

The Leading Freshman Sires Of 2002

Shout It From the Mountaintop. Or At Least Yodel It.

By **LARRY BORTSTEIN**

California can be very proud of its locally based stallions who had their first crop of 2-year-olds at the track in 2002. A significant number of them made a serious impact on the leading freshman sire lists both locally and nationally, so the golden state's future looks very bright in this particular category.

Swiss Yodeler, who stands for \$7,500 at Pepper Oaks Farm in Santa Ynez, was the dominant California sire right from the start. This was not surprising, considering that the 9-year-old chestnut was one of the top 2-year-old racehorses of 1996. That year, he won six times, including the grade I Hollywood Futurity—vanquishing, among others, Free House—the grade II Hollywood Juvenile Championship, and the grade III Best Pal Stakes at Del Mar.

The son of Eastern Echo, himself a precocious juvenile, appears to have passed on his precocity to his progeny, thus establishing him as one of the country's hottest young stallions. Through Dec. 3, 2002, Swiss Yodeler had sired 13 winners, who had accumulated \$663,993 in purse earnings. Then, within the next couple of weeks, two more of his offspring broke their maidens to push his progeny earnings to over the \$700,000 mark.

His talented group to date includes stakes winners Oberwald, a colt with earnings of \$98,636, and the filly My Honey Bunny, earner of \$73,173. Swiss Yodeler's first four winners—My Honey Bunny, Singing Swiss, Alpine Singer and Little Bit a Swiss—were out of mares leased from Marvin Malmuth by Swiss Yodeler's owner, Heinz Steinmann. "It might have been the perfect thing," Steinmann said. "We gave them the speed and the mares gave the distance."

For a horse who didn't do his best work on the track until he was six, Benchmark has had an excellent start at stud with his first crop to race. The 12-year-old Alydar stallion, a resident of Marty and Pam Wygod's River Edge Farm in Buellton, sired 10 winners of \$386,669 during the corre-

sponding period. Among his four victories as a 6-year-old in 1997, Benchmark captured a trio of grade III events—the San Bernardino Handicap, the Del Mar Breeders' Cup Handicap and the Goodwood Breeders' Cup Handicap.

Two sons of 1984 Breeders' Cup Classic champion Wild Again are next on the list of California's freshman sires of 2002. Wild Deputy (Valley Creek Farm) sired eight winners with earnings of \$155,738, and Western Fame (Applebite Farms) had seven winners who accounted for \$222,416. The latter then sired yet another winner within days thereof.

Haint (Sentinel Farms), by former national 2-year-old champion Devil's Bag, gave California a fifth freshman stal-

lion with progeny earnings of more than \$100,000 in 2002. His four winners had bankrolled \$105,037 by Dec. 3.

As a 2002 freshman sire, Joyeux Danseur, now at Lakeview Thoroughbred Farm, had three winners of \$80,401 from the crop he produced while in residence at Three Chimneys Farm in Kentucky.

Then there is the Creston Farms stallion Anziyan, who may have had only one winner to his name as of the first few days of December, but he subsequently moved up the list when two more members of his first crop raced

to victory during the next couple of weeks of last month.

Lakeview is also the home of Truckee, whose first crop produced two winners, including Appealing Wayz, who captured the Rocky Mountain Futurity. By Dec. 3, a number of other California freshman stallions had each produced a couple of winners, namely Born Wild (Hideaway Farms), Mira Loma Thoroughbred Farm LLC's Peyrano (Arg), Red (Schvaneveldt Ranch), West 12 Ranch's Tom Cruiser, Twin Spires (Meadowcreek Ranch) and Hedrick Ranch's Tychonic (GB).

Fruition (Creston Farms) was responsible for one winner in 2002, along with Larry the Legend, the winner of the grade I Santa Anita Derby in 1995 and now standing at Mira Loma Thoroughbred Farm LLC for his owner-trainer Craig Lewis.



Swiss Yodeler