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NORTH CAROLINA SOUTH CAROLINA TENNESSEE



Kaizen Sales: A Model of Continuous Improvement

**RICHARD KENT'S MULTIFACETED BACKGROUND
SERVING HIM SUPREME**

By MICHAEL COMPTON

RICHARD KENT, THE FOUNDER OF Kaizen Sales, has been a leading figure in the Thoroughbred sales arena for decades. Inspired by the Japanese concept of Kaizen, which means “continuous improvement,” Kent has dedicated his career to refining the craft of buying and selling top-tier racehorses. Based in Ocala, Fla., since 1990, Kent and Kaizen Sales reflect the principle for which his operation is named, constantly striving for excellence.

ALL SIRES LISTS ARE THROUGH DEC. 9

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2024 LEADING SIRES IN ALABAMA



For daily updated sire lists visit [BloodHorse.com](https://www.bloodhorse.com)

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2024 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2024 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	Indy (01, A.P. Indy)	N/A	1/0	0/0	0/0	(Bobby Jr., \$17,900)	\$17,900	22	0	0.53	1.48
2	Conan (07, Royal Empire)	N/A	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Channelfortynine, \$13,000)	\$13,000	5	0	0.19	0.72
3	Mosquito (08, Yes It's True), H & H Thoroughbreds	Private	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Foolish Steve, \$10,380)	\$10,380	3	0	0.99	0.27

* includes Southern Hemisphere foals; ¶ Indicates a first-crop sire



Kent hit a home run by buying a future Hall of Famer in *Serena's Song* for Arthur Appleton as a weanling at Keeneland for \$42,000 in 1992. L-R: *Serena's Song* winning the Starlet Stakes, the second of her 11 grade 1 victories, and at Denali Stud in 2021

The thrill of the racetrack and the allure of the Thoroughbred industry were ingrained in Kent from a young age. His lifelong passion for horses is deeply rooted in his family history. Kent is originally from Canada where he was raised around the horse business thanks to the involvement of his father, Lionel, who operated under the banner of Hope Stock Farm.

“My mother always claimed I was at the racetrack in utero,” Kent said. “I grew up riding in Vancouver and going to the races with my father. I remember being in the box seats with my dad. There were a lot of bets that went back and forth between partners of an accounting firm that didn’t go through the mutuel windows.

“I always loved horses and riding. Everyone in the family did,” Kent added. “Then we moved to Montreal and then Toronto. Woodbine was very prominent in my life. Windfields used to have a sale at the farm, and I would walk the grounds with my dad. I was there when Northern Dancer was sold. If you liked

a horse at that sale, your handshake was your contract. Obviously, things have changed quite a bit. I learned at an early age that horses come in all shapes and sizes. I clearly remember my dad looking at Northern Dancer and saying, ‘Too small.’”

NORTH TO SOUTH

Kent gained invaluable experience working on horse farms in France and Ireland after college. He was also an educator in Canada, teaching junior high and high school in the northern territories before finding his calling in the horse business. In the 1980s, Kent and his brother, Michael, nicknamed “Punch,” purchased a farm in Ontario, aptly naming it Hope Stock Farm in honor of their family’s operation growing up. Ultimately, Kent settled in Ocala in 1990, the year he was named general manager of Arthur Appleton’s famed Bridlewood Farm.

“We rekindled the Hope Stock Farm name with my brother,” Kent shared. “We did some work for Appleton at the

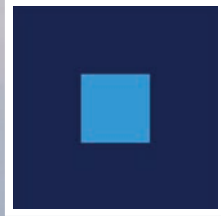
sales and one year ended up foaling a mare that they had sent to Canada. That is how the relationship with Appleton started.

“It was a chance to work with some elite horses,” Kent said of relocating to the Sunshine State. “When I came to Bridlewood, I inherited a yearling manager at that time who still today is one of the best horsemen I’ve ever run across in Brett Brinkman. He is an unbelievable horseman. He was the smartest decision that somebody made, and I inherited him when I got there.”

It didn’t take Kent long to establish that he was a fine horseman in his own right. In 1992, Kent acquired a \$42,000 daughter of Rahy—Imagining, by Northfields, for Appleton out of the Pope McLean (Crestwood Farm) consignment at that year’s Keeneland November Breeding Stock Sale. Named Picture at the time, the filly was sold the following year by Bridlewood for \$150,000 to Robert and Beverly Lewis at the Keeneland July Selected Yearling Sale. The rest, as they say, is history.

