

Nothing Remains Constant, Except Change Itself

With this issue of *California Thoroughbred*, we once again experience a "changing of the guard" by acknowledging a new group of California-bred champions, while another "champion" of our cause, namely Wes Fitzpatrick, signs off as our association's president after three very successful years at the helm. Also adding to this theme of "out with the old and in with the new" are articles ranging from coverage of the inaugural running of the Jan. 25 Sunshine Millions and our annual 'California Statistical Review' to a look at the Golden State's freshman sires of 2003 and news of what lies ahead for the popular Cal-bred steeplechaser, Al Skywalker.

However, let me start by saying that it has been an absolute pleasure working under the guidance of Wes Fitzpatrick, whom I would like to personally thank for possessing great vision, commitment and understanding when it comes to furthering the cause of our locally bred Thoroughbreds. The fact that he bows out as the breeder, in partnership with his wife Sharon, of the 2002 California-bred Horse of the Year Continental Red, is a fitting testimony to his continued contribution to our breeding and racing industry. I am also looking forward to working with his successor Dan Schiffer, who also brings to the table a wealth of experience and knowledge that promises to serve him well as the next leader of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA).

Returning to the subject of last year's elite group of local stars, this month's editorials cover other such great performers as the dominating Disturbingthepeace, the exciting Grey Memo, the dazzling Above Perfection, the gutsy Calkins Road, the determined Super High, the ill-fated Icecold-beeratreds and the flying Humorous Lady. Along with the aforesaid ultra-consistent Continental Red, they are all examples of the best that California has to offer. We salute them as the latest on the list of "official" Cal-bred champions going back more than three decades.

As previously mentioned, we also include detailed coverage of the first Sunshine Millions Day where an incredible \$3.6 million was handed out in purses. We were somewhat humbled by our Florida-bred counterparts, but at least our Cal-breds came away with a number of noteworthy performances. On a personal basis, the event was a lot of fun for me as I was able to visit Gulfstream Park for the first time. There, I enjoyed a most exciting day of racing in company with both the many California breeders, owners and trainers who had also made the long trip east, as well as my predecessor at this magazine, Michael Compton.

Other articles to look out for in this March issue are a wrap-up of the Barretts January Mixed Sale as well as a look back in "A Glorious Time" at the various exploits of the Creston Farms stallion Falstaff. Furthermore, we have our usual lineup of interesting features and departments that keep our readers up to date with all the latest news and information pertaining to California's Thoroughbred industry.

To close, I would like to raise a toast to all those horses, and the people associated with them, who tasted success in 2002. May your accomplishments extend well into the future, in the same vein as all those great champions of years gone by.

—Rudi Groothedde
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In the Company of . . . California-bred Horse of the Year Continental Red
flanked by his trainer Ian P. D. Jory (left) and groom Sergio R. Mejia

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