

SOUTHEAST

Jewel of the South

Adena Springs South expands under Frank Stronach



BY JULIE HAZELWOOD CASTRO / PHOTOS BY LOUISE REINAGEL

STRONACH STABLES IS among the most recognized racing outfits throughout the United States and Canada. A common thread connecting the string of winners raced by owner/breeder Frank Stronach, including a Canadian champion of 2015, are the early lessons they learned at his Adena Springs South training center in Central Florida.

Now in its 20th year of operation, Adena Springs South is guided by a philosophy of allowing young horses to develop at their own pace, suitable to their physiology and mental maturity.

In charge of implementing this philosophy is trainer Richie Purcell, who has been with Stronach's Williston, Fla., farm from the start. Purcell began his career at Coolmore Stud in Ireland, which led to a position at Ashford Stud in Kentucky. He spent several months at Lindsay Park in Adelaide, South Australia, working for Colin Hayes and dabbled in steeplechase riding once back in the States, where he also worked for Brookside Farm near Versailles, Ky.

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Of all the horses he's broken at Adena Springs South, Purcell maintains there haven't been any true "problem" horses. By paying attention during the breaking process, he recognizes that when a horse starts to go the wrong way, it's a signal of a deeper issue. Right away Purcell will change something: the rider, the horse's routine, or its turn-out schedule.

"It's easier to get along rather than to get into a situation where we are misunderstanding the animal," he said.

Purcell has handled a multitude of horses that have gone on to lucrative careers. "I broke Ghostzapper when he was a baby, and he was a tough nut," Purcell said in his smooth County Waterford brogue.

During Danny Vella's tenure as head trainer at Adena Springs South, Purcell also broke top runners Milwaukee Brew, Red Bullet, and Macho Uno.

More recently graduated from the farm were homebreds Shaman Ghost, who in 2015 earned Stronach a third Queen's Plate trophy and was honored with a Sovereign Award as champion 3-year-old male; and the Roger Attfield-trained Shakhimat, who won the 2015 Coronation Futurity by 9¾ lengths and on April 8 won the Transylvania Stakes



Horses make their way to the training track at Frank Stronach's Adena Springs South

presented by Keeneland Select (gr. IIIT). Named the early wagering favorite for this year's Plate, the colt was one of 47 consigned by Adena Springs to the 2015 Fasig-Tipton Florida March sale.

"Our breeding suggests more fall-type horses and distance," Purcell noted.

One Ghostzapper colt, out of a Dynaformer mare, whom Purcell thinks is "special," had just put in two productive days galloping with his head down and behaving like a gentleman. Purcell gave a wry smile, believing that he had found the key to captivating this mischievous colt's attention by having him gallop alongside a filly. "It's kept him a whole lot sweeter and happier to train," he explained.

Toughness is a characteristic that Purcell doesn't mind. Ever confident, he surmised, "That's OK, he'll get it. They need to be tough. Just because they want to be a little bad, doesn't mean that they are bad."

.....

Some farm trainers prefer the action at the racetrack and have

moved on, yet Purcell embraces the tranquility. From his perspective, "This is good right here."

The eight 36-stall training barns at Adena Springs South are fashioned after the structures at The Stronach Group-owned Palm Meadows Training Center near Boynton Beach. Designed to be airy and cool, the barns have hefty timber cruck blades that arch toward ample ceilings that are finished with tongue-and-groove planking. The solid 12-by-12 stalls are all rubber-lined. Purcell and his family live in a nice home within a foot-dash to Barn One, which is filled with 21 2-year-olds and a handful of older horses that are recuperating from racing. Like the automobiles at an elite car show, every horse in the barn has the look of a high-performance model. Most of the well-made individuals possess large hips, good angles, and thick bones.

"He's a block of a boy, eh?" Purcell said of an Awesome Again colt (out of Getback Time, by Gilded Time) as he ran his hands over the legs of

Shaman Ghost's three-quarters brother before legging up his rider. The colt was offered last summer at Keeneland September but was RNA'd for \$85,000.

