

Call
510-490-1111
eNick Stallion Program

TDN
THOROUGHBRED DAILY NEWS
SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2015
732-747-8060 • TDN Home Page [Click Here](#)

Only at
eNicks.com

FEATURE PRESENTATION • GII CHARLES TOWN CLASSIC



POINT OF ENTRY
THE NEXT GLOBAL SIRE

EXCEPTIONAL
FIRST FOALS ARRIVING NOW
by DYNAFORMER'S 5X G1SW



Filly o/s ADJUDICATION Filly o/s VAPOR (GB)

ADENA SPRINGS KENTUCKY www.AdenaStallions.com (859) 987-1798

'BELIEF' TRIES THE BULL RING

While it would have been virtually unheard of just a few years ago for a horse of **Shared Belief** (Candy Ride {Arg})'s caliber to make an appearance at Charles Town, a monster \$1.5-million purse for Saturday evening's GII Charles Town Classic S. lures the co-top-rated horse in the world to West Virginia. If not for an

unfortunate trip when controversially cut off at the start by winner Bayern (Offlee Wild) and forced to settle for fourth in the Nov. 1 GI Breeders' Cup Classic, the Jerry Hollendorfer pupil could be a perfect 11-for-11. The 2013 champion juvenile annexed the GII Los Alamitos Derby, GI Pacific Classic S. and GI Awesome Again S. last season before the Classic, but failed to make it into the top three in Horse of the Year voting despite finishing off the year with a hard-fought victory in Santa



Shared Belief & Mike Smith
Benoit Photo

Anita's GI Malibu S. Dec. 26. Shared Belief asserted his superiority over Horse of the Year California Chrome (Lucky Pulpit) in the GII San Antonio Invitational S. Feb. 7, and easily bested **Moreno** (Ghostzapper) while earning a 111 Beyer Speed Figure in the GI Santa Anita H. Mar. 7. Installed at 2-5 on the morning line, the dark bay will carry the colors of Jungle Racing, KMN Racing, Hollendorfer, Litt, Solis II and Todaro.

Southern Equine Stable's aforementioned Moreno, who landed last season's GI Whitney Invitational S., enters off a close third as the 6-5 favorite in the GII New Orleans H. Mar. 28. He figures to show his usual early speed, but could face pressure from the likes of **Warrioroftheros** (A. P. Indy). **Cont. p3**

BIRSH PREPARES TO TAKE HIS WAR HORSE INTO BATTLE AT THE KY DERBY *By Mike Kane*

Owner-breeder Phillip Birsh and trainer George Weaver crunched some numbers in the days following **Tencendur's** (Warrior's Reward) second-place finish in the GI TwinSpires.com Wood Memorial and compared them to the other major prep races for the Kentucky Derby. They liked what the stats revealed.

The math exercise--showing a jump in speed figures and a favorable decline in the colt's Thoro-Graph number--made it clear that they really ought to consider taking the New York-bred to Churchill Downs for the Derby.

"All of that put together told us that we're in the conversation. So, we're coming," Birsh said.

Cont. p7



Tencendur in the paddock prior to the Wood
Mike Kane photo

15 days.
10 SW's.
5 GSW's.

Ashford, the source of success!

• ASHFORD • **COOLMORE®** • ASHFORD •
A M E R I C A

Contact: Aisling Duignan, Dermot Ryan, Charlie O'Connor, Andre Lynch, Adrian Wallace or Scott Calder. Tel: 859-873-7088. Fax: 859-879 5756. E-Mail: info@coolmore.com



Birsh cont. from p1

Tencendur, a massive colt--he measures 17 hands--with a distinctive name, is an absolute unknown compared to the high-profile group of leading Derby contenders that includes American Pharoah (Pioneer of the Nile), Dortmund (Big Brown) and One Lucky Dane (Lookin at Lucky) from trainer Bob Baffert's barn; GII Louisiana Derby winner and qualifying points leader International Star (Fusaichi Pegasus); and trainer Todd Pletcher's phalanx of standouts headed by Carpe Diem (Giants Causeway), Materiality (Afleet Alex) and



Phil Birsh
Mike Kane photo

Itsaknockout (Lemon Drop Kid). Never mind. Tencendur, who earned more than enough qualifying points in the Wood, finishing two lengths behind Frosted (Tapit), appears to be improving and will be the first Derby starter for Birsh, 57, and Weaver, 44, a native of Louisville.

While he wasn't having a Joe Namath moment and guaranteeing a Tencendur upset was

looming, Birsh noted that the best horse in the crowded field doesn't always win the Derby. He said it is possible that some of the standouts may have already reached their top level, and is quite sure that his colt is still far from the finished product.

"I think it's really important that people not write the headline before the story is done," he said.

The journalism reference is no accident. Birsh is the president and CEO of the family owned Playbill, Inc. which publishes the distinctive monthly theatrical magazine that wraps around the programs of many Broadway and off-Broadway productions. The Manhattan resident has owned horses for 25 years. Tencendur was foaled at the 100-acre Birsh Family Farm in Charlton, N.Y., about a 30-minute drive southwest of Saratoga Race Course.

At the top of the stretch in the Wood, it looked like Tencendur might pull off a shocker at odds of 21-1. Although Frosted ran his colt down in deep stretch, Birsh had a contented smile on his face as he watched Tencendur return to be unsaddled.

"He ran very well and I expected him to perform at the level he performed at," Birsh said, "because in several of his previous races, through no fault of our team or jockey, he was just incredibly green in some portion of every race. Yet he would flash enough talent that I sometimes didn't know that he knew he had. He kept flashing all this talent and kept having legitimate excuses for not winning. I just thought that sooner or later he was going to start putting it together."

