



Pierre Esquirol with Double Honor

TAMING THE WEST

Pierre Esquirol makes a go of it in western Canada

BY JENNIFER MORRISON
PHOTOS BY SHELLEY LUPUL/LUPULOGRAPHY

YOU CAN'T KEEP A PASSIONATE, hard-working horseman down.

Pierre Esquirol is as determined a Thoroughbred breeder as you will meet, someone who has ridden the highs and lows of the business and continues to reinvent his program not just for his own gain but in the hopes of bettering the industry.

From his first broodmare purchases when he was in his mid 20s and in his home province of Saskatchewan to building up his 160-acre Esquirol Farms in Ryley, Alberta, Canada, from scratch, the 54-year-old always has a plan.

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STALLIONS 2019



**SW, G1-Placed
by STREET SENSE
ELNAAWI**

*Street Sense – Pilfer, by Deputy Minister
Won Native Dancer S., placed Donn H.-G1,
Brooklyn Inv. S.-G2, Gotham S.-G3, etc.*

Earnings \$407,305

\$2,500 LF

**Indiana's ONLY Son
of UNBRIDLED
MUSTANFAR**

*Unbridled – Manwah, by Lyphard
Won/Placed in Nine Graded Stakes*

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\$2,000 LF



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2019 LEADING SIRES IN CANADA



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2019 Stud Fee Can\$	Rnrs/Wnrs	BT SWnrs/Wns	Rstrct SW/BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2019 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	GIANT GIZMO (04, Giant's Causeway), Adena Springs North	\$6,500	17/8	0/0	0/0	(Firey and Gorgeous, \$24,360)	\$104,819	200	8	1.62	1.47
2	GOING COMMANDO (00, Unbridled's Song), Ziprick Thoroughbreds	\$1,250	1/1	1/1	0/1	(Escape Clause, \$72,000)	\$72,000	90	3	0.83	0.88
3	OLD FORESTER (01, Forestry), T. C. Westmeath Stud Farm	\$4,000	14/1	0/0	0/0	(Still Krz, \$36,068)	\$65,244	451	17	1.44	1.46
4	WHERE'S THE RING (99, Seeking the Gold), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$3,000	10/3	0/0	0/0	(Undercover Cat, \$20,400)	\$58,459	359	9	1.30	1.33
5	MILWAUKEE BREW (97, Wild Again), Adena Springs North	\$3,000	9/2	0/0	0/0	(She's a Brewer, \$33,000)	\$58,111	*589	24	1.19	1.42
6	NOT BOURBON (05, Not Impossible), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$3,500	9/2	0/0	0/0	(Aljozaliyah, \$41,323)	\$57,140	104	2	1.08	1.33
7	SIGNATURE RED (06, Bernstein), Adena Springs North	\$3,500	6/3	0/0	0/0	(Redeal, \$18,000)	\$34,920	71	3	1.68	1.05
8	IT'S NO JOKE (02, Distorted Humor), Esquirol Farms	N/A	10/2	0/0	0/0	(Over Exposed, \$11,400)	\$33,536	98	3	1.06	1.00
9	SECOND IN COMMAND (00, Silver Deputy), Road's End Farm	\$2,000	5/3	0/0	0/0	(Brechin's Command, \$14,235)	\$29,796	146	6	0.69	0.78
10	GOTTCHA GOLD (03, Coronado's Quest)	N/A	8/2	0/0	0/0	(Off Duty, \$12,850)	\$23,675	*156	1	0.75	1.29
11	HUNTERS BAY (07, Ghostzapper), Adena Springs North	\$2,500	5/0	0/0	0/0	(Liz's Smile, \$10,296)	\$23,122	20	0	0.77	1.35
12	LEONNATUS ANTEAS (04, Stormy Atlantic)	Died, 2018	4/3	0/0	0/0	(Born in a Breeze, \$11,544)	\$22,816	94	2	0.93	1.12
13	IMPERIALISM (01, Langfuhr), Esquirol Farms	\$2,500	8/0	0/0	0/0	(Imperial Hint, \$9,000)	\$19,676	245	5	0.85	1.00
14	SILENT NAME (JPN) (02, Sunday Silence), Adena Springs North	\$10,000	13/1	0/0	0/0	(Hazy Davy, \$5,920)	\$19,529	*416	24	1.44	1.25
15	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), Strideaway Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Fleet Cruiser, \$7,080)	\$14,632	*363	3	0.94	1.10
16	SLIGO BAY (IRE) (98, Sadler's Wells), Adena Springs North	\$3,000	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Max Q, \$12,400)	\$13,963	*414	13	1.18	1.36
17	O'PRADO AGAIN (09, El Prado), Peaceful Valley Farms	\$3,000	2/1	0/0	0/0	(I Am Ready Again, \$10,200)	\$12,820	16	0	0.61	0.79
18	NONIOS (09, Pleasantly Perfect), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$2,000	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Truth Serum, \$9,720)	\$12,600	18	0	0.81	0.71
19	STRUT THE STAGE (98, Theatrical)	N/A	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Strut the Ring, \$11,880)	\$12,200	*122	4	1.21	1.16
20	SCOTS PINE (03, Forestry)	N/A	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Capital Expense, \$8,635)	\$8,635	5	0	0.29	0.26

