

ALABAMA FLORIDA GEORGIA MISSISSIPPI
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One-Woman Shore

Dani Dougherty
with Rogueish

**Dani Dougherty
realizes her dream
at Oakton Farm
Stallions**

BY CYNTHIA McFARLAND

PHOTOS BY LOUISE E. REINAGEL

IN AN ERA when women-owned and women-managed businesses aren't uncommon, finding a stallion facility solely owned and run by a woman is still unique. But then, Danielle (Dani) Dougherty has always appreciated being the exception to the norm.

Whether it's firing up the Weed Eater to trim around the perimeter of the paddocks, handling stallions during breeding duties, dealing with

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\$775,000 Fasig-Tipton
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2019 LEADING SIRES IN FLORIDA


 For daily updated sire lists
 visit BloodHorse.com

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2020 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstret SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2019 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	ADIOS CHARLIE (08, Indian Charlie), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	108/64	3/7	0/3	(Jean Elizabeth, \$264,888)	\$3,767,013	206	7	1.52	1.23
2	FIRST DUDE (07, Stephen Got Even), Double Diamond Farm	\$7,500	134/70	3/3	2/3	(Ready to Runaway, \$180,030)	\$3,446,428	360	12	1.19	1.21
3	BRETHREN (08, Distorted Humor), Arindel Farm	\$7,500	97/48	2/2	0/2	(Scraps, \$158,375)	\$2,645,798	141	4	1.37	1.55
4	WILDCAT HEIR (00, Forest Wildcat)	Died, 2015	116/66	2/2	1/2	(Royal Squeeze, \$221,655)	\$2,578,182	*687	34	1.32	1.30
5	TREASURE BEACH (GB) (08, Galileo), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$7,500	122/51	1/1	0/1	(Saratoga Treasure, \$196,808)	\$2,096,469	*379	2	1.13	1.42
6	OVERDRIVEN (09, Tale of the Cat)	Pnsd	72/43	2/2	2/2	(Extraordinary Jerry, \$210,611)	\$1,953,063	159	3	0.94	1.15
7	BIG DRAMA (06, Montbrook)	N/A	103/61	0/0	0/0	(Spring Drama, \$83,440)	\$1,878,124	240	4	0.87	1.26
8	PROSPECTIVE (09, Malibu Moon), Ocala Stud	\$3,000	65/44	1/2	1/1	(Ceci Valentina, \$266,555)	\$1,801,164	113	4	1.13	1.13
9	SONGANDAPRAYER (98, Unbridled's Song)	Pnsd	115/60	2/3	2/2	(Laughingsaintsong, \$123,150)	\$1,782,502	*1034	37	1.08	1.38
10	FIELD COMMISSION (05, Service Stripe), Solera Farm	\$2,500	67/33	2/3	0/2	(Drafted, \$445,000)	\$1,614,109	146	2	0.82	0.95
11	GONE ASTRAY (06, Dixie Union), Northwest Stud	\$4,500	104/43	0/0	0/0	(Shifty She, \$83,200)	\$1,549,962	*253	8	0.93	1.09
12	¶ KHOZAN (12, Distorted Humor), Journeyman Stallions	\$8,500	43/18	2/2	2/2	(Liam's Lucky Charm, \$233,800)	\$1,258,517	*69	2	1.34	1.42
13	AWESOME OF COURSE (00, Awesome Again), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	69/30	2/2	0/2	(Band of Angels, \$99,747)	\$1,251,320	*255	12	1.30	1.29
14	HIGH COTTON (03, Dixie Union)	Pnsd	78/40	0/0	0/0	(Storming My Way, \$91,990)	\$1,230,228	*402	11	0.94	1.21
15	J P'S GUSTO (08, Successful Appeal)	N/A	40/24	2/2	1/2	(J P's Delight, \$118,100)	\$1,199,426	89	3	1.04	1.06
16	HANDSOME MIKE (09, Scat Daddy), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$4,000	62/29	0/0	0/0	(Here Comes Jackie, \$116,060)	\$1,094,631	92	0	0.70	0.82
17	GREATNESS (99, Mr. Prospector)	N/A	25/16	1/3	0/1	(Lady's Island, \$290,070)	\$862,737	*261	8	1.30	1.00
18	RATTLESNAKE BRIDGE (08, Tapit)	N/A	63/27	0/0	0/0	(Showit, \$51,092)	\$736,848	115	0	0.48	1.02
19	¶ THE BIG BEAST (11, Yes It's True), Ocala Stud	\$6,000	33/16	0/0	0/0	(Inspiressa, \$96,600)	\$678,306	57	0	0.87	1.38
20	WROTE (IRE) (09, High Chaparral)	N/A	35/14	0/0	0/0	(Vincero, \$160,145)	\$575,578	*63	0	0.58	0.83
21	WINSLOW HOMER (07, Unbridled's Song)	N/A	35/18	0/0	0/0	(Boogie With Me, \$63,013)	\$559,445	60	0	0.75	1.05
22	FLASHSTORM (04, Storm Cat)	N/A	38/17	0/0	0/0	(Bella Tormenta, \$91,480)	\$501,396	115	3	0.88	0.93
23	IN SUMMATION (03, Put It Back), Ocala Stud	\$2,500	35/14	0/0	0/0	(Awsum Roar, \$73,430)	\$455,156	*226	5	0.90	1.30
24	IQBAAL (06, Medaglia d'Oro), Ward Ranch	Private	16/12	0/0	0/0	(Riv, \$87,630)	\$395,470	29	0	0.99	1.11
25	CAJUN BREEZE (08, Congrats), Stonehedge Farm South	Private	12/7	1/1	0/1	(Cajun Casanova, \$99,105)	\$387,899	21	2	1.69	1.35
26	BACKTALK (07, Smarty Jones), Goldmark Farm	\$2,250	25/14	0/0	0/0	(Transitive, \$49,050)	\$377,676	59	2	0.95	0.77
27	TELLING (04, A.P. Indy)	N/A	27/13	0/0	0/0	(Arcelor, \$48,945)	\$351,799	50	0	0.63	1.29
28	¶ BAHAMIAN SQUALL (09, Gone West), Double Diamond Farm	\$3,000	13/7	0/0	0/0	(Bahamian Girl, \$102,350)	\$292,966	29	0	0.87	0.94
29	¶ FURY KAPCORI (10, Tiznow), Journeyman Stallions	\$2,500	20/7	1/2	0/1	(High On Gin, \$110,244)	\$280,002	38	1	0.56	1.52
30	GARY D (07, Successful Appeal)	N/A	7/6	1/1	1/1	(Captain D, \$102,235)	\$276,921	12	1	1.13	1.10

