



Regional Sales

by LISA GROOTHEDDE

A significant amount of air was let out of the local commercial industry's tires on March 12, when the 2008 Barretts March Sale of Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training yielded deflated results compared to last year's robust edition. The West Coast's premier auction of ready-to-go racing prospects, conducted by Barretts Equine Limited at its Pomona complex, realized across-the-board declines in all categories: gross, average, median and number sold.

With 73 juveniles sold from the 132 who entered the Hinds Pavilion ring, the 2008 sale produced gross receipts of \$12,996,000, a drop of 32.8 percent from the corresponding sale in 2007, when 88 of the 150 horses offered sold for a cumulative \$19,340,000—the highest such total since 1999, and a 34.7 percent increase from the 2006 gross. Average price tumbled 19 percent this year, from \$219,773 to \$178,027, while the median fell 25.4 percent, from \$147,500 to \$110,000. Buy-backs crept upward, from 41.3 percent to 44.7 percent, and, for the first time since 2001, no horse commanded a seven-figure bid.

"To some extent, we were a victim of last year's success, when the sale average jumped to more than \$200,000," said Barretts President and General Manager Jerry McMahon. "That prices out a lot of buyers, especially when they look at our smaller catalog compared to the sales back east."

"We were primarily disappointed in not getting more horses sold," he explained. "We had excellent pre-sale activity; however, it became clear that buyers and their veterinarians were being very, very selective. I am confident that we had some real racehorses among those sold and the not-solds, and that we'll see them winning major races later in the year."

One buyer who is hoping that will indeed be the case is Californian Jess Jackson, whose Stonestreet Stables LLC acquired the two most expensive lots.



Hip #165, a Cal-bred Victory Gallop filly—\$170,000

Bump In The Road

Topping the sale on a winning bid of \$800,000 was the prophetically named Silver Jess, a daughter of Silver Deputy out of the winning Cox's Ridge mare Duchess Kiss. Bought for \$210,000 at the 2007 Keeneland September Yearling Sale and pinhooked by the Jerry Bailey Sales Agency, the bay filly covered an eighth of a mile in :10.20 during her under-tack preview at Fairplex Park on March 4.

The sale-topper, a half-sister to an Italian group I performer, was bred in Kentucky, but she carries strong ties to the Golden State. Her second dam, California champion and 1983 Vanity Invitational Handicap (grade I) winner A Kiss for Luck, is also the granddam of California-bred grade I winner and 2004/2005 Valkyr Trophy recipient Alphabet Kisses.

Jackson's racing operation, which is currently headed by reigning Eclipse Horse of the Year Curlin, secured the sale's highest-priced colt for \$650,000 from the Niall Brennan Stables consignment. A member of Sir Cherokee's first crop out of Candytuft, by Dehere, the colt is a half-brother to California-based Eclipse Champion Sprinter Midnight Lute, winner of the 2007 Breeders' Cup Sprint (grade I). Like the top-priced filly, he clocked a furlong in :10.20 during his pre-sale work.

Another quick son of a freshman sire also elicited a spirited bidding battle. Scanlon Training Center's Seattle Fitz (Arg) colt out of the winning Whiskey Wisdom mare Whiskey Babe worked a furlong in :10, and was purchased by agent Mike Ryan for \$600,000.

Thirty-six additional juveniles each brought six-figure prices this year, down from 62 in 2007. Two were bred in California: a \$170,000 Victory Gallop half-sister to graded stakes performer Kiss the Devil who was consigned by Kirkwood Stables and a \$100,000 Include colt out of Tiger's Wedge, by Slew o' Gold, who was offered by NexStar LLC.

Overall, five of the 14 Cal-breds offered at the 2008 auction were sold for \$442,000, down from last year's total of \$1,400,000 for seven sold.

Stonestreet led all 2008 buyers, with three youngsters purchased for a cumulative \$1,760,000. Ryan ranked second among buyers, with \$870,000 spent on a pair of colts, while Southern Equine Stables acquired two juveniles for \$850,000.

With six horses sold for \$2,700,000, Bailey was the sale's leading consignor. Second highest was B.C.3. Thoroughbreds, which sold nine juveniles for \$1,650,000. Scanlon Training Center merited \$1,540,000 from the sale of five horses.

Silver Deputy was the auction's leading sire, with his sale-topper and another filly selling for an average of \$495,000. Unbridled's Song was also in demand, with two offspring sold for a \$392,500 average, followed by freshman sire Toccet, whose two available first-crop colts sold for an average of \$242,500. 🐾