



*From the Executive Corner*

# California-Bred Opportunities Shine Brightly

by DOUG BURGE

Similar to the first two runnings of the \$3,600,000 Sunshine Millions, the recently concluded third renewal of the event yielded exciting and competitive racing, tremendous national coverage, and rewarding financial opportunities for California-breds. With many graded stakes winners represented, including the favorites in five of the eight races, the prospect of an overall victory for California looked very promising this year.

Unfortunately, it was one of those days in which the bulk of the favorites were beaten, and as a result Florida-breds again were the overall winners based on races won and the point system used. So far, in the early years of this head-to-head competition, racing luck has not been with us.

But even with the somewhat disappointing results, we must not lose sight of the overall purpose and goal of this event; which is to further elevate the worth and demand for Cal-breds. Owners of Cal-breds did earn almost \$1.6 million on this one day, nearly three times the amount that the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA) allocates to the event.

This lucrative opportunity, with the exposure it provides nationally on television as well as through various industry publications, has indeed caught the attention of horseman across the country. Many trainers stated their support and acknowledged that it does positively affect the decisions they make when purchasing and developing young horses.

Regardless of whether Cal-breds defeat Florida-breds, it is obvious that this opportunity provided by Magna Entertainment Corporation (MEC) and the Horsemen's groups in both states does, indeed, provide significant motivation for owners to race Cal-breds. Thus, breeders are ultimately rewarded when the overall goal of the Sunshine Millions is achieved. Extensive coverage of the day's festivities is included on pages 43 to 48 of this magazine.

Another recently concluded event that is highlighted throughout this edition of *California Thoroughbred*, is the annual year-end awards honoring the top Cal-breds of 2004. With well over 100 stakes wins, including numerous graded stakes races, the accomplishments on the racetrack last year for horses bred in the Golden State were exceptional.

The awards dinner at the Hilton San Diego Resort on Feb. 7, was very well attended with ESPN's Chris Lincoln again doing a great job as the master of ceremonies. At this event, it is traditionally the breeders of the divisional champions who are honored. This year, however, it was very gratifying to have a large number of the owners and trainers of the winners in attendance, so that we were able to acknowledge and pay tribute to these connections who

also worked on producing these top horses. All these parties ultimately play a part in the success of each and every one of the champions who received awards.

Finally, as depicted on the cover of this publication Moscow Burning was voted the Horse of the Year, by the CTBA membership. She exuded class throughout the year running in some of the most prestigious races for both males and females across the country. Moscow Burning was bred by John and Carole Harris (Harris Farms Inc.) in partnership with the late Senator Ken Maddy (Ken Maddy Trust), two of the biggest supporters and leaders of the breeding program in California over the years. It is only fitting that together they bred such a champion mare.



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