

SOUTHEAST



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# Major Makeover in Ocala

*Renovations at OBS to move sale outfit forward*

BY RON MITCHELL

**MICHAEL O'FARRELL'S PROFESSIONAL LIFE** has been inextricably tied to the Ocala Breeders' Sales Co., the Central Florida sales entity he chairs and which his late father Joe co-founded in the mid-1970s.

Committed to its local roots, O'Farrell's Ocala Stud sells only at OBS, offering all the horses it breeds through OBS 2-year-olds in training sales or through private sales at the farm. Like many of the other Florida breeders who constitute the cooperative that owns and operates the sales company, O'Farrell is heavily vested in its health and future.

O'Farrell and other Ocala, Fla.-area board members have been prudent trustees of the company's resources as it has expanded its presence beyond its regional beginnings.

OBS has evolved since its first 2-year-olds in training sale in January 1975, increasing its presence and customer base

far beyond its regional scope. According to the sales company, the \$123 million spent on more than 1,000 juveniles at OBS in 2016 was 70% of the market share. The company reports buyers from 45 states and 15 countries bought 2-year-olds at OBS in 2016.

In addition to its 2-year-old, yearling, and mixed sales, OBS has a successful horse feed and supply company, operates a simulcast facility, and conducts one day of live racing annually.

Throughout its history, OBS' directors and management have been prudent in making improvements that enhanced the buying and selling experience. These have included constructing and repairing barns when needed, installing a main racetrack that has been upgraded with an all-weather surface, adding a training track, building a simulcasting and entertainment facility, and expanding and improving the main pa-

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# 2017 LEADING SIRES IN FLORIDA



For daily updated sire lists visit [BloodHorse.com](http://BloodHorse.com)

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2017 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2017 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>WILDCAT HEIR</b> (00, Forest Wildcat)	Died, 2015	110/24	1/1	1/1	(Brahms Cat, \$51,200)	<b>\$687,266</b>	*665	27	1.41	1.39
2	<b>FIRST DUDE</b> (07, Stephen Got Even), Double Diamond Farm	\$10,000	66/16	0/0	0/0	(Skye Diamonds, \$43,680)	<b>\$415,347</b>	239	3	1.25	1.32
3	<b>HIGH COTTON</b> (03, Dixie Union), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	65/16	2/2	0/2	(R Angel Katelyn, \$60,000)	<b>\$360,858</b>	*366	10	0.97	1.27
4	<b>ADIOS CHARLIE</b> (08, Indian Charlie), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	36/6	0/0	0/0	(She's Stunning, \$24,600)	<b>\$219,560</b>	97	2	1.29	1.39
5	<b>GONE ASTRAY</b> (06, Dixie Union), Northwest Stud	\$5,000	49/10	0/0	0/0	(Three Rules, \$39,600)	<b>\$216,353</b>	*158	4	1.02	1.16
6	<b>WITH DISTINCTION</b> (01, Storm Cat)	N/A	49/11	0/0	0/0	(Too Fast to Pass, \$24,360)	<b>\$205,641</b>	*487	11	1.10	1.20
7	<b>IN SUMMATION</b> (03, Put It Back), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	37/7	0/0	0/0	(Equation, \$30,690)	<b>\$162,522</b>	216	5	0.98	1.38
8	<b>EXCLUSIVE QUALITY</b> (03, Elusive Quality)	N/A	38/8	0/0	0/0	(Dreaming of Neno, \$36,000)	<b>\$137,987</b>	295	7	1.00	1.10
9	<b>OVERDRIVEN</b> (09, Tale of the Cat), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	16/6	0/0	0/0	(Earth Mystery, \$19,808)	<b>\$112,382</b>	78	0	0.62	1.16
10	<b>TWO STEP SALSA</b> (05, Petionville), Get Away Farm	\$7,500	41/6	0/0	0/0	(Salsita, \$22,800)	<b>\$111,988</b>	204	4	1.10	1.04
11	<b>BIG DRAMA</b> (06, Montbrook), Stonewall's Prestige Stallions	\$7,500	32/5	0/0	0/0	(Smile Big, \$23,200)	<b>\$108,430</b>	123	2	1.05	1.36
12	<b>BIONDETTI</b> (08, Bernardini), Woodford Thoroughbreds	\$4,000	23/4	0/0	0/0	(Bella's Legacy, \$19,200)	<b>\$91,616</b>	80	0	0.56	1.57
13	<b>CROWN OF THORNS</b> (05, Repent), Woodford Thoroughbreds	\$2,000	12/5	0/0	0/0	(Major Key, \$25,000)	<b>\$87,675</b>	41	1	0.76	1.18
14	<b>GREATNESS</b> (99, Mr. Prospector), Stonewall's Prestige Stallions	\$3,500	26/6	0/0	0/0	(Lucky Greatness, \$22,320)	<b>\$84,883</b>	*255	7	1.30	1.01
15	<b>J P'S GUSTO</b> (08, Successful Appeal), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,000	12/5	0/0	0/0	(White Smoke, \$32,700)	<b>\$81,794</b>	51	0	0.96	1.11
16	<b>AWESOME OF COURSE</b> (00, Awesome Again), Ocala Stud	\$5,000	40/5	0/0	0/0	(Little Awesome, \$10,150)	<b>\$73,971</b>	196	10	1.74	1.39
17	<b>TELLING</b> (04, A.P. Indy), Stonewall's Prestige Stallions	\$5,000	14/4	0/0	0/0	(Hotty Toddy, \$19,600)	<b>\$67,525</b>	37	0	0.54	1.33
18	<b>COOL COAL MAN</b> (05, Mineshaft), Iran	N/A	20/3	0/0	0/0	(Via Fermato, \$11,760)	<b>\$56,177</b>	78	1	0.80	1.04
19	<b>FLASHSTORM</b> (04, Storm Cat), Northwest Stud	\$2,500	21/4	0/0	0/0	(Rick's Boy, \$11,800)	<b>\$55,562</b>	75	2	0.93	1.01
20	<b>WAGON LIMIT</b> (94, Conquistador Cielo), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,000	6/1	0/0	0/0	(Delta Bluesman, \$29,500)	<b>\$46,420</b>	195	7	1.33	1.10

