat, \$98,978)	\$1,197,355	327	4	0.88	1.02
20	DESERT CODE (04, E Dubai), Harris Farms	\$2,000	48/27	2/2	1/2	(Desert Steel, \$160,772)	\$1,170,128	78	2	1.01	1.12
21	GRAZEN (06, Benchmark), Tommy Town Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	33/23	1/1	1/1	(Grazen Sky, \$269,618)	\$1,149,263	46	1	1.43	1.34
22	OLD TOPPER (95, Gilded Time), Tommy Town Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	55/36	1/1	1/1	(Chati's On Top, \$204,390)	\$1,051,909	520	19	0.95	0.84
23	AFFIRMATIVE (99, Unbridled), BG Thoroughbred Farm	\$1,000	28/14	1/3	0/1	(Warren's Veneda, \$525,100)	\$972,492	86	2	1.20	0.78
24	DIXIE CHATTER (05, Dixie Union), Ballena Vista Farm	\$3,000	58/27	1/1	1/1	(Forest Chatter, \$220,810)	\$922,333	123	2	0.74	1.00
25	COMIC STRIP (95, Red Ransom), Gray's Farm	\$5,000	31/20	3/3	2/3	(Handfull, \$144,019)	\$866,000	326	11	0.82	1.14
26	MCCANN'S MOJAVE (00, Memo)	Died, 2013	47/24	0/0	0/0	(Missy Mouse, \$123,900)	\$809,104	89	0	0.68	1.09
27	EINSTEIN (BRZ) (02, Spend a Buck), Magali Farms	\$6,000	58/34	0/0	0/0	(Cashie's Way, \$53,863)	\$739,241	*123	0	0.67	0.97
28	LUCKY J. H. (02, Cee's Tizzy)	N/A	39/20	0/0	0/0	(Lucky J Lane, \$130,310)	\$709,083	70	1	0.89	1.24
29	SURF CAT (02, Sir Cat), Old English Rancho	Private	35/25	0/0	0/0	(K Thirty Eight, \$141,584)	\$708,433	78	0	0.75	1.22
30	ROCKY BAR (98, In Excess)	N/A	47/28	0/0	0/0	(Ticaboo, \$77,152)	\$706,438	142	9	0.88	0.86

(continued from page 44)

for quite a while," said Root. "Thanks to the Stronach family, we still have racing here."

As with many other regional markets, Oregon's foal crop declined drastically when the Great Recession hit. Oakhurst at its peak bred 234 Thoroughbred mares in 2006, and while those numbers have since plummeted, the Roots are working hard to rebuild them.

During the weekend of Jan. 30-31, the Roots conducted an open house at Oakhurst to introduce Giacomo.

"Everybody loves a Kentucky Derby winner, of course," said Jack. "We want to see if we can kick this Oregon racing industry into gear a little bit."

The open house attracted more than 100 people, many from Oregon as well as some from Washington and Canada.

"We saw more enthusiasm for the beginning of our breeding season than we've seen in probably three years," said Cookie. "It was a lot of fun and better than we expected. We had people come who had been out of the industry for a couple of years. Because of the open house, they said maybe they would go get a mare or two."

The Roots have leased Giacomo for three years, and Jack said he is hoping to breed at least 40 mares a year to the stallion, including several of Oakhurst's own mares. Giacomo is standing for \$2,500.

Andy Stronach, Frank's son, is also

helping by bringing a large number of race mares to Portland Meadows for racing.

"He's had races with only his horses in them," said Root. "At the end of the race, they are auctioning off the winner, and it includes a breeding to Giacomo."

That breeding can be redeemed in 2016, 2017, or 2018, to give the new owners the chance to keep the mare in training if they prefer.

The races, called the National Racing Club 6 Auction Sweepstakes, were conducted on Mondays in January and early February. The mares competed over two furlongs. Portland Meadows conducted a Rainbow Six Jackpot wager on the races, which would pay out only if a single win-

(continued on page 48)



The Roots have been raising Thoroughbreds at Oakhurst Farm since 1996

COURTESY OAKHURST FARM

Paradise Road Ranch –Send your horse to Paradise



AllAboutDreams

Rockport Harbor-Cassidy (Jolie's Halo)
\$1000 LF

.....
Our Stallion
Roster Offers:
• Speed
• Stamina
• Class
.....



Mesa Thunder

Sky Mesa-Citiview (Citi Dancer)
\$1500 LF



Bob Black Jack

Stormy Jack-Molly's Prospector (Native Prospector)
\$2000 LF



Northern Indy

A.P.Indy-Polish Nana (Polish Numbers)
\$1500 LF



Brave Cat

LionHeart-Clever Squaw (Rahy)
\$1000 LF

.....
Our Facility Offers:
• Breeding
• Boarding
• Mare/Foal care
• Lay-ups
• Sale prep
• Excellent Care
.....



