

## MIDWEST/CANADA

# At the Top

## Leonard Zenith's UpHill Stable finally hits its stride

BY LENNY SHULMAN

**BELIEVE IN THE WISDOM** born from trial and error. Almost 55 years into horse ownership, Calgary, Alberta, attorney Leonard Zenith has hit his stride after acknowledging he's made every mistake in the book. Today, his UpHill Stable campaigns the brilliant filly Lightstream and has in recent years enjoyed success with graded stakes winners such as Clearly Now and So Long George and multiple stakes winner Crown Isle.

But Zenith is the first to tell you not to paint his story with too broad a glowing brush because he's spent decades toiling in the ownership trenches with cheap claimers that have largely cost him money, only to be repeatedly bailed out by a good one that has come along and repaired the financial picture enough for his continued participation.

Zenith, 71, is a native of Winnipeg, Manitoba, who began frequenting Assiniboia Downs in his early teens. At 16 he was walking hots and met lifelong friend and longtime horse partner David Miles, who was manning the booth selling programs and renting binoculars.

"I was mesmerized by the whole environment and subculture," said Zenith. "The animals, the people on the backside; we couldn't get enough of it. Everyone else thought I was crazy. According to my parents, there were three places a person shouldn't go: the pool hall, the brothel, and the racetrack."

Zenith spent summers in Calgary walking hots for trainer Leo Giardin, "a grumpy, crusty, difficult man who, for some reason, liked me." At 18 Zenith and Miles purchased Thorny Crown.

"We bought him from a guy named Honest John, but he wasn't," said Miles. "The horse couldn't run four strides."

Then came Bearden Acres, whom Giardin claimed for \$1,250. Zenith and Miles got out even on him.

Married and with a baby on the way while in law school, Zenith found himself in money trouble, with his wife needing to quit her job to take care of their child. But he and Miles had



Leonard Zenith, far left, in the winner's circle at Belmont Park with trainer Brian Lynch and childhood friend David Miles

claimed Game Boy for \$2,500, and he would subsequently run off three wins in a row before being claimed back by the guy they'd taken him off.

"That gave us a little bit of a nest to get through the pregnancy and birth time," Zenith said. "Our daughter was four months old when we moved to Calgary, and Leo called and said he could buy Game Boy back. My wife, who was unbelievable in agreeing to all this, said 'OK' and we bought him back and he won two more for us before we lost him again. He was the first horse I truly fell in love with."

Game Boy would go on to make 117 starts, winning 24 of them.

Miles recalled having a lot of fun in those early days.

"Leonard fell in love with a horse named Sam Sam who used to run last every time," he said. "So he decided we should go to the barn and buy him. He offered the guy \$200 for him and the guy threw a pitchfork at us. So Leonard says he's never betting the horse again, and the next time out he wins and pays \$60."

Zenith raised two children and fed a couple of mortgages but always managed to own one or two inexpensive runners.

Expanding his horizons, he visited New York for the first time in 1974, and coming from the bush tracks of Alberta, he was very much the gawking tourist once he hit the broad expanse of Belmont Park, where he met legendary trainer Allen Jerkens.

"Just like Leo, for some reason Allen really liked me, and our friendship continued until his passing," Zenith said. "He

