

Sharing the Joy of Racing

Owner Profile: Jerry and Ann Moss

By Tracy Gantz

Zenyatta and Giacomo have thrust Jerry and Ann Moss into the national spotlight. But the couple's involvement as Thoroughbred owners goes far beyond the Breeders' Cup Classic and Kentucky Derby winners.

They enjoy the entire ownership experience, from rooting their horses home and standing in the winner's circle to visiting them in the morning and watching the workouts. In fact, it was after watching Zenyatta one morning at Hollywood Park that the Mosses made the popular decision to continue running her in 2010.

"We enjoy visiting with the horses and the trainer and all the people at the barn," said Jerry. "We always take a moment to remember how very much you can accomplish in a day if you get out early enough to enjoy what's happening outside."

The Mosses' roles in racing encompass more than owning and breeding racehorses. Jerry spends countless hours as a California Horse Racing Board commissioner, a position he has held since 2004. Jerry feels that the CHRB plays a vital role in the industry.

"I believe what the CHRB, most importantly, provides for the racing industry," said Moss, "is a forum for all parts of our game to come together and express how they feel about things and how they'd like to change them."

Both Jerry and Ann support many racing-related charities. Several retired racehorse organizations have benefited from the Mosses' generosity. They have worked with Old Friends since its inception as well as such others as CANTER and Tranquility Farm. Jerry and Ann believe passionately in the importance of education and are big boosters of the Grayson Foundation in California and the Race for Education nationally.

"Along with all the important backstretch community support systems," said Jerry, "we need to help the horse retirement farms stay active and continue caring for our equine athletes when they leave the racetrack."

Like most owners, the Mosses began with claiming horses, though Jerry didn't come to it in the usual way.

Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss are the "A" and "M" of A&M

Records, a business they founded and built into the world's largest independent record company. Record manufacturer Nate Duroff helped them get Alpert's "The Lonely Bull" going as what would become a hit single in 1962.

Several years later, after Duroff suffered a slight stroke, Moss asked what he could do to help. Duroff replied that he'd recuperate much better if Moss bought a horse with him. That led to Duroff, Moss, and Alpert claiming Angeltune for \$12,500.

"This little horse was their pride and joy," said Tom Mankiewicz, a screenwriter, horse owner, and great friend of the Mosses.

As Jerry became more involved in horse ownership, Ann enthusiastically accompanied him. They even brought Mankiewicz into the ownership ranks when he expressed a desire to get a cheap claimer. Jerry suggested that they pool their resources into a partnership so that they could get a better class of horse. For several years in the 1980s, Jerry, Ann, and Mankiewicz campaigned horses as the Run for Fun Bunch.

When Jerry first owned horses, he chose Bobby Frankel as his trainer, and Frankel conditioned Moss' first stakes winner, Lovely Robbery, who won the 1981 Santa Ysabel Stakes at Santa Anita.

"Lovely Robbery may have been our first stakes winner," said Moss, "but our first 'special' horse would have to have been Fighting Fit. He ran 50 times for our trainer, Bobby Frankel, and won several graded stakes, including the Mervyn LeRoy, at Hollywood Park."

From those roots, Moss built the stable into a breeding and racing operation that today encompasses about 25 horses in training and 20 broodmares. Their horses have included 1990 Santa Anita Handicap winner Ruhlmann, trained by Charlie Whittingham, and 1994 Kentucky Oaks winner Sardula, trained by Brian Mayberry.

The Mosses credit the other members of their team for helping them to build the stable. Dottie Ingordo-Shirreffs has served as their racing manager since 1984, and her son, David Ingordo, selects horses out of sales. Both Dottie and David are





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involved in breeding decisions. John Shirreffs and John Sadler train the horses in Southern California, while Steve Sherman trains for the Mosses in Northern California.

As A&M Records developed and grew, it signed a group called The Police. Not only did The Police and the band's vocalist, Sting, record hit after hit for the A&M label, they provided names for several of the Mosses' horses.

Mayberry trained many winners for the Mosses, and his widow, Jeanne, still breaks their young horses. In 1992, Brian Mayberry bought a daughter of Stop the Music for them in Florida for \$45,000. Jerry and Ann named her Set Them Free, from a song on Sting's first solo album.

Mayberry developed Set Them Free into a Southern California stakes winner, and she retired with earnings of \$173,275. Everyone on the Moss team hoped Set Them Free would become a good broodmare, but no one expected her to get them into the winner's circle after the Kentucky Derby.

In 2002, Set Them Free produced a Kentucky-bred son of Holy Bull. Continuing with the Sting theme, the Mosses named him Giacomo, after one of Sting's sons. Mayberry had since passed away, and Giacomo went to Shirreffs, whose patience with young horses has proved invaluable to the Mosses and other owners.

At two, Giacomo started just four times, but he showed promise with a second in the Hollywood Futurity. By Kentucky Derby time he still hadn't won a stakes. His placings in the Futurity, San Felipe Stakes, and Sham Stakes gave him enough earnings to get into the Derby field, where he went off at 50-1.

Jockey Mike Smith brought Giacomo home in front by a half-length in the Derby, completing the team that would go on to even bigger fame with another horse with a Sting connection.

In 1980, The Police had put out their third album, called Zenyatta Mondatta. Jerry and Ann felt that those would make terrific horse names, and they gave them to two separate fillies.

Zenyatta has arguably become more famous than the album that lent her its name.

Dottie and David selected the massive filly out of the 2005 Keeneland fall yearling sale. A daughter of Street Cry out of Vertigineux, the dam of grade I winner Balance, Zenyatta cost \$60,000. That seems like a bargain today, but it was Street Cry's first crop, Balance had yet to start, and Zenyatta broke out in a rash before the sale.

That turned out to be a fortuitous set of circumstances for the Mosses, Shirreffs, and Smith. David Flores rode Zenyatta in her first three races, but since then Smith has rounded out the re-teaming of the Giacomo bunch.

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Her antics before her races have added to Zenyatta's popularity. She struts in the paddock and dances in the post parade, all to the adulation of racing fans everywhere.

"She loves her fans," said Ann Moss. "She stops and poses for them. She dances before and after. She's having such a good time."

People send poems, drawings, and letters to Zenyatta and the Mosses every day. One woman even said she wants "She saw Zenyatta" written on her tombstone.

"Everybody says how much she means to them," said Ann Moss. "It's wonderful to touch people's hearts like that."

The thrills that Zenyatta has brought to the Mosses as well as the public played a key role in the decision to keep her in training for 2010.

"We want to be able to enjoy her," said Jerry Moss. "We want to watch her. And I think the fans do too."