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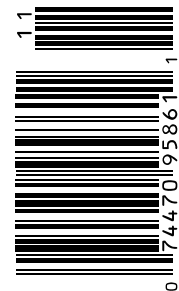
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MILKY WAY FARM
EXPANDING ITS HORIZONS





BOUND FOR THE STARS

LIVING THE SWEET LIFE: LINDA MADSEN'S MILKY WAY FARM

BY TRACY GANTZ

Linda Madsen epitomizes the breeder that the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association had in mind when it created and modifies the California-bred incentive program. Those incentives are helping her to bring better stallions and mares to California and breed a better Cal-bred at her Milky Way Farm in Temecula.

"I think that the Cal-bred program is just the greatest program ever," said Madsen.

Largely because of the additional opportunities for Cal-breds at the racetrack, which makes them more valuable to sell, Madsen has been able to expand her stallion roster and obtain quality mares to support those stallions. In the past couple of months, Milky Way has brought Smart Bid and Circumference to California, and they join the other three stallions already standing at Milky Way—Hooray-

forhollywood, Street Life, and Sundarban.

The stallion roster is a combination of horses Madsen owns part of and client-owned stallions. She and bloodstock agent Gayle Van Leer have combed broodmare sales in Kentucky and California to find mares to breed to the farm's stallions.

"We believed that we need to select some of the best mares that were available that fell within our price range," Madsen said.

Their hard work has paid off, such as when Madsen bought Chilean champion Hickory for just \$1,000 at the 2012 Barretts

January mixed sale. The mare was open, had one foal to the races who had only placed, and had a yearling by City Zip.

Madsen had seen the City Zip yearling, who had just sold at the Keeneland January mixed sale for \$65,000. She liked the yearling enough to buy Hickory, but even she couldn't have predicted that the yearling would go on to be Cal-bred Alert Bay, a multiple graded stakes winner and earner of \$954,495.

Hickory's personality has endeared her to Madsen in addition to the exploits of her son. Madsen keeps the mare in a small pasture



Circumference, a young son of Galileo, will stand his first season in 2016



Hoorayforhollywood represents the Storm Cat line among the Milky Way stallions



Once based in New York, Smart Bid, a son of Smart Strike, is a recent addition to the Milky Way stallion roster

near the Milky Way office, regularly offering her pats and peppermints. Hickory has two broodmare friends that she enjoys being with so much that she fussed when taken outside for just a few minutes to pose for a photo.

Madsen has bred Hickory to Sundarban, getting a colt in 2013 and a filly in 2014. Hickory is back in foal to Sundarban, and Madsen said she will probably breed her to one of the farm's new stallions next year.

Van Leer bought the mare See Alice for Madsen at Keeneland in 2010 for \$27,000. The next year See Alice's half sister Exotic Bloom produced a Tale of the Cat filly. Now named Stopchargingmaria, that filly has earned nearly \$2 million and won such races as the 2014 Alabama Stakes (gr. I) and TVG Coaching Club American Oaks (gr. I).

Madsen liked See Alice so much that she claimed My Sister Sandy, a half sister to See Alice and a full sister to Exotic Bloom, at Portland Meadows. The day of the race Madsen was at Santa Anita and couldn't find a television broadcasting the Portland Meadows signal.

She asked a better sitting at one of the track bars if she could watch the race on his computer. Not only did he help her out, by the time of the race, everybody at the bar was watching the computer, cheering on the filly, who won the race.

"That's what I think rac-

ing is all about," said Madsen.

She then asked if she could watch the Knickerbocker Stakes (gr. IIIT) at Belmont Park because See Tobe, a half brother to My Sister Sandy, See Alice, and Exotic Bloom, was running. The man agreed, took it as a tip, and ran to the windows. See Tobe ran second at 22-1, and the gambler told Madsen that she had just bought him a new computer with what he had bet.

Though Madsen didn't bet on See Tobe, she did very well on the deal after Stopchargingmaria began running well. With Van Leer's help, she bred My Sister Sandy to Tale of the Cat and sold her for \$140,000 at the 2014 Keeneland November sale.

Madsen often buys mares in Kentucky, breeds them to good stallions there, and brings the mares to California to foal and breed back to a Milky Way stallion. For 2016, the Milky Way Cal-bred crop will include foals by Munnings, Cairo Prince,

Magician, Stay Thirsty, Fed Biz, and Can the Man. The mares, with pedigrees full of black type, are by such sires as A.P. Indy, Empire Maker, Medaglia d'Oro, Malibu Moon, Danehill Dancer, and Speightstown.