clients to schedule breedings, or working with the veterinarian to determine whether a boarded mare is in foal, Dougherty, 48, is the one responsible for anything and everything that needs to be done at her Oakton Farm Stallions near Morriston, Fla., just northwest of Ocala.

Originally from Pittsburgh and raised in a family that had Quarter Horses, Dougherty started her horse obsession early. The first equine she could call her own was a Shetland pinto pony stallion named Tarzan. (And, yes, even then it had been a stallion that won her heart.)

"My great uncle bought him at an auction for five dollars and hauled him home in the back of his pickup truck," recalled Dougherty with a smile. "As I got older, the 'ponies' got bigger and faster. My mom was involved with breeding Quarter Horse stallions, so I was around them from a young age. I used to get in trouble for climbing on my mom's stallions."

Dougherty went from horse-crazed little girl scampering across the bare backs of her family's Quarter Horse stallions to honing her riding abilities and guiding young Thoroughbreds through their first



The main barn at Oakton Farm Stallions, home to five stallions for 2020

lessons in becoming racehorses.

Over the years Dougherty put her skills to use with a number of outfits across the country, both galloping horses and working the sales. Past employers, such as Eddie Woods, readily acknowledge her horsemanship and dedication.

"She did the sales for me for four to five years, working as sales coordinator," noted Woods, who is perennially a leading North

American consignor of 2-year-olds. "Dani ran my sale barn and did whatever needed to be done, both working with people and handling horses. She's very reliable and hard working, always the first there in the morning and the last to leave. She's a talented person and knows what she's doing."

