

SOUTHEAST

Northwest Stud Heads in Right Direction

Gone Astray heads solid stallion roster

BY CYNTHIA McFARLAND

ON THIS CLEAR NOVEMBER DAY, there's not a single cloud marring the wide stretch of pale turquoise sky. Although temperatures dipped into the mid-40s at sunrise, by the time the exercise riders pull the tack off their last horses of the morning, they have climbed into the 60s.

It's the kind of day that makes up for August in Ocala. Fall has at last come to Florida's horse country.

The final set of horses has long since left the track at the Nelson Jones Training Center just west of Ocala when Alfredo Lichoa stops by one of the barns to chat with a tenant. As manager of Northwest Stud, Lichoa not only is in charge of that busy operation but also oversees activities throughout the sprawling training complex. That's because all but three parcels of the 550-acre complex are also owned by the Miami-based entity behind Northwest Stud, which comprises 120 of those acres.

Accented by hundreds of statuesque oaks and gently rolling terrain, this location is rich in Thoroughbred history. After all, it was once part of the famed Hooper Farm, one of Ocala's first major Thoroughbred operations. Fred Hooper bred or raced the winners of more than 100 stakes races, including such standouts as 1945 Kentucky Derby winner Hoop Jr., millionaire Eclipse Award winning Susan's Girl, champion sprinter Precisionist, and many more. Recognized with the Eclipse Award for

Outstanding Breeder in 1975 and 1982, Hooper also received the Eclipse Award of Merit in 1991.

That winning tradition continues at this location. Grade one stakes graduates from the Nelson Jones Training Center include such outstanding horses as Awesome Feather, Big Drama, Burning Roma, Carpe Diem, Flashback, Hard Spun, Jackson Bend, Midnight Lute, West Coast, and numerous others.

"Nelson Jones had owned the complex a little less than 10 years when we bought the first part of the property for Northwest Stud in 2010, and then we bought additional parcels," said Lichoa, noting that there are now 16 barns that are rented out with approximately 424 stalls total. Once training season is in full swing, all of the barns have tenants.

Each of the barns has access to round pens and turn-out paddocks. There are three EuroSizer walkers on the farm, as well as three equine swimming pools. In addition to the lighted one-mile dirt track with six-horse starting gate, there are a seven-eighths-mile turf track and a 13½-acre open field for schooling and galloping.



LOUISE REINAGEL

Farm manager Alfredo Lichoa

STRONG START

A veterinarian in his native Venezuela, Lichoa came to the United States in 2001 and worked as resident veterinarian at Franks Farm in Ocala until owner John Franks passed away in 2003. Lichoa then worked as stallion manager at Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds until taking on the responsibility for the start-up of Northwest Stud in 2010.

While he makes regular rounds of the complex to be sure all is well with the various tenants, the bulk of Lichoa's attention is consumed with running Northwest Stud.

The farm itself was designed to be both functional and aesthetically appealing. The stallion barn at Northwest Stud was built in 2012 and features oversized stalls with cushioned Polylast flooring for the comfort and safety of the horses. Each stallion also has his own spacious paddock for spending a good deal of time outside.

In addition to Northwest Stud's three barns, there are numerous large pastures for broodmares. Lichoa is grateful for a strong network of employees and emphasizes that the farm wouldn't be

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

Goldmark Farm..... 35
www.goldmarkfarm.com

BACKTALK

The Nation's Leading Sire of Two-Year-Olds by Earnings Per Starter \$43,810

Soutache, son of **Backtalk**, broke the stakes record winning the Affirmed Florida Sire Stakes at Gulfstream Park, Sept. 2. On Sept. 30, **Soutache** next won the \$400,000 In Reality Stakes. On Sept. 28, a **Backtalk** 2YO daughter, **Dixie Talk**, won at Gulfstream by 8 lengths; and on Oct. 4 another **Backtalk** son, **Halfback**, won at Gulfstream by 6¾ lengths.

Out of **31** starters **Backtalk**
has **20** individual winners.
41 wins, including **3** stakes wins.



BACKTALK

Smarty Jones – Apasionata Sonata
by Affirmed
\$2,250 | stands and nurses



Standing: Backtalk and Young Brian

5290 NW 130th Ave., Ocala, Florida • 352 | 369 | 3377

(Statistics as of Oct. 14 / The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc.)

