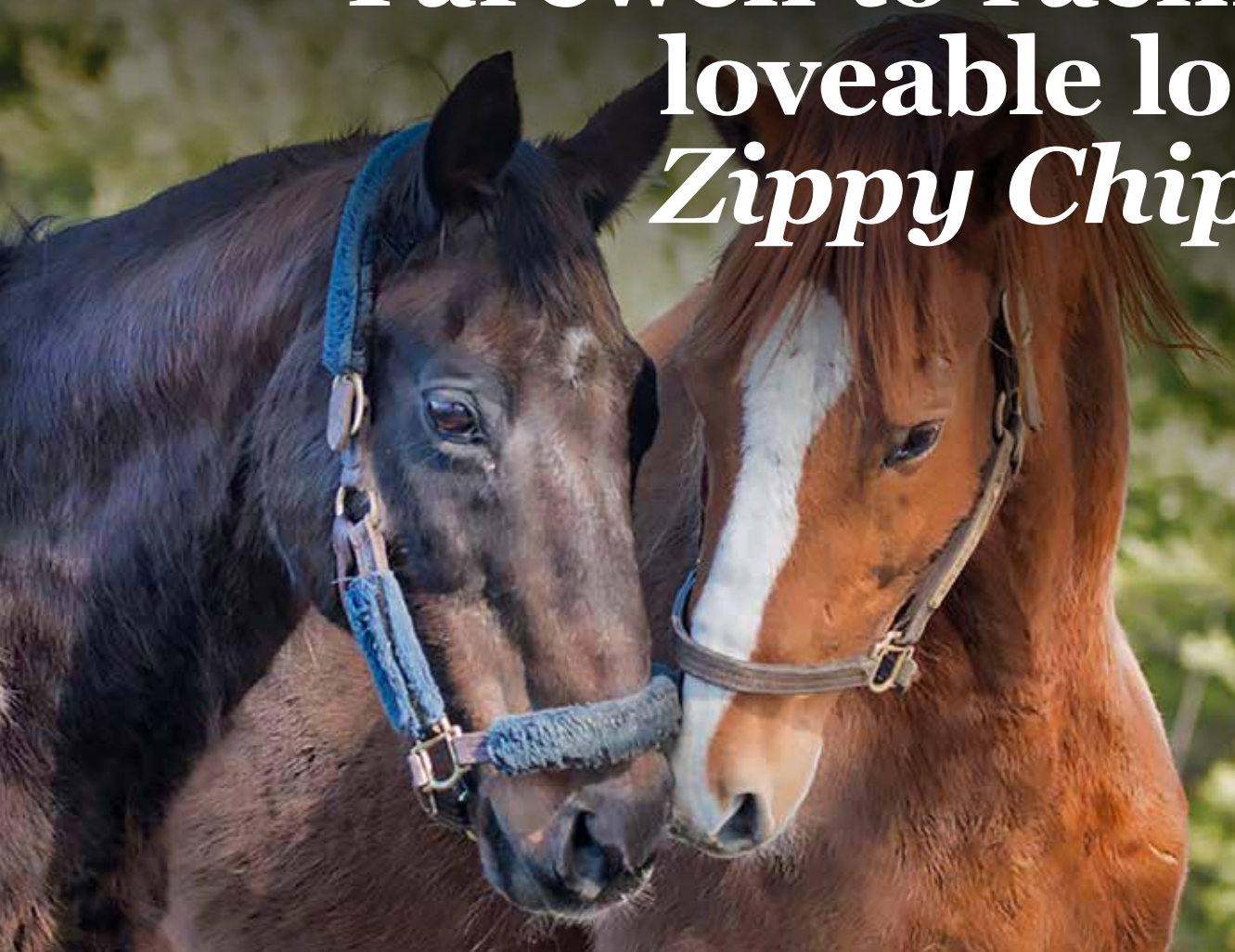


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# TRC

## Farewell to racing's loveable loser *Zippy Chippy*



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# Farewell to racing's loveable loser: remembering *Zippy Chippy*, the 'world's worst racehorse'

Steve Dennis | APRIL 19, 2022



*Zippy Chippy, the hugely popular gelding who earned national celebrity for his career record of zero wins in 100 starts, died on April 15. Steve Dennis pays tribute to an equine legend – of sorts*

A wise man once said that it wasn't about the winning, but the taking part. That was the mantra that Zippy Chippy lived by, that his life was reckoned by, and it made him famous, made him loved, made him the subject of obituaries like this one while far better horses ended up as footnotes in someone else's story.

Zippy Chippy's life, strewn with contradictions on a personal level and on a more general plane yet all of them contributing to his myth and legend, came to its close on April 15. He was 31.

Zippy Chippy ran 100 times and never won a race. That much is fact. Then the myths crowd cloudily in. Dubbed the 'world's worst racehorse', he was renowned for compiling the longest losing streak in American racing history – except he didn't.

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Cover image – Old friends: Zippy Chippy (left) and his pal Red Down South at Cabin Creek by Connie Bush/Tiger Eye Photography/Old Friends

Zippy Chippy: the former racehorse who turned losing into an art form. Photo: Connie Bush/Tiger Eye Photography



A horse named Thrust lost all his 105 races during the less catalogued 1950s, his 'feat' unheralded in an age before the internet and social media made newsworthy every insignificant iota of life.

He was feted as racing's 'loveable loser' – but Zippy Chippy was an irascible animal who frequently bit his trainer Felix Monserrate and was well known for being difficult to handle, until one day Monserrate's seven-year-old daughter Marisa wandered into his stall and began petting the old recidivist, whereupon he instantly became 'loveable'.

Moreover, horse racing is a results-based pursuit. It's about winning, not losing. On a wider scale, the word 'loser' is pejorative. No-one wants to be a loser, and losers are shunned. Yet, somehow, not Zippy Chippy.

In a world predicated upon success, Zippy Chippy turned failure into an art form. He was so bad he was great. And greatness is a currency we all recognise.

### **Bred to be a champion**

Zippy Chippy was bred to be a champion. He was sired by Compliance, a son of Northern Dancer and a half-brother to all-time great El Gran Senor and champion Try My Best. Compliance, in his turn, sired Irish 2,000 Guineas winner Fourstars Allstar and Saratoga superstar Fourstardave, so high hopes were no doubt entertained as the three-year-old Zippy Chippy walked into the gate for his debut at Belmont Park in September 1994.

