

# Southeast

ALABAMA FLORIDA GEORGIA MISSISSIPPI  
NORTH CAROLINA SOUTH CAROLINA TENNESSEE



Khozan at Journeyman Stud

## Sunshine Start

COURTESY, JOURNEYMAN STALLIONS/LOUISE E. REINAGEL PHOTO

### Journeyman Stud-based Khozan rockets to top of Florida sires list

BY CYNTHIA McFARLAND

**IN A WORLD** of dramatically different opinions and varied perspectives, numbers don't lie.

A \$1 million-dollar 2-year-old purchase, Khozan saw a promising racing career cut short by injury, but as a stallion, his star has done nothing but rise. For 2020 he ranked No. 1 on the Florida sires list and No. 6 among all second-crop sires.

Khozan earned his 2020 rankings thanks to 52 winners from 93 runners, including five stakes winners registering eight stakes victories for progeny earnings of \$3,496,717. The son of Distorted Humor out of stakes-winning, stakes-producer Delta Princess began his breeding career in 2016 at Journeyman Stud in Ocala.

"In his first crop of 2-year-olds, Khozan had 20 winners, including three stakes winners and a total of nine black-type horses from 46 starters," noted Brent Fernung of Journeyman Stud. "He has produced 19 stakes horses in his first two crops."

As his runners continued to perform, Khozan rose from



# 2020 LEADING SIRES IN FLORIDA



For daily updated sire lists visit [BloodHorse.com](http://BloodHorse.com)

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2021 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2020 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>KHOZAN</b> (12, Distorted Humor), Journeyman Stallions	\$10,000	93/52	5/8	3/5	(Princess Secret, \$434,300)	<b>\$3,496,717</b>	*127	6	1.72	1.36
2	<b>BRETHREN</b> (08, Distorted Humor), Arindel Farm	\$7,500	103/53	2/2	0/2	(Key Biscayne, \$171,520)	<b>\$2,250,607</b>	176	5	1.29	1.51
3	<b>FIRST DUDE</b> (07, Stephen Got Even), Double Diamond Farm	\$7,500	120/64	2/2	0/2	(Ready to Runaway, \$166,150)	<b>\$2,182,135</b>	398	13	1.15	1.19
4	<b>ADIOS CHARLIE</b> (08, Indian Charlie), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	93/51	1/3	0/1	(Jean Elizabeth, \$189,398)	<b>\$1,847,153</b>	231	7	1.42	1.19
5	<b>GONE ASTRAY</b> (06, Dixie Union), Northwest Stud	\$4,500	108/43	2/4	1/2	(Noble Drama, \$337,435)	<b>\$1,809,034</b>	*293	9	0.93	1.09
6	<b>TREASURE BEACH (GB)</b> (08, Galileo), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$4,000	131/43	1/1	0/1	(Sugar Fix, \$190,539)	<b>\$1,578,765</b>	*581	3	1.06	1.40
7	<b>BIG DRAMA</b> (06, Montbrook), Stormborne Stallions	\$5,000	91/43	0/0	0/0	(Inter Miami, \$105,820)	<b>\$1,518,202</b>	263	4	0.88	1.22
8	<b>THE BIG BEAST</b> (11, Yes It's True), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	57/38	3/3	1/3	(Up in Smoke, \$173,318)	<b>\$1,394,281</b>	93	3	1.13	1.27
9	<b>HANDSOME MIKE</b> (09, Scat Daddy), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$4,000	73/42	0/0	0/0	(Running for Riz, \$76,422)	<b>\$1,330,890</b>	112	0	0.82	0.81
10	<b>AWESOME OF COURSE</b> (00, Awesome Again), Ocala Stud	\$2,000	59/31	1/2	0/1	(Shivaree, \$334,355)	<b>\$1,175,156</b>	*270	12	1.27	1.27
11	<b>FIELD COMMISSION</b> (05, Service Stripe), Solera Farm	Died, 2020	75/32	0/0	0/0	(Lil Commissioner, \$136,710)	<b>\$1,142,668</b>	167	2	0.81	0.96
12	<b>SONGANDAPRAYER</b> (98, Unbridled's Song)	Pnsd	91/32	1/1	1/1	(Boston Cadillac, \$76,655)	<b>\$996,010</b>	*1052	37	1.06	1.36
13	<b>OVERDRIVEN</b> (09, Tale of the Cat)	Pnsd	50/23	0/0	0/0	(Red Crescent, \$87,002)	<b>\$955,887</b>	162	3	0.94	1.13
14	<b>CAJUN BREEZE</b> (08, Congrats), Stonehedge Farm South	Private	26/14	2/3	1/2	(Breeze On By, \$303,000)	<b>\$949,785</b>	38	3	1.82	1.40
15	<b>RATTLESNAKE BRIDGE</b> (08, Tapit)	N/A	54/26	0/0	0/0	(Loriloupies, \$54,020)	<b>\$664,085</b>	145	0	0.52	1.00
16	<b>CHITU</b> (11, Henny Hughes), Bridlewood Farm	\$3,500	37/16	0/0	0/0	(Lugamo, \$65,140)	<b>\$549,856</b>	82	0	0.70	0.87
17	<b>WINSLOW HOMER</b> (07, Unbridled's Song)	N/A	31/15	0/0	0/0	(Oh Deborah, \$66,150)	<b>\$505,414</b>	79	0	0.79	1.12
18	<b>HIGH COTTON</b> (03, Dixie Union)	Pnsd	42/17	0/0	0/0	(High Five Cotton, \$80,245)	<b>\$500,725</b>	*415	11	0.93	1.20
19	<b>GREATNESS</b> (99, Mr. Prospector), Solera Farm	\$3,500	21/11	1/3	0/1	(Lady's Island, \$219,400)	<b>\$465,816</b>	*262	8	1.30	0.99
20	<b>BAHAMIAN SQUALL</b> (09, Gone West), Double Diamond Farm	\$3,000	34/9	0/0	0/0	(Assertiko, \$69,490)	<b>\$419,795</b>	55	0	0.74	0.87