vilion and office. Other enhancements have included installation of a covered walking ring in the rear of the facility and opening a popular tiki bar on the grounds.

“The Ocala Breeders’ Sales Co. was formed by a number of people, most of whom had sizeable farms in the area, to purchase property and to build the best facilities they possibly could to facilitate the people in the industry in the state of Florida to market and sell their product,” O’Farrell recalled.

“From that day until this day, OBS has tried to improve on the facilities we have, not only for consignors but for buyers.”

Consistent with that mission, OBS is undertaking its most ambitious project to date—an expansion and renovation of the pavilion and general offices.

The enhancements will include a new and reconfigured en-

trance and lobby area; a concourse that wraps around the auditorium; new general offices; enlarged food and dining area; two raised viewing areas at the rear of the pavilion; meeting space for agents, consignors, and clients; a new van agent counter; a new video room; larger restrooms; and an auctioneer’s stand in the rear.

“Going back to when the company was first started, our goal was to always provide the best facilities we could for the consignors to market and sell their product,” O’Farrell said. “This fits into that. I understood how and why the company was started, and I feel like we need to provide the best facilities possible. In order to do that, we had to upgrade.”

OBS president Tom Ventura said the project grew in scope once management began looking at areas that needed upgrades, particularly the dining facilities. Rather than taking on a series of smaller construction projects, as had been done in the past, OBS decided to go large, especially considering the limited time such work could be done throughout the year with limited disruption to the sale schedule.

“The project expanded from the initial concept of needing to do a little more with customer service in areas that needed to be enhanced, such as the food service area,” the executive said. “As we began looking at it, we could see other areas that we could improve. When it became obvious it was going to be a bigger project and knowing our windows of opportunity to do significant construction was limited, we decided we would take one big swipe at it rather than multiple steps, which is what we did in the past. This was a much broader project.”

Ventura said the makeover could be completed in time for this year’s yearling sale that will now be held in October, or perhaps in



PHOTOS BY Z

Activity during the OBS January sale

**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 2013 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through February 5, 2017. As supplied to BloodHorse 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 per starter in 2016 is \$22,141 or 45% of the 2016 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 17%; Singapore by 65%. 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.

# prospective



*Malibu Moon – Spirited Away, by Awesome Again  
\$4,000 LFSN*

## MALIBU MOON'S BEST SON IN FLORIDA

<i>Malibu Moon Sons at Stud</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Graded SWs</i>	<i>Earnings</i>
Orb	KY	3	\$2,612,516
<b>PROSPECTIVE</b>	<b>FL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$719,130</b>
Corfu	FL	1	\$214,200
Freedom Child	MD	1	\$170,072

LOOK FOR HIS **STELLAR FIRST 2-YEAR-OLDS** AT UPCOMING SALES





time for the January 2018 mixed sale.

"I think we are within the window of expectations," Ventura said. "I would like for us to be further along than we are, but you run into slight road bumps along the way. Part of the facility was demolished before we started making these changes and what was hiding behind some of those crevices while not unexpected was not exactly what we thought was there. In the big picture we know if everything goes well, we will be finished by October, and, if not then by January (2018), which looks more likely."

During a tour of the facility during the January mixed sale, OBS sales director Tod Wojciechowski explained the addition of the concourse will reduce the number of seats in the pavilion. Also, expanding the food service area means the movement of horses in and out of the sales ring will now be clockwise.

Wojciechowski said the building's exterior will be composed of stacked rock and a circular drive will lead to the reconstructed front entrance.