He finished eighth, beginning a trend that would eventually bring him more attention, more column inches than most Grade 1 winners. The Equibase comment for the race spoke volumes in just two words: lacked rally. Zippy Chippy would make lacking rally the cornerstone of a life well lived.

By the time Zippy Chippy reached 0-for-20, in June 1995, he had been through two trainers and was acquired by a third to save him from the slaughterhouse; even the losers get

lucky sometimes. Felix Monserrate swapped a white Ford pickup truck for him, and most people reckoned he'd got the worst of the deal. Yet this was integral to the making of Zippy Chippy, if not as a racehorse but as a character, a celebrity, a legend in his own lifetime.

### **A backstretch Yogi Berra**

Monserrate, who died in June 2015, was a small-time trainer with a talent for soundbites, a backstretch Yogi Berra whose announcements helped grease the wheels of the Zippy Chippy bandwagon. When Zippy Chippy was runner-up in two consecutive races – he did occasionally flirt with victory but never got the gal – Monserrate told the press: "My horse, he's been losing real close lately."

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Old fella at Old Friends: Zippy Chippy, who lived out his days at the equine retirement facility at Cabin Creek, near Saratoga Springs.  
Photo: Connie Bush/Tiger Eye Photography



As Zippy Chippy moved inexorably, entertainingly through his unending barren spell, reporters went to Monserrate for a line and were rarely disappointed. He was good copy, and good copy makes headlines, and headlines made Zippy Chippy.

"I don't care if he doesn't win. It's just a lot of fun," Monserrate once said. "Say you have three children. One is a lawyer, doing well, and the other a doctor, very, very successful. But the third one is not so smart, so he's working at McDonald's.

"What do you do? Ignore him? Kick him out of the house? He's the one you got to help the most. That's Zippy Chippy."

## A diet of Doritos, popcorn and beer

Fifty defeats, sixty. Seventy in a row. Eighty, ninety, his appearances becoming less frequent but more eagerly awaited. And along the way, the story of Zippy Chippy acquired the sort of detail that took him out of the racing column and on to the front page, above the fold.

In September 1998 he was banned from racing at Finger Lakes in upstate New York, where he had run 70 times, because he had developed a habit of lingering in the gate as his opponents sped away. The articles included the news that Zippy Chippy liked to eat Doritos and popcorn and drink beer, making him a kindred spirit for most of those up in the grandstands cheering him to defeat after defeat.

To be fair, not every race Zippy Chippy ran ended in defeat. He had a two-for-three record against humans – including a 40-yard dash against a minor-league baseball player – and once beat a harness-racer giving him a 20-length start, all stunts designed to raise his progressively sky-high profile as that 100-race milestone drew closer.

When asked how he would feel if Zippy Chippy did one day keep his head in front, Monserrate spoke from the heart. "I would be the happiest man in the world," he said. "You know, maybe I love him too much. I love him more because everyone puts him down."

By the end, it seemed rather that everyone loved him. On September 10, 2004, the 13-year-old Zippy Chippy went



to the gate for the 100th time, for a maiden race at tiny Northampton in Massachusetts.

He was 7-2 second-favourite to do something he'd never done before, bettors by now buying a ticket simply to have a souvenir of the occasion, as they had once done with Secretariat, whose record was slightly better.

## Old showman didn't let us down

It would have been a disaster had he won, to come so close to sporting immortality only to give it up at the last gasp, but Zippy Chippy, who had spent his racing life letting people down, didn't let us down. He finished last, like the old showman he had become, following the script to the end. That was it; three months later he slipped easily into retirement, possibly marking the occasion with a big bag of Doritos and a six-pack of Budweiser.

He lived through the sunset of his days at Old Friends Retirement Farm in Cabin Creek, near Saratoga, an offshoot of the well-known Thoroughbred retirement facility in Georgetown, Kentucky.

For a short period in 2012, Zippy Chippy was involved in a temporary exchange that took him to Old Friends in Kentucky while Grade 1 winner Commentator went the other way to Cabin Creek. "This must be the worst trade since the Red Sox sent Babe Ruth to the Yankees," joked Old Friends founder Michael Blowen.

Happy New Year: Zippy Chippy and Red Down South with the team at Cabin Creek at the start of January 2022. Photo: Old Friends at Cabin Creek

Back at Cabin Creek, Zippy Chippy was the farm's most popular visitor attraction, sharing his paddock with his pal Red Down South, winner of two more races than Zippy Chippy but not in the same league when it came to bragging rights.

"Zippy was our main character here," said JoAnn Pepper, owner/manager at Cabin Creek. "He was so content, and wouldn't do anything he wasn't in the mood for. He taught me so much about life, and I'll miss him forever."

Weights and measures. 100 races, eight second-places, 12 times third. Prize-money of \$30,834 spread across 11 campaigns. Two books written about him, innumerable articles.

Perhaps the finest recognition of his 'talent' came in 2000, when he made People magazine's list of the year's most intriguing personalities. If ever a horse could be said to have an intriguing personality, Zippy Chippy was the one.

He even had his own range of merchandise, the most popular item being a coffee mug bearing the motto 'Winners Don't Always Finish First'. Zippy Chippy never finished first. He was a loser a hundred times over. He lacked rally. But somehow, in defiance of all usual parameters, he made a success of life.





# *Bates Motel: ‘If he’d been a human being, I think he would have ended up in federal prison’ John Gosden*

Jay Hovdey | APRIL 27, 2022

*In the second part of his brilliant new series recalling his personal favorites, Jay Hovdey talks to John Gosden about Bates Motel, who was the trainer’s first big winner in California in the 1980s*

Above – John Gosden’s first big-race winner: Bates Motel cruises home well clear in the 1983 Santa Anita Handicap to establish himself as a national star. Photo courtesy of Santa Anita Park

The movie *Psycho*, released in 1960, was a critical and box office hit that went on to become a cinema classic. It also engendered a justifiable suspicion of motel showers, but that’s for another day.

In 1983, Hollywood, in its infinite wisdom, released *Psycho II* for those who did not get the point the first time around. The setting, once again, revolved around the eerie Bates Motel and its murderously disturbed proprietor, Norman Bates. The movie was not a particular success, but quite by chance the name of Bates Motel rang throughout the land that year – as long as the ringing was done in the horse racing section of the sports pages.



Bates Motel was a Thoroughbred of genuine appeal, noteworthy as a consummate late bloomer and a physical specimen of decidedly acquired taste. He was big in every direction without being handsome, topped by a pair of ears that could pick up satellite transmissions if properly aimed.