No. 12 in the Florida stallion rankings in 2019 to No. 1 in 2020. Khozan was also recognized as No. 1 in the Southeast last year.

His top performer of 2020 was 2-year-old multiple stakes winner Princess Secret who finished first or second in all five of her starts, including wins in the FTBOA Florida Sire My Dear Girl Stakes and the FTBOA Florida Sire Susan's Girl Stakes, earning \$434,300 for owner/trainer Daniel Pita. Bred by Brent and Crystal

Fernung, she was a \$30,000 yearling purchase by Manuel Pita at the 2019 Ocala Breeders' Sale's October yearlings auction out of the Journeyman Bloodstock Services consignment.

Among Khozan's other stakes winners, from all crops, are Liam's Lucky Charm, Poppy's Pride, Sebs Princess, Go Jo Jo Go and Legal Deal. Khozan is also represented by a number of stakes-placed horses, including Untitled (second in the grade 3 Gotham Stakes last March), Big Daddy Dave,

Lure Him In, Independent Miss, Seazan, and Delia O'Hara.

Results of 2020 sales saw 14 Khozan yearlings sell for an average of \$23,786 while 16 2-year-olds sold for an average price of \$42,625.

"Khozan is yet another example of a stallion taking up residence in Florida and showing success early at a great value for breeders," said Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association CEO Lonny Powell. "Legendary stallions have been given their start in the Sunshine State for decades, including Mr. Prospector.

"Khozan comes upon the heels of the late Wildcat Heir, another precocious leading stallion that stood in the state," Powell added. "Both are Journeyman Stud success stories, and each has produced top-class runners in our lucrative Florida Sire Stakes program."

## UNEXPECTED START

Bred in Kentucky by Adena Springs, Khozan was a \$350,000 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga select yearling sale purchase by Hartley/DeRenzo Thoroughbreds in 2013. The following March, Khozan brought a final bid of \$1 million from Al Shaqab Racing at the Fasig-Tipton Florida spring sale of 2-year-olds in training.

"One of the first purchases I made for Al Shaqab Racing was Khozan," recalled Bradley Weisbord, president of BSW/Crow



COGLIANESE PHOTOS

Khozan's Poppy's Pride winning the Inaugural Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs

Bloodstock and ELiTE Sales, who continued to manage the colt's racing career after purchase.