LEFT: STIDHAM & ASSOCIATES; RIGHT: ANNE M. EBERHARDT

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2024 Stud Fee	Rnrs/Wnrs	BT SWnrs/Wns	Rstrct SW/BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2024 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E	Comp Index
1	Khozan (12, Distorted Humor), Ocala Stud	\$6,000	217/112	3/4	1/3	(Shaq Diesel, \$140,110)	\$5,301,277	*423	16	1.15	1.15
2	Neolithic (13, Harlan's Holiday), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$5,000	74/46	3/3	1/3	(Dancing N Dixie, \$300,190)	\$2,809,166	132	5	1.08	0.88
3	Adios Charlie (08, Indian Charlie), Ocala Stud	\$3,000	108/59	1/2	0/1	(Stone Silent, \$157,968)	\$2,778,075	411	12	1.16	1.10
4	Jess's Dream (12, Curlin)	Died, 2024	95/51	3/3	1/3	(Beth's Dream, \$253,750)	\$2,677,278	*221	8	0.94	1.36
5	Valiant Minister (13, Candy Ride), Bridlewood Farm	\$4,000	56/33	2/2	1/2	(Bentornato, \$820,000)	\$2,412,164	117	3	1.21	0.98
6	Social Inclusion (11, Pioneer of the Nile), Briardale Farm	Private	56/36	3/3	1/3	(Uncle Heavy, \$257,100)	\$2,173,446	130	6	1.14	0.99
7	Awesome Slew (13, Awesome Again), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	70/35	1/1	0/1	(Hades, \$311,550)	\$2,080,948	96	2	0.99	1.33
8	Brethren (08, Distorted Humor), Arindel Farm	\$4,000	87/39	1/2	0/1	(Octane, \$428,500)	\$2,071,727	294	12	1.13	1.35
9	Cajun Breeze (08, Congrats), Stonehedge Farm South	\$5,000	71/31	2/5	0/2	(Dean Delivers, \$325,850)	\$1,982,980	149	8	1.11	1.16
10	First Dude (07, Stephen Got Even), Double Diamond Farm	\$7,500	71/31	1/2	0/1	(Charlie's Wish, \$180,995)	\$1,586,777	508	16	1.07	1.09
11	St Patrick's Day (15, Pioneer of the Nile), Journeyman Stallions	\$3,500	49/23	1/1	0/1	(Fiona's Magic, \$181,010)	\$985,140	90	1	0.71	0.97
12	Bahamian Squall (09, Gone West), Double Diamond Farm	\$3,000	32/16	1/2	0/1	(Spirit Wind, \$281,650)	\$878,504	107	2	0.78	0.86
13	¶ Win Win Win (16, Hat Trick), Ocala Stud	\$8,500	24/8	2/3	0/2	(Win N Your In, \$218,950)	\$738,772	50	2	0.98	1.09
14	Field Commission (05, Service Stripe)	Died, 2020	25/12	2/2	1/2	(Bluefield, \$150,627)	\$733,348	196	4	0.83	0.96
15	Big Drama (06, Montbrook)	Died, 2021	27/17	0/0	0/0	(Burnaway, \$84,070)	\$642,422	300	5	0.87	1.14
16	Rogueish (16, Into Mischief), Solera Farm	\$2,500	16/11	1/2	0/1	(Naughty Rascal, \$158,130)	\$641,200	30	1	0.97	0.82
17	Gone Astray (06, Dixie Union)	N/A	42/19	1/1	0/1	(Richiesonroll, \$88,235)	\$613,510	*353	11	0.88	1.02
18	Chitu (11, Henny Hughes), Bridlewood Farm	\$2,000	35/18	0/0	0/0	(Esperon, \$72,385)	\$586,128	151	1	0.62	0.86
19	¶ Bodexpress (16, Bodemeister), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$3,500	18/8	1/1	1/1	(Hot Girl Walk, \$117,500)	\$390,104	46	1	0.71	0.71
20	¶ Curlin's Honor (15, Curlin), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$2,500	17/4	1/1	1/1	(R Morning Brew, \$129,000)	\$257,556	31	1	0.50	0.94

* includes Southern Hemisphere foals; ¶ Indicates a first-crop sire

Renamed Serena's Song, the tough-as-nails Hall of Fame filly banked more than \$3.2 million in a storied racing career for trainer D. Wayne Lukas. An 11-time grade 1 winner, Serena's Song, who was a part of Rahy's second crop, won 18-of-38 starts with 11 seconds. She was inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame in 2002, her first year of eligibility.

"She wasn't very big," said Kent, recalling what stood out about Serena's Song as a weanling. "The one thing I will always remember about her is that she was an incredibly balanced filly, even as a November weanling. Arthur decided we were going to pinhook some weanlings, so we sold her the next year to Wayne (for the Lewises) at Keeneland.