### A diplomatic Englishman

His trainer, the diplomatic Englishman John H.M. Gosden, would take great pains to avoid references to the aesthetics of Bates Motel in favor of his lilting stride and powerful thrust.

Those attributes were on display for only about 13 months between August of 1982, when he lit up an allowance event at Del Mar, and September of 1983, when he impressed a discerning New York audience with a pair of unlucky losses.

Combined with a flourish of four straight stakes victories earlier in '83, the New York form was enough to earn an Eclipse Award for Bates Motel, while at the same time giving the 32-year-old Gosden his first of many champions to come.

Gosden had been training in California for barely a year when he hopped an eastbound plane in January 1981 to take a look at a 2-year-old for his newest clients, Jacqueline Getty and her son, Michael Riordan.

"He was put through the sales here in Newmarket, but no one wanted him," Gosden said recently from his

Clarehaven Stables on Bury Road. The reserve price was 35,000gns for the Kentucky-bred son of Sir Ivor, but the bidding stopped at 32,000 – about \$80,000 in those days – and the owners took him back.

"He spent a bit of time at Warren Place with Henry Cecil, then was sent back to America," Gosden said. "When Jackie Getty and Michael Riordan asked if I'd like to train a horse for them I said of course. I had 10 or 12 in the barn at the time."

Bates Motel was in temporary residence at a training center in Holly Hill, South Carolina. "It was an interesting experience," Gosden went on. "I got there early one morning to see this huge, flop-eared Sir Ivor colt being pre-trained by none other than Lucien Laurin."

### 'I think he's he's got something'

That's Lucien Laurin, as in the trainer of Triple Crown winner Secretariat and dual Classic winner Riva Ridge. "Lucien was quite the flashy dresser," Gosden said.

"I recall he was wearing his usual colorful combination. After watching the colt canter around the track wearing blinkers we went to breakfast, and I'll never forget what Lucien said. 'I don't know what it is about this colt, but I think he's got something.' That was quite a statement."

It also had the benefit of being correct, although the 'something' Bates Motel hinted at as a young 2-year-old

Left – West Coast dude: John Gosden, 1980s California version. Photo: Del Mar

Right – Bates Motel returns from a break to make short work of the 1983 San Diego Handicap at Del Mar. Photo courtesy of Del Mar

took its time to bloom. Gosden had to wait for colt's various parts to properly align, which meant Bates Motel did not make his first start until February of his 3-year-old season. He did not win a maiden race until his fourth start in late May.

By then the Classic colts of 1982 already had dealt with the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness Stakes. Bates Motel won that maiden race at Hollywood Park on May 31, Memorial Day, the same afternoon Conquistador Cielo won the Metropolitan Handicap at Belmont Park. But while Conquistador Cielo went on to take the Belmont Stakes, the Dwyer, the Jim Dandy, and the title as Horse of the Year, young Bates Motel could produce only an embarrassing try on turf and a poor performance on the dirt in his two following starts before the light finally came on.

Gosden at the time was a rising star in California, but after a decade in the States he returned to England to win multiple training titles, win a pair of Epsom Derbys, and train such household names as Enable,

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*“He was quite a thug of a horse, really... If he’d been a human being, I think he would have ended up in federal prison.”*

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Stradivarius, Kingman, Golden Horn, Mishriff, Cracksman and Ravens Pass, to list just a handful.

Bates Motel was ridden most often by veteran Terry Lipham, who successfully toggled between Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses during a career cut short by two serious falls in his early 40s.

Admired for his horsemanship, Lipham was a soulmate of such veteran trainers as Charlie Whittingham and Jerry Fanning, which is why keen younger trainers like Gosden and fellow Brit Ian Jory sought Lipham’s services.

### **Compelling headlines**

However, it was the owners of Bates Motel who supplied the most compelling headlines. Jacqueline Marie Manewal was from a prominent St. Louis family known for their bakeries. Her first husband was Michael L. Riordan, brother of eventual Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan, whose Equity Funding Corp. rose to great heights in the financial world before falling into disrepute and earning a huge federal fine.

Jacqueline and Michael were married in 1952 and had four children before he was killed in a freak mudslide that raced through their home in the posh Mandeville Canyon neighborhood of West LA during a ferocious storm siege in January of 1969. Riordan was 41.

The following year, while seen on the arm of oil empire heir and company executive George F. Getty II, Jacqueline bought the yearling filly Sunday Purchase for \$43,000 at a Keeneland sale.

George and Jacqueline were married in 1971, accompanied by fanfare befitting the son of J. Paul Getty, at one time the world’s richest private citizen. George Getty died in 1973 in circumstances that remain mysterious to this day, although that did not keep director Danny Boyle from playing his death as a garish suicide at the beginning of the televised mini-series *Trust*, aired first in 2018.

Michael Riordan was just 28 when Bates Motel came into their lives. A film buff, Riordan gets credit for the colt’s haunting name, suggesting that a clever line in a stallion ad someday might read: “Send your mare to Bates Motel.”

For that matter, the lineage of the horse was almost as interesting as those of his humans. In 1968, Sir Ivor won the English 2,000 Guineas, Epsom Derby, Champion Stakes, and Washington, D.C. International. His sire was Secretariat’s half-brother, Sir Gaylord, and his trainer was Vincent O’Brien, one of Gosden’s earliest mentors.

Sunday Purchase never raced, but some of her siblings, out of the Count of Honor mare Dame Fritchie, were accomplished. Rest Your Case won the 1973 Hopeful Stakes at Saratoga. The mare Frederick Street was a star of the Ohio circuit who crossed the river to finish second against the boys in the Clark Handicap at Churchill Downs. Their full-sister, Hopes Ahead, was the dam of Optimistic Gal, whose 10 major stakes wins included the Kentucky Oaks, Alabama, and Spinster.

T.V. Lark, the sire of Sunday Purchase, brought impressive credentials to the mix. In 1974, competing against the get of such heavyweights as Round Table, Northern Dancer, and the late Bold Ruler, T.V. Lark led all North American sires with earnings of \$1.2 million and 121 wins by his daughters and sons. Bred in California, T.V. Lark himself was a star on the track, having beaten Kelso on the square in the 1961 Washington, D. C. International to be hailed as the season’s grass champion.

### **‘A big, backward horse’**

But that was all on paper. Gosden, training from scratch, had to deal with the ungainly creature at hand. “Bates was a big, backward horse, so we went very gently with him,” Gosden recalled.