Esquirol has made a name for himself through the stallions he has brought to western Canada, from graded stakes winners Kissin Kris and Whiskey Wisdom to his current pair of Imperialism, sire of multiple grade 1 winner Imperial Hint; and It's No Joke, a graded stakes-winning son of Distorted Humor.

The quest of a horse breeder is not without its challenges, however, and currently Esquirol finds himself at a crossroads. His first large yearling crop by a variety of commercially successful U.S. sires did not sell well last year, albeit at the Canadian

Thoroughbred Horse Society's Alberta yearling sale, which realized sharp drops in average and median price.

But with the pending opening of Century Mile Racetrack and Casino on April 28, Alberta's first ever one-mile track and the only such track west of Woodbine in Ontario, Esquirol is not yet discouraged.

"I have to be optimistic and I want to be optimistic," said Esquirol, whose partner Shelley Lupul is an integral part of the farm. "I have a lot of mares to foal this year and I think I have been breeding a lot of nice horses for longer races."

Raised in the tiny village of Meota, Saskatchewan, in the northwest corner of the province alongside Jackfish Lake, Esquirol was born to Elie and Estelle Esquirol and raised in farm life.

"My dad was a very influential person in my life," said Esquirol. "He was a true-blue cowboy. I have all of his cowboy gear in my house."

The elder Esquirol, who had eight children, lived to be 100 before he died in 2012.

Pierre was raised around all types of livestock. At age 6, the Saskatchewan-



Imperialism



It's No Joke

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 2015 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through February 17, 2019. As supplied to BloodHorse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., lists 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 2018 is \$23,755 or 50% of the 2018 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 50% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 15%; Singapore by 66%. 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.

*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.



Tale of the Tape.

129 Justify (\$150,000)

123 Mendelssohn (\$35,000)

118 No Nay Never (€100,000)

115 Frac Daddy (\$3,500)

107 Daddy Long Legs (\$10,000)

Sons of Scat Daddy ranked by Timeform Rating.