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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	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	NOTIONAL (04, In Excess), Swiftly Farms	\$2,000	48/19	0/0	0/0	(Bagea, \$26,980)	\$299,951	284	6	0.84	1.14
2	FORT PRADO (01, El Prado), Swiftly Farms	\$2,000	43/8	0/0	0/0	(Prado's Sweet Ride, \$18,000)	\$143,881	168	2	0.83	1.44
3	BENNY THE BULL (03, Lucky Lionel), Swiftly Farms	\$3,000	28/6	0/0	0/0	(Eila, \$16,400)	\$80,053	*212	2	0.85	1.00
4	LANTANA MOB (05, Posse), Southern Indiana Equine	\$2,500	10/3	0/0	0/0	(Operation Stevie, \$23,675)	\$58,266	49	3	1.04	1.12
5	MONBA (05, Maria's Mon), Nicks Farm	\$2,000	13/4	0/0	0/0	(Z Z Rider, \$12,510)	\$57,775	68	0	0.71	1.31
6	DEPUTY STORM (01, Forestry), R Star Stallions	\$1,500	11/4	0/0	0/0	(Wyfold, \$14,403)	\$56,237	91	2	0.99	1.22
7	ELITE SQUADRON (04, Officer), Midwest Equine & Veterinary Hospital	\$2,000	7/4	0/0	0/0	(Shirota, \$13,320)	\$40,982	65	0	0.61	1.06
8	GOLD CASE (94, Forty Niner) Died, 2014		8/2	0/0	0/0	(Dive Bar, \$14,464)	\$29,372	*604	19	0.99	1.09
9	CASH EL CASTLE (99, Silver Ghost), Swiftly Farms	\$1,000	6/1	0/0	0/0	(Dorothe Marie, \$16,746)	\$24,940	113	4	0.88	1.02
10	SILVER MOUNTAIN (05, Victory Gallop), Nicks Farm	\$2,000	5/2	0/0	0/0	(Big Silver Hoss, \$8,287)	\$22,298	23	0	0.51	0.90
11	SWEET RETURN (GB) (00, Elmaumul), Nicks Farm	\$2,000	14/0	0/0	0/0	(Pasta Giovanni, \$6,630)	\$16,339	106	0	0.65	0.85
12	ELUSIVE BLUFF (06, Elusive Quality), Southern Indiana Equine	\$1,500	4/2	0/0	0/0	(Cute Little Mess, \$7,500)	\$15,679	37	2	1.19	0.87
13	CHARGING INDIAN (02, Indian Charlie)	N/A	2/2	0/0	0/0	(Picaboo Rose, \$7,200)	\$13,917	20	0	0.60	0.85
14	STRONG CONTENDER (03, Maria's Mon), R Star Stallions	\$3,000	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Majestic Contender, \$8,860)	\$13,772	*148	4	0.97	1.16
15	STRONG HOPE (00, Grand Slam), Midwest Equine & Veterinary Hospital	\$2,000	7/0	0/0	0/0	(Kitai, \$7,094)	\$12,974	338	5	0.93	1.67
16	SANTIVA (08, Giant's Causeway), Midwest Equine & Veterinary Hospital	\$2,500	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Santiva's Ride, \$8,400)	\$12,700	12	0	0.23	0.70
17	DOMESTIC DISPUTE (00, Unbridled's Song), Indiana Stallion Station	\$2,000	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Short Hill Kit Kat, \$6,300)	\$12,159	*333	2	0.84	1.16
18	LENTENOR (07, Dynaformer), Indiana Stallion Station	\$2,000	2/0	0/0	0/0	(Rollin Smoke, \$6,000)	\$10,560	15	0	0.52	1.11
19	STAR CAT (07, Storm Cat), Breakway Farm	\$2,500	9/1	0/0	0/0	(Allie's Little Cat, \$4,661)	\$10,467	41	1	0.77	0.92
20	VENTANA (06, Toccet), Indiana Stallion Station	\$2,000	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Little Jig, \$6,494)	\$10,334	13	0	0.26	0.98

opened up a whole new vision for me with the way he cared for his horses and the quality of them. I would stand at the rail of the training track for hours watching those horses gallop with their necks bowed. You could really see what a good horse looked like. That was a changing point.

“Allen taught me a lot about horses and even more in life lessons. He was truly a mentor. We stayed up all night at his home once with him playing videos for me and explaining things. What a great experience.”

Zenith bought the stakes-placed, Calu-

met Farm-bred Our Cadet from Jerkens and stood him in Alberta for several years. He also campaigned Our Cadet's son Worthy of Praise, whom Jerkens conditioned to win a \$10,500 claimer at Belmont in 1981. Said Zenith, “That win was the thrill of my life.”