Weisbord noted that Khozan had some shin issues out of the 2-year-old sale and didn't get to the races until his 3-year-old

ster speed, so we were kind of left in no-man's land," said Weisbord, adding that promoting a stallion without a black-type win is a tough sell in Kentucky. "We were one race away from getting to stand him in Kentucky, but we had to go to Plan B, and



LOUISE E. REINAGEL

**Brent and Crystal Fernung with Khozan**

season. In his first race at Gulfstream Park Jan. 24, 2015, the Todd Pletcher trainee drew Post 14.

"He ran unbelievable that day from a very difficult post," recalled Weisbord of Khozan's victory in the seven-furlong maiden special weight race. "That's when we started to get excited about him."

Khozan ran back at Gulfstream Feb. 22, 2015, in a one-mile allowance optional claiming race and "ran off the screen again that day," said Weisbord. He would win that race by 12¾ lengths.

Undefeated and untested, having won both starts by wide margins, the colt was aiming for the 2015 Besilu Stables Florida Derby (G1) when he sustained a career-ending injury.

"Unfortunately, he came up with an injury, and we were left with a non-stakes winner, but one with a pedigree and mon-

ster speed, so we were kind of left in no-

man's land," said Weisbord, adding that promoting a stallion without a black-type win is a tough sell in Kentucky. "We were one race away from getting to stand him in Kentucky, but we had to go to Plan B, and

### JOURNEYMAN ON BOARD

A trip to Kentucky by the Fernungs would get the ball rolling on Khozan's new home.

"In late October of 2015, Ben Taylor from Taylor Made Farm called and told me that Khozan was possibly available," said Fernung, who quickly called Weisbord. "Crystal and I were in Kentucky for the Breeders' Cup, and, while in town we arranged to go see Khozan who was boarded at WinStar Farm. We were very impressed with him, but by the time we got back to Florida, I was full-force second-guessing myself."

"We decided to ask Dr. Johnny Mac Smith, co-founder of Peterson & Smith Equine Hospital in Ocala and a close friend for decades, to look at him. Johnny called back the next day and said, 'Buy that horse; I love him.'"

Fernung points out that when choosing any stallion prospect, he has never felt they should fit into a "Florida niche."

"Basically, we just want a horse that has a great pedigree and has proved extraordinarily talented. Khozan had a great family pedigree combined, in my opinion, with the most talent of any horse in his crop with the possible exception of American Pharoah," Fernung said. "In his two starts, Khozan went from a first-time starter to a top-10 Derby pick. With his physical, pedigree, and proven talent, Khozan represented everything that I want in a stallion prospect. When he became available, I shoved all the chips to the middle and declared that I was all in."

With Al Shaqab's wanting to retain a significant portion in the horse, a syndicate was put together with the goal of giving Khozan every chance to make it as a sire.

Brent and Crystal Fernung reached out to Gil and Marilyn Campbell of Stonehedge Farm South near Ocala. Confident their program would benefit Khozan, the Fernungs approached the Campbells about purchasing an interest in the stallion.

With almost four decades in the Thoroughbred industry, the Campbells maintain a breeding farm and a successful racing stable. The multiple graded stakes-winning owners of \$5,489,433 race under the name Stonehedge.

"We've known Brent and Crystal for many years. Once Brent sent us Khozan's pedigree, we couldn't pass it up. It was a done deal; we were in," said Marilyn Campbell, noting that what helped sell them on the horse was the fact that Khozan is a half brother to three grade 1 stakes winners, including champion Royal Delta (\$4,811,126) and that his dam's pedigree boasts the likes of Northern Dancer, Secretariat, Seattle Slew, and A.P. Indy.

#### Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the selected region (stallions that have died or been exported prior to the 2015 breeding season are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available Northern Hemisphere statistics through December 31, 2020. As supplied to *The Blood-Horse* by The Jockey Club Information Systems, Inc., earnings 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 2019 is \$25,300 or 53% of the 2019 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 53% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 17%; Singapore by 85%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled black-type stakes winners worldwide. \*Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners include all countries. (A ¶ indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).



