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by edd roggenkamp

HIGH HOPES FOR NEW OWNERS

In recent years, all three of the foundation pillars that support our industry--bettors, racetracks, and owners, have been crumbling. Our old reliable bettors are aging, pulling back or are moving to other games. Our racetracks are under siege and many, even in big critical growth markets, are seemingly in danger of failure. And our racehorse owners have been reducing their stables, with some exiting our sport completely, or going on hiatus.

For the last group, the race horse owners, this past weekend has the potential to be a strong boost for the future of our sport. Why? Because the results of the best races in America, the Grade I's, and Grade II's were sprinkled with horses that sold at auction for modest prices. This could stand as proof to the millions of millionaires in America that they too, for a reasonable investment, have a chance to grab the gold ring and experience a once in a lifetime thrill.

All too often, our industry's sales-topper headlines trumpet the impression that folks traveling in less than a private 737 need not enter the racing arena, and that only million-dollar horses have a chance to win. But at a time when breeders and trainers and veterinarians and tracks all need new blood and new enthusiasm in the form of new owners, last weekend was a blockbuster. Look what you could have bought for \$100,000.

Saturday, Oct. 2, Belmont:

JOCKEY CLUB GOLD CUP S. (G1), \$750,000.

Won by HAYNESFIELD, c, 4, Speightstown--Nothing Special, by Tejabo. (\$100,000 yrl '07 KEESEP; \$20,000 2yo 2008 KEEAPR).
3rd--Fly Down, c, 3, Mineshaft--Queen Randi, by Fly So Free. (\$80,000 yrl '08 KEESEP.).

BELDAME S. (G1), BEL, \$343,000.

Won by LIFE AT TEN, m, 5, Malibu Moon--Rahrahsixboombah, by Rahy. (\$35,000 yrl '06 KEESEP).

NORFOLK S. (G1), Oak Tree at Hollywood, \$250,000.

Won by JAYCITO, c, 2, Victory Gallop--Night Edition, by Ascot Knight. (\$110,000 yrl '09 KEESEP).

And Saturday was capped off by the great Zenyatta when she won:

LADY'S SECRET S. (G1), OTH, \$250,000.

ZENYATTA, m, 6, Street Cry (IRE)--Vertigineux, by Kris S. (\$60,000 yrl '05 KEESEP).

Earlier in the day in England, Douglas McIntyre's Pennsylvania homebred, Sahpress (5, b m by Sahn--Sorpresa by Pleasant Tap) won the G1 Kingdom of Bahrain Sun Chariot S. in Newmarket for the second year in a row. This Pennsylvania-bred filly was bred on Sahn's modest \$5,000 stud fee at Shadwell USA.

The next day, Sunday, and perhaps the biggest example of the weekend, was when three recent bargains hit it big in the:

OAK LEAF S. (G1), OTH, \$210,000.

1st --RIGOLETTA, f, 2, Concerto--Almost Aprom Queen, by Montbrook. (\$35,000 2yo 2010 OBSAPR.). -

2nd--Tell a Kelly, f, 2, Tapit--Evrobi, by Tabasco Cat. (\$45,000 yrl '09 KEESEP.).

3rd--Indian Gracey, f, 2, Indian Ocean--Miz Betty Grace, by Matty G. (\$34,000 2yo 2010 OBSAPR.).

But it is not just the wins that are impressive, it is the story about the opportunity to compete and place at the top levels of racing for a reasonable cost.

In the JOE HIRSCH TURF CLASSIC INVITATIONAL S. (G1), BEL, \$500,000:

2nd Paddy O'Prado, c, 3, El Prado (IRE)--Fun House, by Prized. (\$105,000 yrl '08 KEESEP.).

GOODWOOD S. (G1), OTH, \$250,000.

3rd Dakota Phone, g, 5, Zavata--World of Gold, by Spinning World. (\$67,000 2yo 2007 BESMAY)

CLEMENT L. HIRSCH MEMORIAL TURF CHAMPIONSHIP S. (G1), OTH, \$250,000.

3rd Bourbon Bay, g, 4, Sligo Bay (IRE)--Coral Necklace, by Conquistador Cielo. (\$1,700 yrl '07 KEESEP.).

HAWTHORNE GOLD CUP H. (G2), HAW, \$250,000:

3rd A. U. Miner, h, 5, Mineshaft--Clerical Etoile (ARG), by The Watcher. (\$90,000 yrl '06 KEESEP.).

MISS GRILLO S. (G3), BEL, \$150,000:

2nd Arch Support, f, 2, Arch--Two Ninety Jones, by Sir Harry Lewis. (\$75,000 yrl '09 KEESEP).

WOW! What a weekend for the little guys.

Even in this time of recession, with the stock market bouncing back, and depending on which definition or financial formula you use, there are between 5,000,000 and 8,000,000 millionaires in America. States like California 700,000 millionaires, New York 380,000, Florida 380,000, Illinois 280,000, Pennsylvania 250,000 and New Jersey 230,000, all big racing states, lead the way. Comfortably wealthy baby boomers are looking for ways to put fun and excitement in their lives, and as you well know, nothing is more thrilling than standing in the winner's circle.

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For the past decade it was easy to get the impression that this was a sport for only the mega-rich, and that more pedestrian owners had no chance, no reason to try, or worse, were unwelcome in the sport of kings.

I believe we missed a prime opportunity to bring thousands of new and enthusiastic mid-level owners into this thrilling sport during the financial go-go years of the 2000's.

Every one loves a bargain, especially a bargain with a special surprise ending. Antiques Roadshow is PBS's highest-rated series. Each week, nearly 10 million viewers tune in...to watch somebody's \$10 yard sale vase turn into a \$5000 work of art. Similarly, this past weekend proved that racing is not exclusively a sport for kings. Facts are facts, obviously high quality animals can be had for reasonable (bargain) prices, and that could be very good news for the future of our sport.

No one knows where lightning will strike next!!!
Edd Roggenkamp retired as General Manager of Dealer Operations for General Motors in 2001 and moved to a farm in Versailles, Kentucky order to have more years to hunt, fish and race horses "while still young enough and healthy enough to enjoy it." He now devotes most of his energy to raising, training and racing Thoroughbreds on the Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio circuit. For 30 years, he raised and competed with field trial birddogs and is a past President of a National Field Trial Association.

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