Nevertheless, Zenith struggled to remain involved in racehorses. His position was again saved by a claimer when the Verne Winchell-bred Magni Glo went on a six-race winning streak for Zenith at Fort Erie in Ontario in 1986, earning nearly \$20,000 on the season.

“He was a late-running sprinter who just got there in the last jump every time and moved your heart into your throat,” Zenith said. “He was determined, and he kept me in this because otherwise I couldn't have stayed in the game financially.”

As the century flipped, Zenith had a revelation, he'd lost a half-million dollars over his 30 years of owning cheap racehorses he either claimed, bought privately, or purchased at the Belmont paddock sale.

“In those days I picked out my own horses,” he said, “and I really learned a lot, but everything I learned was from a mistake. I got sucked in by a horse's stat-



COADY PHOTOGRAPHY

Lightstream winning Keeneland's Beaumont Stakes last spring

**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 March 19, 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.

ure. My time working around horses gave me no knowledge of conformation whatsoever. So I decided to change my MO. My kids were grown, the mortgage was paid off, and things were OK. So I decided to go to the yearling market in 2001 and started UpHill Stable.

“I met Ron Fleischman in Lexington, and we forged a relationship and I’ve come to rely on him totally when it comes to conformation. Nobody has more knowledge about it than he does, and he became my compass and beam of light.”

Around the same time, Zenith was at an art exhibit in Canada that his wife was putting on and was approached by a successful businessman and art lover named Jim Hill.

Hill picks up the story: “This guy was almost asleep leaning up against the wall, so I started talking to him and the conversation turned to horses. Eventually I went to Leonard’s home on a Saturday and the entire dining room table was covered in *Stallion Registers* and *BloodHorses* and *Racing Forms*. Piles of them. And he lectured me from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon with half an hour off for lunch. When I left, I thought, ‘Wow, that could have been terrible, but it was actually quite interesting.’”

Jim and his wife, Susan, bought 50% of four yearlings Zenith had recently purchased. One, Storm Caller, had some talent, and Zenith wanted to run him in an \$80,000 claimer. The Hills, though, had fallen in love with him and didn’t want to risk losing him. The Hills kept Storm Caller, the partnership broke up, and today Jim and Susan Hill own Margaux Farm near Midway, Ky., which they’ve built into a world-class training and boarding operation; they have raced top runners such as grade 1 winner Grand Arch; they buy expensive yearlings; they own a B&B near Keeneland; and they’re still friends with Zenith.

“I never dreamt Jim Hill would go in to the extent he has,” said his mentor. “His involvement is 20-fold more than mine. He’s a fine person and we have dinner a couple of times a year, but he gets upset when I don’t stay at his B&B during the sales. I can’t be socializing; I have to do my studying. I think he finds me crusty.”

Zenith’s fortunes took a northward turn after he gave the sales reins over to Fleischman. They liked an Arch colt at the 2007 Keeneland September sale that showed a bad ankle on an X-ray.

“Ron has X-ray vision and didn’t believe the image,” said Zenith. “We took the picture to a radiologist and she said there was a defect in the film. That’s how we got Crown Isle for \$20,000 (privately)

when everyone else was walking away.”

Crown Isle won the 2009 Toronto Cup Stakes on the turf at Woodbine and the same year’s Ontario Derby, making nearly \$250,000 in his career. So Long George, another son of Arch, was purchased in 2010 for \$50,000 and won the Nijinsky Stakes (G2T) in 2013, earning better than \$290,000 in his career. Zenith enjoys pointing out he defeated the Hills’ Grand