PARK STUD

Michael and Laurel Byrne - info@parkstud.ca - parkstud.ca

2019 LEADING SIRES IN INDIANA



For daily updated sire lists
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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled). (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2019 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2019 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	GREELEY'S CONQUEST (04, Mr. Greeley), Breakway Farm	\$2,500	18/3	0/0	0/0	(Pretty Greeley, \$47,400)	\$89,076	68	0	0.73	0.93
2	READY'S IMAGE (05, More Than Ready), Midwest Equine & Vet Hospital	\$2,000	23/2	0/0	0/0	(Mannford, \$13,440)	\$69,640	*381	6	0.87	1.14
3	UNBRIDLED EXPRESS (04, Unbridled's Song), Swifty Farms	\$2,000	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Unbridled Class, \$55,020)	\$56,390	53	5	1.54	1.13
4	FORT PRADO (01, El Prado)	Pnsd	24/3	0/0	0/0	(Dirtydeedsduncheap, \$11,100)	\$56,261	*193	2	0.76	1.33
5	HUNT CROSSING (09, Corinthian), Indiana Stallion Station	\$1,000	23/2	0/0	0/0	(Handsome Hunt, \$7,700)	\$54,474	124	0	0.39	0.70
6	DUKE OF MISCHIEF (06, Graeme Hall)	N/A	11/3	0/0	0/0	(Sandy Mischief, \$19,080)	\$47,997	57	0	0.42	0.79
7	TURBO COMPRESSOR (08, Halo's Image), Breakway Farm	Private	11/1	0/0	0/0	(First Deal, \$10,545)	\$33,255	38	1	0.68	1.13
8	ELUSIVE BLUFF (06, Elusive Quality)	N/A	4/1	0/0	0/0	(A M Milky Way, \$30,666)	\$30,837	50	2	0.96	1.00
9	LANTANA MOB (05, Posse)	N/A	8/1	0/0	0/0	(Supreme Justice, \$18,850)	\$30,691	67	4	1.02	1.16
10	NOTIONAL (04, In Excess), Haffner Farm	\$1,000	16/2	0/0	0/0	(Camp Washita, \$10,980)	\$30,311	341	6	0.77	1.10
11	VICTOR'S CRY (05, Street Cry), Holden Farm	\$25,000	8/0	0/0	0/0	(Singandcryindubai, \$7,500)	\$23,240	109	2	1.01	1.22
12	CASHLE CASTLE (99, Silver Ghost), Swifty Farms	\$1,000	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Dorothe Marie, \$12,000)	\$16,300	115	4	0.92	0.99
13	STRONG HOPE (00, Grand Slam)	Died, 2017	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Rattle My Chain, \$5,700)	\$14,440	340	5	0.92	1.62
14	CSABA (09, Kitten's Joy), R Star Stallions	\$2,000	7/1	0/0	0/0	(El Tangan, \$4,580)	\$10,597	29	0	0.24	0.81
15	MONBA (05, Maria's Mon), Nicks Farm	\$2,000	5/1	0/0	0/0	(He Is Ruthless, \$4,500)	\$9,633	75	0	0.65	1.27

born "farm boy" sold garden vegetables he grew himself. At 14, he had a herd of 400 hogs that he traded about for cash. There were horses in his life too, and through friends and his brother Eddie, Esquirol was introduced to racing.

After graduating from an agriculture and farming program at the University of Saskatchewan, Esquirol made his first trek to a horse sale.

"It was a mixed sale in Calgary," said Esquirol. "I drove there in my car and came home with five mares for \$10,500. I sold their progeny for a total of \$52,000." That hooked Esquirol on the breeding industry for life.

In 2004 Esquirol relocated to Alberta and managed the successful sale yearling crops of Horizon Farms for two seasons before he bought his current property.

"There was not a fence post to be seen

when I started," said Esquirol. "I built it up the way I wanted it and started in the stallion business. There were only a few stallions in the province. I believed there was a door to be opened, and my goal was to bring in stallions that could produce racehorses."

Most of Esquirol's stallions have had a good following, including Cobra King, Gold Legend, Kissin Kris, and Whiskey Wisdom, the last-named a former Ontario stallion by Wild Again.

Imperialism, a foal of 2001 and a son of Canadian-bred star Langfuhr, was a leading Kentucky Derby (G1) candidate in his day and won the grade 2 San Vicente and San Rafael stakes before a second-place finish in the Santa Anita Derby (G1) and a charging third in the slop behind Smarty Jones in the Run for the Roses. He earned more than \$890,000 in his career.

Esquirol obtained Imperialism when he went to Florida's Get Away Farm late in 2014 to bring home accomplished stallion Double Honor, a Gone West son with more than 20 stakes winners to his credit.

