

# The Sequel Bloodstock Success Story

by **DEBRA GINSBURG**

"We are looking for athletes, horses that are well-balanced and can cover a good deal of ground," says Sequel Bloodstock's Becky Thomas. "Sales nowadays are governed by how a horse performs on the track, so I select yearlings for their athleticism and presence above anything else."

Thomas' arena is actually the 2-year-old in training sales, but the Del Mar Yearling Sale and other such top sales around the country provide her with a ready market of good prospects. She and her associates scour the summer and fall yearling sales for babies that fit her criteria. She then takes them back to her base in Ocala, Fla., where she puts a good foundation into them and prepares them for the juvenile sales the following spring. Horses from Sequel's consignments preview so well under tack that they have often topped the sale and even fetched record prices.

One recent example was a Sea of Secrets colt that set a world record for a 2-year-old when he fetched \$2.7 million at Barretts in March. Thomas paid just \$30,000 for the colt the previous July and he had the Pomona-based auction company buzzing with a quarter-mile in :21 3/5. Arabian Light, a \$60,000 purchase out of the 1999 Del Mar Yearling Sale, also worked impressively enough to warrant a \$700,000 bid from Prince Ahmed bin Salman's The Thoroughbred Corp at the 2000 Barretts March Sale. The impressive work tab and price was matched a year later by Officer, for whom Sequel had paid \$175,000 at Del Mar.

"I tend to be very careful and don't spend more than \$200,000 for a yearling," she said. "If a horse can't display its athleticism during the sale previews, it won't bring the price we want. Officer was one yearling that nearly reached my spending limit, but he was the complete package. I usually like to spend between \$40,000 and \$80,000 for yearlings, because we have to put a lot of work into them to get them ready for two-year-old sales."

Rudy Delguidice, a former jockey, is Becky's buyer at Del Mar because she's busy shopping for yearlings at Saratoga. A part of Sequel Bloodstock's team for 13 years, Delguidice selected both Arabian Light and Officer.

"Because of Saratoga and the upcoming Eastern sales, this is the only time we split up," she explains. "Otherwise we look at all the horses in a sale as a team effort. Rudy and I think a lot alike. The horses we both like, we give them a second look and vet-check all the horses we like a second time. Sometimes, though, we might just bid on a yearling right before it goes into the ring if we like the way it moves and behaves, especially if it has a presence."

It is no surprise that Sequel Bloodstock's successes with Arabian Light and Officer coincide with the Del Mar Yearling Sale's rise from the ashes in the last decade. Arabian Light sold at the first of four record-breaking sales in 1999 and he scored his first stakes win in the Graduation Stakes days before a second record-breaker in 2000. Officer came out of that sale and his racetrack success in 2001 created such a demand for good California-breds in 2001 that Rudy was able to buy just one yearling.

Both Arabian Light and Officer became graded stakes winners and have since embarked upon stud careers, but they are by no means the only success stories for Sequel Bloodstock. Sunday Sport, an Honour and Glory filly who was purchased for \$75,000 at Del Mar in 2000 and then brought \$190,000 at an Ocala 2-year-old sale, originally raced in England but returned to the U. S. and has since won twice. Sequel also bought a filly from Free House's first crop for \$40,000 last year and resold her for \$125,000 at Barretts in March. The Thoroughbred Corp.'s graded stakes winners Habibti and Kafwain were other successful Sequel Bloodstock pinhooks.

Not only does Thomas have a good eye for equine athletes, she also knows the market very well. If a horse has a California pedigree, she will sell it at a 2-year-old sale out here where it stands a good chance of fetching a good price among buyers who know the family. Officer, being by California champion and top local sire Bertrando, was ideally suited for the California market, as was the world record Sea of Secrets colt. Neil Drsydale trained his sire to become a California stakes winner.

"It's very satisfying to sell for a big price because it validates all your hard work," she said. "But it's even better when they go out there and win. To watch horses like Officer, Kafwain and Habibti capture graded stakes races for their new owners has to be the greatest thrill."



Becky Thomas



Rudy Delguidice