

Bill Oppenheim-February 11, Now to Speculate



From the desk of...

BILL OPPENHEIM

NOW TO SPECULATE

It was great to see Steve Sherack and Brian DiDonato dead-head for the win on Far From Over (Blame) in their BetAmerica Derby Prep Showdown (click [here](#)), and it reminded me that,



Far From Over
Susie Raisher

after a month of talking about APEX sires, which by definition have disclosed form as stallions, it's about time we turned our attention to the legion of unproven sires that do not yet have runners. Who to bet on here? The market provides us with a few clues for those

young sires that have at least covered mares, but let's face it, we're in speculative territory here.

In the spirit of Sherack vs. DiDonato, I enlisted *TDN* International Editor Kelsey Riley to join me in looking over what we know so far--from their race records and any market performance--for the nearly 275 North American and European sires we're keeping track of in four 'sire crops': F2013 (1st foals 2013, 2-year-olds of 2015); F2014 (1st foals 2014, first yearlings 2015); F2015 (1st foals 2015); and F2016 (first covering season 2015, will have foals in 2016). Pick one from each crop from North America and one from Europe, I suggested, and I'll do the same. North America goes first. We have two big advantages over Steve and Brian in our little bet, by the way: one, we get four choices; and two, by the time the result is known most people will have forgotten who we bet on, whereas Steve and Brian have to live with their results in print the very next day.

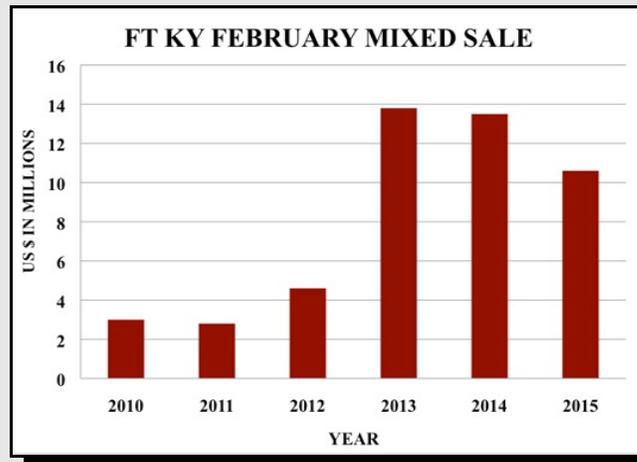
Before throwing our darts at the wall, I'd just like to note how strong the Lane's End stallion **Candy Ride** has performed over the last couple of seasons. He was #5 on the *TDN* North American General Sire List in 2014 (click [here](#)), with eight graded/group stakes winners (GSW) last year, and ranks #4 so far this year (click [here](#)).

In last weekend's GII San Antonio S., Shared Belief (Candy Ride) defeated California Chrome (Lucky Pulpit) fair and square on the dirt, with 6 1/2 lengths back to Grade I winner Hoppertunity (Any Given Saturday) in third. Shared Belief had been champion 2-year-old of this crop, and California Chrome of course was champion 3-year-old of what, by the way, appears to be a very deep crop of current 4-year-olds.

Weekly Sales Ticker

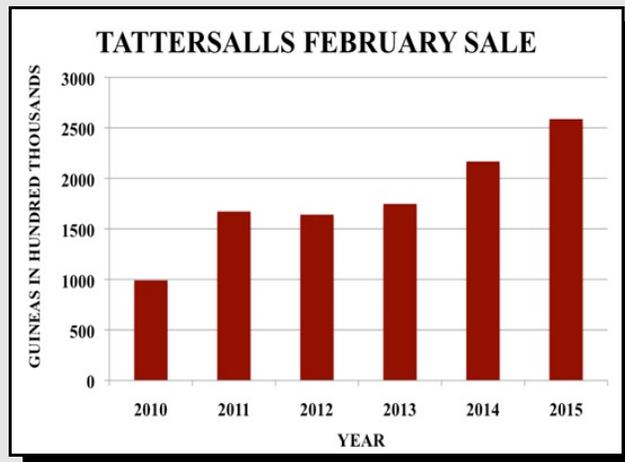
by Bill Oppenheim

"The January and February Mixed Sales in North America and Europe constituted less than 5% of the total North American and European auction market total of \$1.67-billion last year. It's unlikely that the lack of fireworks at these sales so far this year presages anything; more likely is that class (in thoroughbreds, at least, and probably in Life as well) is a pyramid, and as the population increases, those increases are more likely to be at the bottom of the pyramid than at the top".
- Bill Oppenheim



