

BREEDING

Pedigree Analysis



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Travers Winners as Sires

The Travers Stakes (gr. I) has been one of the most important races in the history of American racing since its inception at the 1864 Saratoga meet. It's a race that has always attracted the best 3-year-olds, and in recent years (stallion managers and breeders take note), its winners have consistently become successful stallions.

As an event for 3-year-olds going 1¼ miles on dirt, the Travers matches the conditions of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I), earning its nickname "The Midsummer Derby." That's where the similarities end. A 3-year-old racing in the Travers is four months more mature, coming into a less stressful atmosphere and facing a smaller field with less potential for traffic problems. The race also tends to attract runners more suited to the distance, because early-season hopefuls that filled the Derby field have been weeded out.

In the last 30 years only three Kentucky Derby winners have returned to win the Travers: Sea Hero, Thunder Gulch, and Street Sense. For comparison, two Preakness Stakes (gr. I) winners (Point Given, Bernardini), and six Belmont Stakes (gr. I) winners (Easy Goer, Thunder Gulch, Lemon Drop Kid, Point Given, Birdstone, and Summer Bird) have won the Travers.

This parallel with the Belmont Stakes suggests the Travers may be a truer stamina test than the Kentucky Derby. An alternative interpretation is that the Travers is a truer expression of a horse's top-class ability. That may be the reason

winners of the Travers are proving more consistent as top-class sires than are Kentucky Derby winners.

Colonel John, the 2008 winner, is the youngest of past Travers winners with foals of racing age. He's one of the early freshman sire leaders this summer and has already sired a stakes winner, Conclave, 2-year-old filly winner of the Sorrento Stakes (gr. II) at Del Mar. By Tiznow out of a Turkoman mare, Colonel John has a pedigree that suggests classic stamina, yet Tiznow also sired the 2005 champion juvenile filly, Folklore, in his debut crop.

The first crop of Street Sense, the winner of the 2007 Travers, are now 4-year-olds. His 10 stakes winners so far include grade I winner Aubby K and Unlimited Budget (gr. II). Unfortunately for U.S. breeders, he was sent to Japan for the 2013 breeding season.

The 2006 Travers winner, Bernardini, entered stud as a premier prospect and has lived up to expectations, with grade I winners such as To Honor and Serve, Stay Thirsty (2011 Travers winner), Alpha (2012 Travers winner in a dead heat with Golden Ticket), Biondetti, and A Z Warrior. His 2013 fee was \$150,000, the highest in the land, and while he's not proved himself a full replacement for his sire, A.P. Indy, his future appears secure.

The 2005 Travers was won by Flower Alley, whose first two crops include Central Bank Ashland Stakes (gr. I) winner Lilacs and Lace and champion 3-year-old I'll Have Another, winner of the 2012 Kentucky

COLONEL JOHN

TIZNOW, b, 1997	Cee's Tizzy, 1987 6s, wnr, \$173,150 733 f, 39 SW, 1.63 AEI	Relaunch, 1976 18s, SW, \$278,100 725 f, 89 SW, 2.66 AEI	In Reality Foggy Note
		Tizly, 1981 6s, wnr, \$6,209 11 f, 9 r, 8 w	Lyphard Tizna
COLONEL JOHN b, h March 4, 2005	Cee's Song, 1986 18s, wnr, \$82,225 14 f, 13 r, 9 w, 4 SW	Seattle Song, 1981 9s, SW, \$295,321 332 f, 23 SW, 1.75 AEI	Seattle Slew Incantation
		Lonely Dancer, 1975 10s, wnr, \$3,873 15 f, 13 r, 12 w, 2 SW	Nice Dancer Sleep Lonely
SWEET DAMSEL, dkb/br, 1995	Turkoman, 1982 22s, SW, \$2,146,924 683 f, 33 SW, 1.21 AEI	Alydar, 1975 26s, SW, \$957,195 689 f, 77 SW, 5.07 AEI	Raise a Native Sweet Tooth
		Taba, 1973 8s, SW, \$20,609 15 f, 13 r, 11 w, 2 SW	Table Play Filipina
	Grande Dame, 1986 17s, SW, \$81,460 10 f, 7 r, 5 w	Zen, 1973 13s, SW, \$120,919 402 f, 27 SW, 1.62 AEI	Damascus Penny Bryn
		Fia, 1974 25s, wnr, \$130,094 12 f, 11 r, 8 w, 2 SW	One for All Sticks n' Stones

Derby, Preakness, and Santa Anita Derby (gr. I).

Birdstone won the 2004 Belmont and Travers, and as a stallion, achieved the astonishing feat of siring two classic winners, the 2009 Kentucky Derby winner, Mine That Bird, and Belmont winner, Summer Bird, in his first crop. Summer Bird followed up with a win in that year's Travers and won the division championship.

Ten Most Wanted took the 2003 Travers, following in the footsteps of his own sire Deputy Commander, who won in 1997. Neither was a remarkable sire, except for this father-son tradition. Ten Most Wanted sired just two stakes winners and wound up being shipped to Panama, where he died in January of this year.

In 2002 the Travers was won by Medaglia d'Oro, whose early progeny includes the champion 3-year-old filly and Horse of the Year Rachel Alexandra, and grade I winners Marketing Mix, Violence, and Plum Pretty, and 43 other added-money winners.

Point Given scored in the 2001 Travers, following his sire Thunder Gulch, winner in 1995. Point Given would not be reckoned a commercial success, but he's been successful nonetheless, siring Canadian champions Sealy Hill (Canadian Horse of the Year) and Points of Grace, as well as grade I winners Go Between, Coil, and Point Ashley.

The 2000 Travers was won by the gelding Unshaded.

Of the 13 Travers winners since 2001, eight have foals of racing age. Seven of those have sired graded stakes winners, six have sired grade I winners. Four of these (Point Given, Medaglia d'Oro, Birdstone, Flower Alley) have sired champions or classic winners, and two (Birdstone and Bernardini) have sired three of the last five Travers winners.

It's hard to believe that their success as breeding stallions is not in some way due to the fact they had what it took to win the Travers. BH

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