Once the project is completed, buyers and sellers will find a larger cashier's office, similar to the one at Keeneland, Wojciechowski said, adding that OBS personnel studied other facilities in deciding what to consider for their project.

The work by Ocala-based general contractor McLaughlin & Co. will be performed with a minimum of disruption to OBS sales in 2017. By canceling its October 2016 auction, OBS was able to have the most significant amount of exterior work done early.

"The plan was to get as much of the exterior done as possible in the window we created by canceling the October sale because that is the most intrusive part of the process," said Wojciechowski. "So we needed to get as much of the exterior structure done in that window. We have coordinated with the contractor for windows of opportunity. They (OBS clientele) should see some changes from January to March and from March to April."

During the January sale the makeshift dining area was cramped, leading to lengthy waits for food, but overall any inconveniences were minimal.

"Having to start and stop (work) is a little bit of a challenge," Wojciechowski said. "We knew what we had to do to get it buffed up before this sale."

"Whatever inconveniences are minor, and we look forward to a better product at the end," Ventura said.

Although OBS saw a downturn in its 2016 sales, O'Farrell and Ventura said there was no consideration of delaying the project, noting that it had been planned for a year and a half to two years.

"We know this is a bit of a roller-coaster ride in this business, and we are taking the long-term view this is something we need to do for the betterment of the company and the industry," Ventura said. "We are in the horse business, and we are in it for the long haul. We have always been responsible with our money and our investments. The timing may not have been ideal, but this is something the board wholeheartedly supported."

"We couldn't throw up our hands and say 'let's don't do it,'"



**Tom Ventura: "We decided we would take one big swipe at it."**

PHOTOS BY Z

O'Farrell said. "We felt like we needed to step up and improve the facilities. There is no question we have a much larger buyer base and they are used to going to nice facilities. We wanted to feel like we were trying to keep up. It is going to be horse friendly, consignor friendly, and buyer friendly."

Wojciechowski said OBS would not disclose the costs. O'Farrell said OBS is a well-operated business and as such had sufficient cash on hand to pay for it.

"The company is healthy," he said. "We have had some good years and some not-so-good years. We don't throw money around. We are pretty conservative in the manner in which we

run the company. There will be no money borrowed. We didn't want to do anything with the money other than improve the facility."

Other Ocala horsemen are looking forward to OBS' being able to show off its facility.

"I think it will be fabulous when it is finished," consignor and OBS director Niall Brennan said. "A lot of effort and detail have gone into planning it. We are just trying to keep pace and invest in the sales company's future, and to do that, you have to invest in your facilities and create a really first-class environment for people to come to. We have a lot of international buyers coming to our sales, and they need to be at a first-class facility. It will really showcase OBS and the Ocala horse industry."

"Some of the people who show up here and spend a lot of money



RON MITCHELL

**The back walking ring at OBS**

expect first class, and I think that is what OBS is trying to provide," said consignor Tom McCrocklin. "They (buyers) want you to have everything they need and expect...everything is evolving."

O'Farrell said OBS is not counting on a bump in business as a result of its major upgrade but is staying true to its core mission.

"Improving this sale pavilion more than likely is not going to improve this sales company's income," O'Farrell said. "We did not do it for that reason. We did it to provide the best facility possible for consignors. We want them to be able to market their horses the best they can. In order to do that, we wanted to provide the best facilities we possibly can." **BH**

**GRADE 2 SW BY CHAMPION SIRE OF #1 FRESHMAN SIRE**

**WINNER AT 2 AND 3  
BLACK TYPE AT 3 AND 4**

**DEFEATED BC DIRT MILE  
CHAMPION TAPIZAR**

**WATCH FOR  
UPCOMING  
2-YEAR-OLDS  
SOON!**

# ANTHONY'S CROSS

Indian Charlie - Screening, by Unbridled



Winner of the \$250,000 Robert B. Lewis S-G2 at Santa Anita (1 1/8 miles, over TAPIZAR); 3rd, Sham S-G3 at Santa Anita; Berkeley H-G3 at Golden Gate Fields.

Half-brother to Graded winner and five-time SW FUGITIVE ANGEL (\$382,661). First dam is the UNBRIDLED mare SCREENING, half-sister to three Group or Graded SWs, including SMART BID (G2, \$1,008,309), REPRESENTING (Swi-G1, \$314,831) & DEAL MAKING (G2, \$237,874).

Son of **INDIAN CHARLIE:**

- Champion sire of more than 90 stakes winners, including: Sire Sensation of 2016 UNCLE MO (\$150,000 stud fee), sire of 19 first-crop SWs, including Kentucky Derby winner & Champion 2yo NYQUIST; multiple GI SW A.P. INDIAN (\$1,337,434), GOMO (GI); OUTWORK (GI); UNCLE VINNY (G3, GISP), etc.



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