

# MAKING SUCCESSFUL RUNNERS



MATHEA KELLEY

A lot of work goes into preparing a young Thoroughbred to get to the training track

**A**LL ONE NEEDS TO DO IS LISTEN to the pride in the voice of the people who worked with Triple Crown winner Justify when he was a yearling to understand the importance of the breaking and early training process in the success of the Thoroughbred runner. In a matter of a couple of months, Justify evolved from a sales yearling who needed time to grow from a willing student learning the fundamentals of his upcoming career and into a complete racehorse.

Breaking and training experts must show patience, skill, and understanding as they teach young horses to accept a bit, saddle, and rider, as well as introducing them to the lifestyle they will encounter at racetracks.

Then there are the ontrack lessons—everything from training with dozens of other racehorses on the track and getting used to the tight environs of the starting gate, to running with others directly in front of or to the side.

Finding a quality breaking and training facility is key to the success of Thoroughbred owners, and it is a decision no less important than purchasing the right young Thoroughbred. What follows are insights from proven experts in the field of educating young horses and helping make them successful runners.

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## BENCHMARK

Situated on 100 acres in North Texas, Benchmark Training Center is about 40 miles east of Dallas, making it centrally located for horsemen racing not only at Lone Star Park but at Oaklawn Park in Arkansas, Remington Park in Oklahoma, and Harrah's Louisiana Downs near the Texas border in Bossier City, La.

Benchmark Training Center is well known for producing top-line runners. The training center sent out last year's sale-topper at the Texas Thoroughbred Association's sale of 2-year-olds in training at Lone Star Park with a Tale of the Cat colt selling to Louisiana-based Whispering Oaks Farm for \$120,000. Named Morethanfishin, the dark bay gelding broke his maiden impressively May 4 at Evangeline Downs.

Recent stakes winners that underwent their schooling at Benchmark, located near Quinlan, Texas, and operated by Gerwyn "Taffy" Jones and his wife, Jane, are One Liz, who won last year's Isaac Murphy Handicap at Arlington International Racecourse and is stakes-placed in 2018; and Ruby Sioux, who annexed the Jack Bishop Stakes last summer at Prairie Meadows.

Texas Chrome, another Benchmark grad, was a consistent graded stakes star from 2015-17, earning more than \$1 million, including the purses from scores in the grade 3 Super Derby and Oklahoma Derby.

Among the amenities offered by Benchmark is a five-eighths-mile training track. The recent addition of 16 new stalls makes room for 72 head. The facility also has a multi-stall starting gate, a Euorciser, and multiple turn-out paddocks, ranging from one to five acres, that are ideally suited for layups.

"Our track is a wide racetrack with a dirt surface," the horseman said. "It is a very kind surface and has been very kind to the horses."



COADY PHOTOGRAPHY

**Benchmark-trained Texas Chrome earned more than \$1 million**

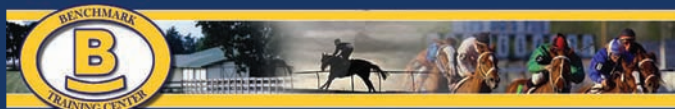
After working on the East Coast, Jones, who began honing his horsemanship more than 35 years ago in his native Wales, has been developing Benchmark over the last 20 years.

Jones estimates that some 80%-90% of the horses that receive early training at Benchmark win at least once after making the move to the racetrack.

Jones attributes the success of Benchmark's trainees to his patient training style, which contrasts to the hurried pace employed by many other facilities.

"I am bringing a little bit of a European technique to the method of training," Jones said. "I am not as aggressive as some Americans get with their young horses by letting the horses grow into themselves and mature to be the athletes they can be."

# BENCHMARK TRAINING CENTER



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Gerwyn "Taffy" Jones, Owner/Trainer • Mark Brennan, Farm Manager  
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www.benchmarktc.com • Email: taffyrace@aol.com

**WEBB CARROLL TRAINING CENTER**

Graduates from the Webb Carroll Training Center had a pretty special year in 2017. They made 539 trips to the winner's circle, some by the top runners in the game such as Abel Tasman, winner of last year's Longines Kentucky Oaks (G1) and an Eclipse Award winner. According to partner Travis Durr, so far this year 236 wins have been racked up by those who got their careers started at WCTC, with 23 stakes horses and eight graded stakes horses.

