

# FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

That Thoroughbreds are a tricky investment is well-known to all participants in the industry. There is a lot of money passing hands for a most-fragile commodity, meaning that the care and welfare of the animal should be of paramount importance to all involved. Choosing where to board your broodmare and, subsequently, where to raise your foal are crucial decisions not to be made without careful study and examination of all alternatives. A proper facility should have the tools, experience, and horsemanship to ensure the safety and welfare of its Thoroughbred charges, as well as the proper physical layout and access to top veterinary care. You'll want staff members who are well-versed in timely communications with you, the client.

Fortunately, many such top-shelf boarding operations exist throughout the country to give that special care to your Thoroughbred. What follows aims to educate horsemen about some of the leading facilities.

## HIDDEN BROOK FARM

Hidden Brook Farm near Lexington, Ky., attempts to put the horses boarded there in the best position to succeed.

"Our main focus is giving every horse a chance to be successful regardless of how they're bred," said Hidden Brook managing partner Sergio de Sousa.

The full-service operation founded a dozen years ago by partners de Sousa, Jack Brothers, Dan Hall, and Mark Roberts, is focused on one primary goal—producing racehorses. Some of the top horses representing Hidden Brook's program this year include Moanin, a New York-bred son of Henny Hughes who won this year's February Stakes (Jpn-I); Paulassilverlining, a grade II-winning Kentucky-bred daughter of Ghostzapper who is entered in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Sprint (gr. I); and, grade I winners Ball Dancing, Dads Caps, and Finnigans Wake. Hidden Brook long ago topped 100 stakes winners that have called the farm home.

"Basically we want to raise athletic horses who will be able to race," de Sousa said, adding that the farm has learned to not overdo things. "It is possible to do too much with a horse, and we've found that sometimes doing more is not always doing better for a horse.

"That said, we treat each horse as an individual."

In the immediate vicinity of historic

Claiborne and Stone farms just east of Lexington and near Paris, Ky., Hidden Brook's 600 acres stretch over limestone-rich soil that has nurtured generations of racetrack champions. The farm offers 164 stalls and a variety of spacious paddocks.

For those looking for a breaking, training, or lay-up facility, Hidden Brook has now expanded into Ocala, Fla., where Roberts runs a training center called Hidden Brook South.

Along with the Kentucky facility, Hidden Brook can cover all needs of any horseman, from foaling right on up through sales consignments.

The farm's clients benefit from quality horsemanship. The hands-on care and individualized equine programs are tailored to every phase of a horse's development, from reproductive management on through feed and nutrition, sales prep and consignments, mating and pedigree analysis, and bloodstock advice.

Another reason to choose Hidden Brook is the tremendous beauty of the farm and its peaceful surroundings, which create a relaxed atmosphere. While there is no doubt serious business is being done daily, there is also the feel of staff that enjoy their jobs and interact accordingly. Everyone works together for the good of the horse and the clients. This is a team in every sense of the word.

Great people, fantastic location, and

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an unmatched past-performance record make Hidden Brook a top choice to consider for your boarding needs.—F.A.

## WALDORF FARM

As the economic tide continues rising for the Thoroughbred breeding industry in New York, Hudson Valley's Waldorf Farm offers a safe harbor for regional mare owners to take advantage of the lucrative state-bred program.

Waldorf Farm, near North Chatham, is owned by veteran equine reproductive specialist Dr. Jerry Bilinski. The 400-acre farm offers experienced management, top-notch facilities, and a daily commitment to customer service—for the horses and its owners.

"We pay attention to details, and we treat these horses like they were our own," said Bilinski, who has been a practicing veterinarian for 47 years and co-owns a veterinary clinic across the road from the farm. "There is always a risk factor with horses; you know there is a certain percentage of problems that are going to occur. We pride ourselves in keeping that percentage low."

Bilinski, who is also a breeder, stands two stallions at Waldorf: Bustin Stones and second-year stallion Japan.

Bustin Stones (City Zip—Shesasurething, by Prospectors Gamble) is a grade I stakes winner who is currently sixth

on the leading New York sire list but the leader among the top 20 New York sires by percentage of winners from runners. He has 45 (65%) winners from starters to date. His top runner of 2016 is stakes winner Bust Another, who has earned \$245,647.

