

The deal makers

Bloodstock agents need good eye for a horse

PSYCHOLOGICALLY, at least, Thoroughbred bloodstock agents must share at least one trait with the used-car salesmen to whom they are too often sarcastically compared: They must have thick skins.

To be successful, a bloodstock agent also must possess a wide variety of skills, including a good eye for a horse, a wide knowledge of and rapport with players in the industry, an acute sense of value, the resilience to reload when a prospective buyer says no, and dogged persistence. In varying degrees, each of the 12 leading bloodstock agents or agencies profiled herein exhibit each of these characteristics. They have to, or they would not have made their way onto this list.

Unfortunately, there is no way to quantify success as a bloodstock agent available in the public record. Many if not most of their accomplishments are private, and many of their transactions are carefully guarded from public view. One thing is certain—the agents and agencies profiled below are among the most successful and important participants at the top levels of the game in 1998. Surely there are others who wield as much influence, and surely their accomplishments will merit inclusion on other occasions. The following profiles were written by Bill Mooney, a frequent contributor to THOROUGHBRED TIMES.



Photos by Z

Reynolds Bell Thoroughbred Services

REYNOLDS BELL JR., in that calm and assured manner that is a hallmark of his personality, was talking about the \$7-million purchase he made of Korveya at the 1998 Keeneland November sale. “Jayeff B Stables, which belongs to George Prussin and Richard Santulli, already owned 50% of the mare,” Bell said. “Now, she’s solely Jayeff B’s property.”

“There aren’t too many around who could match Korveya’s record. She’s already produced two classic winners in France, Hector Protector and Shanghai. She’s produced Bosra Sham, a classic winner in England. She’ll be bred to Woodman next spring and she’s in foal to him now, with either a full brother or sister to Hector Protector and Bosra Sham. Yes, you could say that purchasing Korveya was the highlight of the year for me. And, we should be able to get three or four more foals out of her, with some luck.”

Bell, 46, is originally from Houston. The son of Alice Chandler and grandson of Hal Price Headley, he is a



REYNOLDS BELL JR.

Principal: Reynolds Bell Jr.
Location: Lexington, Kentucky
Founded: 1992

Focus: Advises and serves as agent for clients in private sales and at public auctions, stallion seasons and shares, stallion management

fourth-generation participant in the Thoroughbred business. “My family moved to Lexington in 1959, and it’s been home ever since,” Bell said. “My agency performs many different services. Bernie Sams handles the segment of the business that involves seasons and shares. I primarily handle private purchases and public auctions. We’ve added a new division that involves management of the Gainsborough stallion program, and Jay Bruncker heads that up. We deal with lots of people every day.”

“We went through the correction we needed to after the federal tax laws were changed in the mid-1980s,” said Bell. “That positioned our industry for what we’re experiencing today. Meanwhile, the overall economy, boosted by a technological revolution, is providing people with money to spend. Racing’s a great industry to participate in and a great entertainment product. We’re on a run, and it’s wonderful to be part of it.”