The results speak for themselves. Abel Tasman has retained her form at 4, winning the June 9 Ogden Phipps Stakes (G1) at Belmont Park. Later in the card on Belmont Stakes day, the WCTC graduate Spring Quality landed the grade 1 Woodford Reserve Manhattan Stakes.

Other 2018 stakes-winning graduates from the program include Gamble's Ghost, a two-time grade 3 winner this year who just won the Ontario Matron Stakes (G3) July 15; Firenze Fire, winner of Belmont's Dwyer Stakes (G3) July 7 after taking last year's Champagne Stakes (G1); and Pimlico Special Stakes (G3) winner Irish War Cry.



ARIANNA SPADONIN/YRA

Webb Carroll graduate Sue's Fortune leads the Adirondack Stakes field Aug. 11 at Saratoga Race Course

Durr, a lifelong horseman who has taken the reins at WCTC after working under Webb Carroll for a decade, has mastered the ins and outs of running a top-level breaking and training facility. And while success with 3-year-olds is what the sport focuses on, the results from the 2-year-old sector of the business show many more trips to the winner's circle are in store. Durr is proud of the early results from this year's 2-year-old graduates—with more than 10 winners so far—including Richard Nicolai's Sue's Fortune, a sharp winner Aug. 11 of Saratoga's Adirondack Stakes (G2). Other juvenile winners include Tremont Stakes winner Our Braintrust and the well-thought-of Lutsky, a 5/4-length winner of his July 12 debut in New York.

All of this success comes from the center's philosophy of sending horses to the training track in big sets, giving each horse as

much of a "racetrack atmosphere" as possible, with the goal of sending a "sane, sound, fit, educated horse" ready for the track environment when it comes time to perform.

The 50-acre-plus training center just outside St. Matthews, S.C., features state-of-the-art racing surfaces and facilities, including a seven-furlong irrigated dirt oval, a six-furlong irrigated turf course, starting gate with an experienced crew, small and large turn-out paddocks, a swim facility, and an eight-horse exerciser.

"We're no better than our help," Durr said of the key to success. "We have a very good crew."

"We've been on a good run, and we have a really good group of 2-year-olds that we're hoping will have a good Saratoga meet and will go on with their careers."

**HIGHLANDER TRAINING CENTER**

Highlander Training Center, near Sulphur Springs, Texas, offers year round training of Thoroughbreds on its 122-acre spread.

The staff and owner's combined experience with racehorses approaches 100 years. The staff's past records include 2009 Horse of the Year Rachel Alexandra, multiple Texas champions, and more than 400 stakes winners at major tracks across the South and Midwest. Highlander Training Center, 80 miles east of Dallas, is conveniently located within easy shipping distance to eight racetracks, giving owners plenty of options besides sending stock to Florida or Kentucky to be trained.

The HTC team accomplishes its mission of "forging champions" through correct foundation breaking techniques, nutrition, veterinary care, and one-on-one interaction with each horse. Through communication with each owner, HTC works toward well-defined goals and is designed to produce racehorses fit and ready to take owners to the winner's circle.

This fall, HTC will boast a new, state-of-the-art training barn containing 32 stalls, vet examination room, courtyard, and covered round pen and walker. The barn will also contain four rubber floor wash bays, 16-foot rubber-lined aisle ways, 12x12 rubber matted and wall lined stalls with automatic waterers. Large overhead fans will be added for efficient ventilation, along with corner hay feeders, an automatic fly system, and 24-hour security system. The original training barn, with comparable features, has 29 12 x 12 stalls. A therapy center will be added in 2019.

