



CTBA Member
PROFILE

CALIFORNIA
FOCUS FOR
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BASED
BREEDER

STORMY HULL

BY JACK SHINAR

Stormy Hull is not one to rest on his laurels. After the eastern Washington breeder sold a pair of eye-catching California-bred yearling fillies for \$200,000 apiece at the Fasig-Tipton California fall yearlings and horses of racing sale Sept. 27 at Pomona, the 64-year-old horseman was back at his ranch paddock breaking the next group of yearlings.

“You can’t get complacent,” Hull said. “You gotta stay hungry.”

He and his brother Guy do it all at their 15-acre spread, known as Critter Creek Farm. About 30 miles northwest of Spokane, it’s in a fairly remote location. While mucking stalls on a recent afternoon, Hull began to reflect on what happened on sale day. The fillies, named Truly Magical and Someone Like You, were

both purchased by Samantha Siegel’s Jay Em Ess Stable, and their price tied for the second highest of the sale.

“I’m kind of emotional about it, but I was just so proud of them,” said Hull, his voice cracking a bit as he related the moment. “(The fillies) were so busy all day. At a sale like that, it doesn’t take long for the word to get out. And everyone wanted to see them; a lot of people came back two or three times.

“The girls were just stars all day. Nothing rattled them, not even in the sales ring with the announcer and all the other commotion. They were just so cool, standing there. Never showed any nervousness.”

Hull and his brother handled the shipping of the Critter Creek consignment to the sale. The trip to Pomona, using two trucks and trailers, “took 30 hours straight through,” he said.

“It was very stressful,” Hull said. “I used to do an overnight stop for trips like this, but it seemed like there were always problems with the horses afterward. So as hard as it is, we find it’s better just to do it straight through,” though they make brief stops along the way.

Hull has lived his whole life around horses, and he’s been breaking young ones for 45 years. When it comes to equines of all types, there’s not much he hasn’t done. And yet he still finds the hardest part of the breeding game is saying good-bye.

“I call them my kids because they mean so much to me,” Hull said. “I get so attached to them. It’s hard for me to let them go. I know it seems funny to feel that way in a business like this, but when you spend so much time with young horses and see them grow and mature mentally, it’s hard not to.”

The best part of the deal on the fillies (besides the money, of course) was that they are still together, he says.

“Both fillies have been raised together. They’ve played and slept together. Now it’s even possible that they’ll race against each other. We are so thrilled that the two girls got such a wonderful owner like Samantha Siegel. And her trainer, Brian Koriner, takes great care of his horses.”

Truly Magical, a dark bay filly by Good Magic—Nine Point Nine, by Tribal Rule, and Someone Like You, a chestnut filly by Stanford—Open Mic, by Unbridled’s Song, topped a seven-horse Critter Creek consignment that brought \$602,000.



FASIG-TIPTON PHOTO

Stormy Hull and his Critter Creek consignment found much success at the Fasig-Tipton California fall sale of yearlings, led by two fillies selling for \$200,000 each



A hands-on horseman, Stormy ponies Someone Like You, a California-bred daughter of Stanford, at his Critter Creek Farm



California-breds both, Truly Magical, with Guy Hull left, and Someone Like You topped Critter Creek's Fasig-Tipton California consignment

Nine Point Nine was bred by Hull and Ginger A. Samples, his former partner, and purchased back from Holly and David Wilson through their trainer, Vladimir Cerin, once her racing career was over. Open Mic was purchased in foal to Stanford for \$11,500 at the 2021 CTBA January mixed sale.

"Sometimes, you just get lucky," Hull said.

The breeding to Good Magic, Hull says, was made possible by owner John Sikura and the Hill 'n' Dale syndicate, which stands Good Magic.

"I would never have been able to breed to a horse like Good Magic—a 2-year-old champion and a Breeders' Cup Juvenile champion—without their help. It was a true honor for me."

Hull's Fasig-Tipton consignment included a Clubhouse Ride colt, who went for \$90,000 to Boomer Bloodstock and Radley Equine, and a full brother to multiple stakes winner California Diamond named Ten of Diamonds, who sold for \$60,000 to agent Tari Brocklebank.

Bred by Hull, California Diamond was a four-time stakes winner at 2 and voted the champion California-bred juvenile male of 2016. The son of Harbor the Gold out of Carrie's a Jewel was one of 46 horses killed in the Lilac Fire that swept through San Luis Rey Downs Dec. 7, 2017.

California Diamond, owned by Rockingham Ranch and an earner of \$475,970, is Hull's most accomplished

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Stormy with Some Like You as a weanling at Tommy Town Thoroughbreds in California

runner to date. Nearly five years after the colt's death, Hull finds it difficult to discuss.

"It still hurts," he said. "He provided me with thrills and emotions that I've never experienced before. He was such a special colt. He was laid back but easy to train, and he just got better and better as he grew up."

In recent years Hull has concentrated his breeding and sales efforts on the California market.

"There's not much horse breeding

going on around here anymore," he said of Washington. "Emerald Downs is down to racing 52 days a year, and that's not enough to sustain a breeding program. I wish it weren't so.

"A lot of people tell me I ought to just move to California. But I really love where we're at and I'd hate to leave."

Hull keeps his most recent success in perspective.

"I've had a really good year," he said. "But last year was maybe my worst. Loss of livestock, the quality of the stock, expenses, you name it. The thing is, this business always keeps me humble. But this is what I love to do. Horses have always been an important part of my life, even when I was little. Call it the horse gene."

"None of this do I do by myself. I see it like a bicycle wheel full of spokes. Each one of those spokes is equally important because if any one of them fails, then the whole thing can fail."

"There are so many people that I should give credit to, but three who really stand out—Dave McGlothin and Jonny Hilvers at Harris Farms and Mike Allen at Tommy Town Thoroughbreds. Dave gave me the confidence that I could compete in California, and Jonny and Mike for their continuing support. Talk about strong spokes. And the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association—the people there have been so good and so helpful." **CTB**