



## Managing Editor's Welcome

# The Greatest?

As a kid, I marveled at the three-time world heavyweight champion boxer Muhammad Ali, who was often referred to as "The Greatest."

That accolade has since been attributed to only a few other elite individuals, but it can now be accorded to another great athlete at whom we currently marvel. It's the Thoroughbred racehorse Lava Man, who can lay claim to that title as arguably the best California-bred of all-time.

Tiznow won two Breeders' Cup Classics and earned \$6,427,830; Best Pal won three California Horse of the Year titles and a dozen graded stakes races; Snow Chief won the classic Preakness Stakes and five other grade I events; and Native Diver won three consecutive Hollywood Gold Cups and 31 additional stakes races. But with his second consecutive victory in the Santa Anita Handicap on March 3, as only the third horse alongside John Henry and Milwaukee Brew to achieve this feat, Lava Man can possibly now be called "The Greatest."

Legitimizing this statement are his career achievements to date. He is the only other horse to win the Hollywood Gold Cup more than once. He has won his last nine stakes races in California. He is both a grade I winner and track record-holder on Hollywood Park's turf course. He has six grade I victories to his name. He is the only horse to have swept the Big 'Cap, Gold Cup and Pacific Classic Stakes in a single season. And, he has been voted the Golden State's Horse of the Year for the past two years.

And, as these very words are being written, Lava Man has just traveled halfway across the world to compete in the \$5 million Dubai Duty Free (UAE-group I), a one-mile turf test at the Nad Al Sheba Racecourse in the United Arab Emirates.

This April 2007 issue of *California Thoroughbred* also features some other great Cal-breds. We preview Cal National California Gold Rush VIII at Hollywood Park on Sunday, April 29, by spotlighting the amazing achievements of Kentucky Oaks winner Fran's Valentine, as well as those fillies and mares who have won the race named after her that's held at this \$1.31 million day of 10 stakes races exclusively for Cal-breds.

The recent graded stakes winner Mistical Plan and black-type winners River's Prayer, Jack's Wild and Somethinaboutlaura are reviewed, while we also provide a wrap-up of the Barretts March Sale of Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training, where a Cal-bred filly was purchased for \$800,000. Plus,



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In the Company of...John Brocklebank, whose B.C.3. Thoroughbreds was the leading consignor at this year's Barretts March Sale of Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training, with nine head sold—including both the \$1.4 million sale-topper and a California-bred filly for \$800,000—for gross receipts of \$4,620,000, during last year's edition of this auction at Fairplex Park in Pomona on March 14, 2006.

Dawn Lucas is the subject of this month's CTBA Member Profile, we preview those local sires who have their first runners this year, and readers can also look forward to all of this publication's other regular columns, features and departments.

Until next time, may you breed the best to the best and not just have to hope for the best!

—Rudi Groothedde  
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