FASIG-TIPTON KY MIXED FEBRUARY SALE

YEAR	CAT	RING	SOLD	%W/D	%S/R	%S/C	GROSS	AVG
2015	616	493	406	20.0%	82.4%	65.9%	\$10,560,700	\$26,012
2014	588	505	406	14.1%	80.4%	69.0%	\$13,527,500	\$33,319
2013	337	277	245	17.8%	88.4%	72.7%	\$13,781,700	\$56,252
2012	422	342	267	19.0%	78.1%	63.3%	\$4,562,600	\$17,088
2011	322	237	183	26.4%	77.2%	56.8%	\$2,821,500	\$15,418
2010	337	270	192	19.9%	71.1%	57.0%	\$3,025,600	\$15,758



TATTERSALLS FEBRUARY SALE (IN GUINEAS)

YEAR	CAT	RING	SOLD	%W/D	%S/R	%S/C	GROSS	AVG
2015	307	240	211	21.8%	87.9%	68.7%	2,586,100	12,256
2014	301	214	172	28.9%	80.4%	57.1%	2,166,600	12,597
2013	316	244	190	22.8%	77.9%	60.1%	1,747,600	9,198
2012	298	244	179	18.1%	73.4%	60.1%	1,641,100	9,168
2011	272	207	164	23.9%	79.2%	60.3%	1,672,300	10,197
2010	289	233	147	19.4%	63.1%	50.9%	991,500	6,745

Data compiled by Brianne Stanley

Candy Ride's recent sparkling form puts him right there on par with the other F2006 (first foals 2006) North American titans: Gainesway's **Tapit** (\$300,000); Darley's **Medaglia d'Oro** (\$125,000, reviewed by Andrew yesterday); and WinStar's **Speightstown** (\$80,000). Candy Ride is \$60,000, up from \$35,000 (what a bargain that was) last year, and is now reconfirmed as a fully paid-up member of the North American F2006 'fearsome foursome'.

F2013 SIREs: 1st 2-Year-Olds 2015

This is a very interesting crop of sires, with a total of nine North American stallions--eight in Kentucky and Big Drama in Florida--which are standing their fourth seasons for \$10,000 or more; so plenty of chances to be the next Tapit or War Front. The top first-crop North American sire by yearling average in 2014 was Claiborne's \$10,000 son of Tapit, **Trappe Shot** (\$125,968), with Coolmore Ashford's 2010 champion 2-year-old **Uncle Mo** (\$111,958) in second spot, and Castleton Lyons' **Gio Ponti** (\$95,684) in third.

Also standing for \$10,000-\$15,000 for 2015 are: WinStar's **Drosselmeyer** (\$63,934), winner of the 2010 GI Belmont S. and 2011 GI Breeders' Cup Classic; WinStar's **Sidney's Candy** (\$61,636), wire-to-wire winner of five graded races on all three surfaces and a horse we both give a big shot to make a sire; Spendthrift's **Tizway** (\$83,481), impressive winner of the GI Met Mile (Beyer 113) and the GI Whitney (Beyer 111) in 2011; Airdrie's **Haynesfield** (\$57,243), the only horse to beat Blame in 2011; Lane's End's **Twirling Candy** (\$43,260), winner of the seven-furlong GI Malibu on the dirt and beaten a nose and two necks when second and third in two 10-furlong Grade I's on the synthetic; and Florida's Hallmarc Farm's **Big Drama** (\$58,304), who won the GI Breeders' Cup Sprint and was named champion sprinter in 2010 and kicked off his 5-year-old season in 2011 by running a fantastic Beyer 120 in the GIII Mr. Prospector S. at Gulfstream Park.

BILL: There are plenty of worthy candidates, as you can see above, but **GIO PONTI**, who went to stud for \$20,000 in 2012 and is now down to \$15,000, is my number one pick. There are two reasons I really like this horse. First is his form: he ran 29 times over five seasons, never more than seven races a year; great training performance by Christophe Clement. So he was very durable, and he had class as well: at four, five, and six he won seven Grade I races and was second in seven more. In 24 turf starts he won 11, and was nine times second. As a 4-year-old he ran second to Zenyatta in the GI Breeders' Cup Classic on the synthetic; as a 5-year-old he ran second to Goldikova in the GI Breeders' Cup Turf. So he was versatile as well.