"There was a little something in the back of my mind that was saying, 'We might've been making a mistake here,'" Kent continued. "Obviously, it was a big mistake, or not. I did go out and buy the dam of Serena's Song (Imagining). Then I started to get a thing for Northfields mares, and I bought the dam of Forbidden Apple as well."

Kent acquired Imagining for Appleton at the Keeneland November sale of 1993, securing her for the sum of \$180,000 out of McLean's consignment. With this admiration of Northfields mares, Kent bought North Of Eden, the dam of Forbidden Apple, for Appleton. A Bridlewood foundation mare, North Of Eden is buried at Bridlewood Farm



Kent recalls seeing the legendary Northern Dancer sell at Windfields Farm in Canada

after passing away from natural causes in 2011 at age 28.

North Of Eden produced three grade 1 winners—Paradise Creek, Wild Event, and Forbidden Apple. She is also the granddam of European champion David Junior, a multiple group 1 winner and earner of more than \$4.1 million. The 10 winners produced by North Of Eden earned nearly \$6.5 million during their racing careers.

Another horse Kent played a role in selecting for Bridlewood was Hail Atlantis. Kent extended to \$650,000 for the grade 1-winning daughter of Seattle Slew, who was consigned by Eaton-Williams. Winner of the 1990

Santa Anita Oaks (G1), Hail Atlantis was carrying Stormy Atlantic at the time.

"The price for Hail Atlantis was beyond my comfort zone but not Arthur's," Kent shared. "When they handed me the ticket to sign for her at the sale, I couldn't even remember how to sign my name. But we got it done."

PLUMLEY FARMS

A few years after his stint at Bridlewood Farm, Kent went to work managing Harold Plumley's Plumley Farms in Ocala. A successful entrepreneur with a manufacturing company in Tennessee that specialized in synthetic rubber, Plumley, a former president of the

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2024 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstret SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2024 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	Done Talking (09, Broken Vow)	N/A	26/17	0/0	0/0	(Stop the Cap, \$95,850)	\$674,181	59	0	0.99	0.89
2	Wicked Rich (06, Yes It's True)	N/A	2/0	0/0	0/0	(Canochee, \$3,180)	\$3,580	22	0	0.80	0.98

* includes Southern Hemisphere foals; † Indicates a first-crop sire



One of Kent's earliest jobs in Ocala was that of general manager for Appleton's Bridlewood Farm

Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association, passed away in 2019 at age 92.

"Harold was an incredible gentleman," Kent said. "They don't make them like Harold anymore."

"When I first went to work for Harold, he lifted the hood of a car and showed me all the rubber plant parts in the car, whether it was a radiator horse or anything else. He said, 'We make 15 cents on every one of these that we sell, and we make millions of them. How are we going to do that in the horse business?' The first answer I told him was, 'Well, we're not.' We got along famously together."

Kent's philosophy on breeding and developing young horses is influenced by his experiences working with Plumley. His commitment to producing top-quality horses extends beyond profit, encompassing a broader sense of responsibility and pride.

"I place a great importance on where a horse is raised and who raised them,"

"I ALWAYS FELT THAT YOU SHOULD STAY IN YOUR LANE. THERE ARE SO MANY BRILLIANT PEOPLE IN TOWN WHO HANDLE THE 2-YEAR-OLDS, AND THAT WAS NEVER MY FORTE. WE USED TO BREAK AND TRAIN A LOT, BUT I WOULD ALWAYS SEND THEM OUT TO OTHER PEOPLE TO SELL. THEY (2-YEAR-OLD CONSIGNORS) ARE MY CUSTOMERS, SO I DON'T NEED TO COMPETE AGAINST THEM."

—RICHARD KENT

Kent said. "Working for Harold for 13 or 14 years, he had three goals. He drilled into us that we needed to be good stewards of the land and leave it in better condition than we found it. He wanted to be incredibly proud of the product we put out and stand behind it. And he would say, 'If you happen to make a little money, that would be good, too.' I'm proud to say that we accomplished those three goals with Plumley Farms."

Dubai Majesty, a daughter of Essence of Dubai, was bred by Plumley. Following an outstanding racing career in which she won the 2010 Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Sprint (G1) at Churchill Downs for Martin Racing Stable and Dan Morgan and trainer Bret Calhoun, Dubai Majesty was bought by Katsumi Yoshida for \$1.1 million at the 2010 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky November Sale. Dubai Majesty is still making headlines. She is the dam of Shahryar, who finished third in the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1T) at Del Mar in November for owner Sunday Racing and trainer Hideaki Fujiwara. The now-7-year-old horse, who was bred in Japan by Northern Farm, also finished third in the race in 2023.