“It was on Christmas Eve we breezed

him three-eighths of a mile, and he went in 36 and change. I thought, ‘Whoa, we’d better run this boy.’ But at three he took forever to get his act together. He could lug in like nothing else. In a couple of his early races he ripped two boots off Ray Sibille putting him against the rail.

“He was quite a thug of a horse, really,” the trainer added. “If he’d been a human being, I think he would have ended up in federal prison. Not aggressive, just very hard-headed. He was quite some character.”

Bates Motel won an allowance race at Del Mar during the summer of 1982, after which Gosden spotted the colt in a little handicap at Bay Meadows during a meet sponsored by the San Mateo County Fair. Bates Motel won the race, and the Gosdens – John and wife Rachel Hood – celebrated on the town.

“San Francisco had a good opera house,” said Gosden, a lifelong buff. “Bates won well and showed a bit of class. And as I recall we saw Puccini’s *La Fanciulla del West*, which was quite appropriate for California.”

Bates Motel descended upon Santa Anita that winter of 1982-83 with his disparate parts finally firing in one direction. He won an allowance race on New Year’s Day, then had a forgettable afternoon floundering in a muddy Charles H. Strub Stakes, followed by a smart recovery to win the 9-furlong San Antonio Handicap.

“That night Rachel and I went out to dinner in Pasadena,” Gosden recalled. “I said, ‘I think we’ve finally found one.’”

When the 1983 Santa Anita Handicap arrived amidst a series of February and March rains, Gosden made no secret that the wet conditions had played havoc with the tender feet supporting the tonnage of Bates Motel. His hooves cracked and were patched, right up to the day of the Handicap, while Gosden did just enough to keep the big horse fit to the task.





## Climbing the slippery pole

And the task was considerable. A field of 17 lined up for the 46th running of the mile-and-a-quarter event. Breaking from post 13, Lipham let the pacesetters race through the opening quarter past the grandstand before working his way to mid-pack down the backstretch. From there, horse and rider launched a steady, sweeping run to take the lead in the stretch and draw off to win by 2½ lengths. Among the beaten was The Wonder, trained by Whittingham.

“Charlie took great pride in being the first to arrive at the gap in the morning to open the gates to the racetrack,” Gosden said. “The morning after the Handicap, I made a point of beating him to it. But as I’m standing there, I feel a cold hand squeeze my neck and Charlie’s voice in my ear, ‘It’s a slippery pole, lad.’”

Bates Motel got a break after the Santa Anita meet and reappeared at Del Mar to win the San Diego Handicap by seven lengths over The Wonder. After that, it was off to the east coast, where the first stop was Monmouth Park for the Monmouth Handicap, in those days a Grade 1 event at 9 furlongs. The opposition included Whitney Handicap winner Island Whirl, Preakness winner Linkage, and Belmont Stakes winner Bet Big.

## Humbling the best handicap horses

“The enormous son of Sir Ivor, making his first start outside of California, humbled the best handicap horses in the country

with an easy 2½-length victory in the \$279,200 Monmouth Handicap today at Monmouth Park,” wrote Steven Crist in the New York Times. “He barely broke a sweat and he missed the track record by only a fifth of a second.”

Then it was on to New York, where Bates Motel and Gosden took up temporary residence in the Allen Jerkens barn at Belmont Park.

“We got to know each other,” Gosden said. “Allen would say, ‘You California trainers – all you ever do is train for speed. Why don’t you work a mile once in a while?’ So I did. I worked Bates Motel a mile ... and got him beaten, twice.”

But not by much. Slew o’ Gold, a 3-year-old getting five pounds and Angel Cordero, beat Bates Motel by a dirty nose in the Woodward Stakes at 9 furlongs. Breeder John Gaines, who had bought into Bates Motel, insisted Lipham be replaced for the subsequent Marlboro Cup by Chris McCarron, who was having a banner season. Still, the result was agonizingly familiar.

“There was a bit of pressure, since Terry got on very well with the horse,” Gosden said. “As for the race, Cordero spent the whole time driving us to the outside fence with Slew o’ Gold. In the meantime, Jacinto Vasquez went the short way ‘round on the inside and beat us both.”

This is not sour grapes. Andrew Beyer of the Washington Post saw the same race. “For every step of this 1¼-mile Classic, [Cordero] rode a tactical race

Left – Terry Lipham is all smiles and Bates Motel is all ears as they jog home after winning the San Diego Handicap at Del Mar. Photo courtesy of Del Mar

Right – Bates Motel loses a heartbreak head-bob to the younger Slew o’ Gold in the 1983 Woodward Stakes at Belmont Park. Photo: Bob Coglianese

against Bates Motel,” Beyer wrote. “He proceeded to win the battle but lose the war.”

Watching the Marlboro from home in California, I recall a shoe or something being thrown at the set at the sight of Cordero playing his herding game. Still, finishing a close third under such circumstances did nothing to dim the growing reputation of Bates Motel. He was voted champion Older Male and went to stud at Gainesway Farm in Kentucky, where he served until he was pensioned in 2003.

His offspring included the stakes-winning filly Barbarika, who in turn produced the filly Sherriffs Deputy, to the cover of Deputy Minister. In March of 2004, Sherriffs Deputy delivered a Smart Strike colt with a forthright blaze and a pair of perfect hind stockings. Seven months later, Bates Motel died, his passing memorialized by a plaque near a fountain at Gainesway. The Smart Strike colt became Curlin, a two-time Horse of the Year, and among the many good reasons to celebrate Bates Motel as a world-class Thoroughbred to remember.

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California Chrome: seven-time G1 winner was the horse of a lifetime for owner-breeder Perry Martin.  
Photo: Arrow Stud/Hiroki Yamanaka



# California dreamin' *the inside story of* *California Chrome*

Steve Dennis | MARCH 28, 2022

*Kentucky Derby hero's small-time owner-breeder Perry Martin tells Steve Dennis about his horse of a lifetime – and opens up about what he describes as a 'labour of lost love'*

He was and is a dream of a horse, in so many ways. California Chrome arose from humble beginnings, blessed with dreamboat looks and a charismatic can-do, will-do attitude, and his unlikely pathway to glory made him the racing embodiment of the American Dream, his journey following the same trajectory as that fabled yearning shared by so many millions.

Now his joint-owner/breeder Perry Martin has written the inside story of his horse, piecing together the fragments like a man who keeps a notepad on his bedside table to scribble down his dreams as he wakes up, and then finds they have come true. *California Chrome: Our Story* is a good book, an absorbing read, but one also marbled with a dark vein of sorrow, as Martin explains.