Run Brother Ron

Perfect Mandate-Aloha Mangos (Bold Badgett)
\$1000 LF



Golden Balls (Ire)

Danehill Dancer(Ire)-Colourful Cast (Ire)
(Nashwaan)
\$2000 LF



Sierra Sunset

Bertrando-Toot Sweet (Pirates Bounty)
\$1500 LF



2015 LEADING SIRES IN OREGON



Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 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	GIACOMO (02, Holy Bull), Oakhurst Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	78/40	1/1	0/1	(Classic Giacnroll, \$133,810)	\$1,194,957	*297	11	1.09	1.23
2	HARBOR THE GOLD (01, Seeking the Gold), Bar C Racing Stables	\$5,500	102/53	1/3	0/1	(Mach One Rules, \$93,826)	\$1,124,352	250	12	0.61	0.70
3	GRINDSTONE (93, Unbridled), Oakhurst Thoroughbreds	\$1,500	77/36	0/0	0/0	(Its Allabout Jerry, \$52,658)	\$554,852	*583	18	1.06	1.42
4	SIXTHIRTEEN (04, Dixie Union), Bar C Racing Stables	\$1,000	7/3	0/0	0/0	(Three Sixteen, \$19,842)	\$50,967	14	0	0.27	0.53

(continued from page 46)

ner hit it, with a mandatory payout Feb. 8.

Giacomo's illustrious race record notwithstanding, the Roots like the horse on a personal level as well.

"He is very sweet and so gentle; I couldn't believe it," said Jack. "He's a little bit shy—he kind of has to get to know you. I have not had a stallion as gentle as him yet."

Root still has to remind himself that Oakhurst has two Derby winners.

"I get goose bumps every time I think about it," he said. "It makes you want to get up in the morning and think 'Wow, am I lucky.'"

Whereas many regional farm owners might see a Kentucky Derby winner as out of their reach, Root subscribed to the "nothing ventured, nothing gained" philosophy in getting Grindstone.

"After Mr. (W.T.) Young died, I made a call to Overbrook Farm and asked if, by any chance, Grindstone was for sale," said Root.

Root negotiated with Overbrook personnel, not only dealing with the financial

side but also assuring them that Oakhurst would take good care of the stallion.

Grindstone won the only Kentucky Derby that the Roots have attended in person. Jack said that isn't why he wanted to stand the stallion, though it makes the horse even more special to the couple.

"I love route races," said Root. "The problem for Grindstone is that we don't have many route races in the Pacific Northwest. But Grindstone's horses can run all day, and I'm going to raise route horses. I was interested in that type of horse."

Grindstone stands out in a regional market like Oregon. At Overbrook, Root said, the horse had the stall next to superstar sire Storm Cat.

"He's a very intelligent horse," said Root. "He's probably the smartest horse I've ever had."

Oakhurst also stands Baquero and Slew's Saga.

D. Wayne Lukas trained Baquero for owners Bob and Beverly Lewis. A son of Forty Niner—Fit for a Queen, by Fit to Fight, Baquero earned \$123,759. The

Roots bought Baquero from the Lewises.

"We've had Baquero since he was 4, and he's 21 now," said Root. "His babies can sprint, and they can route. They stay sound, and they're really neat horses."

Slew's Saga came from Mickey and Karen Taylor, the co-owners of Triple Crown winner Seattle Slew. The Taylors bred and raced Slew's Saga, a son of Seattle Slew—Belle Breeding, by Southern Halo. Slew's Saga earned \$246,464 and won the 2004 Cup and Saucer Stakes at Woodbine.

"I'm pretty sure that every horse the Taylors own is on this farm right now—two older mares and one baby," said Root.

The Taylors dispersed most of their remaining horses at the 2015 Barretts January mixed sale in Southern California.

"Slew's Saga has been a nice little sire who came along at the wrong time, when the breeding industry was really doing poorly," said Root. "For the number of mares he's had, he's actually done quite well."

The Roots have always stood stallions, starting with a son of Nijinsky II named Dance God. Jack's love of racing, however, dates back to his childhood in New Mexico.

In addition to his grandmother telling young Jack he should be a vet, his parents bought him a horse when he was 6. But it was an uncle who inadvertently steered Jack into racing through managing a book and magazine store. Whenever the store ended up with an extra copy of *The Blood-Horse*, Jack's uncle would give the issue to his nephew.

"When I was a little kid, I read those magazines, which is how I got interested in racing and breeding," Root said.

In 1968, when he was 14, Jack's family went on a month-long driving trip around the country. In Kentucky they decided to tour the Thoroughbred farms.



When building Oakhurst, Jack Root wanted oak board fencing like a Kentucky farm

PHOTOS COURTESY OAKHURST FARM

Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the states featured in this section (stallions that are dead or exported prior to 2011 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through December 31, 2015. As supplied to Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., 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%. 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.