HTC's four-furlong track is irrigated and groomed daily and

***The Highlander Training Center team accomplishes its mission of 'forging champions' through correct foundation breaking techniques, nutrition, veterinary care, and one-on-one interaction with each horse.***

# SARATOGA STAKES WINNING GRADS

CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THESE IMPRESSIVE  
TWO-YEAR-OLDS



**CHATTE L** shown winning the  
**SKIDMORE STAKES** August 17th at **SARATOGA**.  
Purchased as a yearling by Webb Carroll Training Center  
Owner: David Baxter • Trainer: Brandon McFarlane



**SUE'S FORTUNE** shown winning the  
**G2 ADIRONDACK STAKES**  
August 11th at **SARATOGA**.  
Owner: Fortune Farm • Trainer: Jeremiah Englehart

Our graduates get the **RIGHT** start because from the beginning we handle our youngsters the **RIGHT** way. They get the education they need, and they get an incredible foundation. So when they head to the track, they are ready to run with sound mind and body. Yes, we boast impressive 2YO statistics. But we don't,

**WE WON'T**, push them unnecessarily. That's horsemanship. And when it comes down to it, that is the secret to our success. Our young Thoroughbreds are allowed to develop at their own pace. While many of our graduates enjoy early success, all of them are handled with the long haul in mind, most of which have a long career lasting many seasons.

*A job well done, a name you can rely on.*



## WEBB CARROLL TRAINING CENTER

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has True Center starting gates and a pony horse to assist every set. An owners' reception and viewing building, plus an outside viewing area, is coming by spring of 2019. Both vantage points will offer comfort and convenience for watching the horses go through their paces. HTC's website will include private portals for owners to watch their horses breeze and check up on their training regimen.

Individual paddocks and numerous pastures supply efficient turn out for rehabilitation or rest off the track. The paddocks and pastures feature rolling hills, ponds, automatic waterers, lush coastal grass, large loafing sheds, and long hay/grain feeders.

The center is owned by a Texas LLC organized by longtime Thoroughbred owner Larry Hirsch. Knowing the importance of early development and training of a horse, he joined forces with well-known trainer Jimmy "Scooter" Dodwell to launch HTC. Scooter and staff bring the highest level of professionalism to breaking and training Thoroughbreds. Their skills are complemented by a strong commitment to the physical safety and well-being of the horses entrusted to them. A staff of 17 loyal and dedicated licensed riders, grooms, and other key people are committed to "forging champions."

### MARGAUX FARM

Margaux Farm has a long-standing reputation for its first-class facilities and for offering top-notch care.

A full service operation situated on 640 acres of rolling land in Central Kentucky, Margaux boasts three separate training tracks, including a five-furlong all weather European style gallop that undulates over hills; a straight 1 $\frac{1}{6}$ -miles all-weather track; and a 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile turf course that has an uphill finish.

"The key to our breaking program is very simple: time and patience. It's much easier to do things right the first time around. We want these babies to have positive experiences and be happy doing their job," said Amanda Motz, who is head of sales and marketing for the farm owned by Jim and Susan Hill. "Each horse has its own individual program, and we have some

great riders who have worked at the farm for a very long time.

"A lot of our success can be attributed to the combination of having world-class facilities and a dedicated, knowledgeable staff. Everyone is on the same page in having the horses' best interest at heart."

The proof is in the results. Led by general manager Michael Hardy and by farm trainer Dermot Littlefield, a recent Margaux success story is Crawl From the Bar, a 2-year-old Exchange Rate filly who has made only two starts—both stakes-placings—at Woodbine so far this year.

Other top runners of 2018 who received their early lessons at Margaux include Daddy Is a Legend, a grade 3 winner last year who got the important Saratoga season off on the right foot with a score in the Lake George Stakes (G3T) on opening day; Divine Miss Grey, a three-time stakes winner this year, including a score June 30 in Monmouth Park's Lady's Secret Stakes; and Divisidero. A two-time grade 1 winner, 6-year-old Divisidero impressed in the July 7 Arlington Handicap (G3T).

The runners are able to perform well on the track due to the lessons they receive during their training sessions.

"Before they leave the farm, we really try to expose them to as much as possible, and to recreate that racetrack environment in order to make the transition to the racetrack as seamless and stress free as possible," Motz said. "We want trainers to be able to carry on with them without a hitch once they ship out."

Margaux is also dedicated to providing the best customer experience. Access to videos and photos is easily available, and clients also receive weekly emails and updates by phone.

One exciting update to the farm's facilities is a new rehab barn that should be ready by the fall. The 26-stall barn will include an AquaTred and a salt therapy room, among other features.