"Harold would have been smiling at that result," Kent shared of Shahryar's Breeders' Cup placing. "I'm sure he was smiling. That was the great thing about working for Harold. The fact that Dubai Majesty went on and did so well for everybody that touched her after us, that would mean a lot to him. We all know it's not an easy game, but it was important to Harold that our product was highly respected."

Sweetsouthernstaint, campaigned by Plumley, captured the 1997 What a Pleasure Stakes (G3) at Calder and finished third in the Holy Bull Stakes (G3) at Gulfstream Park the following year. As a stallion, Sweetsouthernstaint sired Sweetnorthernstaint. Bred in the Sunshine State by Eduardo Azpurua, Sweet-

THIS PAGE: LOUISE E. REINAGEL; OPPOSITE PAGE: RICK SAMUELS



While managing Plumley Farms, Kent worked with the Howard Plumley-bred Dubai Majesty who would become an Eclipse Award winner

northern saint annexed the Illinois Derby (G2) in 2006 and was runner-up to Bernardini in that year's Preakness Stakes (G1) for owners Joseph Balsamo and Ted Theos.

FOCUSED APPROACH

Around the time he went to work for Plumley, Kent launched Kaizen Sales. Today, Kaizen Sales focuses on wean-

lings, yearlings, and broodmares and is based at Golden Legacy in Ocala, the same property that was once home to Plumley Farms.

"Kaizen means continuous improvement," Kent said. "Since none of us know everything about this business, it seemed like a neat concept for the Thoroughbred industry because if you think you know

it all, you're in big trouble. That's how we came up with the name Kaizen."

While many consignors in Ocala focus on pinhooking and selling 2-year-olds, Kent has carved a niche for Kaizen Sales. He believes in focusing on his strengths and avoiding direct competition with 2-year-old consignors. The strategic approach allows him to dedicate his expertise to earlier stages of a horse's development.

"I always felt that you should stay in your lane," Kent said. "There are so many brilliant people in town who handle the 2-year-olds, and that was never my forte. We used to break and train a lot, but I would always send them out to other people to sell. They (2-year-old consignors) are my customers, so I don't need to compete against them."

When it comes to selecting horses, Kent prioritizes physical attributes over pedigree, believing that a great horse



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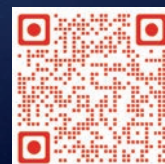
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can come from any background. Kent also values the importance of a horse's upbringing, highlighting the significance of Florida as an ideal environment for raising young athletes.

"When I'm looking at a horse, I'm looking at the physical," related Kent. "Good horses can come from anywhere. I think we make mistakes when we follow the herd on sires. I certainly like name recognition on a sire, but that is not my determining factor. It's whether that's an athlete you are looking at or not. If it's an athlete, I put that over pedigree. I'm not saying that I dismiss pedigree, but I want to see an athlete.

"An important thing to me is the top line of a catalog page," he continued. "I want to know where that horse was raised. Coming from Canada, I watched Sam-Son Farms foal their mares in Canada, breed them in Kentucky, and raise them in Florida. And then turn around and ship them home after they were broken and trained in Ocala, and they absolutely dominated Canadian racing for decades. Every one of those horses was raised in Florida. I've come to totally appreciate the fact that Florida is the best place to raise a horse."



Kent and grandson Jack taking in a morning of training

FAMILY TIES

Married to wife, Lise, for 40 years, Kent has three daughters—Julie, Claire, and Tara. Julie followed her father into the Thoroughbred business and works in Lexington for Brookdale Sales.

"I would like to have a dollar for everyone who has told me that I married up," said Kent. "Lise is a big part of all of it. I'm super proud of my daughters. I think as a parent, that's the biggest thing you

are proud of, your children. Julie has always loved the business, the pedigrees, and all the research. She's very sharp. She comes down and helps us out with every sale in Ocala. She is a whole lot smarter than her dad ever was.

"I've been very fortunate to meet some incredibly wonderful people in this industry, from Arthur Appleton to Harold Plumley, and so many others," Kent added. "The Thoroughbred industry is remarkable that way. At the sales, I've got the same help that I've had for 20 years. They have been with me for so long and are so good at what they do. I get compliments all the time on the quality of our sales team. That's also a tribute to my daughter (Julie) who helps run things."

As Kaizen Sales continues to hum along, Kent has undeniably left his mark on the Thoroughbred industry with his ability to identify and nurture top-tier talent. His business sense and unwavering passion have shaped numerous success stories on the racetrack and in the auction ring, and his influence is far from waning. Through his daughter Julie, the future of the Kent family's impact on horse racing looks brighter than ever. **BH**

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