Over the years Adena Springs has been very active consigning yearlings. Elfrida Stronach, Frank's wife, likes to give the buy-backs a couple of weeks off in Kentucky before they are shipped south to begin the breaking process, where they join homebreds and some auction purchases.

Two among the fleet were bought at the same sale: a colt named Spun Out (by Hard Spun, out of Misty Hour) who is from the family of To Honor and Serve and Angela Renee; and an Awesome Again filly out of Miss Loren, who was a champion in her native Argentina. Purcell tries not to have favorites and said that he likes them all but hinted Macho Dancer, a colt by Macho Uno, and the Ghostzapper colt out of Capital Plan named Gorbachov look pretty good right now.

A half dozen horses head to the track in sets starting at first light accompanied by assistant Manny Cano aboard

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Adena Springs South's Richie Purcell

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2016 LEADING SIRES IN FLORIDA



Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2016 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	WILDCAT HEIR (00, Forest Wildcat)	Died, 2015	130/39	0/0	0/0	(Wildcat Wish, \$47,500)	\$1,057,912	*598	26	1.43	1.43
2	KANTHAROS (08, Lion Heart), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	36/16	2/3	1/2	(X Y Jet, \$550,970)	\$1,044,058	112	6	1.81	1.26
3	WITH DISTINCTION (01, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$7,500	103/29	0/0	0/0	(Distinctly Mine, \$89,333)	\$787,320	*457	10	1.12	1.21
4	AWESOME OF COURSE (00, Awesome Again), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	45/14	2/3	0/2	(Awesome Banner, \$195,400)	\$695,348	160	10	2.09	1.44
5	IN SUMMATION (03, Put It Back), Ocala Stud Farm	\$2,500	68/19	1/1	0/1	(Calculator, \$150,800)	\$643,210	190	4	0.98	1.44
6	HIGH COTTON (03, Dixie Union), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	79/23	2/2	1/2	(April Gaze, \$103,060)	\$599,608	*309	7	0.98	1.28
7	FIRST DUDE (07, Stephen Got Even), Double Diamond Farm	\$7,500	41/15	1/1	0/1	(Flora Dora, \$75,250)	\$525,454	146	1	1.21	1.40
8	TWO STEP SALSA (05, Petionville), Get Away Farm	\$7,500	48/15	1/1	0/1	(Two Step Time, \$95,000)	\$432,796	154	4	1.28	1.03
9	BURNING ROMA (98, Rubiano)	N/A	25/12	1/1	0/1	(Sheer Drama, \$180,000)	\$346,448	*179	5	0.98	1.16
10	EXCLUSIVE QUALITY (03, Elusive Quality), Journeyman Stud	\$2,500	67/20	0/0	0/0	(Dreaming of Neno, \$28,800)	\$339,692	263	7	1.05	1.12
11	GONE ASTRAY (06, Dixie Union), Northwest Stud	\$4,500	37/10	0/0	0/0	(Natalie La Rose, \$40,440)	\$314,093	*110	2	0.83	1.18
12	MONTBROOK (90, Buckaroo)	Died	49/16	0/0	0/0	(A Colt Following, \$29,000)	\$306,567	*893	47	1.48	1.51
13	BIG DRAMA (06, Montbrook), Bridlewood Farm	\$15,000	37/6	0/0	0/0	(Instant Drama, \$35,105)	\$285,774	87	1	1.02	1.34
14	GREATNESS (99, Mr. Prospector), Prestige Stallions	\$6,000	36/11	0/0	0/0	(Great Smoke, \$39,870)	\$262,921	*249	7	1.37	1.02
15	COOL COAL MAN (05, Mineshaft), Journeyman Stud	\$3,500	31/10	0/0	0/0	(Matt King Coal, \$80,200)	\$250,444	61	1	0.81	1.08
16	WEST ACRE (95, Forty Niner)	Died, 2012	15/4	1/1	0/1	(Fast Flying Rumor, \$94,400)	\$219,402	336	15	1.39	1.19
17	BENNY THE BULL (03, Lucky Lionel), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,500	29/7	0/0	0/0	(Eila, \$48,400)	\$206,483	*190	2	0.96	1.00
18	J P'S GUSTO (08, Successful Appeal), Journeyman Stud	\$2,000	13/6	0/0	0/0	(Oh Great Idea, \$40,600)	\$189,800	38	0	0.78	1.15
19	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), HallMarc Stallions at Stonewall Farm Ocala	\$4,500	36/6	0/0	0/0	(Valueable Charmer, \$49,100)	\$181,453	*352	3	0.95	1.14
20	HEAR NO EVIL (00, Carson City), Ocala Stud Farm	\$2,500	18/5	1/1	0/1	(Ballet Diva, \$78,920)	\$167,617	104	7	1.80	1.53

