

Florida Pedigree

By MATT O'NEIL

THE DEATH OF NOTEBOOK after the 2003 breeding season was a big blow to the Florida breeding industry. A glance at the 2005 Leading Florida Sires list makes that loss all the more lamentable. Notebook ranked first among all Florida-based stallions with 2005 progeny earned of \$2,764,738. That's the third time the son of Well Decorated has worn the Florida crown and the ninth consecutive year that he ranked in the top five.

Notebook retired to Ocala Stud for the 1990



SWEET SOUTHERN SAINT

breeding season after a very successful career on the racetrack. The D. Wayne Lukas-trainee won the Kentucky Jockey Club (G2) at two and was a factor on the 1988 Kentucky Derby trail, placing in the Rebel, Fountain of Youth Stakes (G2) and Florida Derby (G1). He was kept sprinting afterward and had won three more stakes by the end of his four year-old season, including the Best Turn (G3).

The son of Well Decorated began his second career in solid fashion with 13 first crop juvenile winners. He was the second leading First Crop Sire in Florida in 1993 (behind Crusader Sword) and ranked ninth among his peers nationally. His only stakes winner from that first crop, however, was

Lynn's Notebook who did not earn blacktype until her four year-old season.

Post It, a member of Notebook's second crop, put her sire on the map with a victory in the Alicibiades (G2) at the 1994 Keeneland Fall meeting. While the winners kept coming, the next few seasons were lean in terms of stakes runners and it wasn't until the mid-1990's that Notebook really hit his stride.

His fifth crop, foals of 1995 contained five stakes winners including the grade three winner Well Noted. Notebook's sixth crop was his finest in terms of national impact with a pair of grade one winners in Three Ring and Delaware Township. His next crop was his most prolific in terms of overall stakes winners with eight. Notebook would add the grade one winners Booklet and Spoken Fur from his ninth and tenth crops. With his fourteenth and last crop now juveniles Notebook has sired seven percent stakes winners from foals.

Notebook's penultimate crop, three year-olds of 2006, may prove to be his best. He has already sired Consider Thesource, winner of last year's \$400,000 My Dear Girl Division of the Florida Stallion Series. Three colts by Notebook are nominated to the Triple Crown and one is already being talked about as a serious Classics contender. The leader of the Notebook pack of sophomores so far is Achilles of Troy, easy winner of the Count Fleet and Whirlaway in New York. While his competition has been suspect his speed figures compare favorably with the best in his generation.

The two other Notebook Classic nominees look to have plenty of quality as well. The Kinsman-owned Florida-bred Hemingway's Key won his first two starts for Nick Zito before an off-the-board finish in the Holy Bull Stakes (G3) over a messy Gulfstream Park surface. He'll get another chance to shine in stakes company this spring. Rick Violette, who won the 2004 Fountain of Youth Stakes (G2) with Read the Footnotes, handles the promising Laptop Computer. The Florida-bred broke his maiden impressively at Aqueduct before finishing a strong second to the stakes quality Barbican in his intial Allowance try.

Concerto, sire of last year's Kentucky Derby favorite Bellamy Road, also had three colts nominated to the Triple Crown. The Florida-bred Bushmill's Best is the furthest along of the tripartite, having cleared his N1x condition by 8 1/2 lengths on January 31 at Tampa. It's interesting to note that Bushmill's Best was bred by Diane Cotter, breeder of Bellamy Road.

In all, 16 current Florida stallions have three year-olds nominated to the Triple Crown with Exchange Rate, Straight Man and Sweetsouthern saint represented by a pair of nominees each.

Last spring the Sweetsouthern saint colt General John B finished second in the Santa Anita Derby (G1). This year the Saint Ballado stallion may have an even better Kentucky Derby prospect in Florida-bred Sweetnorthern saint.

In his second start Sweetnorthern saint earned the unique distinction of being disqualified (down to fourth) from a race he 'won' by 16 lengths. While he didn't get first place money that day, he confirmed that form with a pair of subsequent big wins. He earned triple digit Beyer Figures in both those victories, a Maiden Special win at Aqueduct and 10-length romp in the Miracle Wood Stakes at Laurel.

Sweetnorthern saint is out of the Waquoit mare Ice Beauty and is inbred to Herbager at 4x5 and to the taproot mare Boudoir II at 6x6. He is the first stakes winner from his sire's second crop and fifth overall. Sweetsouthern saint's third crop are juveniles of 2006.

Neither Montbrook nor Formal Dinner have any 2006 Triple Crown nominees, but both veteran Florida stallions are making noise in other ways so far this year.

Two Montbrook youngsters brought final bids in excess of \$400,000 at the OBS Calder Two Year-Old in Training sale. Those hips helped make veteran son of Buckaroo the leading sire by average.

Mrs. E. P. Robsham went to \$460,000 for a Montbrook filly out of the On to Glory mare Velvet Choker. The filly was the third highest hip sold, while the fourth highest was a Montbrook colt. He is out of the Unbridled mare Unbridled Bliss and commanded a final bid of \$435,000, also from Mrs. Robsham.

Four of the seven Montbrooks offered found new homes for an average price of \$263,750. New York-based Freud was the second leading sire with

three hips selling for \$198,333.

Formal Dinner finished 2005 with four stakes winners and \$2,195,010 in progeny earnings, a total good enough for a 6th place ranking on the Florida Leading Sires list. So far in 2006, the Well Decorated stallion is making an impact on the graded sprint programs on both coasts.

His five year-old son Universal Form won the G3 Deputy Minister H. at Gulfstream Park in early February. The horse is out of the Phone Trick mare Pyrite Phone and is the fourth lifetime graded winner for his sire.



Formal Dinner is also the broodmare sire of the California-based three year-old sprinter Too Much Bling. The colt was purchased by Stonerside and partners after a 19 length maiden win in Ohio last summer. He finished third G1 Hopeful at Belmont for his new connections before disappointing runs in the G1 Champagne and G3 Nashua. In 2006 he is justifying his purchase with two nice wins in the San Miguel and the G2 San Vicente at Santa Anita.

Too Much Bling is the third foal, and third stakes winner, out of the mare Rose Colored Lady. He is by the Fappiano stallion Rubiano and is the first graded stakes winner out of daughter of Formal Dinner. Rose Colored Lady has also produced the Ohio-bred stakes winners Barnsy, by the Danzig son Langfuhr, and Ready for Roses by the Halo grandson More Than Ready. She is a foal of 1994 and was one of Formal Dinner's two first crop stakes winners from just 15 foals. ■

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