

# Florida Horse Sends Sunshine

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the horses may be at the track or sent off to a stud farm before they return to Minnich's farm to foal.

About four years ago a client who had boarded horses at Minnich's operation for three years brought Peace Rules' dam, Hold To Fashion, to the Annville farm when Peace Rules was a yearling.

The mare was one of 14 that the client boarded at Minnich's farm.

The client's bill began to stack up, and with a tab of more than \$40,000, the client began to look for ways to alleviate the debt.

Minnich's son Bryan, who had worked and studied for more than a year at a large horse farm in Kentucky, counseled his father to work out a deal with the client for Hold To Fashion.

The mare had the right conformation, her own racing victories, and a foal that was already racing and turning in wins.

She didn't come free, however. Minnich signed off much of the client's debt, then paid the mare's sale price, as she was sold for \$18,000 in Ocala, Florida but not paid for.

He also paid the \$25,000 stud fee in addition to \$14,000 in boarding fees to the stud farm in Kentucky.

"I spent money I didn't have — and I normally don't do that — just to pay for this horse," said Minnich.

"I'm not a big guy and it was rough over the winter. I was boarding as many horses as I possibly could, just to make money" to pay the mare's fees.

To help him out of his money stresses, Minnich hoped to see a win out of one of his horses at the track.

However in August 2002 his promising filly, agitated by race-track excitement, reared up and flipped over on the blacktop and killed herself, adding another layer to Minnich's woes.

With the harsh, cold winter increasing to Minnich's challenges, "I was wondering why I was even in the business. I guess the good Lord helped me out by sending this horse my way."

As Peace Rules began to create a buzz on the racing scene, calls began coming in to Minnich about the mare.

"We knew she was worth something, but not this kind of money," said Minnich, referring to the mare's upsurge in value with the success of her son.

A Kentucky sales agent company believes the mare is now worth \$750,000. Already 14 years old, she could produce foals

until she is 22-24 years old.

Now in foal to Thunder Gulch, winner of the Derby and Belmont, and third in the Preakness in 1995, the mare may be sold at a Keeneland, Kentucky sale in November, decided Minnich.

She also has a foal at her side. After purchasing and foaling out Hold To Fashion, Minnich bred the mare to Forest Wildcat, son of famed Storm Cat.

The result, a filly, now a yearling, is now in his hands. Minnich is deciding whether to sell the

filly at a sale in Saratoga in August or a Kentucky sale in July.

## Close Calls

Minnich has already had a number of close calls with the pair.

"I had the horse (Hold To Fashion) sold for \$40,000 but the buyer couldn't come up with the money," he said.

He also had the filly tagged for sale. "I was going to sell her for \$100,000 but the deal fell through," he said. Minnich was told the filly is worth approxi-

mately \$250,000-\$350,000 because of the success of her older half-brother.

"Every time a deal fell through, I just thought 'I guess that was not supposed to happen,'" he said.

The filly may be sold this summer in a Kentucky sale, and Minnich plans to travel down to watch the sale, "or bring her back to race" if the price isn't right.

Hold To Fashion, a speed horse herself — running best at distances less than a mile — tends to produce speed horses, according to Minnich. She won her first race by 12½ lengths, he said.

Peace Rules is also a speed horse, said Minnich. "Speed

horses have to go out front," said Minnich. "They (jockeys) can take more out of a horse by holding it back.

"They almost have to let them go there and see what they'll do, then when the others start coming, pour it on," he said.

At the time Hold To Fashion was sold in Ocala, Florida, the mare was carrying Wild Kipper, a foal by Kipper Kelly, and foaled on Minnich's farm. Minnich has decided to keep and race the colt, now training in Florida.

The colt will come back to Pennsylvania by July, where he

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Above and at right this foal, nicknamed "Buddy," lost his mother shortly after she gave birth and enjoys free rein of Minnich's yard and barn.

## Randall G. Renninger

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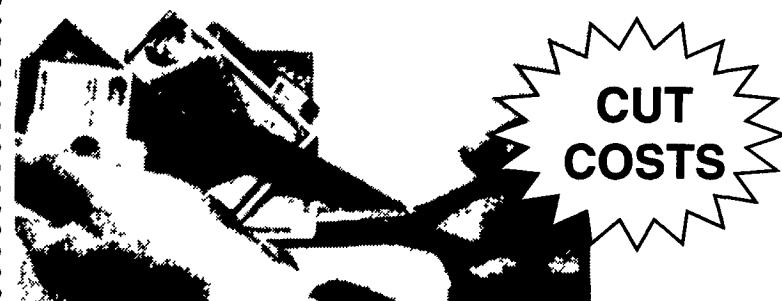
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