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2017 Stud Fee Can\$	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2017 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	IMPERIALISM (01, Langfuhr), Esquirol Farms	\$2,500	29/6	1/2	0/1	(Imperial Hint, \$195,000)	\$284,442	225	5	0.79	0.99
2	OLD FORESTER (01, Forestry), T. C. Westmeath Stud Farm	\$4,000	26/8	0/0	0/0	(Still Krz, \$48,300)	\$179,152	366	13	1.44	1.54
3	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), Strideaway Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	18/3	0/0	0/0	(Falina's Song, \$21,300)	\$83,249	*356	3	0.94	1.12
4	WHERE'S THE RING (99, Seeking the Gold), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$3,000	15/4	0/0	0/0	(Sick Love, \$15,954)	\$76,250	333	9	1.34	1.38
5	NOT BOURBON (05, Not Impossible), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$3,500	9/3	0/0	0/0	(Not Beauquette, \$18,720)	\$66,720	73	2	1.11	1.33
6	SLIGO BAY (IRE) (98, Sadler's Wells), Adena Springs North	\$5,000	13/3	0/0	0/0	(Hidden Turn, \$24,230)	\$59,572	*390	12	1.21	1.39
7	MILWAUKEE BREW (97, Wild Again), Adena Springs North	\$5,000	16/3	0/0	0/0	(Wild About You, \$11,500)	\$54,470	*546	24	1.20	1.47
8	IT'S NO JOKE (02, Distorted Humor), Esquirol Farms	\$2,000	17/2	0/0	0/0	(Ned Devine, \$15,364)	\$50,341	91	3	1.13	1.01
9	SILENT NAME (JPN) (02, Sunday Silence), Adena Springs North	\$10,000	14/2	0/0	0/0	(Persky's Spirit, \$20,480)	\$44,779	*342	15	1.42	1.24
10	SAFFIR (02, Unbridled) Died, 2014		6/3	0/0	0/0	(Arnhem, \$25,600)	\$43,086	94	2	1.35	1.22
11	GOTTCHA GOLD (03, Coronado's Quest), Peaceful Valley Farms	\$2,500	19/1	0/0	0/0	(Making Havoc, \$11,750)	\$39,937	*128	1	0.84	1.35
12	WILKO (02, Awesome Again), Paulee Thoroughbreds	Private	15/2	0/0	0/0	(Wilko's Last Dance, \$11,720)	\$38,952	*231	5	1.08	1.22
13	GIANT GIZMO (04, Giant's Causeway), Adena Springs North	\$7,500	9/3	0/0	0/0	(Ruth Less Blue, \$12,600)	\$36,279	135	7	1.98	1.54
14	BOLD N' FLASHY (89, Bold Ruckus)	N/A	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Azimut, \$25,790)	\$30,657	354	16	1.29	1.21
15	QUEST (99, Seeking the Gold)	N/A	2/0	0/0	0/0	(Greengrassofyoming, \$27,500)	\$27,900	142	2	0.77	1.29
16	KENTUCKY BEAR (05, Mr. Greeley), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	Private	4/2	0/0	0/0	(Seniorita Pride, \$18,408)	\$23,408	64	2	1.32	1.29
17	STORM VICTORY (00, Storm Cat)	N/A	6/2	0/0	0/0	(Too Much Johnson, \$12,574)	\$22,536	223	6	0.53	0.63
18	OMEGA CODE (00, Elusive Quality), Peaceful Valley Farms	\$2,000	10/1	0/0	0/0	(Alpha and Omega, \$15,822)	\$22,374	323	10	0.70	1.21
19	SECOND IN COMMAND (00, Silver Deputy), Road's End Farm	\$2,000	4/2	0/0	0/0	(Deputy's Command, \$9,834)	\$20,720	112	5	0.76	0.76
20	SPANIARD (06, Candy Ride)	N/A	2/0	0/0	0/0	(Spanish Hombre, \$14,025)	\$19,735	39	0	0.96	1.58
21	SOCIETY'S CHAIRMAN (03, Not Impossible), Shannondoe Farm	\$5,000	1/0	0/0	0/0	(Code Warrior, \$19,200)	\$19,200	21	3	3.86	1.08
22	PURE PRECISION (99, Montbrook)	N/A	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Don't Ask Me Why, \$17,892)	\$18,827	164	3	1.09	0.99
23	SENOY (05, Cactus Ridge)	N/A	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Bombita, \$16,869)	\$16,869	4	0	0.88	1.15
24	NAUGHTY NEW YORKER (02, Quiet American)	N/A	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Dirty Dozen, \$16,101)	\$16,101	12	0	0.61	0.97
25	ONE WAY LOVE (95, Regal Classic)	N/A	4/1	0/0	0/0	(He's Etain, \$10,420)	\$13,352	331	3	0.91	1.27

