



2010 TOBA State Breeder of the Year for California

by LARRY STEWART

The already esteemed Horse Division of Harris Farms got more acclaim by being named the 2010 TOBA (Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association) State Breeder of the Year for California, further establishing John Harris as one of the country's leading owner/breeder of Thoroughbreds.

The award, voted on by the Board of Directors of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association' (CTBA), will be presented at a ceremony in Lexington, Kentucky, in September.

The total 2010 earnings by California-breds under the Harris Farms name was \$2,488,432, and if you add in what partners such as Donald Valpredo and John Nicoletti made, you're talking about more than \$3.5 million in earnings last year from runners who included four graded stakes winners.

Unzip Me won six of eight starts in 2010, including four in graded stakes company, before finishing third in the five-furlong Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint at Churchill Downs, she then came back to start off 2011, with a win in the Monrovia Stakes (grade III) at Santa Anita Park on Jan. 2.

The five-year-old City Zip mare overall has 11 firsts in 20 races and has finished out of the money only twice, and never since 2009. She was bred by Harris and Valpredo, and is owned by them in partnership with Per Antonson, the Farm Trainer at Harris Farms, and her current trainer Marty Jones. Unzip Me was voted the 2010 California Champion Older Female.

Compari, bred and owned by Nicoletti, Valpredo and Harris, won three of five starts in 2010, and overall has six wins in nine races.

Cost of Freedom, bred at Harris Farms, won five of eight starts in 2010. The grade I-winning eight-year-old gelding by Cee's Tizzy is owned by Gary and Cecil Barber.

Quick Enough, another Harris Farms standout, had three firsts and two seconds in six starts during 2010.

Also under the Harris Farms banner, Lucky Pulpit was California's leading freshman sire in 2010, while Swiss Yodeler has consistently been one of the state's leading sires of two-year-olds. Unusual Heat, who now stands at Harris Farms, has been California's leading sire since 2008, and

Harris Farms: Proud Of Its Success

has more than \$29.2 million in progeny earnings. Tiznow, the only two-time winner of the Breeders' Cup Classic, was bred at Harris Farms.

In all, Harris Farms has accounted for 27 California divisional champions, 19 California Cup champions, and six Horse of the Year honors for the farm and its clients.

Of his goals as an owner and breeder, Harris said, "Mainly, I just want to raise competitive horses I can be proud of."

Harris has long been very involved in the politics of horse racing, but plans to cut back some. He has served as a member of the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB) since 2000, and is a past chairman. However, he does not plan to seek reappointment to the CHRB when his term expires this summer.

"I have enjoyed my time on the board—it has been both stressful and challenging and I am glad I did it," he said. "But now it is time to move on."

Beyond its horse division, Harris Farms, located throughout much of the central San Joaquin Valley, is a conglomerate that also involves thousands of acres of cropland, the world renowned Harris Beef brand and the Harris Ranch Inn & Restaurant, an oasis that serves as a stopping-off place for travelers on Interstate 5 as well as a gathering spot for locals and groups.

The main Harris Farms horse ranch is located nine miles north of the Harris Ranch Inn complex and one mile east of Interstate 5. Some 50 miles away and 20 miles east of Fresno is the picturesque, oak-studded pastures of the Harris River Ranch, home to weanlings and yearlings.

River Ranch is also home to John and Carole Harris, who began dating when both were students at UC Davis. They live in a rebuilt 18th century English Country house, personally decorated by Carole with artifacts from around the world. The Kings River, which runs through the property, adds to its magnificent and immaculate beauty, a Harris trademark in everything he does.

"We are blessed to have a wonderful team," he said. "Many of them have been here for decades, and we want to do things right." 🐾



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