## MARE SUPPORT

As a young man, Fernung worked at Lasater Farm near Ocala, home of highly successful Florida stallions Nodouble, Noholme II, Cutlass, and Great Above. He recognized that much of what those stallions accomplished was the result of strong support by Lasater Farm's own broodmares.

"I think Florida stud farms have always made stallions largely through their own participation," Fernung said. "Journeyman doesn't have the mare population to put that kind of commitment to our stallions, but together with our partners, Al Shaqab Racing and Stonehedge, we've successfully got Khozan off the ground."

"Al Shaqab has bred nine to 10 mares to him each year for the last five years, and we've done well selling them and winning races," Weisbord said.

The Fernungs bred between 15-20 of their own mares to Khozan last year and anticipate doing the same again in 2021. With a broodmare band totaling about 60 head, the Campbells have committed about half of them to Khozan.

"We have 18 Khozan yearlings, about a half dozen 2-year-olds, and in 2021 we have close to 30 Khozan foals," said Marilyn Campbell, noting that they will send about 30 mares back to the stallion this breeding season.

While the Campbells race the majority of their horses, they do sell a few. They sold some mares in foal to Khozan during the recently concluded OBS winter mixed sale. Among those mares were two who had already foaled, so their 2021 Khozan foals sold alongside.

When asked what is most impressive about Khozan's progeny, Campbell notes their size, bone, good muscling, and correct conformation, but adds that it goes beyond conformation and appearance.

"They can run at just about any condition. They can go long; they can go short; they can run on grass," said Campbell. "They really have a heart; they just don't give up."

"Khozan is getting fast, precocious, and correct horses. They routinely have great minds, which you shouldn't ever underestimate in fast horses," added Fernung. "That allows them to stretch out and quite

often run a route of ground."

Stonehedge has campaigned some of Khozan's top runners. In 2020 its multiple black-type winning 2-year-old Poppy's Pride was on the board in all six starts, including four wins and earnings

ite horse he's ever been around.

"He was a kind horse, incredibly smart and stunning to look at. He was in some ways the perfect Florida stallion. His babies were precocious and sound. They were very fast, almost always sprinters," recalled Fer-



RYAN THOMPSON/COGLIANESE PHOTOS

**Princess Secret, winner of two FTBOA stakes in 2020**

of \$211,724. Other Khozan stakes winners bred and raced by the Campbells include Liam's Lucky Charm, multiple stakes winner of \$342,800, and Go Jo Jo Go (\$112,800).

Because Journeyman Stud is a commercial breeding operation, the Fernungs sell a significant number of their stock at 2-year-olds in training sales.

Weisbord notes that not only did syndicate partners breed substantial numbers of mares to Khozan, but they also put those homebreds in their racing programs.

"They had success with them on the racetrack and selling them, and that's a huge part of the whole process," Weisbord said. "Getting the Fernungs and Campbells on board was key to his success. It's one thing to put the dollars in; it's another to breed all the mares. You need major support to make a horse, not just year one, but years two, three, four, and five. The Fernungs and Campbells deserve credit for keeping the pipeline churning out runners, so along with Al Shaqab, they are collectively breeding 40-plus mares a year."

Journeyman Stud was home to the late Wildcat Heir, another leading Florida sire, and Fernung still regards him as the favor-

ning. "Likewise, I've found that the Khozan babies share the precociousness and soundness traits, and they also have great minds. The difference in the two is that the Khozans are much more versatile.

"They run short and long, grass or dirt. One of his sons, Lure Him In, recently ran a closing second in a 1¼-mile allowance race on the turf at Santa Anita, as a point in fact."

Khozan's stud fee was kept at \$10,000 for 2021 even as his runners' accomplishments propelled him to No. 1 in Florida.

"Kentucky farms have approached us to say he could stand for more if we moved him up there," observed Fernung. "If breeders in Florida continue to support Khozan like they did in 2020, the Khozan syndicate shouldn't have much incentive to make a change."

"It's a great story all around for a horse that most people might not have gotten the right home for," Weisbord said. "Together they gave the horse a chance in a regional marketplace, and he's paying everyone back for the confidence they had in him." BH

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