"He was kind of a throw-in," said Esquirol about Imperialism. "But then Imperial Hint emerged, and, well, he is a household name in racing now."

In his third-year of racing in 2018, Imperial Hint won the Alfred G. Vanderbilt Handicap (G1) at Saratoga and the Vosburgh Stakes (G1) at Belmont Park, completing his season with a third-place finish in the Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1).

Imperialism's first Alberta crop are 3-year-olds of 2019, and It's No Joke will have yearlings this season.

Esquirol looks forward to his stallions' first runners, but he still feels the sting from last year's Alberta yearling sale when most



Mares enjoying the pasture at Esquirol Farms

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2019 LEADING SIRES IN OHIO



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled). (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2019 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2019 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	COWTOWN CAT (04, Distorted Humor), Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm	\$2,000	25/6	0/0	0/0	(Bow Town Cat, \$36,979)	\$182,000	223	5	1.12	1.21
2	INDY WIND (02, A.P. Indy), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,000	11/3	1/1	1/1	(Starship Jubilee, \$85,560)	\$126,088	79	2	1.18	1.05
3	FACTUM (08, Storm Cat), Cedar Brook Farm	Private	29/7	0/0	0/0	(She'smyrisenstar, \$23,430)	\$118,880	105	0	0.54	1.35
4	BIONDETTI (08, Bernardini), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,500	27/4	0/0	0/0	(Das Da One, \$16,560)	\$100,146	125	1	0.75	1.36
5	CORFU (11, Maibu Moon), Duncan Farms	\$1,500	14/3	0/0	0/0	(Cory Gal, \$28,000)	\$66,905	39	0	0.95	0.93
6	AWESOME PATRIOT (08, Awesome Again), Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm	\$2,500	28/3	0/0	0/0	(Wonitbyland, \$9,240)	\$50,183	*162	1	1.34	1.05
7	VAQUERO (06, Orientate), Raimonde Farms	\$1,000	4/2	0/0	0/0	(El Cheapo, \$23,680)	\$43,303	24	1	1.02	1.02
8	KINGSHIP (03, King Cugat)	Died, 2016	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Lady Power, \$20,345)	\$39,751	16	0	0.38	1.01
9	TIDAL VOLUME (06, Tapit), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,500	4/2	0/0	0/0	(No Volume, \$18,682)	\$37,565	44	0	0.46	0.56
10	HOSTILE TAKEOVER (04, Dixie Union), Raimonde Farms	\$1,500	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Another Sunrise, \$19,107)	\$37,163	22	0	0.59	0.88
11	A GIANT VALENTINE (03, Giant's Causeway)	N/A	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Here Comes Jigs, \$20,720)	\$26,448	25	0	0.39	0.91
12	KETTLE CORN (07, Candy Ride), Fair Winds Farm	\$2,500	6/1	0/0	0/0	(Candy Kettle Corn, \$18,073)	\$24,359	46	0	0.85	1.30
13	TWINSPIRED (08, Harlan's Holiday), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,500	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Inspired to Rock, \$24,333)	\$24,333	16	1	1.72	0.81
14	MUCH THE BEST (06, Forestry)	N/A	4/0	0/0	0/0	(Sword of Roheryn, \$9,176)	\$24,272	26	0	0.43	0.77
15	VERTIFORMER (07, Dynaformer), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,000	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Sammy Da Bull, \$18,780)	\$23,688	14	0	0.96	0.49
16	MOBIL (00, Langfuhr), Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm	\$2,000	7/1	0/0	0/0	(Speedy Mobile, \$10,680)	\$22,740	*198	5	1.27	1.25
17	MIXMASTER (06, Medaglia d'Oro), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$1,500	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Dorthysfunnygirl, \$19,805)	\$19,947	24	0	0.55	0.55
18	KISS THE KID (03, Lemon Drop Kid), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,000	7/1	0/0	0/0	(Lady Breanna, \$11,970)	\$18,985	54	1	0.97	1.51
19	CITY WEEKEND (02, Carson City), Meadow Springs	\$2,000	8/1	0/0	0/0	(City Sidewalks, \$9,900)	\$15,266	117	1	0.74	0.89
20	INDIAN EXPRESS (00, Indian Charlie)	N/A	3/0	0/0	0/0	(Bold Envoy, \$11,140)	\$12,580	41	1	0.85	0.68

of his offerings did not reach their reserve.

