

# Southeast

ALABAMA FLORIDA GEORGIA MISSISSIPPI  
NORTH CAROLINA SOUTH CAROLINA TENNESSEE



## Skilled Trade

Gene Recio, left, with his parents Lynn and Bill

### Family tradition continues at Lynwood Stable

BY CYNTHIA McFARLAND  
PHOTOS BY LOUISE E. REINAGEL

**IF EVER A JOB** could be defined as a “skilled trade,” the breaking and training of future racehorses qualifies. Guiding young Thoroughbreds from their first lessons under saddle all the way to the winner’s circle is a career where only the best horsemen excel.

And it can’t be learned in a classroom.

Enter Lynwood Stable’s Gene Recio, who brings an education that began with

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## 2019 LEADING SIRES IN FLORIDA


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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)	\$2,649,798	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)	\$2,101,802	*380	2	1.12	1.41
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	1.14	1.13
9	SONGANDAPRAYER (98, Unbridled's Song)	Pnsd	115/60	2/3	2/2	(Laughingsaintsson, \$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	1.36	1.41
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	0.90	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	0.82
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	(Awsom 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	0.98	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	1.70	1.35

lessons from his father, Bill, who has run Lynwood for more than three decades, and continued through unique hands-on experience with some of the country's top horsemen. As Gene transitions into a leadership role at the Ocala, Fla., area farm, he'll carry on his father's emphasis on communication.

"My dad has always said, 'You're not making the news; you're just reporting it, so don't hold back.' He taught me to be honest and up-front with clients," noted Gene, "and we're blessed to have good clients who are horse people.

"There are a lot of good horsemen in Ocala, so the thing that sets us apart—besides doing the basics very well—is that the customer service we give is above what's called for. Communication is really important."

Clients appreciate knowing that their horses are in good hands and that the Recios share the full story of what's going on with the training process.

"The thing about Gene and Bill is that their attention to detail is second to none. They are great communicators with us, and, above all, they do a phenomenal job. They know the horses inside and out; they're a full-service operation for us," noted Calumet Farm's general manager Eddie Kane. "We send them homebreds and ones we buy. We have 60 head with them this year.



Recio's father taught him 'to be honest and upfront with clients'

The horses are all well-educated when they leave and in great shape."

Kane isn't the only horseman to see top results. Lynwood Stable, which breaks and trains 100-150 horses each year, has been the launching pad for an accomplished array of horses, including two-time (2015-16) champion filly Songbird, 2015 champion older horse Honor Code, 2017 Las Vegas Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1) winner Battle of Midway, grade 1 winners Omaha Beach, Guarana, Gift Box, Leofric, Funtastic, and graded stakes winners Isotherm, Exaggerated, Oscar Nominated, English Bee, King Jack, and

Oleksandra, among others.

In 2015 Gene Recio, now 29, joined his father as assistant trainer. In September 2019, he moved up to the position of head trainer, but that doesn't mean the elder Recio is out of the picture. While the leadership transition is taking place, Bill Recio, 72, will continue to provide valuable input. When people ask Gene how it's going for him "taking over" for his dad, he laughs.

"He's here every day; it's not like he's retired. I handle the set lists and employees and make the training charts, but it's nice having Dad here to bounce things off, and it works out well; it's a team effort," said Gene Recio. "He's out here doing what he loves, and I'm very happy to be able to spend this time with him."

The feeling is mutual.

"With a lot of horses, you need a lot of eyes. I point out things I think we need to fix, but Gene does all the training," Bill Recio said. "Now I'm like an assistant trainer, and I don't come back in the afternoon."

Bill claims he's semi-retired and is taking advantage of a lighter schedule to do things he's never had time to pursue.

"I can go away every once in a while now. I like to fish, and I recently won a handicapping tournament and qualified to go to Vegas," he said of the National Horseplay-

# B·A·O·M·A

# BIG TIMERS

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SERTAHULT PHOTOS



Lynwood Stable breaks between 100-150 horses each year

ers Championship contested earlier this month in Las Vegas. “I would never have had time to do that if not for Gene. I have a lot of faith in him.”

### HANDS ON

Even before he was in high school, it was a habit for Gene to accompany his father to the barn. “I’ve always enjoyed the training aspect: breaking the babies in the stalls and getting on them for the first time. I galloped for a while, but then I grew too big for that job,” he said.

Gene admits that early on he’d rather have hung out with his friends, like most other teenage boys, but his father had different plans—plans that ignited a career.

“My dad wanted me to get a working education from different backgrounds. I’m very grateful to him for pushing me at a young age to go outside my comfort zone,” said Gene. “At a young age, I went to Saratoga for the summer and worked with Todd Pletcher. I didn’t have much of a choice; Dad said I was going, but that was OK.”

After that first summer job working for Pletcher, Gene continued his “apprenticeship” as he went to work with trainers Chad Brown, Neil Howard, and Shug McGaughey.

“I stayed with Shug for two years; he’s the best horseman I’ve ever worked with,” recalled Gene, adding that many of the minor details of horsemanship can only be learned through time and hands-on experience.

From overall organization to horse care, Gene Recio found that an enormous amount of effort goes into running a barn, and it pays to learn from the best.

“Knowing all of that can give you an edge. After I came back from working with Shug in 2015, I’ve been here at Lynwood ever since,” he said. “When I first got back home from working at the track, I did some pinhook partnerships with friends and clients to supplement my income. I like doing the sales on a small scale, but I don’t want it to take away from my bread and butter, which is the breaking and training business.”

Between Bill Recio’s background of training at the racetrack and Gene’s early years spent working there, their combined experience has proved invaluable when it comes to developing and giving young horses the best chances for success.