Between working yearling and 2-year-old sales, galloping at training farms, and even riding polo ponies in Aiken, S.C.,

Dougherty racked up years of hands-on experience.

Eventually, Dougherty knew it was time to leave behind the “gypsy” life of constant travel that is required to work sales across the country, and made the decision to set down roots in Ocala’s horse country. Her fondness for working with stallions made running a stallion facility an inviting option.

She discovered a pristine 28-acre farm near Morriston, just outside Ocala, that had been built around 2015 by Stacy Furgang, a veterinarian who was interested in establishing a rehab/layover facility for sport horses. Dougherty took one look at the well-designed 12-stall concrete block barn, thoughtfully laid-out paddocks, and beautiful oak-studded property and knew this was the spot for her business. She leased the farm from Furgang and in December 2018 became sole proprietor of Oakton Farm Stallions.

For the farm’s first season in 2019, Oakton stood eight stallions. Five are currently on the roster for the 2020 season. This is Dougherty’s second year owning the business, and all decisions are under her control.

The farm is home to multiple stakes winner Backtalk (Smarty Jones—Apassionata Sonata, by Affirmed), Eclipse Award-winning 2010 champion sprinter and grade 1 stakes winner of more than \$2.7 million Big Drama (Montbrook—Riveting Drama, by Notebook), graded stakes winner Finale (Scat Daddy—Twinkle, by Lively One), and winners Rogueish (Into Mischief—Verdana Bold, by Rahy) and Young Brian (Hard Spun—Glacier Peak, by Pulpit).

Dougherty is sole owner of Finale, majority co-owner of Rogueish, and co-owner of Big Drama.

Oakton Farm Stallions hosted a stallion show in early December, and Dougherty plans to hold another, likely in February.

“The December stallion show had a very good turnout,” Dougherty said. Complete with cocktails and hors

2019 FLORIDA SIRE BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
First Dude	134	70
Wildcat Heir	116	66
Adios Charlie	108	64
Big Drama	103	61
Songandaprayer	115	60
Treasure Beach (GB)	122	51
Brethren	97	48
Prospective	65	44
Gone Astray	104	43
Overdriven	72	43
High Cotton	78	40
Field Commission	67	33
Awesome of Course	69	30
Handsome Mike	62	29
Rattlesnake Bridge	63	27
J P’s Gusto	40	24
Khozan	43	18
Winslow Homer	35	18
Flashstorm	38	17

d’oeuvres, the event was scheduled in the evening to make it easier for horse people to attend.

Dougherty is enthusiastic about recruiting new stallions to join the existing roster so that she can offer even more opportunities for mare owners.

STALLION DECISIONS

In addition to promoting her stallions to Thoroughbred breeders, Dougherty offers her stallions to Quarter Horse mare owners as well. Two of her farm’s stallions—Big Drama and Rogueish—are being successfully advertised to Quarter Horse breeders. This just makes sense, observed Dougherty, who is personally involved when it comes to collecting semen on these stallions for shipment to Quarter Horse breeders.

“Big Drama was already being marketed to Quarter Horses when I bought into him as part owner, so that is being continued,” she said. “I also started marketing Rogueish to Quarter Horses because of his speed and pedigree, and this was prior even

to the announcement of his sire Into Mischief’s being marketed to Quarter Horses.”

For contracts with Quarter Horse mares, Dougherty takes the stallions to a neighboring veterinary clinic for semen collection so it can be shipped either frozen or cooled, according to the specific contract. This requires additional time and effort on her part, but she feels that expanding to include breeding with shipped semen is an important aspect of promoting these stallions. And for Dougherty, doing what’s best for each stallion is the only way she’ll do business.

For example, this fall Uncle Vinny, a grade 3-winning son of Uncle Mo, was sent to Oakton to stand, but when an opportunity arose in Pennsylvania that Dougherty believed would be better for the horse, she agreed to his relocating there.

“I want what’s best for the horse’s future,” she said.