Margaux's convenient location is a short distance from the Keeneland and Fasig-Tipton sale grounds with some of the best veterinary clinics in the country nearby.

### PAUL SHARP STABLES

Paul Sharp has been breaking and training Thoroughbreds for more than three decades, and his years of experience have taught him to keep things streamlined.

"We're here to do a job, and do it well," he said. "There are a lot of people in this business that do what I do, but one thing that sets us apart as far as our breaking and training program is we really focus on the horse and developing its confidence. We concentrate on developing their minds and their bodies and get them ready to go to the next step...and that shows in a lot of what we do. The big picture is confidence."

Sharp's methods have proved very successful on the racetrack. Recent graduates include Monomoy Girl, the current leading 3-year-old filly of 2018 with wins in the Longines Kentucky Oaks (G1), Acorn Stakes (G1), and Coaching Club American Oaks (G1). Catch a Glimpse, Canada's Horse of the Year of 2015, is a recent



ADAM COGLIANESE/NYRA

Daddy Is a Legend draws clear in Saratoga's Lake George



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SKIP DICKSTEIN

Division leader Monomoy Girl, a graduate of the Paul Sharp Stables, strides clear in the Coaching Club American Oaks

graduate, and Sharp's pinhooking skills helped develop Pure Silver, winner of last year's Adirondack Stakes (G2) at Saratoga. Pure Silver was also named champion New York-bred 2-year-old filly of 2017.

"We offered her for sale, and subsequently didn't sell, but the owners (Twin Creek Racing Stables) were more than happy to keep her," Sharp said.

Sharp's operation is a 90-acre training farm that also does layoffs. As it is with other successful outfits, the staff is a key factor in helping get horses ready for the next level.

Assistant Isidoro Centeno has been with Sharp for 18 years and

is an integral part of the team.

"I can put him in any situation we have, and he's going to do everything just like I would do it," Sharp said. "He's a big part of what we do. He's quite a horseman."

Sharp's wife, Sarah, a top-notch horseperson in her own right, does the "behind-the-scenes stuff that nobody ever gets credit for," Sharp said.

Sharp's philosophy with young horses is pretty simple: "It's all positive reinforcement. I'm not reinventing anything, really, but I like to make sure a horse has learned what he's supposed to before he leaves here to go to the next step.

## MARGAUX FARM

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For more information, contact:

**Amanda Motz**  
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DIVISIDERO (G1)  
GRAND ARCH (G1)  
BEE JERSEY (G1)  
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AVANZARE (G2)  
LIGHTSTREAM (G2)  
GO BLUE OR GO HOME (G2)  
BREAKING LUCKY (G2)  
DADDY IS A LEGEND (G3)  
KIMBEAR (G3)  
SHARP SENSATION (G3)  
RERUN (G3)  
WEILAND (SW)  
DIVINE MISS GREY (SW)  
MAJESTIC DUNHILL (SW)



MARGAUX

“If you look at the process from breaking to racing at 2, at Saratoga or at Churchill Downs for instance, the ones that have performed the best have had some really positive reinforcement to let their instincts to run come out. That’s what you don’t want to get in the way of.”

Sharp’s outlook, along with his talented team, will hopefully allow you to get to the winner’s circle.

### SILVER SPRINGS STUD

Silver Springs Stud is a full service operation in the heart of Thoroughbred country in Bourbon County, Ky. The farm encompasses 225 acres, with 100 acres devoted to the breaking and training of top-level young horses. Beyond the great land and layout an experienced ownership and management team tends to every detail to make their horses successful in their future job on the racetrack.

The mission at Silver Springs Stud is to develop bone and condition the mind. Bone comes from the soil (with a strengthening 2:1 calcium-to-phosphorus ratio) and natural spring water. The conditioning—from the undulating fields—comes from land along with its expert staff led by owner Steve Johnson, who has been in the business since 1971, and farm manager Erik Johnson, who as part of the Darley Flying Start Program, brings a world of equine management skills to the operation.