"The book is best described as a labour of lost love," he says. "My wife Denise and I had been talking over a book about California Chrome for some time, something to set the record straight about Chrome and detail what it was like to own a champion racehorse.

"When Denise died suddenly last June, there was a large hole in my life that I decided to fill by working on achieving the goals we had set for our 'retirement'. The five-month effort to write the book, our story and his, really helped me start to heal emotionally."

### California Chrome did it all

The public story of California Chrome needs little retelling, although the process is a luxurious diversion that encourages repetition. The hero is a copper-coated ball of muscle with four white socks and a sprawling white blaze, cheaply bred by a couple of racing rookies in Martin and his partner Steve Coburn. They started out as two of many in a racing syndicate and soon wanted more from the sport, so they bought cheaply one of the mares they had previously co-owned and sent her to a young, inexpensive stallion.

From the union between Lucky Pulpit and Love The Chase came a horse who would win 16 races, including two of the world's most prestigious contests, earn \$14.7 million in prize-money – on his retirement a record for a US-trained horse but one now surpassed by Arrogate – and be taken to the hearts



of the racing public like few others have been. California Chrome did it all.

In 2014 he won the Kentucky Derby and two years later won the Dubai World Cup, two of his seven top-level successes that also included the Preakness Stakes and the Santa Anita Derby. Of all his high days, though, it's Chrome's victory in the 2016 Pacific Classic that Martin recalls with the greatest affection.

"I was feeling very good, as my stress level was low," he recalls. "I visited Chrome at the barn at Del Mar in the morning and he was feeling very strong that day. With the wonderful scenery and weather where the surf meets the turf in southern California, everything just seemed perfect. His easy five-length win was just the icing on the cake."

Martin, 65, is a no-nonsense native of Chicago who was known as the quiet man beside the much more vociferous Coburn, but it takes little prompting for him to lyricise about California Chrome. Comparisons between the great horses are an everyday pastime, and Martin relishes the debate.

"How do you measure the greatness of horses?" he asks rhetorically. "Twice during his career Chrome won six races straight, one streak against his own age group across 2013-14 and the other against older horses in 2016. And I think he would have won the Triple Crown if he hadn't been stepped on at the start of the Belmont Stakes [he finished fourth]. I would match him against anybody.

California celebration: Perry Martin holds the trophy aloft after a glorious triumph in the Pacific Classic at Del Mar. Holding the roses is his late wife Denise, with daughter Kelly's head visible between her and jockey Victor Espinoza. Photo: Benoit

### Adoring army of Chromies

"What made him great? It's hard to say, but Chrome's most important quality is that he is a very intelligent horse and learned to love human attention at an early age. As a result, he adopted behaviour that makes people happy – one example is turning toward clicking cameras and hamming it up for photographers."

He certainly made a lot of people happy. His vast and adoring army of fans became known as the Chromies, and to them this big, flashy chestnut evolved into more than a horse, became a talisman whose power stretched beyond the white rails of the racetrack.

"The Chromies felt a special connection to him," says Martin. "All the various Chrome ownership groups made allowances for access to the horse. There were dozens of calls and emails from Chromies whose dying wish was to pet Chrome or feed him a horse cookie. Our trainer Art Sherman and his crew, and Taylor Made Stallions, made those visits happen.

"Chrome was twice voted Horse of the Year by the professionals, but I am very proud that he is the only two-time winner of the Secretariat 'Vox Populi' award, which is voted on by the fans."





## An outsider in an insider's sport

And talk about fans in high places. As the old aphorism has it, vox populi vox dei; the voice of the people is the voice of God.

Martin might have been a Chromie if circumstances had been different. He preferred to watch California Chrome's races from the track apron with Denise, standing among the railbirds rather than being cloistered away in an executive box, and for all his top-level success considers himself an outsider in an insider's sport.

His background is in analytics, he worked for the US Air Force's testing laboratory in California before taking it over when the base closed, testing structures for flaws, improving reliability and saving lives in so doing.

Such a career leads irresistibly to the notion that Martin made a success out of failure, which is an apt description of what we are all trying

to do in racing. He uses the analytical mind that underpinned his life's work to focus sharply on racing, not always at a particularly flattering angle, as befits an outsider looking in.

## US racing needs to be torn down and rebuilt correctly

"US racing needs to be torn down and rebuilt correctly from the bottom up," he says. "There is no one thing that is going to fix the sport. Critical analysis may be exactly what racing needs; however, racing doesn't think so.

"I have read articles that indicate syndicates are the salvation of racing because they bring more people into the sport. As I explain in the book, we used Blinkers-On syndicate as a sort of racing university. We got the full experience of racehorse ownership at a fraction of the price.

"A recent report stated that the average owner in the US can expect a return on his investment of 42 per

Kentucky king: a famous victory for California Chrome and Victor Espinoza in the Kentucky Derby in 2014. Photo: Churchill Downs

cent – for every \$100 put in you get \$42 back. In my estimation, this is the root cause of why US racing is declining. My advice for prospective owners or breeders is to learn what you are getting into before you get into it.

"Middlemen are stripping out sponsorship money, media-contract money, wagering takeout etc and putting that toward corporate profits rather than purses. Horse owners need to reorganise the sport along the lines of other professional sports. No-one is working on this! All of today's effort revolves around drug testing and cheating trainers. That won't change the root cause of the decline."

## Chrome was not an average horse

Some will point out that Martin is not a good example, having owned the nation's former leading earner who paid off at much more than 42% ROI. He accepts this view, but points out that he has also owned plenty of horses who have been very average indeed.

"Luckily for me, Chrome was not an average horse," he adds. "If you treat horse racing as a hobby, the Internal Revenue Service will disallow your horse expenses. I very seriously treat horse racing as a business. There have been some very good years and I've written checks to the IRS exceeding \$1m.

"The most exasperating thing, though, is that I can repeatedly point out the reality of the situation, but the industry keeps doing the same thing and expecting different results."

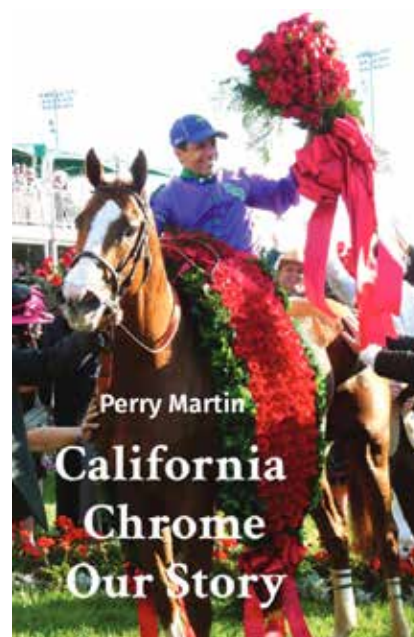
Martin is steadily reducing his involvement in the US and expanding it in Japan, where the 11-year-old Chrome stands at Arrow Stud, and he derives considerable satisfaction from planning the matings for his broodmares each year.