"We are doing this totally for the California program because we believe in it," said Madsen. "We think it's just wonderful what they are doing for California."

Madsen has dedicated Milky Way to Thoroughbreds for the past 10 years, but she has been breeding horses all her life. She and her late parents, Leland and Esther May Mekeel, raised champion Arabian horses, and Linda still leases part of Milky Way to an Arabian breeder.

The Mekeels originally bred Arabians on a farm in Whittier, and they moved the operation to the Temecula location in 1967. Milky Way now encompasses about 100 acres, most of it devoted to Madsen's Thoroughbred operation, though she also shows Guernsey cows.



Street Life, a son of champion Street Sense, has first-crop yearlings this year



Sundarban is a classically bred son of A.P. Indy out of a Storm Cat mare from Gold Beauty's family

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MILKY WAY FARM



TRACY GANTZ

Linda Madsen with her star broodmare Hickory, dam of Cal-bred multiple graded stakes winner Alert Bay



COURTESY, LINDA MADSEN, MILKY WAY FARM

Sweetnearlypic and her Sundarban filly enjoy the lush paddocks at Milky Way Farm

Madsen married Thoroughbred veterinarian Larry Seeman, and they raised two boys, Terry and John, now adults. Seeman worked for many of the Thoroughbred farms that dotted the area during the 1980s. That was Linda's introduction to Thoroughbreds, and she loved the breed and the racing.

During that time, Linda and Larry bred the filly Runaway Blues, a Cal-bred daughter of Runaway Groom, who briefly stood at El Rancho Murrieta. Linda eventually lost Runaway Blues in a claiming race, but it whetted her appetite for Thoroughbreds.

Linda and Larry kept some Thoroughbred layups at Milky Way, and as the Arabian business began to dwindle, they started switching the farm to Thoroughbreds. Larry didn't live long enough to see the complete transformation because he died in 2008, but Linda has carried on their work.

Dr. Steve Colburn now serves as Madsen's veterinarian, and she consults with him on the nutrition program for all of the horses. Though she has three full-time employees and several part-timers, she is very hands-on, doing much of the horse management herself.

Milky Way has three barns for a total of 55 stalls. Most of the horses spend much of their time outdoors, either in one of the 15 five-acre pastures or in one of the approximately 50 outdoor pens of varying sizes. The pens and pastures are fenced with wood and V-mesh.

"We just built 20 more pens because we're getting a lot of lay-ups, and we also built more foaling stalls," said Madsen. She believes that with California's temperate climate, horses enjoy being outside and thrive in a more natural environment.

Another recent upgrade has been the addition of an office building. New trees and flowers have been part of this year's improvements, and Madsen is looking forward to showing off the farm as the first stop on the Nov. 21 stallion tour hosted by the California Thoroughbred Farm Managers Association and the CTBA. Linda serves as vice president of the CTFMA.

California's drought affects every farm, but Madsen is lucky to be connected to the local water district. She has just upgraded all her piping.

"We're very water-conscious," she said. "With the drought, we can't irrigate the pastures, but we've always fed hay nutritionally

anyway. We usually feed a mix of alfalfa and grass hay."

Madsen has the hay tested so that she and Colburn can be sure the hay and grain diet has the right amount of protein, vitamins, and minerals for the specific animal.

Milky Way offers a full range of services, from breeding and foaling mares to caring for young horses, sales preparation, and lay-ups. The only thing the farm doesn't do is breaking and training. Galway Downs and San Luis Rey Downs are both close by. Madsen sends her horses to Jose Murillo, who has his own facility and also trains out of Galway.

Joy Seifert and Jeff Stiefel partner with Madsen on many of her horses. They are all also good friends, and Seifert's daughter Rebecca is married to Linda's son John. John and Rebecca have twin daughters, while Terry and his wife, Bethany, have three sons, giving Linda plenty of grandchildren to spoil.

Seifert, Stiefel, and Madsen own Sundarban, a son of A.P. Indy—Desert Tigris, by Storm Cat. The second dam is champion Sky Beauty, who also produced English group III winner Hurricane Cat, and Sundarban is a half brother to English