"When you're going to the sale with yearlings by Take Charge Indy, Dialed In, Strong Mandate, and Overanalyze and you go home with those animals, I feel let down because I did my part," he said.

"These are horses by stallions known on a world stage coming to your local market and you think the least you will do is break even and maybe even make money. But when the stud fee hasn't been reached I

question the future."

Esquirol believes that the yearling sale was negatively affected by bitterly cold weather on that September weekday in Olds, Alberta.

"The weather plus where the sale was out in Olds, it took a couple of big buyers out of the picture," said Esquirol.

"I have most of the yearlings that I bought back in training now, but they are for sale. I don't race horses. If I did, I would

have three mares, not 26."

Esquirol is hedging his bets on Century Mile, which he said will need an entirely different type of racehorse because of its one-mile circumference.

"A one-mile racetrack is a different game plan," he said. "I don't know if everyone here is prepared for a one-mile racetrack. On a bullring, you find a little sprinter that gets out of there, moves to the rail, and hangs on. Has this industry thought enough about buying and racing Thoroughbreds as they were meant to be, carrying their speed a distance of ground?"

Esquirol and Lupul are set to sell another big group of yearlings this fall, and this spring's foal crop includes offspring of U.S. stallions Texas Red, Competitive Edge, and Palace.

"The market for these types did not materialize (last year)," said Esquirol. "Are these factors that can be dealt with? Internal factors or the economy?"

"Is it because we have not yet reached out to a new part of society to bring in all the younger people, the 'techy' people, into our industry? Young people today have cell phones and they are hooked up to social media, so if something happens in one part of the world, everyone everywhere knows



Some of Esquirol's 26 broodmares

2019 LEADING SIRES IN IOWA



For daily updated sire lists visit BloodHorse.com

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2019 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstret SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2019 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	STROLL (00, Pulpit)	N/A	34/13	0/0	0/0	(Strolling, \$37,200)	\$237,322	*317	14	1.01	1.26
2	SING BABY SING (03, Unbridled's Song), Madison County Thoroughbreds	\$2,000	13/1	0/0	0/0	(Sombra Negra, \$6,870)	\$19,620	92	3	0.61	0.85

about it right away. We need to incorporate that technology into racing and make it more user-friendly to young people.”

Esquirol related a conversation he had with one of his two 20-something daughters recently.

“I asked her what the word on the street was in her work and social world about the new racetrack. She said everyone is excited to go and watch racing there, but no one expressed much interest in owning a horse. We need to educate people about it.”

Esquirol bred more than 20 winners in the last two seasons, including stakes winners Smart Fix, Emma Jean Too, Regal Max, and Sweet Annie.

This year he has high hopes for a couple of runners he bred and sold as yearlings in 2017. Mucho Maximus, a son of Mucho Macho Man, has been showing improvement as a sophomore at Turf Paradise this winter while Line of Fire, a Line of David filly, is held in high regard by co-owners Curtis Landry and Don Danard.

Esquirol’s current project, between foaling mares, is trying to lure some National Hockey League alumni players into buying a share in his Dialed In gelding Lanny Mac. The 2-year-old is named for former Calgary Flames star Lanny MacDonald.

“These are the types of things we need



Yearlings navigate the western Canada terrain; mare with her foal on its first time out (below)

for racing. Syndicates and some recognizable names getting involved,” he noted.

Esquirol has lured more than one friend into horse ownership in recent years and hopes others do the same.

“I love what I am doing and I have always said money was never my goal,” said Esquirol. “I am an entrepreneur. Don’t tell me I can’t do it because that will make me even more determined.” **BH**

Jennifer Morrison is the Canadian correspondent for BloodHorse.



Esquirol is breeding to name-brand U.S. stallions