(continued from page 38)

the outfit's pony I'm the Tiger, who won the Frank J. De Francis Memorial Dash (gr. I). Two laps of the one-mile oval are in order. Pairs gallop a mile and a quarter side-by-side in a steady cadence over the conventional cushioned surface, a 50:50 mix of dirt and sand. The inner track, which used to be a grass surface, now sports white, pure silica sand with irrigation underneath. Even after a heavy downpour, it enables Purcell not to miss a day of conditioning.

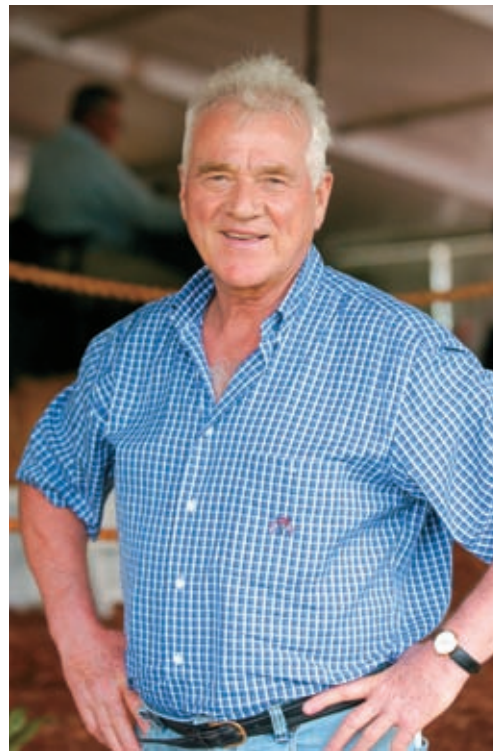
With all the horses on the farm, the solid training base, and gate schooling once a week, they are well prepped for their racetrack trainers to commence workouts about two weeks after arriving.

The strength of the training center is its staff, according to Purcell. His six exercise riders include several former jockeys, and all are very patient. The grooms each care for five horses. At the beginning of the breaking process, the yearlings are turned out by gender. They have their own pecking order and they come in nice and tired; easier to teach. While ground driving puts a good mouth and mind on a yearling, Purcell will move past that step if one is not accepting.

Good nutrition is an important part of the program, too. Purcell feeds a complete pellet that is low in starch, low in sugar, and high in protein. Good-quality,

evenly mixed orchard grass and alfalfa hay is very important to the program as he likes to have the horses drop their heads and graze around the clock.

Purcell has some insight into what it takes to be an elite athlete since he's



Frank Stronach is marking his 20th anniversary in Florida

been competing in Ironman triathlons the last 10 years. After hours he often runs or bikes on the miles of paved roads throughout the well-manicured farm. Purcell qualified for the Boston Marathon four times yet looks up to his employer as

an inspiration. He said the energy level of octogenarian Stronach is amazing.

Stronach divides his time among Gulfstream Park, Santa Anita, and his farms in Florida, Kentucky, Ontario, and Austria. While leaving the breaking process up to Purcell, Stronach is very hands-on with purchasing bloodstock and is on the phone quite a bit with Purcell while picking trainers and sending the horses out in late spring. Purcell considers the Stronachs to be "really, really good owners" and great to communicate with. "I speak with Frank, Elfrida, or (son) Andy at least once a week and email my monthly training report to those within the racing circle."