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Bluegrass Cat	249	143
Tribal Rule	168	101
Unusual Heat	120	69
Lucky Pulpit	127	57
Ministers Wild Cat	96	48
U S Ranger	126	47
Eddington	90	44
Decarchy	79	44
Kafwain	76	44
Benchmark	84	42
Marino Marini	78	41
Street Hero	71	41
Square Eddie	61	40
Papa Clem	83	38
Stormin Fever	77	38
Southern Image	73	38
Bertrando	74	37
Old Topper	55	36
Einstein (BRZ)	58	34
Vronsky	53	30
Rocky Bar	47	28
Dixie Chatter	58	27
Desert Code	48	27
Surf Cat	35	25
McCann's Mojave	47	24
Heatseeker (IRE)	55	23
Don'tsellmeshort	50	23
Grazen	33	23
Tannersmyman	45	22
Terrell	39	22
Sea of Secrets	46	21
Tizbud	37	21



Oakhurst is home to a breeding farm and a veterinary practice

“We went to Claiborne, Darby Dan, Spendthrift, Calumet—all the big farms,” said Jack. “We saw Ribot, Graustark, His Majesty, Swaps, Ridan, and Round Table. I was overwhelmed, and I thought, OK, this is what I’m going to do.”

The family moved to Oregon when Jack was in high school. He attended Oregon State University, where he met Cookie, and went to veterinary school at Iowa State University. That led to another close encounter with Kentucky, when he served a summer externship at Hagyard-Davidson-McGee.

“I spent one day a week at Claiborne and got to know Secretariat very well—he was standing there at the time,” said Jack.

Later, while working in Miami, Root had the opportunity to work with another Triple Crown winner, Seattle Slew, who was in training there. That’s also when he met the Taylors.

Root established a veterinary practice in Oregon, and he and Cookie raised a family of four sons—Ben, Brad, Adam, and Tristan. Eventually, they decided to build a Thoroughbred farm and purchased the Oakhurst property in 1996. All of the boys grew up on the farm, and Brad worked there for six years. At different times, Jack, Cookie, and Ben have all trained the farm’s runners.

Oakhurst encompasses 147 acres, with plenty of pastures surrounded by oak board fencing.

“I wanted it to look like Kentucky,” Jack said.

Oakhurst has two barns, the larger one with 64 stalls and the smaller with 20. The farm also has a large indoor arena, which is handy for turnout with Oregon’s rainy weather.

The Roots built a stately home on the property, not far from the Ewing Young oak tree. Though the tree sits on the acreage, technically the Roots do not own it.

Ewing Young was a fur trapper and early settler in Oregon before it became a state. When he died in 1841, leaving behind much property and no heirs, a civil government had to be formed to deal with the situation. That eventually led to the establishment of an Oregon government and, indirectly, to Oregon’s statehood in 1859.

An acorn planted on Young’s grave in 1846 grew into the tree, now recognized as a protected Oregon Heritage Tree.

Jack and Cookie operate their breeding and boarding business at Oakhurst as well as Jack’s veterinary practice. The practice serves every type of horse and includes two veterinarians besides Jack. Cookie serves as general manager of both the farm and the vet practice.

“My primary practice for many years was almost exclusively reproduction and the racetrack,” said Jack. “I worked at Portland Meadows for a long time until about three years ago. Now we focus on lameness, and our predominant clients are Western-type horses, like barrel racers, Western pleasure, reiners, and cutters.”

Jack and Cookie have bred and raced numerous stakes winners, including Shamundi, Oregon’s champion 2-year-old male of 2010 and 3-year-old male of 2011, trained by Ben. Shamundi is currently the riding horse of their veterinary receptionist’s daughter.

“He has a great home, and she loves him,” said Jack.

The Roots have led all Oregon breeders

by earnings several times. They also bred and raced Forty Something, Oregon’s champion 2-year-old filly of 2011. She is now one of their broodmares.

They currently have two horses in training with Jesse Velazquez and soon plan to ship a 3-year-old son of Grindstone named Stately Regalstone to Lukas.

“My wife has had a crush on him forever,” said Jack. “He is, in my opinion, one of the neatest people in the entire world. He has been so nice and kind to my wife. His wife has kind of got to be friends with my wife, and it’s been really special.”

While Cookie enjoys the horses immensely, she quickly credits her husband as the driving force behind the creation of Oakhurst.

“People say, ‘Oh, you are so lucky that you have a husband who understands your love for horses,’ and I have to laugh,” said Cookie. “It was really his passion. People assume he’s doing it because I wanted the horses and the horse farm. Some of our friends ask him how he knew how to lay out the farm. He said, ‘I’ve been thinking about this since I was 9 years old.’” **BH**