

BREEDING

Pedigree Analysis



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THE IMPORTANCE OF TURN-TO

North America's leading sire (by progeny earnings) for 2013 was Kitten's Joy, who follows in the footsteps of his sire, Irish-bred El Prado, the leading sire of 2002. The father/son team represents the Northern Dancer sireline through El Prado's sire, Sadler's Wells, but this three-generation string of great stallions shares another common thread. All three are out of mares from the Turn-to line, a strain that has been synonymous for honest durability for decades.

Sadler's Wells was out of Fairy Bridge, a daughter of Bold Reason, by Hail to Reason, by Turn-to. Sadler's Wells' son El Prado was out of a mare by Sir Ivor, who was by Sir Gaylord, a son of Turn-to. Kitten's Joy is out of a mare by Lear Fan, by Roberto, by Hail to Reason. So while Northern Dancer is a strong influence in Kitten's Joy's pedigree, his linebreeding to Hail to Reason (5x4) and Turn-to (6x5x5) also wields a powerful genetic punch.

The story begins with Turn-to (1951, by Royal Charger—Source Sucree, by Admiral Drake), who was imported from Ireland as a yearling. Racing for Harry Guggenheim's Cain Hoy Stable, he won the Saratoga Special and Garden State stakes at 2. At 3 he was on a three-race win streak, including the Flamingo Stakes, before a bowed tendon ended his brilliant career.

Turn-to was a hard-sell as a stallion, with an early breakdown compounded by imperfect conformation (although well-muscled, he had upright pasterns and unattractive hocks), but his runners came out early and were very fast. The first crop included champion First Landing; the second had All

Hands; the third one had champion Hail to Reason; and the fourth, Sir Gaylord, Cyane, and Dead Ahead. The problem was that both Hail to Reason and Sir Gaylord broke down early, putting a taint on Turn-to—rightfully or not—as a source of unsoundness.

Surprisingly, most of the strains descending from Turn-to, such as Hail to Reason, Sir Gaylord, First Landing, Best Turn, and Cyane, earned reputations for soundness. A good guess is that Turn-to probably covered a lot of tough mares, bred to him to compensate for his own faults, such as Hail to Reason's dam, Nothirdchance, who started 93 times in six years of racing.

The typical Turn-to descendant is the classic American "plain brown wrapper," with the emphasis on "plain." The Hail to Reasons and Sir Gaylords fit this description, usually stout-looking horses that are bigger than average, rangy, angular types with tremendous bone. Kitten's Joy, a big, ruggedly handsome horse with a Roman profile, is much more typical of his Hail to Reason ancestry than he is of the smaller, chunkier Northern Dancer line.

A lack of eye appeal has tended to make stallions from this line less commercially successful than the hot models that have competed against them over the decades, but it's been the bloodline's strength that has allowed it to doggedly persist. The more fragile Bold Rulers, Raise a Natives, and Northern Dancers needed a dose of stouter stuff every once in a while, and the Hail to Reasons, Sir Gaylords, and Cyanes have been the providers.

Hail to Reason had quite a few successful sons including Roberto, Halo, Mr. Leader, Bold Reason, Stop the Music, and Proud Clar-



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ion. Roberto's sons narrowed down to Dynaformer and Kris S., Arch and Blame, and some hopeful Dynaformer sons such as Point of Entry and Brilliant Speed as the current standard bearers.

Halo survived in the U.S. through Southern Halo and More Than Ready, but in Japan, Sunday Silence reigned as king, and his sons continue to dominate. Halo's daughter Glorious Song produced Rahy, found in Giant's Causeway, Freud, and Posse. Another Halo daughter produced Machiavellian, sire of Street Cry.

Mr. Leader appears in Distorted Humor and Lion Heart. Bold Reason's main claim is through his daughter Fairy Bridge, dam of Sadler's Wells and Fairy King. Stop the Music sired Cure the Blues and the mare Illeria, whose son Include is linebred 4x4x4 to Turn-to.

Hail to Reason's daughter Reason to Earn appears in Bold Reasoning's line, who gave us Seattle Slew.

Sir Gaylord's line has narrowed in North America, and his grandson Lord Avie was one of the last representatives, broodmare sire of Lawyer Ron. Sir Gaylord's son Sir Ivor got Bates Motel, but he also sired Sir Tristram, a great stallion based in New Zealand. His line has come back to America through Zabeel, who sired the great Octagonal, who sired Lonhro.

Cyane's son Smarten is the dam's sire of two-time leading sire Smart Strike, thriving now with the success of Curlin and English Channel.

Over the decades, the Turn-to line has been the prescription for what is usually lacking, the hardiness and toughness that often come in a plain brown wrapper. BH

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