“I’ve been there from when you put the bridle on in the stall for the first time until you go to the starting gate,” Gene Recio said. “It’s a very well-rounded experience, and there’s a bigger picture. When you’re at the track and see the daily grind seven days a week, you understand the mental aspect of what it takes to become a good horse,” said Gene. “We’ve taken my dad’s proven program, and I’ve added some of the things I learned from top trainers at the track and some of my own ideas. There haven’t been any drastic changes, but I think we’ve improved everything, and having racetrack

experience is an added benefit.

“Our horses go to a lot of different trainers; about 90% of the horses we have are going to the races, not the sales,” added Gene, who is pleased with those percentages and prefers to train for the end result: the racetrack.

### AN EYE ON RACING

That training for the track takes the form of Lynwood Stable’s offering breaking and training, lay-ups, 2-year-old sales prep, and representation. Lynwood’s program is tailored to how horses will be handled at the racetrack, so once a young horse leaves the training operation and heads to a race career, the animal isn’t faced with a major learning curve when it arrives at the track.

“We tack in the stall, walk the shedrow around the barn, and riders get a leg up just like at the track,” noted Gene. “We go in big sets, and when horses walk to the track, they stand there before and after working. We make it so that their transition to the racetrack, where there’s so much going on, isn’t as hard on them.”

To that end, horses are never rushed during the training process. As Gene explains, their program is “old school” because that’s the best for the horses.

“You push too hard, the horse will make you wait at some point,” he added.

“Horses take time to develop. We take six to eight weeks before they ever go to the

#### 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 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. (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.

# Adios CHARLIE



JEAN ELIZABETH

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Fee: **\$4,000** LFSN

Indian Charlie – Teak Totem, by Northern Afleet

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**#1**  
**FLORIDA**  
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winner of the **\$150,000 Ladies**  
**Turf Sprint S.** at Gulfstream Park  
Jan. 25, her sixth consecutive  
stakes score.



Recio giving instructions on the training track at Lynwood Stable

track for the first time, so they have a lot of riding before then,” Gene explained. “We get a good base and a good mouth on them first. We do a lot of jogging and galloping in the field. You can’t ride in a bubble, so our job is to get a good foundation on them and expose the young horses to many of the different things they will see at the racetrack.”

That approach is appreciated by owner Erik Johnson of ERJ Racing, a professional hockey player with the Colorado Avalanche. Johnson has worked with Lynwood Stable for several years and has 15 head there now. Johnson breeds and also pinhooks yearlings for the 2-year-old sales and is happy to race any horses that don’t sell. Among these was juvenile filly Comical, winner of the 2019 Schuylerville Stakes (G3) at Saratoga.

“I bought her at Keeneland September, and she didn’t meet the price we wanted at OBS March,” said Johnson of the Into Mischief filly he pinhooked and consigned with Gene. “The sale is really an important day, but not the most important.

“The thing I’ve noticed with a lot of 2-year-old people is that they squeeze the lemon really dry and you don’t have a lot left after the sale. With Gene, they can rock right on after the sale and have a really good career. He puts the horses and their well-being first; he won’t ask them for more than they can give and caters to the individual horse, so you end up with a more quality animal in the long run. The sale isn’t the end goal with Gene; it’s just a stop along the road to where you want to go.”

It definitely helps that Lynwood Stable

employs its own riders, rather than use freelance riders who go from farm to farm. This results in consistency as well as more time under saddle for the horses.

“Young horses can fool you, but the really great horses just carry themselves differently,” observed Gene. “With Songbird and Honor Code, I could look those horses in the eye and see something different. They’re stronger and smarter with above average intelligence.”



Recio with the farm’s namesake

For those young horses being prepared for sales, Gene says the majority of his clients are willing to race if the horse doesn’t bring what they’re hoping for at the sale. “We always try to save something for later in case they don’t sell,” he noted.

#### NEW LOCATION

Gene is taking over an operation with plenty of tradition, although it recently

has changed locations. Bill and Lynn Recio married in 1969, and within a few short years, Bill had his trainer’s license and named Lynwood Stable after his wife. After training at the racetrack for about seven years, he had the opportunity to come to Ocala in 1981 as private trainer for the late Eugene Cashman. Bill was not only breaking babies and training them for the races but also doing lay-ups of older horses. It was a pleasant change of pace and a new kind of stability after the on-the-go lifestyle of a racetrack trainer.

The Recios have three children, all of whom have deep ties to the Thoroughbred industry. In addition to Gene, who is the youngest, elder son Mike Recio has Southpoint Sales in Lexington and daughter Katie is married to Three Chimneys Farm vice chairman Doug Cauthen.

Instead of the overhead involved with owning a farm, the Recios have always chosen to lease barns at a training facility. After being based at Classic Mile near Ocala for many years, Lynwood Stable relocated its entire operation to Crupi’s New Castle Farm in July 2019.

The 200-plus-acre facility has 12 barns and 300 stalls, as well as numerous turnout paddocks and large fenced grass fields for schooling. Horses train on a meticulously maintained three-quarter-mile dirt track that has a quarter-mile chute and a six-horse starting gate. Training is enhanced by the use of European-style free walkers and a cold water spa.

Hanging from the rails leading onto the track are small plaques bearing the names of outstanding horses that have trained on this same oval. The young horses walking back to the barns under a clear blue Ocala sky don’t care that they just galloped over the same surface where such grade 1 winners as Uncle Mo, Always Dreaming, Palace, Awesome Gem, and many other Crupi’s New Castle Farm graduates once worked. What those horses do know is that every step of their education is channeled with care and consistency.

In combining these two traditions, it’s a safe bet to guess some new plaques will soon be added. **BH**

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