Adena Springs South conducted its own sale of 2-year-olds between 2002 and 2009. Hosted at the original 453-acre property—formerly Lin-Drake Farm—it had a country atmosphere with straw
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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 2012 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through April 10, 2016. 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 2015 is \$21,782 or 50% of the 2015 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 50% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 17%; Singapore by 57%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-black-type stakes results from all available countries. *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.

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At one point up to 288 horses were being prepped at Adena Springs South for 2-year-old sales or for racing

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bales serving as seats under a party tent. Between 1997 and 1999, Stronach purchased three adjacent properties totaling 3,800 acres. After revitalizing the neglected fields and fencing, he planned and developed a state-of-the-art training center complete with a modern sales pavilion and breeding facility.

At its peak occupancy, with each barn full and assigned to an assistant trainer, up to 288 horses were being prepped for either the Adena Springs sale of 2-year-olds or for racing.

Though a commercial breeder, Stronach has never hesitated to race the stock he's raised but doesn't happen to sell at auction.

A good example is Ginger Punch (by Awesome Again), who went through the 2005 Adena Springs sale where she got a final bid of \$27,000 and was bought back. She went on to become an Eclipse Award winner following her Emirates Airline Breeders' Cup Distaff (gr. I), Ruffian Handicap (gr. I), and Go for Wand Handicap (gr. I) wins. In all, she earned \$3,065,603.

Hunter's Bay (by Ghostzapper) was offered in the 2009 Adena 2-year-old sale and bought back after getting a final

bid of \$110,000. Stronach would win two graded stakes and finish second in the grade I Ricoh Woodbine Mile Stakes with Hunter's Bay, who earned more than \$611,000.

Since 2007 Adena Springs has taken a responsible stance not to breeze its sale 2-year-olds. Purcell believes it is only fair to permit buyers to see how the horses stride when stretched out, so they are asked to move up into the bit

2016 FLORIDA SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Wildcat Heir	125	35
With Distinction	100	29
High Cotton	77	23
Exclusive Quality	66	20
In Summation	68	18
Montbrook	49	15
Two Step Salsa	47	15
First Dude	41	15
Kantharos	36	15
Awesome of Course	44	13
Greatness	35	11
Gone Astray	37	10
Burning Roma	23	9
Cool Coal Man	30	8
Value Plus	36	6
Benny the Bull	27	6
Adios Charlie	10	6
Big Drama	36	5
Flashstorm	18	5
Silver Tree	18	5
Hear No Evil	17	5
Concorde's Tune	14	5
J P's Gusto	13	5
Hello Broadway	11	5
Spellbinder	10	4

and open gallop.

Jack Brothers, who has been with the company in marketing stallion seasons and at the sales since 1994, said that Stronach today seeks a balance between racing and selling.

When asked about the high points



Adena Springs South is a state-of-the-art training center inside 3,800 acres

during his tenure, Brothers said, “I always go back to Awesome Again’s Breeders’ Cup Classic (gr. I) victory, and then to watch his son Ghostzapper emulate him.”

A Queen’s Plate winner, Awesome Again (by Deputy Minister) raced undefeated throughout his 4-year-old campaign and retired with \$4,374,590 in earnings. His 1998 Breeders’ Cup Classic was a race that arguably still stands as one of the best fields ever assembled. Awesome Again is the only Classic winner to sire a winner of that race, as well as siring other Breeders’ Cup winners Ginger Punch, Wilko, and Round Pond.

Ghostzapper drew off to win the Classic by three lengths at Lone Star Park in track- and stakes-record time of 1:59.02. The 2004 champion older male and Horse of the Year earned \$3,446,120. One of the best of the 21st century, the Hall of Fame inductee stands at stud at Adena Springs Kentucky alongside his 22-year-old sire.