California Chrome has been well supported by Japanese breeders, and Martin hopes for similar results to those produced by shuttling him for two years to Chile, where he was last year's leading first-crop sire. Europeans will have an opportunity to see the Chrome genes in action this summer, as his two-year-old daughter Passion Tango will be in training at Rae Guest's yard in Newmarket. The story, and the dreams, go on.

"I have owned a horse of a lifetime," says Martin. "But Denise and I discussed this many times, and the greatest pleasure we got from him was visiting Chrome before he was Chrome, when he was called Junior. Before the crowds, before the big races, as a foal and yearling, we would spend as many weekends as we could at Harris Farms just being with him. It was time well spent.

"Of all the horses I've owned, Chrome is the only one I have called 'my Derby horse'. We had high hopes for his brother Faversham but I never considered him in that regard. I am hoping again to have a horse I can look at and just know he is my Derby horse."

If California Chrome's career was a monument to the horse himself, Martin's book is the inscription around the base of that monument, to inform and delight those who come late to the scene. Martin may have another Derby horse one day, but there will never be another Chrome.



California Chrome: Our Story by Perry Martin

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LONGINES



# Torquator Tasso

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**Another Arc winner sold at BBAG sales**

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Entries close: Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April

**Premier Yearling Sale: 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022**

Entries close: Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> April

**October Mixed Sales: 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

Entries close: Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> September



Unkindest cut: shock Derby winner Serpentine has been gelded. Photo: Racenews

# Derby winner Serpentine gelded after joining top Aussie owner Lloyd Williams

Jon Lees | MARCH 07, 2022

*Serpentine, a shock 25-1 winner at Epsom in 2020, is believed to be the first Derby winner since at least 1900 to be gelded.*

Bloodstock history has been graced by a plethora of Derby winners who have stamped their lasting mark on the breed – as might be expected, according to the legendary owner-breeder Federico Tesio's celebrated dictum, that "the Thoroughbred exists because its selection has depended ... on a piece of wood: the winning post of the Epsom Derby".

Indeed, such is the race's importance to the breeding world that geldings aren't even allowed to run, as is often the case in major European G1 events.

However, it appears shock 2020 Derby winner Serpentine won't be joining the ranks of Epsom heroes to spread their exalted genes down through the equine ages. The son of bloodstock legend Galileo – the first of Aidan O'Brien's eight Derby winners in 2001 – has been gelded after being shipped to Australia to continue his racing career.

The five-year-old is listed as a gelding on the websites of both Racing Australia

and new trainer Robert Hickmott. Leading Derby historian Michael Church confirmed the significance of the operation, saying: "As far as known, no Epsom Derby winner from 1900 has been gelded."

Serpentine was last year bought by seven-time Melbourne Cup-winner Lloyd Williams and transferred from Aidan O'Brien's Ballydoyle stable to his son Joseph. Now he has joined Hickmott.

Serpentine pulled off a huge shock when he made virtually all to land the Derby by 5½ lengths after slipping the field under Emmet McNamara at a starting price of 25-1.

Victory in the senior Classic is usually the gateway to a career as a stallion, even in the National Hunt sphere, as has been the case with another surprise winner, Wings Of Eagles, who scored in 2017.

What is more, Serpentine is bred in the purple. As well as being a son of Galileo, whose success as a stallion has underpinned much of Coolmore's success over recent decades, he is out of the 2010

Oaks runner-up Remember When, herself closely related to Arc and Irish Derby winner Dylan Thomas. Five of his full siblings have won, including at Group level.

Serpentine has yet to add to his Derby score. In his next two starts he finished fourth in the Grand Prix de Paris and filled the same position in the Qipco Champion Stakes. He did not finish in the money in 2021, producing his best run on his last start when seventh in the Goodwood Cup.

Williams is one of Australia's most successful owners, winning the Melbourne Cup a record seven times. He gained his most recent success in 2020 with Joseph O'Brien-trained Twilight Payment.

Nick Williams, the owner's son and racing manager, explained later that Serpentine had been gelded "on veterinary advice". Speaking to racing.com, he explained: "A Derby winner, your first preference would be to leave him a colt, but it will certainly improve him as a racehorse, being a gelding, so we did that."





Top of the world: Golden Sixty is the new #1 on TRC Global Rankings after his brilliant victory in the FWD Champions Mile. Photo: HKJC

# New world order: Golden Sixty hits #1 spot on Global Rankings for Hong Kong

Nicholas Godfrey | APRIL 26, 2022

*Hong Kong superstar Golden Sixty is the new world #1 on Thoroughbred Racing Commentary's Global Rankings after his record-breaking victory in the FWD Champions Mile at Sha Tin on Sunday [April 24].*



In beating HK Derby runner-up California Spangle by a couple of lengths, the Francis Lui-trained six-year-old gained a 93-point boost, moving up from #3 to #1 to leapfrog Australia's Royal Ascot-bound sprinter Nature Strip at the top of the charts. Another former world #1, the Pegasus World Cup winner Life Is Good, drops down a spot to #3.

Reigning HK horse of the year Golden Sixty overwhelmed his Sha Tin rivals in the closing stages to complete back-to-back victories in the mile showpiece and take his career tally to 21 wins from 24 starts, all of them in Hong Kong.

In the process he became the highest prize-money earner in HK racing history, enhancing his all-time bank to HK\$113,400,600 (\$14.45m/£11.36m) with a first prize of HK\$11.4m (\$1.45m/£1.14m) and thereby surpassing the previous record of HK\$106,233,750 (\$13.54m/£10.64m) established by Beauty Generation.

"He's one in a lifetime," said jockey Vincent Ho, speaking to the HKJC media team. "He still wanted to slow down a bit the last couple of strides but he did amazing."

Although Golden Sixty has never raced abroad, his connections are now eyeing a trip to Japan for the prestigious Yasuda Kinen at Tokyo racecourse on June 5.

"Yes, he is entered already," said trainer Lui. "But of course, we have to see how he recovers and we also need to see the quarantine, whether we can go and how the arrangements work. If everything is easy, we will go.