“The horse business has changed dramatically, and not always in the best way, from how it was when I bought into my first partnership on a horse in 1957,” observed longtime owner and breeder Ed Seltzer, whose Solera Farm is located north of Ocala. Seltzer is part owner in Rogueish and has bred quite a few mares at Oakton Farm Stallions.

“Dani owns the majority of Rogueish. I had known her for a while when Rogueish came along. We had several offers for the horse to stand in Maryland and West Virginia, I think because they didn’t have any Into Mischiefs there. But I thought it’d be nice to do something with him here (in Florida). He only had the one start because he got hurt, but he’s got a great pedigree and several things have happened in that family recently.”

Seltzer is co-breeder and co-owner of 3-year-old Lucrezia, a full sister to Rogueish who won the Sandpiper Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs Dec. 7 for her second win in four starts with earnings of \$90,800.

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 December 31, 2019. 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 2015 is \$21,782 or 50% of the 2015 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 17%; Singapore by 57%. 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.

“If anybody deserves to have things work for her, it’s Dani. She’s an incredibly hard worker, devoted and honorable, which is hard to find in any business. You don’t meet many people with her incredible amount of knowledge and hands-on horsemanship,” Seltzer said. “The stallion business is not an easy business, but we want to support her with as good a selection of mares as we can.”

DRIVEN AND DEDICATED

To spend any time with Dougherty is to realize this is a woman who cares passionately about horses—and not just if there’s money to be made. Take for example, Mynah’s Boy, better known by his barn name of “Rico,” a retired racehorse who’s now living the good life, happily doing duty as farm teaser and weanling babysitter at Oakton Farm Stallions. The gelding was running in Puerto Rico when, after his 42nd career start, he was purchased by R.A.C.E. Fund—a Pennsylvania-based organization that helps Thoroughbreds in need of retirement or rescue.

“I got involved with R.A.C.E. Fund when they needed a layover spot for a group of horses they brought out of Puerto Rico, and I’ve helped them with a lot of horses since then,” Dougherty said. “I adopted Rico in June 2015, and he does everything here now, from working as a teaser to helping with the babies at weaning time.”

It’s safe to say nothing has been handed to Dani Dougherty. This is a woman who’s most at home in the saddle or at the end of a shank. Her work ethic borders on ex-



Young Brian, a son of Hard Spun, stretches his legs at Oakton Farm Stallions

treme, but she’s the first to confess there’s no other way to make it all happen. While many other farm owners typically rely on employees, Dougherty is her own crew, hiring only some part-time help during breeding/foaling season just to be able to grab a little sleep. She loves being the one who does the teasing of mares, handles the stallions in the shed, and even checks semen under the microscope for every breeding. Bottom line, Oakton Farm Stallions is Dani Dougherty.

While Dougherty is the one in the spotlight, she is quick to express gratitude to several other women in the industry who have graciously helped her behind the scenes with support and encouragement as she strives to achieve her goals.

On a drizzly late fall evening, she’s making rounds in her barn, checking on each stallion before calling it a day. Two personable orange tabbies curl around Dougherty’s ankles before trotting ahead of her to jump up on the ledge of one of the stallion stalls. One of the stallions sniffs curiously at the cats before turning his head to gently nuzzle Dougherty’s hand on the railing. Two more similarly colored cats appear in the shedrow and pause to greet her as she walks through the barn.

“They’re all rescues,” Dougherty explained with a laugh and shrug of her shoulders. “I call them the Orange Mafia.”

In the fading light of day, a sense of peace envelops the barn. One of the stallions nickers. Raindrops spatter rhythmically against the roof and glitter on the pavement outside the stalls.

Dougherty admits that one of the things that brings her the most satisfaction is “just being in my barn in the evening looking at my boys when they all have their heads out of the windows waiting for me.”

It’s taken a long time to get to this point, and Dani Dougherty isn’t taking any of it for granted.

“I finally have my own stallion barn and stallions,” said Dougherty with quiet pride. “I’m relentless about promoting my stallions and getting mares. I hope this will be known as ‘the’ place for stallions.” **BH**



Oakton Farm Stallions also is a good spot for turnout and lay-ups

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