“Bustin Stones has been doing lights out on the racetrack,” said Bilinski. “If you want to get breeders’ awards, he is the one to go to.” The 12-year-old stallion stands at Waldorf for \$2,500.

New to the roster this year was Japan, a stakes-winning son of Medaglia d’Oro and a full brother to multiple graded stakes winner Al Khali. Bred by Emory Hamilton in Kentucky and raced by New York owner/breeder Barry Schwartz, Japan is out of the family that includes graded winners Soaring Empire, Keen Ice, Somali



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

**Quality pastures and an experienced staff are important factors in deciding where to board**

Lemonade, Serra Lake, and Hungry Island. Japan stood this year for \$7,500.

“He has a lot of substance; a beautiful horse,” Bilinski said. “We bred 65-70 mares to him, so he is being supported by Barry Schwartz and a number of other syndicate members.”

With the quality of facilities and management in New York so much higher than they were when state-bred incentives were initially offered in the mid ’70s, Bilinski said few reasons remain for breeders not to take advantage.

“If I have a New York-bred horse by a New York stallion, then I can see 30% coming back my way,” he said. “That gives me a much better feeling than seeing 15% coming my way. Here we have a good staff, and we communicate with our clients. We are in the breeding business ourselves so we know what people go through.”—*E.M.*

**WILLOW CREEK**

As Tonya Tozzi and Shawn Mullis made plans to return to the United States after a

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stint in Dubai, they selected an area of New York State near Saratoga Springs as the destination for their Willow Creek Farms.

Located in Fort Edward, Willow Creek consists of 54 acres of lush pastures, a perfect setting to house mares and foals under the personalized care of Tozzi, a professional horsewoman, and Mullis, a certified journeyman farrier with more than 28 years of experience.

Mullis operated a thriving business in the Ocala, Fla., area and worked with some of the leading Quarter Horses in the country before going to Dubai. Based at Meydan Racecourse, Mullis provided farrier services to the stables of Sheikh Mohammed and Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum, among others.

While there Mullis was also involved with laminitis cases at the equine hospital in Dubai, where he worked alongside some of the most prominent veterinarians and

farriers, adding to his knowledge as a farrier and horseman.

Tozzi's experience includes managing a larger New York farm that honed her breaking and training skills as well as those for sales preparation and then working for prominent farms in Ocala, before she and Mullis went to Dubai. While in the Middle East, Tozzi rode horses and established a business importing and exporting stable equipment along with nutritional and veterinary supplies for most of the major stables there.

At Willow Creek the couple draws upon their experiences to provide personal, hands-on care and specialty farrier services where needed. A nutrition program is tailored to suit each boarder and each pasture has a run-in shed and heated automatic waterers.

While many farms have electronic surveillance systems that can be watched

on a monitored screen, Willow Creek has gone a step further by placing in each stall a camera that is connected virtually to the owners' mobile devices, meaning the owners can have total visual access to all horses on the property all the time, regardless of location.

In addition to the personal care and security system that sets the farm apart, Willow Creek's prime location near some of New York's leading breeding farms and Saratoga Race Course is another incentive for owners and trainers to send their horses there.

"We pride ourselves in being a small facility that gives the very best in personalized care while your mare is here to stay with us," Willow Creek's website states.

That makes it a premier boarding facility to be considered by any horseman.

See more at [www.willowcreekfarmny.com](http://www.willowcreekfarmny.com).—*R.M.*



## Boarding, Mare Care, & Layups available at *Willow Creek Farms, New York* .

Beautiful 54 acres located 20 minutes from Saratoga Racecourse. Perfectly setup to house and care for your mares and foals. Owners live on premises and personally care for your horses. Our stalls are equipped with state-of-the-art live surveillance systems with live feed 24 hours a day .



Views of the farm and more info is available on our website at [www.WillowCreekFarmNY.com](http://www.WillowCreekFarmNY.com)

Contact us at 518-603-7707 or email at [willowcreekfarms11@gmail.com](mailto:willowcreekfarms11@gmail.com).

# WALDORF FARM

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### BUSTIN STONES

City Zip — Shesasurething, by Prospectors Gamble  
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Medaglia d'Oro — Maya, by Capote  
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P.O. Box 959, North Chatham, NY 12132 / Farm Office: 518-766-9400 / Fax: 518-766-4601  
Jerry Bilinski, DVM / cell: 518-461-8424 / email: drbilinski@aol.com / waldorffarm.com

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