"It's not easy to have a horse who wins so many races," added Lui. "We are very happy, we all feel glory about this horse."

Golden Sixty is a gelded son of top US stallion Medaglia d'Oro who carries the silks of owner Stanley Chan. He achieved a TRC Computer Race Rating of 125 for Sunday's victory, the 11th time he has topped the 120-mark – roughly speaking, the benchmark for a world-class G1 performance. His personal best was 127 in the Longines HK Mile in December 2020.

He has six wins to his name in official G1 races – but that number would be higher were it not for the fact that certain HK races, such as the HK Derby, are not accorded international status as they are restricted. TRC takes a common sense outlook and treats them as 'proper' G1s for rankings purposes.

Unlike traditional methods of racehorse rankings, TRC Global Rankings are a measure of an individual's level of achievement over a rolling three-year

Overseas mission: Golden Sixty may head to Japan for the Yasuda Kinen after beating California Spangle in the Champions Mile. Photo: HKJC

period, providing a principled hierarchy of the leading horses, jockeys, trainers, owners and sires using statistical learning techniques.

Racehorse rankings can be compared to similar exercises in other sports, like the golf's world rankings or the ATP rankings in tennis.

Golden Sixty is the 18th different horse to top the rankings in 434 weeks since 2014; the top three horses by weeks at #1 are Winx (162), Enable (56) and American Pharoah (42).

The most recent #1s were Palace Pier (17 weeks), St Mark's Basilica (9), Knicks Go (11), Life Is Good (9) and Nature Strip (3). Golden Sixty's current portfolio is worth 2,066pts according to our system, on which world #1s have ranged from 2035pts to 2796pts with the median being 2408pts.

The current era therefore represents a relatively low level historically with the #1 position having been more volatile than at any time in TRC Global Rankings history.





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# Group 1-winning jockey Robbie Dolan set to appear on The Voice Australia

Jon Lees | MARCH 23, 2022

*Days after showing he has the X-factor in the saddle, expat Irish jockey Robbie Dolan has been announced as one of the contestants on The Voice Australia.*

On stage: expat Irish jockey Robbie Dolan will take part in The Voice Australia, set to air on Channel 7 after Easter. Photo: Channel 7

Dolan confirmed himself one of the rising stars of the saddle in Sydney when recording his second G1 success on the breakout star of the autumn, Shelby Sixtysix, in the Galaxy at Rosehill on Saturday [March 19].

Now off the track he is also set to win fans when he takes a shot at becoming a pop idol in front of a panel of judges including Rita Ora and Keith Urban after successfully auditioning for the TV talent show, due to air after Easter on Channel 7.

"It's pretty exciting – it feels like a dream at this stage," said Dolan, 26. "Singing has always just been a hobby to me. I did school plays years and years ago and always really enjoyed singing.

"Racing took over my life but just recently I've started to learn guitar and try to do a few gigs. It's a step away from racing. I'd love to get into it but it's hard to have two lives and racing is everything at the moment.





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*“I basically came over with nothing. I had no money, I had a school bag on my back. I just wanted to give it a go.”*

.....



“They are very different worlds but once I got the opportunity to perform on The Voice I was like, ‘Why not, what have I got to lose?’

Kildare-born Dolan was born into horse racing. His grandfather Peadar Matthews won two Irish Classics in the 1960s; both parents, Bobby and Paula, also rode and brother Barry is a trainer in the US.

Dolan quit Ireland at the end of 2016 for Australia with just three winners to his name at home, where he was apprenticed to Adrian Keatley, after securing a job as a work rider.

“I was riding in Ireland with little effect,” he said. “I needed a change to continue improving. I was getting one ride here, one there, and not getting a lot of experience.

“I was going to go to America,” he went on. “My brother is a trainer there and that was always appetising to me but it was difficult to get a visa and I couldn’t afford it. Australia had always been in the back of my mind and I was able to get a job riding out.

“I basically came over with nothing. I had no money, I had a school bag on my back. I just wanted to give it a go.”

Eventually settling in Sydney, Dolan joined the stable of Mark Newnham and over the 2017-18 campaign rode 93 winners, capturing both the New South Wales metropolitan and provincial apprentice championships.

He has now ridden 233 winners altogether, 19 during the current campaign including two at G1 level, the latest on Shelby Sixtysix, part of a double at Rosehill.

“It was a great weekend,” he said. “Sometimes everything goes to plan and Saturday was just one of those days – it was great to get two wins.

“I thought Shelby Sixtysix would run very well on Saturday but I didn’t know if he could win, being a Group 1. He really surprised me the way he let down – he let down like a serious sprinter, not just a horse that likes a wet track.”

Dolan and agent Mark Guest had pitched for the ride knowing the Danny Williams-trained sprinter would have 8st 4lb in the Galaxy, which is a handicap. Their success was a timely boost as Dolan lost the ride on Profondo, on whom he secured his first G1 victory last October, after the horse was a well-beaten favourite in the Australian Guineas.

“Racing is a game of ups and downs,” said Dolan. “Profondo ran very bad first time up so they went with Hugh Bowman who has ridden more than 100 Group 1s. I respect the decision – it’s up to the owners. I was grateful to even ride him.”

Dolan also won’t be in the saddle when Shelby Sixtysix has his next

In the saddle: Robbie Dolan partners Shelby Sixtysix to victory in the G1 Galaxy at Rosehill in Sydney last weekend. Photo: Photo: Racing and Sports/Steve Hart

start in the TJ Smith Stakes with Tommy Berry reclaiming the mount.

However, Dolan will have his next G1 start when he partners Gin Martini in the Vinery Stud Stakes on Saturday. “Things are going well,” he said.

“Things went really well as an apprentice. I won back-to-back champion apprentice titles and that was unreal. The first year I came out of my time was very difficult. It’s still pretty difficult but I’ve won plenty of group races and two G1s this season.

“Even if I never got as far as riding winners, As soon as I got to Australia I had no regrets about my decision. I am a permanent resident now, my girlfriend is having a baby in July and I’ve bought a house.

“I’m riding out wherever I can and riding for lots of different stables. Hopefully the Galaxy win showed people that I can ride light still. In these big G1 handicaps that are coming up like the Doncaster and the Sydney Cup, there are a lot of light weights so hopefully I can put my hand up for that.”