Recognized as a pillar within the Thoroughbred industry, Stronach and Adena Springs Farm have bred some of the finest Thoroughbreds in North America, leading to seven Eclipse Awards as Outstanding Breeder and 17 Sovereign Awards as Canada’s Outstanding Breeder or Owner. Nationally, Stronach’s racing stable has led in earnings four times.

Brothers described the founder of Magna International and the owner of The Stronach Group as a “great motivator,” and that he leads by example. The effect of his philosophies rubs off



Fort Larned, winner of the 2012 Breeders’ Cup Classic, stands at Adena Springs South

on his staff, whether at his race-tracks or on the farms. Brothers said, “He is always raising the bar and he will challenge you to do more and to do better.”

Stronach’s home-grown philosophies have expanded into other agricultural markets, including beef cattle, hogs, and chickens. Purcell said the cage-free egg layers have “the ‘Life of Riley’ with their own little penthouses.”

Small herds of very robust Brangus cattle can be spotted from the clocker’s deck—just a few of thousands owned by Stronach that are grazed throughout four Florida counties. According to general manager Rick Moyer, Stronach’s commitment to Florida’s agriculture industry has now expanded to more than 95,000 acres, including land set aside for timber. Adena Meats currently supplies hormone and antibiotic-free grass-fed beef; as well as organic, pasture-raised chicken to restaurants at Gulfstream Park and to his world-class Adena Golf and Country Club.

After a five-year hiatus from the stallion business at Adena

Springs South, four stallions have been brought in. Stronach’s decision to re-enter the Florida stallion market in 2015 was enthusiastically received by the local breeding community. Stallion season sales and nominations manager Declan Doyle stated, “Mr. Stronach underscored his commitment to the Florida breeding industry by relocating 2012 Breeders’ Cup Classic winner Fort Larned to our Williston facility from Kentucky.”

With \$4,471,322 to his credit, Fort Larned (by E Dubai) also boasts decisive wins in the Whitney Invitational Handicap (gr. I) and Stephen Foster Handicap Presented by Abu Dhabi (gr. I). He is joined by Capo Bastone (by Street Boss), who captured the Foxwoods King’s Bishop Stakes (gr. I) and was runner-up in the Sentient Jet Breeders’ Cup Juvenile (gr. I); City Wolf (by Giant’s Causeway), a graded stakes-winning half brother to Ghostzapper and City Zip; and Canadian champion Hunters Bay (by Ghostzapper), a multiple graded winner who ran second to Wise Dan in the Ricoh Woodbine Mile Stakes (Can-IT).

Now with foals on the ground, Doyle added, “The truest testament as to the quality of the first foals by our stallions has been by the returning breeders this season.”

With Adena Springs South’s stallion roster and the Florida-bred stakes program building momentum at Gulfstream Park, Stronach’s commitment and influence on Florida breeding and racing will be felt well into the future. Brothers put it best when he said, “I cannot go anywhere, to a sale or to the racetrack, without someone coming up to me and saying, ‘I don’t know where we would be in the industry without Mr. Stronach right now.’” **BH**

2016 FLORIDA SECOND-CROP SIRES BY EARNINGS

Sire	Named Foals	Rnrs	Wnrs	Stks Wnrs	Earnings
First Dude	145	41	15	1	\$506,884
Gone Astray	110	37	10	0	\$302,783
Big Drama	86	36	5	0	\$255,614
Adios Charlie	54	10	6	0	\$145,027
J P’s Gusto	38	13	5	0	\$138,763
Crown of Thorns	27	12	2	0	\$69,999
Telling	30	7	2	0	\$46,538
Factum	40	8	2	0	\$43,055
Causeway’s Kin	8	2	1	0	\$27,910
Rodman	5	2	0	0	\$18,465
Iqbaal	15	1	1	0	\$18,400
Field Commission	24	4	0	0	\$14,190
Get Rich Quick	13	3	1	0	\$10,997
Vineyard Haven	14	4	0	0	\$10,830