Arch twice in his career. Kenny Leugene, who breaks the UpHill horses in Florida, suggested a horse to Zenith well back in the cobwebs of the 2011 Keeneland September yearling sale, which he bought for \$30,000. Sent to trainer Brian Lynch, Clearly Now at 3 won the Swale Stakes and Bold Ruler Handicap (both G3) and at 4 took the Belmont Sprint Championship Stakes (G3) going seven furlongs in 1:19.96, the fastest seven furlongs in the history of New York racing, which Zenith witnessed some 40 years after he had stood at the rail of the training track watching good horses gallop for the first time. Sold privately after a 2015 win at Saratoga, Clearly Now has earned more than a \$1 million in his career.

Although he has turned conformation decisions over to Fleishman, Zenith does take some pride in his reading of pedigrees, which he's studied for his entire time in the game.



Graded stakes winner So Long George

"When I started looking at catalogs, I kept seeing Bull Lea was all over these pedigrees, so I figured that meant something," he said. "Pedigrees play a big part in what I do. Crown Isle is by Arch. So Long George is by Arch. Clearly Now and Lightstream are out of Arch mares. Does that send a message? Last year we found an Arch yearling we're very high on who we've named Repair the World. When I look at a catalog page, I seek out what I call the "diagonal line," which is the sire of the yearling, the broodmare sire, and the sire of the second dam. Lightstream's diagonal line is Harlan's Holiday, Arch, and Dynaformer. Repair the World's is Arch, Seeking the Gold, and Seattle Slew, probably the best diagonal line you'll ever find."

Lightstream was purchased for \$55,000 at the 2014 Keeneland September auction. In her first three starts under Lynch, she won her maiden, the Adena Springs Beaumont Stakes (G3) at Keeneland, and the Soaring Softly Stakes on the Belmont turf. She has since added the Lexus Raven Run Stakes (G2) last season and is being patiently handled for a 2017 comeback race. She has earned \$463,000 to date.

"She was the first horse we bought that year," said Zenith. "We didn't know she'd become what she became. I liked a City Zip yearling better that year, and right now he's a 4-year-old maiden."

With Lightstream having become so valuable, UpHill has sold slices of her to Sol Kumin's Head of Plains Partners and the California-based Little Red Feather Racing syndicate. Zenith maintains control over her and has the option, under most scenarios, to run her through her 5-year-old season in 2018 if he so chooses.

UpHill Stable today is a 50/50 split between Zenith and Ron and Irma Desrochers, whom Zenith also brought into the game.

"When I wrote to the Desrochers about becoming partners," said Zenith, "I began my letter to them this way: 'It is inevitable

