



Before the Hammer

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Before the Hammer is a series presented by Keeneland that will spotlight consignors, their stories of success and their featured offerings at the upcoming Keeneland November Breeding Stock Sale.

TAYLOR MADE POISED FOR BIG KEENOV

by Amanda Duckworth

Although the Taylor Made name is now ubiquitous when it comes to sales, those behind the family run organization look to a piece of artwork to remember it wasn't always that way. Taylor Made Sales Agency debuted at Keeneland in 1978, but it was an event in the early '80s that confirmed they wanted to stay on the path they had chosen.

"We've got a painting in our office, and it's of three mares that we sold on the same day at Keeneland in 1984 for over \$1 million apiece," said Mark Taylor, the vice president of marketing and public sales operations. "At that point, we were relative newcomers to the selling business, and that day really put us on the map. It gave us credibility, and it also validated what my brother Duncan had been doing, which was selling these horses as individuals. We don't believe that you just drag them out of the stall and they are going to bring what they are



Mark Taylor | Keeneland photo

going to bring. Each horse has a story you can tell."

That approach to selling Thoroughbreds has certainly worked for Taylor Made, as it has sold more stakes winners, more graded stakes winners, more Grade I winners, more Breeders' Cup champions, and more sale toppers than any other consignor in history. In fact, in nine of the past 10 years, it has been the leading consignor in the world.

Through the years, it has sold more than 90 mares for at least \$1 million, and one of the places it has always had incredible success is the Keeneland November Breeding Stock Sale.

"We are just the conduit," said Taylor. "We are trying to bring the seller and the buyer together in a win-win transaction that is hopefully going to be life changing for both parties, and Keeneland is a great platform to do that. Keeneland plows their

receipts from these transactions back into racing, so it is a fantastic recipe for everybody."

The long list of memorable Keeneland November Sale moments for Taylor Made includes offering such top racemares as Hall of Famer Ashado, who sold for what was then a world record \$9 million; GI Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies winner Cash Run, who brought \$7.1 million as a broodmare after selling for \$1.2 million at the Keeneland July Yearling Sale five years earlier; and GI Kentucky Oaks heroine Plum Pretty, who reached \$4.2 million.

"We love selling yearlings and weanlings, but the top quality fillies and mares off the track, that's always been our calling card," said Taylor. "The thing that makes the Keeneland November Sale the most fun for us is that we live vicariously through these horses we get to sell. We don't get to race a lot of horses ourselves, but we get to feel like we are participating in their careers and we become part of that story with the owner."

"Each mare is a blank canvas," Taylor cont. "People want to know what they did and where they came from in their pedigree. We get to present all that. We never promote just, 'Oh Taylor Made, come buy a mare from us.' We say, 'This is Ashado, this is Cash Run. This is her whole story.' We immerse ourselves in each mare and treat them as an individual."

This November, Taylor Made will be presenting the likes of Grade I winners Street Fancy ([Hip 70](#)), Celestine ([Hip 144](#)), and Evening Jewel ([Hip 185](#)), just to name a few.



Celestine | Coglianese photo

Before the Hammer Cont.

Street Fancy, who is by Street Sense, found her biggest success in the G1 Starlet S. last December, and Taylor is confident she is the type of mare who sells herself.

"She is just big and gorgeous and you can see why she could run," said Taylor. "There is no mystery about what made her great. She's one where after getting her out of the barn and putting her in front of people, she's going to do the rest of the work for you."

Meanwhile, Celestine's biggest moment came this summer in the GI Longines Just a Game, where the Scat Daddy filly pulled away to win by 3 3/4 lengths.

"Celestine should appeal to everybody from around the world," said Taylor. "She is an elite talent, and she hails from a female family that is deep and keeps reproducing itself. Then she's by Scat Daddy, who was a great international sire, and that's really



Street Fancy | Benoit photo

what America needs more of. Celestine is the whole package. If you get her and breed her the right way, there is no telling what you can produce. I think breeders from everywhere are going to recognize that, and it is going to be fun to see who gets to take her home."

Unlike Celestine and Street Fancy, who are coming off the track, Evening Jewel comes into the sale in the early stages of her broodmare career. Her oldest foal is a 3-year-old filly by Medaglia d'Oro named Joyeria who is racing in Europe, and Evening Jewel is being offered in foal to Pioneerof the Nile.

During her racing career, Evening Jewel earned more than \$1.2 million while winning multiple Grade I contests, including the GI Central Bank Ashland S. at Keeneland, and she just missed winning the GI Kentucky Oaks in 2010 by a nose.

"When these mares are good racehorses, a lot of them have that intangible of class, presence and charisma," said Taylor. "Most of them have it. You just have to get people interested and let them come to the barn and get to know the horse. If you



Evening Jewel | Keeneland photo

give that mare a chance to capture a buyer's imagination, that's when people want to pay more money for them. People want to put them in their stall back home."

Taylor Made, which is located just outside of Lexington in Nicholasville, has been owned solely by the Taylor brothers since 1986. Along with being a major player in the stallion ranks, there is no question they have built the family operation into one of the leading sales agencies in the world.

"We are talking about the Ashados and the Cash Runs, but there have been dozens," said Taylor. "We sold D'Wildcat Speed, and she has Group 1 winner Lady Aurelia for Stonestreet this year. Mariah's Storm was sold to John Magnier at the Keeneland November Sale for \$2.6 million. She was carrying Giant's Causeway at the time, and think of what he has meant to the Coolmore operation. It has just been a steady pipeline, and the Keeneland November Sale is what it is all about."



Click to listen for an interview with Taylor Made's Mark Taylor.

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