The other reason I like Gio Ponti so much is that two other American turf sires, F2007 Kitten's Joy and F2009 English Channel, have made sires, and Gio Ponti was certainly in the same class, at least, as a racehorse. There is much more turf racing in America than there used to be, so even if he proves to be a better turf/synthetic sire, there will be lots of opportunities for a sire like this that didn't exist 20 years ago.

And, given the success of Kitten's Joy and English Channel, Europeans and other international buyers are much more in tune with the possibilities of American turf horses with this much class. As far as I can tell, the whole anti-American drug argument is a convenient cop-out in this respect for those who don't want to come to America to buy for other reasons; the overseas runners by Kitten's Joy and English Channel seem just fine without Lasix. But I digress; the point is that Gio Ponti was a horse with tremendous class, outstanding form, and three Eclipse Awards. It doesn't hurt either that the Ryan family, which owns Castleton Lyons, will race a few by Gio Ponti in Europe.

KELSEY: While we will never have the opportunity to see the progeny of Candy Ride's champion son Shared Belief, this year's crop of freshman sires boasts no fewer than three Grade I winners by Candy Ride.

TWIRLING CANDY, who stands at Lane's End alongside his sire, is second only to Shared Belief for the best Beyer among sons of Candy Ride, having posted a 108 when winning the GI Malibu S. Like Shared Belief and Candy Ride himself, however, Twirling Candy wasn't a one-hit wonder on the track. After breaking his maiden in his lone start at two over the Hollywood all-weather, Twirling Candy went unbeaten in three subsequent starts through the GII Del Mar Derby.

He recorded three straight 100+ Beyers in his next three starts, including the Malibu--where he broke Spectacular Bid's seven-furlong track record--and a 102 in the GII Strub S. in his first start as a 4-year-old. His three-figure Beyer streak was broken only by a rough-trip 92 when he was fifth in the GI Santa Anita H. in 2011, but he returned later that year to round out his career with a 100 Beyer when winning the GII Californian S., a 106 when third in the GI Hollywood Gold Cup and a 105 when second in the GI Pacific Classic. Therefore, within eight months, Twirling Candy won a Grade II on the turf, set a new track record for seven furlongs in a Grade I on the dirt before winning a Grade II over 1 1/8 miles on the dirt by 4 1/2 lengths, and won a Grade II over 1 1/8 miles on the synthetic. For a \$10,000 stud fee this year, Twirling Candy could prove a good bet if his progeny inherit his speed and pronounced class.

Also with their first 2-year-olds debuting this year are WinStar's speedy **Sidney's Candy**, and Hill 'N' Dale's **Misremembered**. The latter, a dual Grade II winner at three and winner of the Santa Anita H. at four, could prove a real bargain this year at \$3,500: he posted six 100+ Beyers, including a 106 when winning the Santana Mile at five and a 105 in his swansong next out when second in the GII Oaklawn H., and missed the board just twice in 13 starts. This trio should certainly give Candy lovers something to sink their teeth into.



Sidney's Candy
Louise Reinagel

F2014 SIREs: 1st Yearlings 2015

This group of sires will be totally dominated by **Frankel**, arguably the greatest racehorse ever. His first yearlings, especially at the European sales, will even draw attention in the outside world. For most of us the closest we will ever get to Frankel yearlings is when we go and see them at the sales; but the form lines with Frankel, especially for horses who actually got close to him, like **Excelebration** and **Nathaniel** (and **Zoffany**, to judge by the foal sales), should prove very meaningful to more regular buyers.

For North American buyers, it will simply explain why there will be a lot more money spent for yearlings by Europeans than by Americans for the first crops by F2014 sires.

Typically for American sires these days, the F2014 North American sire crop is headed by a \$35,000 stallion, namely Lane's End's **Union Rags**, with WinStar's **Bodemeister** the only other NA sire standing for as much as \$30,000. They were the one-two among North American sires with their first foals 2014 (and short yearlings thus far in 2015), with averages of \$134,316 and \$109,714, respectively. Also with their first foals averaging over \$60,000 ([click here](#)) were: Lane's End's **The Factor** (\$92,538); Ashford's **Stay Thirsty** (\$84,071); Gainesway's **To Honor And Serve** (\$81,273) and **Tapizar** (\$73,421); and Darby Dan's **Shackleford** (\$60,952).