2017 LEADING SIRES IN FLORIDA



For daily updated sire lists
visit 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	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	WILDCAT HEIR (00, Forest Wildcat)	Died, 2015	220/138	8/10	4/8	(Rainbow Heir, \$153,850)	\$5,581,731	*684	33	1.39	1.36
2	FIRST DUDE (07, Stephen Got Even), Double Diamond Farm	\$10,000	152/73	2/4	0/2	(Skye Diamonds, \$378,920)	\$3,341,851	265	5	1.17	1.27
3	HIGH COTTON (03, Dixie Union), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	159/72	2/3	0/2	(Talk Logistics, \$200,550)	\$3,223,190	*387	10	0.98	1.26
4	ADIOS CHARLIE (08, Indian Charlie), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	73/48	2/2	1/2	(Mo Cash, \$170,684)	\$2,489,011	115	3	1.49	1.34
5	GONE ASTRAY (06, Dixie Union), Northwest Stud	\$5,000	100/57	4/5	2/4	(Starship Bonita, \$389,100)	\$2,448,968	*173	6	1.08	1.15
6	WITH DISTINCTION (01, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$7,500	109/57	0/0	0/0	(Sweet Distinction, \$87,490)	\$1,834,281	*503	11	1.07	1.18
7	TWO STEP SALSA (05, Petionville), Get Away Farm	\$7,500	120/53	3/3	1/3	(Driven by History, \$126,200)	\$1,735,175	228	7	0.99	1.01
8	IN SUMMATION (03, Put It Back), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	99/61	0/0	0/0	(Calculator, \$142,020)	\$1,683,785	219	5	0.97	1.36
9	OVERDRIVEN (09, Tale of the Cat), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	60/32	1/1	0/1	(Overnegotiate, \$164,015)	\$1,439,303	105	1	0.95	1.16
10	AWESOME OF COURSE (00, Awesome Again), Ocala Stud	\$5,000	87/43	0/0	0/0	(Awesome Banner, \$228,275)	\$1,389,650	198	10	1.54	1.39
11	BIG DRAMA (06, Montbrook), Stonewall's Prestige Stallions	\$5,000	76/44	1/1	0/1	(Smile Big, \$126,292)	\$1,364,828	139	3	0.98	1.31
12	EXCLUSIVE QUALITY (03, Elusive Quality)	N/A	88/41	0/0	0/0	(Dreaming of Neno, \$113,832)	\$1,139,497	299	7	0.96	1.08
13	GREATNESS (99, Mr. Prospector), Stonewall's Prestige Stallions	\$3,500	47/31	0/0	0/0	(Mr Manning, \$157,225)	\$1,055,584	*255	7	1.31	1.01
14	BIONDETTI (08, Bernardini), Woodford Thoroughbreds	\$4,000	61/30	0/0	0/0	(Bet On Mike, \$67,253)	\$874,539	98	0	0.64	1.49
15	BACKTALK (07, Smarty Jones), Bridlewood Farm	\$3,000	28/17	1/2	1/1	(Soutache, \$405,000)	\$868,784	47	1	1.20	0.77
16	FLASHSTORM (04, Storm Cat), Northwest Stud	\$2,500	41/25	0/0	0/0	(Cinderella El Crome, \$116,900)	\$692,276	82	3	0.94	0.98
17	POSEIDON'S WARRIOR (08, Speightstown), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$6,500	23/4	1/2	0/1	(Firenze Fire, \$449,100)	\$552,401	*109	1	1.15	1.09
18	J P'S GUSTO (08, Successful Appeal), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,000	33/19	1/1	0/1	(Remember Willy, \$56,242)	\$526,946	57	1	0.91	1.12
19	MONTBROOK (90, Buckaroo)	Died	34/21	0/0	0/0	(Schivarelli, \$112,598)	\$522,747	*895	47	1.45	1.48
20	FIELD COMMISSION (05, Service Stripe), Solera Farm	\$2,500	28/14	0/0	0/0	(Ten Hut, \$101,560)	\$511,585	66	0	0.74	0.97
21	TREASURE BEACH (GB) (08, Galileo), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$10,000	32/11	0/0	0/0	(Ambassador Jim, \$82,500)	\$507,609	*159	0	0.72	1.48
22	CROWN OF THORNS (05, Repent), Woodford Thoroughbreds	\$2,000	28/15	0/0	0/0	(Major Key, \$68,220)	\$497,570	46	1	0.79	1.15
23	HEAR NO EVIL (00, Carson City), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	29/12	0/0	0/0	(Diamonds R Trump, \$58,800)	\$443,983	113	7	1.59	1.48
24	BRETHREN (08, Distorted Humor), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$6,000	15/5	0/0	0/0	(Tip Sheet, \$117,750)	\$408,255	35	0	1.31	1.83
25	SILVER TREE (00, Hennessy), Vegso Racing Stable	\$2,500	19/13	0/0	0/0	(Tree Fire, \$51,834)	\$403,297	44	1	0.83	1.18

where it is without their efforts.

"Our employees are like family; we've put together a good team, everyone knows what they have to do, and we really support each other," he said. "We've had the same group of people working here for five

years. Our team is second to none. They could work anywhere in the world in the horse business."

Established as a racing and pinhooking operation, Northwest Stud has quickly grown into a respected commercial breed-

ing farm, which is home to four stallions, all owned by Northwest Stud. The 2018 roster includes Gone Astray, Flashstorm, Duke of Mischief, and Irish-bred Wrote.

Gone Astray is the farm's "big" horse, a multiple graded stakes winner of \$1,125,162 and by Dixie Union out of the Mr. Prospector mare Illicit. Gone Astray won the Pennsylvania Derby (G2), the Ohio Derby (G2), and the Salvator Mile (G3). He was seven times stakes-placed.