Dubai dominance: Invasor (Fernando Jara) adds the Dubai World Cup to his victory in the Breeders' Cup Classic. Photo: Al Adiyat

# ***What They're Thinking*** **Kiaran McLaughlin:** **Invasor winning the** **Dubai World Cup is my** **fondest memory**

TRC | MARCH 22, 2022

*Former trainer Kiaran McLaughlin, best known for Dubai World Cup winner Invasor, answers the questions*



*Kieran McLaughlin secured his first job as a trainer when he was hired by Sheikh Mohammed to work in Dubai, having assisted various trainers including the legendary D Wayne Lukas and also working as a jockey's agent.*

*McLaughlin, 61, went on to operate barns in both Dubai, where he was champion trainer three times, and New York. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1998, he escaped the desert heat by returning to New York permanently in 2003 where – with the continued support of Sheikh Mohammed and particularly his brother Sheikh Hamdan – he trained more than 1,500 winners.*

*McLaughlin's biggest successes were for the Maktoum family. For Shadwell he won the Belmont Stakes with Jazil in 2006, when the Argentine-bred Invasor earned Horse Of The Year honours, having won the Breeders' Cup Classic. Invasor went on to win the Dubai World Cup in 2007.*

*For Godolphin, McLaughlin trained Frosted to win three times at G1 level, including the Whitney in 2016. He quit training in 2020 to become agent to top jockey Luis Saez.*

**Which racing figure past or present do you most admire?**

Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum. He was a special man, a fabulous person to be in the presence of and I was lucky enough to be around him for 25 years. I felt like I learned something every day I was around him. He was fantastic with pedigrees and possessed a photographic memory for horses' faces. I first met him after I was hired by his brother Sheikh Mohammed in 1993 to go to Dubai. I started training a couple of horses for Sheikh Hamdan and things just grew and grew until I then started to take some back to America. It was a wonderful relationship.

**Which is your favourite venue and race anywhere in the world?**

Saratoga is my favourite race meet. For six weeks you get to see everybody. They come from around the world for the sale and the races. My favourite race is the Dubai World Cup. It was fabulous to win it for Sheikh Hamdan with Invasor and then many years later I went back to win it last year as a jockey agent with Mystic Guide, ridden by Luis Saez with Godolphin being the owner. It's such a great event.

**Who is your favourite racehorse and why?**

Invasor because it was such a great story to receive him in Florida from Sheikh Hamdan and Shadwell, not knowing what we had. We trained him and took him back to Dubai for the UAE Derby, where he finished fourth the first time he ran there. He almost stayed there for the summer in Dubai but luckily we brought him back and he never lost another race for us. It was great to go back again and win the Dubai World Cup with Sheikh Hamdan sitting on his couch watching. It doesn't get any better than that.

**What is your fondest memory in racing?**

It's a repeat but, as a trainer, it would be Invasor winning the World Cup, no question about it. As an agent, one of the fondest memories would be Luis winning his first Breeders' Cup race on Essential Quality in the Juvenile in 2020.

**If you could change one thing in racing, what would it be?**

Uniform laws, rules and regulations from coast to coast in America. By that I mean things like the same rules for the starting gate. Sometimes racetracks allow the 'Monty Roberts' blanket at the starting



gate, some allow you to open the front door to try and load the horse, some allow you to blindfold, but not all. That's one example. But there are different rules for what types of shoes horses can wear. Every racetrack should be the same.

Medication should be the same everywhere, or worldwide for that matter, with us getting away from Lasix and raceday medication. Licensing and colours too, there are so many rules and regulations. I feel like in America every state is different.

*Kieran McLaughlin was speaking to Jon Lees*

# TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS

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**Available at [thoroughbredracing.com](http://thoroughbredracing.com)**

Thoroughbred racing has its rankings of the world's leading horses and the world's best races, but the sport is devoid of meaningful classifications of the humans involved, the jockeys, the trainers, the owners.

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# TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS



01 May 2022

## Horses

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Golden Sixty AUS	HK	2059
2	Nature Strip AUS	AUS	2025
3	Life Is Good USA	USA	1994
4	Knicks Go USA	USA	1949
5	Zaaki GBR	AUS	1931
6	Efforia JPN	JPN	1927
7	Verry Elleegant NZL	AUS	1868
8	Anamoe AUS	AUS	1859
9	Hot Rod Charlie USA	USA	1853
10	Golden Pal USA	USA	1852
11	Titleholder JPN	JPN	1848
12	Speaker's Corner USA	USA	1841
13	Fireburn AUS	AUS	1818
14	Hitotsu AUS	AUS	1814
15	Jackie's Warrior USA	USA	1798

## Jockeys

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	James McDonald	AUS	2059
2	Flavien Prat	USA	1961
3	Joel Rosario	USA	1955
4	William Buick	GBR	1936
5	Irad Ortiz Jr	USA	1901
6	Frankie Dettori	GBR	1869
7	Christophe Lemaire	JPN	1777
8	Luis Saez	USA	1633
9	Ryan Moore	GBR	1620
10	Jose L Ortiz	USA	1578
11	Yuga Kawada	JPN	1553
12	Florent Geroux	USA	1534
13	Vincent Ho	HK	1525
14	Jim Crowley	GBR	1501
15	Mickael Barzalona	FRA	1483

## Trainers

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Charlie Appleby	GBR	2784
2	Chad C Brown	USA	2655
3	Bob Baffert	USA	2619
4	Brad H Cox	USA	2452
5	John & Thady Gosden	GBR	2437
6	Chris Waller	AUS	2197
7	Aidan O'Brien	IRE	2182
8	Todd Pletcher	USA	1860
9	Jamie Richards	NZL	1838
10	James Cummings	AUS	1717

## Owners

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Godolphin	AUS	3438
2	Coolmore Partners	IRE	2504
3	Shadwell Estate Company	GBR	2120
4	Sunday Racing Co Ltd	JPN	1833
5	Silk Racing Co Ltd	JPN	1743
6	Peters Investments Et Al	AUS	1703
7	White Birch Farm / Peter Brant Et Al	USA	1620
8	Juddmonte Farms	USA	1612
9	Stanley Chan Ka Leung	HK	1519
10	Te Akau Syndicates	NZL	1514

## Sires

Rank	Name	Country	Points
1	Dubawi IRE	GBR	2239
2	Deep Impact JPN	JPN	2205
3	Galileo IRE	IRE	2073
4	Frankel GBR	GBR	1883
5	Into Mischief USA	USA	1832
6	Kingman GBR	GBR	1770
7	Sea The Stars IRE	GBR	1722
8	Lord Kanaloa JPN	JPN	1557
9	Curlin USA	USA	1531
10	Uncle Mo USA	USA	1528