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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	Cumulative			
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1	<b>COWTOWN CAT</b> (04, Distorted Humor), Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm	\$3,000	61/16	1/1	0/1	(Tiger Blood, \$65,500)	<b>\$479,216</b>	186	3	1.12	1.28
2	<b>INDY WIND</b> (02, A.P. Indy), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,000	20/10	0/0	0/0	(Starship Jubilee, \$40,200)	<b>\$185,374</b>	75	1	1.11	1.08
3	<b>KISS THE KID</b> (03, Lemon Drop Kid), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,500	12/2	0/0	0/0	(Bow Tie Affair, \$25,900)	<b>\$68,849</b>	44	0	0.99	1.68
4	<b>CITY WEEKEND</b> (02, Carson City), Meadow Springs	\$2,000	16/5	0/0	0/0	(City Slammer, \$20,460)	<b>\$64,897</b>	103	1	0.75	0.89
5	<b>E Z'S GENTLEMAN</b> (05, Yankee Gentleman), Duncan Farms	\$2,500	8/3	0/0	0/0	(E Z's Mistress, \$27,300)	<b>\$61,961</b>	36	0	0.27	1.28
6	<b>MR. MABEE</b> (01, Storm Cat)	N/A	5/2	0/0	0/0	(She Mabee Wild, \$51,000)	<b>\$57,346</b>	71	0	0.71	0.83
7	<b>PARENTS' REWARD</b> (98, Mr. Prospector), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$1,000	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Diva's Kitten, \$28,040)	<b>\$55,062</b>	57	3	0.97	0.80
8	<b>KILLENAULE</b> (02, Fusaichi Pegasus)	N/A	7/3	0/0	0/0	(Angelnale, \$10,231)	<b>\$30,696</b>	94	0	0.49	0.84
9	<b>INDIAN EXPRESS</b> (00, Indian Charlie), Old School Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Indian Nate, \$15,620)	<b>\$29,410</b>	39	1	0.85	0.69
10	<b>KING OF THE ROXY</b> (04, Littleexpectations), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$1,000	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Shes My Girl, \$27,380)	<b>\$27,888</b>	12	0	0.38	0.86
11	<b>ADDED EDGE</b> (00, Smart Strike), Raimonde Farms	\$1,500	13/4	0/0	0/0	(Edgy Redhead, \$7,440)	<b>\$25,978</b>	171	7	0.69	0.78
12	<b>MERCER MILL</b> (94, Forty Niner), Fair Winds Farm	Private	8/1	0/0	0/0	(Catmar, \$21,304)	<b>\$24,752</b>	231	15	0.70	0.89
13	<b>LIGHTNIN N THUNDER</b> (01, Storm Cat), Ben Mears Farm	\$2,000	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Enchanted Boots, \$15,730)	<b>\$17,670</b>	203	6	0.87	1.06
14	<b>ALCINDOR</b> (07, Unbridled's Song)	N/A	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Byers Beware, \$10,774)	<b>\$17,174</b>	15	0	1.24	1.32
15	<b>WESTERN PRIDE</b> (98, Way West), R.C. Cline Thoroughbred Farm	\$1,500	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Sweet Butterfly, \$15,780)	<b>\$17,120</b>	104	0	0.62	0.94
16	<b>VAQUERO</b> (06, Orientate), Raimonde Farms	Private	2/0	0/0	0/0	(Cataphract, \$13,540)	<b>\$14,624</b>	13	1	0.70	0.82

you will lose all your money. The only questions are how long it will take and how much fun will you have.' But that didn't turn out to be correct because with these good horses we're making money and we have tax problems."

Lest anyone think he's doing too well, Zenith is quick to point out in 2015 he paid \$115,000, the most he's ever spent for a yearling, for a City Zip yearling whom he recently sold for \$7,000; and paid \$30,000 for another yearling whom he just gave away. But his recent success has been impressive, considering UpHill consists right now of Lightstream and the maiden 4-year-old; one 3-year-old Bellamy Road filly; and five 2-year-olds.

Zenith bristled good-naturedly when told that Lynch called him "one of the lucky guys." Asked if he agreed, Zenith said, "No, I resent it. My take is that avoiding the purchase of bad yearlings

is 90% skill. Buying a good yearling that turns into a good horse is substantially luck. Nobody has that kind of skill. But I continually see horses that we reject bring big money from people, and that never ceases to amaze me. We usually end up buying below the median for any given day.

"My first love is buying yearlings, and my second love is watching them develop into racehorses. In the afternoons (races) now, honestly, it's not as exciting as it used to be because I have too much anxiety and worry."

At a couple of points during our discussion, Zenith stopped and questioned whether he was boring the interviewer, who agreed with Jim Hill. Zenith is really quite interesting and is a formidable mentor who has learned horse racing's lessons the hard way. Which is the UpHill upside to trial and error. **BH**



SKIP DICKSTEIN

A 'changing point' in Zenith's Thoroughbred involvement came when he met Hall of Fame trainer Allen Jerkens



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

Zenith was instrumental in getting Susan and Jim Hill (center) into breeding and racing