Flip Flop on over
to celebrate Ocala Farm Ministry's
**CALL TO THE POST
DINNER AND AUCTION**

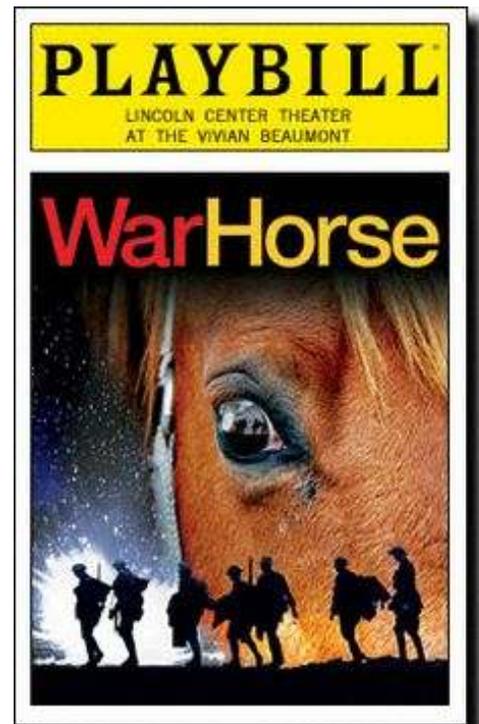
Sunday, April 19, 2015
HAPPY HOUR & AUCTION PREVIEW
Sail away at 6:00pm
7:00pm Dinner and Live Auction
ITW building at OBS

**Tickets \$100.00 per person,
\$800.00 per table (10)**

For more information, please contact
STEPHANIE BRENNAN - 352.427.8540
JAQUI DEMERIC - 352.843.0456

The Wood was significant step forward for colt, who broke his maiden on Jan. 19. He was fourth in the GIII Withers and, wearing blinkers for the first time, was fifth in the GIII Gotham. Jose Ortiz was on him in the Wood, but he is the regular rider of Upstart, so there is likely to be a jockey change for the Derby. Birsh said he doesn't know who the next pilot will be.

Typically, Birsh races his fillies, retiring the good ones to his small broodmare band that now numbers six, and sells his colts. He broke form and kept Tencendur, a son of his mare Still Secret (Hennessy), though. **Cont. p8**



Birsh, president and CEO of Playbill, will bring his own war horse to the Derby.



Birsh cont.

“He just was always a very impressive physical specimen,” Birsh said. “His mother produces really good horses with excellent cardiovascular systems and throats. I felt that was a very big advantage. He was always an impressive candidate. He always stood out. He was always quiet and nice. Sometimes a little immature; he’s still immature, frankly. He’s still not fully developed or grown up, but he’ll get there, sooner or later.”

Birsh purchased Still Secret for \$18,000 to support his stallion, Mayakovsky. They produced Mother Russia, who was sold and earned over \$500,000 while being trained by Linda Rice. Mother Russia is a broodmare in Japan now and her colt, Golden Barows, was third in the G2 U.A.E Derby Mar. 28. Still Secret was sent back to Spendthrift’s Warrior’s Reward this year.

Last summer, Birsh said he received glowing reports from Kentucky horsemen preparing the colt for the track and turned down a \$200,000 offer from a bloodstock agent.

“I decided I wanted a serious name for a serious horse, so I named him Tencendur,” Birsh said. “His father’s name is Warrior’s Reward and I wanted to name him after one of the great warrior horses in history. King Charlemagne is a man who is credited with putting down some of the foundation of modern Europe. His horse was named Tencendur. My wife is French and there is no end to the amount I’ll go to please her.”

The exploits of Charlemagne and Tencendur in the Battle of Roncevaux in 778 are part of the French epic poem [La Chanson de Roland](#), the oldest surviving major work in French literature.

Birsh said he let Weaver make the call on whether to try the Derby, but he’s tickled to be going.

“It is a dream come true to be part of this extraordinary, legendary institution called the Kentucky Derby,” he said. “It is a privilege to be a part of this race. It is a privilege to be associated with this historic moment in the racing year. It’s a true fantasy to be able to think that in decades to come, that your children will tell their grandchildren that their father had a horse in the Derby. That kind of continuity of the history of racing is so joyful for a man who cares so much about racing and wants to succeed if possible at a level like this.

“It’s a true fantasy to be able to think that in decades to come, that your children will tell their grandchildren that their father had a horse in the Derby. That kind of continuity of the history of racing is so joyful for a man who cares so much about racing...” –Phil Birsch

2015 KENTUCKY DERBY TRAINERS’ DINNER

TUESDAY, APRIL 28

Cocktails at 6:00 pm | Dinner at 6:45 pm

Hyatt Regency Ballroom, Louisville, Kentucky

Hosts: Jill Byrne and Paul Rogers

Single Ticket \$160

Table of 10 \$1500

Cocktail Attire

Make Reservations
(859) 259-1643







It’s very hard to do. I’m grateful and I really do understand what it means. I appreciate it.”

Tencendur delivered as Birsh had hoped in the Wood and the owner expects him to get better with more seasoning.

“If he stays healthy and continues to mature, maybe in late spring or early summer we’ll see the full creation,” Birsh said.

“He’s very young, very green.

That’s why I feel so confident about him. Despite himself, he’s here.”

[CLICK HERE TO SHARE THIS STORY](#)



You can also pick up a copy of the TDN today at the OBS Spring Sale.

TODAY’S FEATURED VIDEO REPLAYS

Sponsored by  Fasig-Tipton



‘TDN Rising Star’ Deceptive Vision earns graded tally on another surface in GIII Doubledogdare S.

[Click here to watch this race, and all of our featured video replays.](#)