

by **DEBRA GINSBURG**

Susie Edlund couldn't remember a time when she didn't love horses. Growing up in Rolling Hills Estates, she got involved with hunter/jumpers and owned her first horse when she was only 10. Her passion eventually evolved into teaching riding to kids, and buying former racehorses for resale as show and pleasure mounts. These days, however, she concentrates on developing promising young four-legged prospects for the racetrack.

During a 10-year stint as an instructor at the Portuguese Bend Riding Club, she got to know Robert and Coletha Hutchinson when she gave riding lessons to their daughter Linda. It was through that association that the Hutchinson-Edlund Thoroughbred partnership was born.

"Linda took a liking to me and wanted to know if I'd be interested in becoming a partner in a horse ranch," Susie recalled. "Her father had purchased some land out in Murrieta where he wanted to retire to and thought he'd like to raise some horses. The only thing was he didn't know what kind of horses he wanted."

She moved her hunter/jumper business to Murrieta and became equal partners with the Hutchinsons. Robert passed away some years ago, but she has continued the partnership with his widow and daughter. Although showing still comprises a good portion of her work, she now buys a lot of former racehorses off the track and retrains them for other sports, like show jumping and polo, that capitalize on a Thoroughbred's speed and athleticism. She has also branched out a bit to break and sales-prep yearlings, breed mares and even stand a stallion.

"My association with Thoroughbreds actually goes back a long way," she explained. "I once worked for the

CTBA as a bid runner when they used to have their sales at the old Hollywood Park pavilion. But the way I got into the business was that I used to

filly by Falstaff out of Video Menu. She got the filly ready for her Del Mar Yearling Sale inspection at the Murrieta Ranch and prepped her for the sale itself. That filly brought a final bid of \$32,000 at the 1998 Del Mar auction and became two-time California Champion Cover Gal.

She also prepped a California-bred son of Fly So Free for the following year's sale at Del Mar. Bred by Kenneth Reinsch and orphaned soon after he was born, the youngster fetched a respectable \$60,000 as a yearling. He made an even bigger splash at the Barretts March 2-Year-Old Sale in 2002, when Prince Ahmed bin Salman's The Thoroughbred Corp. bought him for \$700,000, which was then a record for a Cal-bred sold at public auction. He was named Arabian Light and went on to win both the Graduation Stakes at Del Mar and grade II Lane's End Breeders' Futurity at Keeneland for lifetime earnings of \$410,544.

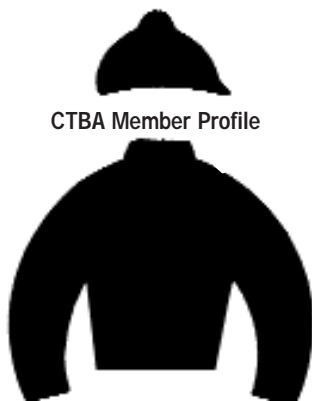
"When you have a horse at your ranch and deal with it on a daily basis, you really get to know it as an individual," Susie said. "Both Arabian Light and Cover Gal were exceptional animals. I knew in my heart they would bring good prices at the sale and do well for themselves on the track. They're the kinds of horses you always dream about."

Since the Murrieta property is only 20 acres, Susie basically green-breaks yearlings and works with horses that don't require a lot of training.

"We get them ready to go to a place that has a training track," she explained, "but we rarely turn anybody away. If we can work with the horse, we'll take him on. We

also board lay-ups from the track and even had some of (the late) Georgia Ridder's mares here to prep for the dispersal sale. There's only room for about 40 horses here at one time, so there's a big turnover."

CTBA Member Profile



Susie Edlund



pinhook yearlings for various clients and prepare them for 2-year-olds in training sales."

More recently, Edlund broke several of local breeder Ron Gomez's babies, which included a strapping bay

Some years ago, Argentine horseman Michel Viejobueno brought some Thoroughbreds from his native country for Susie to break. They became friends and the association led her to standing his stallion, Town Caper, at the Murrieta ranch.

