

# SWEET CANDY

Ted Aroney helped start  
a dynasty with Candy Ride

BY TRACY GANTZ



When Ted Aroney first heard about Candy Ride, the Triple Crown was never in the picture. The undefeated colt came from Argentina as a 4-year-old and ultimately won the 2003 Pacific Classic Stakes (gr. I) at Del Mar for Aroney's good friends and clients Sid and Jenny Craig.



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Ted Aroney, top, managed the racing career of Candy Ride for Sid and Jenny Craig and bred and co-owns Danzing Candy, shown winning the San Felipe Stakes



Jenny Craig hugs jockey Joel Rosario after Twirling Candy's victory in the Del Mar Derby

Thirteen years later 76-year-old Aroney is very much thinking about the Triple Crown races as a possibility for Danzing Candy, a grandson of Candy Ride. Aroney bred Danzing Candy, winner of the March 12 San Felipe Stakes (gr. II) at Santa Anita, in the name of his Halo Farms and co-owns him with Jim and Dianne Bashor.

Aroney has played a significant role in what is developing into a Candy Ride dynasty. As the racing manager for the Craigs, he not only helped them with the racing careers of Candy Ride's sons Sidney's Candy and Twirling Candy but also aided in establishing those two horses at stud.

"When Candy Ride started getting his first babies, Sid Craig passed away," said Aroney. "He would have loved to have seen some of them. He would have been so happy."

Sid Craig died in 2008, before Sidney's Candy and Twirling Candy reached the races. Both horses won grade I events for Jenny Craig and are having success at stud in Kentucky.

Aroney, with bloodstock agent Gayle Van Leer, bought mares that would complement Candy Ride and his sons.

"I always look for big, scopey mares," said Van Leer. "I also looked for mares with big, good feet."

At the 2011 Keeneland November mixed sale, Van Leer found the Songandaprayer mare Talkin and Singing, now the dam of Danzing Candy. In nine starts in 2010 and early 2011, Talkin and Singing had placed four times but never won, and she sold in foal to Tale of the Cat. Van Leer got her for \$50,000 from consignor Woodspring Farm.

“She was so pretty—like a show horse,” said Van Leer.

Aroney bred Talkin and Singing to Twirling Candy the first year the horse went to stud at Lane’s End Farm. In 2013 the mare foaled Danzing Candy at that farm near Versailles.

“I bred him from a baby, and everything has gone right so far,” said Aroney.

Aroney likes to bring in partners on his racehorses, and he said he has rarely met owners as enthusiastic as the Bashors. Aroney, who lives with his wife, Leslie, in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., got to know the Bashors about the time Candy Ride was winning.

Both men were in the property development business, but they cemented the friendship even more through their interest in racing. Aroney, born in Los Angeles, came from Australian roots, with an uncle who once had a horse in the Melbourne Cup (Aus-I). Bashor’s parents took him to California racetracks when



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Candy Ride is developing a dynasty at stud

he was a young boy, and he remembers horses such as Swaps.

“He was always interested in horses but never owned any,” said Aroney. “He really had passion.”

Aroney and the Bashors began to partner on some of Aroney’s homebreds, usually coming up with a winner or two each summer at Del Mar.

“The first race they won at Del Mar, it was like they won the Derby,” said Aroney.

Aroney put Danzing Candy into training with Cliff Sise, and the Bashors saw the colt last fall when he came to Del Mar for the fall meeting.

“This is the best one I’ve had in a long time,” Aroney told them.

Danzing Candy did not become one of the Bashors’ Del Mar winners, however. In his first outing he broke slowly from the rail and rushed into contention around the turn only to run into tight quarters and finish eighth.

“American Pharoah got beat the first time—don’t worry about it,” Aroney told the Bashors.

Major contributors to the University of Southern California, the Bashors run Danzing Candy in silks that reflect USC’s gold and cardinal colors. The colt hasn’t lost since, winning three starts at Santa Anita, culminating in the two-length San Felipe victory. The colt is expected to take his next step toward the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I) in the April 9 Santa Anita Derby (gr. I).

Talkin and Singing produced a colt by Candy Ride in 2014 who brought \$50,000 as a yearling at Keeneland and recently sold for \$620,000 as a 2-year-old in training. Aroney said that he sold the mare privately to Rick Porter, the owner of cham-

pion Songbird, and shortly after the sale she produced a full brother to Danzing Candy.

While Aroney and the Bashors hope Danzing Candy can become their first starter in the Kentucky Derby, Aroney knows only too well what can go wrong.

“Jerry Hollendorfer and I were partners on five horses that came within 30 days of running in the Kentucky Derby,” said Aroney.

Three years ago Aroney and Hollendorfer won the San Felipe with Hear the Ghost, a son of Ghostzapper they owned together. In early April of that year, the gelding injured his right front leg and missed the Triple Crown races.

Hollendorfer has trained several stakes winners for Aroney, going back to King Glorious, winner of the 1988 Hollywood Futurity (gr. I) and 1989 Haskell Invitational Handicap (gr. I).

Aroney bred King Glorious in California, a fortuitous circumstance arising out of the owner looking for mares to breed to his stallion Shanekite, a multiple stakes winner standing in Northern California.



Dianne Bashor and Aroney flank the hardware earned by Danzing Candy

“I went to a sale at Hollywood Park,” Aroney said. “They sold out of a tent, and it was raining. I bought seven mares and paid about \$3,000-\$4,000 each. I bought Glorious Natalie in foal to Naevus. She had the foal, and that was King Glorious.”

As King Glorious was growing up, Aroney traveled to Keeneland to buy some yearlings with Alan Magerman, who had raced 1969 Del Mar Futurity winner George Lewis. They brought their purchases back to Kentmere Farms in Rancho Santa Fe for examination by Dr. Jack Robbins, and Aroney also asked Robbins to look at his Naevus yearling.