Since entering stud in 2012, Gone Astray has been extremely well received, covering 112 mares his first year and 117 the next. He has become a top 10 first- and second-crop sire. Among his best runners to date is 3-year-old colt Three Rules, winner of the Carry Back Stakes (G3), who has earnings of \$939,160 through mid-November.

Gone Astray is also represented by 2017 stakes-winning juvenile fillies Starship Bonita, who won the Florida Sire My Dear Girl Stakes and the FTBOA Florida Sire Susan's Girl Stakes at Gulfstream Park in September; and Go Astray, winner of the



LOUISE REINAGEL PHOTOS

The stallion barn at Northwest Stud

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 November 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 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 Northern Hemisphere black-type stakes results from all available countries. *Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners include 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.



A band of 50 broodmares calls Northwest Stud home

FTBOA Florida Sire Desert Vixen Stakes and third in the FTBOA Florida Sire Susan's Girl Stakes.

Lichoa says Gone Astray is both intelligent and laid back, qualities that helped him adapt quickly to his role as a breeding stallion.

Flashstorm was the first horse on the Northwest roster. A 2004 son of the legendary Storm Cat, he is out of Kristi, by St. Jovite, and has already sired black-type runners on two continents. His dam is a half sister to grade 1 winner and millionaire Geri.

"He was already a graded stakes-placed winner of \$261,819 when we bought him out of D. Wayne Lukas' barn in early 2009," recalled Lichoa. "We initially planned to keep racing him, but an injury ended his career, so we stood him at stud starting in 2010. He's one of the last Storm Cats standing and one of the best looking."

Also making his home in the Northwest Stud stallion barn is Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G1T) winner and multiple stakes-placed Wrote. The only son of two-time Eclipse Award winner High Chaparral standing in the U.S., Wrote earned \$815,943 and entered stud in 2014.

Lichoa is highly impressed by Wrote's foals, which are extremely attractive and have good bone density. The young sire is already represented by stakes-placed 2-year-old winner High Providence.

Rounding out the stallion roster is Duke of Mischief, a multiple graded stakes win-

ner of \$1,905,747 who entered stud in 2014. The son of Graeme Hall defeated a number of top horses during his career and had his most impressive year as a 4-year-old when he captured the Oaklawn Handicap (G2), the Philip H. Iselin Stakes (G3), and the Ft. Lauderdale Stakes (G3).

The farm's broodmare band now numbers 50, some of which were raced by the farm and many of which were purchased specifically because of how they crossed on Northwest stallions.

"We started with 10 broodmares and now have 50. Conformation and bloodlines are more important than race record when we are looking for mares. We've had very good luck with unraced mares," observed Lichoa. "We breed to a few outside horses, but mostly we support our own stallions."

SALES SUCCESS

In addition to being a full-service breeding operation, Northwest Stud races a number of horses each year and is also committed to selling quality horses, both yearlings and 2-year-olds.

The farm has had multiple pinhooking success stories, including Carpe Diem, a multiple grade 1 stakes winner of \$1,519,800, who was purchased as a yearling at the 2013 Keeneland September sale and became the co-highest-selling juvenile of 2014 when purchased by Stonestreet Stables for \$1.6 million at the Ocala Breeders' Sales Co. March Sale of 2-year-olds in training.

Northwest Stud bought Constellation, who later became a grade 1 stakes winner of \$619,464, as a yearling at the 2014 Keeneland September auction and sold the filly for \$800,000 at the Ocala Breeders' Sales Co. March 2015 Sale of 2-year-olds in training.

Another top seller was multiple graded stakes-placed stakes winner Zulu, whom Northwest Stud bought at Keeneland September 2014 and sold for \$900,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Florida Select 2-year-olds in training sale in 2015.

Clients who have done well with their Northwest Stud purchases often return to buy from their consignment again, and Lichoa says this level of trust cannot be underestimated for any sales and pinhooking operation.

Reflecting on the market, Lichoa has been pleased by the results at the 2017 sales.

"The market is strong if you have the right horse," he noted.

Lichoa is one of many Florida breeders who hope that the state's breeders' program will improve in the near future.

"Since we started the farm, the number of mares bred in Florida has gone down. A lot of people are breeding out of state, or breeding to Florida stallions, but foaling them in other states," he said. "We have to have incentives to help small breeders."

One way to do that would be to make changes to the current program.

"More than 70% of Florida-breds are winning out of state," Lichoa pointed out. "If the program was changed so that breeders can receive awards when their horses race outside Florida, that would be very helpful to them. For example, if breeders got 5% of the purse when their horse wins anywhere in the country, that would be a big plus for them."

Offering those Florida breeders the best possible stallion choices remains a priority for Northwest Stud. Lichoa says that the farm is looking to the future and is open to standing additional quality stallions that best fit the Florida program.

"At the end of the day, I'm really proud of what we do," said Lichoa with a smile. **BH**

Cynthia McFarland is a freelance writer based in Ocala, Fla.