BILL: He's a little bit of a forgotten man among some big names here, but a horse I have a lot of time for is Airdrie's **CREATIVE CAUSE**, by Giant's Causeway out of the near \$1.2-million earner and Grade I winner Dream of Summer, by Siberian Summer, himself a grandson of Caro by Siberian Express (thus the gray). I do like that pedigree wrinkle, as I'm convinced Caro and



Creative Cause
Airdrie

the entire Grey Sovereign line impart class. Giant's Causeway, for his part, has already proven an effective sire of sires, through the likes of Shamardal, Footstepsinthesand, and First Samurai; in fact, there's a good chance Giant's Causeway will actually be classified as branching off from other

Storm Cat--much like Fappiano did from Mr. Prospector--and becoming his own sire line.

I have never wavered in my belief that I'll Have Another was the best North American 3-year-old of 2012, and was a certainty to win the Triple Crown before he broke down two days before the GI Belmont S. ultimately won by Union Rags over Paynter; and it's his form with I'll Have Another and Bodemeister that persuades me that Creative Cause has a big chance to make a sire. To begin with, Creative Cause--who had been a \$135,000 yearling purchase by Becky Thomas--was an early 2-year-old: he won a 5-furlong maiden on the Hollywood Park synthetic in July in :56:4/5, earning a Beyer 98, very high for a 2-year-old at that time of year.

He then won the GII Best Pal S. at Del Mar at 6 1/2 furlongs (synthetic) over I'll Have Another. He was third (promoted to second) to Drill in a messy GI Del Mar Futurity, then won the GI Norfolk S. (I think that's now the Frontrunner) at 8 1/2 furlongs on the dirt, and was third, beaten a length, by all-the-way winner Hansen, and Union Rags, in the GI Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Churchill Downs.

Creative Cause was back in February 2012, running third to Drill in the GII San Vicente over seven furlongs. Then, going back up to 8 1/2 furlongs, he beat Bodemeister in the GII San Felipe, then dropped a desperate nose decision to I'll Have Another in the GI Santa Anita Derby. He was fifth, beaten three lengths by I'll Have Another and Bodemeister, in the GI Kentucky Derby, and was retired after finishing a distant third to the same two horses in the GI Preakness. He made 10 career starts, winning four (including three at two, from five furlongs to a mile and a sixteenth), and finishing in the first three in nine of his 10 starts. Precocious, consistent, and classy--some real virtues in a sire prospect.

KELSEY: Empire Maker is already proving his worth as a sire of sires, with last year's leading second-crop sire Pioneerof The Nile to his credit, and it wouldn't be a surprise to see WinStar's very-talented **BODEMEISTER** follow in that mold. While Bodemeister himself made all of his six starts at three, his pedigree does show precocity--his dam, Untouched Talent (Storm Cat) won the GIII Sorrento S. and was second in the GI Del Mar Debutante and (then) GII Alcibiades S., and her 2011



Bodemeister
Louise Reinagel

filly by Smart Strike, Fascinating, was also second in the Debutante and third in the GI Chandelier S.

Bodemeister recorded back-to-back Beyers of 101 when breaking his maiden and finishing second to the far more experienced Creative Cause in the GII San Felipe S. four weeks later, and he turned in a 108 five weeks

after that when romping on the front end in the GI Arkansas Derby. Three weeks later, Bodemeister nearly pulled off a monstrous performance in the Derby when setting sizzling fractions of :22.32, :45.39 and 1:09.19, but he went down by just 1 1/2 lengths to I'll Have Another. Bodemeister recorded a career-best 109 Beyer when second in the Preakness in his final start, and the market responded well to his first-crop of 135 reported foals at last year's breeding stock sales; he was second only to Union Rags (Dixie Union) by average, with 28 sold from 32 offered for an average of \$109,714 and a median of \$107,500, suggesting a uniform quality among his offerings.

F2015 SIRES: 1st Foals 2015

Thankfully for the opposition, there's no superstar Frankel or six-figure stud-fee sire to compete with among the NA/EU sires whose first foals are being born this year. There are six in North America who started for more than \$15,000 in 2014: Darley's **Animal Kingdom** (\$35,000), winner of the 2012 GI Kentucky Derby and the 2013 G1 Dubai World Cup; Claiborne's 2013 GI Kentucky Derby winner, **Orb** (\$25,000), who led the crop in 2014 covering sire average; Coolmore (last year), now Ashford's **Declaration of War** (\$40,000), by War Front, winner of the G1 Queen Anne S. at Royal Ascot (1 mile) and the G1 Juddmonte International (10 1/2 furlongs) at York; Ashford's **Shanghai Bobby** (now \$15,000), unbeaten champion North American 2-year-old in 2012; and the three-quarter brothers (sorry, Dan Liebman, they are) **Paynter** (WinStar, \$25,000), winner of the GI Haskell and runner-up to Union Rags in the GI Belmont after I'll Have Another was scratched, and Calumet's **Oxbow** (now \$17,500), winner of the 2013 GI Preakness.