Aroney recalled that the colt was crooked and Magerman suggested they sell him at a Bay Meadows sale because “he’s not worth anything.” Aroney telephoned Hollendorfer, based at Bay Meadows at the time, and asked him to take care of King Glorious until the sale.

Hollendorfer saw some talent in the colt and asked Aroney if he wanted to put a reserve on him. It was literally a million-dollar question because King Glorious went through the sale as a \$6,500 RNA and ultimately earned \$1,175,650. Aroney and Magerman sold King Glorious to the Japan Racing Association for stud duty for another seven figures.

“His offspring won a lot of races in Japan,” said Aroney, who feels that King Glo-

rious would have done even better as a sire there had Sunday Silence not overshadowed him.

Aroney remembers King Glorious fondly, recalling that “he’d lie down in his stall all the time, and he’d always have a cat on top of him sleeping. He loved bran muffins in the morning.”

Hollendorfer also trained a Breeders’ Cup winner for Aroney. The two men, along with frequent Hollendorfer partners George Todaro and John Carver, owned Dakota Phone, who captured the 2010 Breeders’ Cup Dirt Mile (gr. I) at Churchill Downs as a 37-1 longshot. It was Hollendorfer’s first Breeders’ Cup victory, and the field they beat included 2009 Kentucky Derby winner Mine That Bird.

The Craigs proved instrumental in Dakota Phone as well. Aroney had bought Dakota Phone for the Craigs at the 2007 Barretts May 2-year-old sale for \$67,000, and the gelding first raced for Aroney, the Craigs, and Hollendorfer.

“When he (Sid) passed away, he wanted me to have this horse,” Aroney said after the Breeders’ Cup. “It got a little rich for me, and I put a few partners together in him. So this goes back to Sid and Jenny, and it’s like a family horse.”

Aroney met Sid Craig through friends, and they had a mutual friend in trainer Hal King. King and Craig at one time had taught dancing and owned franchises in the Arthur Murray Dance Studios. After he retired from training in 1990, King served as a bloodstock adviser to the Craigs before he died in 1994.

At about the same time, Aroney recalls that he met up with trainer Ron McAnally at a Del Mar yearling sale. McAnally liked some horses in the sale, and Aroney suggested that Sid Craig drop by. McAnally bought a couple of yearlings for Craig, an association that ultimately led to such South American purchases as Paseana and Candy Ride.

“A few months later Ron McAnally called me from Argentina,” said Aroney. “He



STEVE STIDHAM/HOLLYWOOD PARK

King Glorious winning the 1988 Hollywood Futurity



ADAM COGLIANESE/NYRA

Grade I Santa Anita Derby winner Sidney's Candy is off to a good start at stud ...

was looking at a horse for sale down there called Paseana. I called Sid, who was in a board meeting.”

Craig initially told Aroney he was too busy to consider the horse right then, but Aroney said he convinced Craig to buy her, in part because of McAnally's reputation for finding good runners in South America. A few years before, McAnally had bought Bayakoa for Frank and Janis Whitham. Both mares became Eclipse Award winners and members of the Hall of Fame.

The Craigs and Aroney's circle of friends in Rancho Santa Fe expanded to include Marty and Pam Wygod, Eddie Nahem, and Bertrand Hug. Nahem had named his champion Bertrando for Hug, who owns and operates Mille Fleurs and Bertrand at Mister A's. Mille Fleurs is a popular Rancho Santa Fe restaurant, while anyone flying into San Diego International Airport has seen Mister A's, as planes on approach for landing pass within what looks like a few feet of the 12th-floor restaurant.

“I became partners with Bertrand Hug, and we would buy horses for Del Mar,” said Aroney. “We'd try to buy a half-dozen horses with Alan Magerman and Jerry Hollendorfer. We had winners every year.”

When the Craigs purchased the Rancho Santa Fe training center that had begun as the late Eugene Klein's Del Rayo Racing Stables, it became the place for breaking and training their horses as well as runners for the Wygods and Aroney. The Craigs renamed the facility Rancho Paseana, and Jenny Craig kept it after Sid's death until selling it to Microsoft founder Bill Gates in 2014.

Many of Candy Ride's offspring received their early lessons at Rancho Paseana. For a while, Sise left the racetrack to serve as the farm trainer there.

"Marty (Wygod) brought him to Rancho Paseana," said Aroney.

When Candy Ride went to stud in 2005, the Craigs kept a significant interest in him. Van Leer bought mares for the Craigs and Aroney to breed to the stallion.

"That's when I started buying horses for them," said Van Leer. "We also bought some Candy Ride foals when they came onto the market to get them in the public eye and get them into good hands."

In 2004 Van Leer bought Jealous Wildcat (by Forest Wildcat) for \$40,000 and Fair Bianca (by Bien Bien) for \$27,000 for Aroney, two mares that have figured prominently in his breeding program. Aroney bred multiple graded stakes winner Evita Argentina out of Jealous Wildcat through a Candy Ride breeding and raced her with Ron Judy. John Sadler was her trainer.

Aroney kept Fair Bianca primarily in California, getting three six-figure earners from her, including California-bred stakes winner Miles Rules, trained by Sise. Aroney is now breeding horses out of Miles Rules, who has a 2-year-old Cal-bred filly by Twirling Candy named Miles Candy.

Aroney and Jim Bashor won a race at Del Mar with Oh My Enberg, a daughter of Tribal Rule—Fair Bianca trained by Sadler and named for sports broadcaster Dick Enberg's signature saying. But Danzing Candy is the Bashors' first stakes winner, and he might just be the one finally to get Aroney to the Kentucky Derby. **BH**



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