



CTBA Member  
**PROFILE**

TV HOST  
AND FORMER  
TRAINER  
HAS EYE  
FOR GOOD  
CAL-BREDS

# NICK HINES

BY JACK SHINAR

**N**ick Hines, long familiar to fans for his racing analysis as “The Sarge” on television, showed up as the leading buyer at the recent California Thoroughbred Breeders Association winter mixed sale at Pomona.

It’s not surprising. The former trainer and longtime TV host has been an independent bloodstock agent for more than a decade. He spends much of his time scouting Thoroughbreds for his clients and attending sales through-

out the country. At the Jan. 31 auction, the budget-conscious Hines led the way with seven purchases totaling \$132,000.

Discussing his change in career direction, he said he reluctantly stepped away from training in the fall of 2007, a year after getting married.

“I was at a crossroads,” Hines explained. “I had been offered a job with Southern Equine Stable to manage their horses. I had about 30 horses at the time, training a few for Harris Farms and also for Paul Girdner, an owner who played a big part in my career. I had married Michelle in 2006, and

we wanted to start a family. So basically we had a decision to make. It was tough.”

He worked with Southern Equine until the Michael Moreno-owned company made the decision to leave California in 2011. Hines managed a number of top horses for Southern Equine, including Salute the Sarge, a multiple graded stakes winner as a 2-year-old who placed in both the Del Mar Futurity (G1) and the Norfolk Stakes (G1) in 2007.

The horse’s name was in reference to Hines, of course, who had become famous in racing circles for the perfect military salute he would give on his manic journey from the grandstand to the winner’s circle following a win by one of his horses.

Hines, a mountain of a man at 6-foot-5 and close to 300 pounds, created an indelible image for TVG viewers with his exuberant gestures to the crowd—waving his arms wildly and throwing kisses—followed by his salute. The racing network certainly noticed, and his natural flair with the microphone led to a gig starting in 2005 as a racing analyst.

Hines grew up on a horse ranch his father, Michael, built near Las Vegas. His father, who raced horses in California, was an attorney and a member of the Nevada state racing commission who died in a riding accident in 1985. Nick decided to tap into the knowledge he had developed through a lifetime around horses, turning much of his attention to bloodstock.

At the CTBA sale, Hines bought three horses—all 2-year-olds—on behalf of



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NICK HINES

Nick Hines has become a popular host and analyst for FanDuel TV

owner Michael Nentwig, Rachael's Ride, a chestnut filly by Clubhouse Ride—Slalom, by Bodemeister, was the top seller for 2-year-olds at the sale, bringing \$43,000. The others were Drumcondra, a dark bay or brown colt by Sir Prancealot—Nonna Gianna, by Havana Gold, and Evania, a chestnut filly by Om out of the graded stakes-placed Good Journey mare Kathleen Rose. Both sold for \$33,000.

"I met Michael through a mutual friend," Hines said. "He's developed a winning formula while surrounding himself with the right people."

Hines also bought a yearling chestnut colt, Art of Seduction, for 10s Racing for \$8,500. Art of Seduction is from the first crop of the sire Yorkton, a multiple graded stakes-winning son of Speightstown standing in Kentucky, and is the first foal for his dam, Burnt Island, by Hardspun.

The remaining three horses, all broodmares in foal, were purchased by Hines with plans to send them to new stallion Tizamagian, a multiple graded stakes winner of \$741,851. The Richard Mandella-trained Tizamagian, a 6-year-old son of Tiznow, was retired late last year by MyRacehorse and is standing at Milky Way Farm in Temecula Valley.

What does Hines look for in examining a young horse's potential?

"Yearlings, for me, involve more pedigree research (especially when pinhooking), as it's more of a crystal ball as opposed to the 2-year-olds," he said. "As with most, I rely upon the intuitive while trying to get a feel for the yearlings while looking for proper balance and conformation with aptitude. But trying to project where they'll be a year from then or two years is an art, and you're more of a prognosticator.

"With the 2-year-olds in training sales,



Hines with his family, son Cash and wife Michelle

it's much like that of an NFL combine, where you have the benefit of clocking horses under tack and seeing how they respond and, in turn, react, which makes the process of finding a good horse a bit easier in my opinion."

Among his recent California-bred highlights, Hines noted, is multiple stakes winner El Tigre Terrible, a two-time Cal-bred champion as 2-year-old male in 2019 and 3-year-old male the following year. Hines purchased the son of Smiling Tiger for \$18,000 as a yearling for Slam Dunk Racing at the 2018 Barretts October mixed sale. Hines also landed the multiple stakes-placed filly Taming the Tigress, a lifetime earner of \$331,132, for \$21,000 at the CTBA's 2020 January mixed sale.

Hines, who earned a degree in agricultural business from Cal Poly Pomona University, lives in Palos Verde with Michelle and their 13-year-old son, Cash.

"We named him Cash so we'd never

be broke," he joked.

In addition to his television work as a part-time host and analyst for FanDuel TV (formerly TVG), Hines, 52, is an equine acquisition advisor for the fast-growing MyRacehorse, the micro-share sales company specializing in the high-end horse market, as well as for Edge Racing, a more traditional partnership affiliate of MyRacehorse. On top of that, he runs his own stable, Battle Born Racing, a general partnership he named for his home state of Nevada.

He started Battle Born Racing Stable in 2004. It currently owns a dozen Thoroughbreds and a couple of broodmares. Hines reported that Battle Born has been most prominent racing at the Los Alamitos night meet, connecting on a win rate of 42% overall competing in

both Thoroughbred and mixed divisions.

Hines met Michael Behrens, the founder and CEO of MyRacehorse, in 2018. The fledgling group was involved in discussions with B. Wayne Hughes and Spendthrift Farm on forging a partnership that would give small-time fans a chance to take part in the sport of horse racing at the highest levels through the sale of micro-shares.

"It was not easy—there were days that were tumultuous," said Hines, who went to work for MyRacehorse concentrating on scouting horses and sales. "It really came down to seeing the process through, and in the end they got it done.

"MyRacehorse is now worldwide and has been tremendously successful. I think it's important because it gets new blood into the game. I've always been about taking care of the little guy. Because if you do, eventually the little guy will become a big guy." **CTB**