Kevin Noltemeyer is the farm trainer. A native of Louisville, Noltemeyer, 30, started working on the racetrack the day he turned 18 and could apply for a license. He’s held his trainer’s license since he was 20 and has worked in New York, California, and Kentucky, while under such notable trainers as Todd Pletcher, Dallas Stewart, Barry Abrams, Eoin Harty, and Paul McGee.

Noltemeyer has also prepped yearlings for Lane’s End and trained at Margaux Farm before taking the job as Dixiana Farm

trainer. He enjoys what he does and takes a unique approach to the breaking program.

“We try to keep the horses away from the track for the first part of the young horses breaking process,” he said. “We work them in fields early on more than anything so they can learn in a relaxed environment. They are looking to the rider and doing exactly what we want them to do. It develops a very good mind as well as develops a really good mouth.”

Before the horses make their way to a training track, they are introduced to rolling hills of the farm.

“We incorporate hills into the working regimen a lot,” Noltemeyer said. “We have a section of the farm where we can work a horse three-eighths of a mile with an uphill gallop out, and there is a rail there to get the horses used to it. We don’t take them down there until about three weeks before we are going to give them their first work.”

“Silver Springs has a pari-mutual gate on the farm in which the young horses go in at least once a week. It’s important when they get to the racetrack and into a trainer’s barn they flow right into their program and good gate manners is a big part of that.”

Silver Springs Stud does have access to a five-eighths training

“

***We work them in fields early on more than anything so they can learn in a relaxed environment.”***

— KEVIN NOLTEMEYER

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track that is incorporated into the later stages of training for both young horses and older horses.

### WOODFORD THOROUGHBREDS

Innovation and reinvestment are vital to keep businesses on top of the market. Woodford Thoroughbreds is in the process of redoing its training track in Central Florida this summer, making sure its facility remains state-of-the-art. Going all the way to the foundation, the track will have its base refurbished, a new irrigation system installed, and high-end cushion put in for the coming season.

Spanning more than 1,000 acres near Ocala, Fla., Woodford Thoroughbreds prides itself on the amount of turnout paddocks it offers and boasts one of North America's only 1½-mile and half-mile turf gallops, which are carved into the surrounding woods.

"It is a great place to start out young horses," said vice president Matt Lyons, referring not only to the facility but also to the veteran team on hand.

Farm trainer John Gleason, who has been with Woodford for more than five years, has a wealth of experience, having previously worked for Bryan and Holly Rice's Woodside Ranch where he had his hands on horses for such major owners as Robert and Beverly Lewis, W.T. Young's Overbrook Farm, and JMS Stable.

"He's a very talented, underrated horseman," Lyons said. "It's not a fluke that a lot of the horses that come out of his program win first time out. The foundation he puts under the horses really sets them up for their future careers."

Gleason's team includes assistant Quincey Hoppel, a fifth-generation horseman.

"We have good riders and a good crew; a crew that stays with us year-round," Lyons said. "Once our 2-year-olds leave our yearlings come into the facility and we start prepping then. It keeps our team together and consistent. A lot of 2-year-old folks have to let their crew go for the summer. Our team stays together, and



ELSA LORIEU

Grade 1 winner **Midnight Bisou**

that's a very positive thing for what we're doing."

The number of winners to come from Woodford Thoroughbreds is impressive. Multiple grade 1 winner Stopchargingmaria was a Woodford Thoroughbreds pinhook and Midnight Bisou, winner of the Santa Anita Oaks (G1) and Mother Goose Stakes (G2), was an RNA as a yearling that came back through the Woodford Thoroughbreds program.

Another recent success story is Discreet Lover, most recently third in the Whitney Stakes (G1) at Saratoga.

"He's turned out to be a life-changer for the people that bought him," Lyons said. "He came through our training program. While he was a \$10,000 sale 2-year-old, he's knocking on the door of a million dollars in earnings."

A full service outfit, Woodford Thoroughbreds stands several stallions and works with its partners to get their offspring off to the winner's circle. **BH**

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## Discreet Lover

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Earnings of **\$941,560**

Bred, raised, broken, trained  
& sold by Woodford.

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With lifetimes of combined experience and a world-class facility, we are dedicated to providing horses with impeccable care while striving to build solid foundations for racing success. Patience and confidence building is the **Woodford Way**.

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