"My partner (Earle McNeil) had some horses with Susie and he respected her knowledge and expertise with horses," Viejobueno says. "Although she's never had any experience with stallions, she seemed very interested in standing Town Caper. We trusted her enough to give her the chance and it's been a very satisfying arrangement."

A Cal-bred son of the Icecapade stallion Fatih, Town Caper captured the 1993 Foothill Stakes at Fairplex Park and ran second in the Real Good Deal Stakes at Del Mar. A serious student of pedigrees, Michel kept an eye on the horse as a possible stallion prospect and claimed him quite inexpensively at Fairplex in 1995, when he started descending the claiming ladder.

Despite nine wins from 34 starts and earnings of \$220,943 and a pedigree that contained such influential stallions as Nearco, Graustark, Damascus and Never Bend in his first five generations, few people wanted to send their mares to Town Caper. Susie and Michel started breeding him to neighbors' Quarter Horses and Appaloosas just to get some foals out there. After one of his racing Appaloosa babies became a champion at two and three, Susie and Michel believed they might have something special in Town Caper.

Although Town Caper hasn't been bred to outside mares and has thus far had limited opportunities at stud, he is posting some good numbers. One of his foals, Gamblin Town, was one of the nation's winningest Thoroughbreds last year, scoring 10 victories from 17 starts.

Another, Fatal Caper, became the stallion's first stakes horse when she placed in the \$200,000 Melair Stakes at California Gold Rush IV this year. And, despite the fact that Town Caper was unraced at two, several of his offspring have proven precocious enough to race and win as 2-year-olds.

"Breeding and genetics will always tell," Michel said. "As soon as I saw what Town Caper was getting from a bunch of poor mares, I went to Kentucky and bought better mares for him. We're thinking of shuttling him to Argentina. I have some mares down there that I can breed to him and several farms have shown an interest. He has a lot of speed."

Michel keeps his California-based mares in a place that's undeveloped and

She currently has hopes for a 3-year-old General Meeting colt named Flying General who debuted at Santa Anita Park in March. Produced from the stakes-winning Flying Paster mare Ashland Rose, Flying General was bred by CTBA Director Clydene Boots and given to Susie after he failed to meet his reserve at the 2001 Barretts October Yearling Sale. Edlund, in turn, gave a share in the colt to trainer D. Wayne Baker, so they're looking forward to racing him as partners.

Susie also owns two mares with Leonard Lidstrom, who raced Let's Go Surfing with her. One of them is Claim This Dance, a Mining mare out of a half-sister to Turkoman. They sent her to Kentucky the first year that they had her, to be bred to the 1994 Kentucky Derby winner Go for Gin. The result of that mating is Cal-bred Danceing Gin, who is now three and training with Baker. In 2001 and 2002, Claim This Dance produced a couple of Memo (Chi) fillies, and was then bred to Town Caper this year. The other mare is



Let's Go Surfing—Santa Anita Park—January 9, 1999

brings them down to foal their babies at nearby Circle H Ranch. When the foals are a few days old, Susie takes the mares to her place where she gets them ready for their next breedings.

She has also campaigned a few runners herself. She feels her best horse was a Cutlass Reality gelding, who she bought from Harris Farms Inc. at the 1996 Del Mar Yearling Sale and named Let's Go Surfing as a tribute to her roots as a California beach girl.

"He was a really fun horse to have, and paid his way at the track," she recalled. "He ran second in the California Cup Sprint after he got claimed from us. He raced against horses like Spinelessjellyfish, Sky Jack, Love That Red and Guillermo and earned more than \$200,000."

stakes-placed Blair's Favorite, by Irish River (Fr), who has a beautiful Memo colt that will probably go in this year's Del Mar Yearling Sale.

In addition to caring for Town Caper and the horses on the Hutchinson property, Susie makes her home in Fallbrook, in North San Diego County, with an assortment of four-legged and equine companions.

One of them is a Thoroughbred/Appaloosa son of 1969 Hollywood Gold Cup winner Figonero. She bought the horse as a yearling from Dr. Jim Buell and he's now 27. She also has a couple of young Thoroughbreds that she's reschooling as trail horses.

"I can't ever imagine a life without horses," she said. "It's like Heaven on earth."