BILL: All are horses with good claims, but I am a huge fan of **ANIMAL KINGDOM**. He was a real 20-1 surprise package, produced by trainer Graham Motion, to win the 2011 GI Kentucky Derby in his first start on the dirt, having prepped with a win in the GIII Spiral S. on the synthetic at Turfway. After finishing a closing second to Shackelford in the GI Preakness and only sixth behind the previously--and subsequently--unheard-of Ruler On Ice in the GI Belmont, Animal Kingdom was on the shelf for a lot of the next 16 months, with just one allowance win at Gulfstream early in his 4-year-old year. Motion picked a soft spot for his comeback race: the 2012 GI Breeders' Cup Mile at Santa Anita. Animal Kingdom gave Wise Dan a fright, finishing second with a real rattle, suggesting had he got clear earlier he might have even won the race. After a prep race at Gulfstream, he then went and won the 2013 G1 Dubai World Cup, then still on Tapeta. He was the 6-5 favorite for the G1 Queen Anne S. for the opening race at Royal Ascot in June of 2013, but he spotted Elusive Kate when she came into the paddock and turned into a stallion on the spot, trailing home 11th of 13. He's really a reverse shuttler, principal ownership in him thereafter having been secured by Australia's Arrowfield Stud.

Animal Kingdom is by the crack miler Leroidesanimaux, who is a real neat Blushing Groom type to look at, but Animal Kingdom has thrown to his dam's side physically; his dam, Dalicia, was a 10-furlong Group 3 winner in Germany (she defeated Soldier Hollow that day) by the multiple German champion sire, Acatenango, and Animal Kingdom would look a lot more like an Acatenango than a Blushing Groom. He showed top-class form on all three surfaces, and won the Kentucky Derby and Dubai World Cup. For all the legions of people who claim they want toughness and soundness, Animal Kingdom must be a horse who really appeals.

KELSEY: If nothing else, **PAYNTER** has the genes to make a sire. Not only is he out of a full-sister to Tiznow, but he is also bred on the same cross as Awesome Again's resurgent sire son Ghostzapper (both being out of Relaunch-line mares). Paynter is a half to a pair of stakes winners and he is also, as Bill mentioned, a three-quarter brother to Preakness winner Oxbow, who is by Awesome Again out of another full-sister to Tiznow.

Paynter recorded a 106 Beyer when winning a Pimlico allowance prior to finishing second by a neck to Union Rags in the GI Belmont S., and he came back the following month to notch a 107 when winning the GI Haskell. Off for 11 months thereafter due to illness, he recorded a 114 Beyer off the layoff going seven furlongs over the all-weather at Hollywood Park. Paynter covered 127 mares in his first season last year.



Paynter

Louise Reinagel

F2016 SIRES: Standing Their First Season 2015

The two horses standing for 'half a hundred' this year are both in Europe: Juddmonte's **Kingman** (£55,000), by Invincible Spirit and the best European miler of 2014 whose only defeat came when second to Night of Thunder in the G1 English 2000 Guineas; and Coolmore's **Australia** (€50,000, by Galileo out of Ouija Board), who was third in that 2000 Guineas and went on to win the G1 English and Irish Derbies and the G1 Juddmonte International. The most expensive retirement in North America is Three Chimneys' 2013 champion 3-year-old **Will Take Charge**, who retires for \$30,000. Frankel's full-brother **Noble Mission**, who blossomed into a 10-12 furlong Group 1 winner in 2014, goes to Lane's End for \$25,000; and we think the only other North American sire to debut for more than \$15,000 is Coolmore Ashford's **Verrazano** (\$22,500), winner of the GI Wood Memorial and Haskell Invitational (by nearly 10 lengths, Beyer 116) in 2013.

BILL: Here we both came up with the same horse--**VERRAZANO**. Kelsey makes the case for him below. I will only add two points: the first is, as Kelsey says, that he had three runs in England last year when trained by Aidan O'Brien. I thought the second of those, when he split Toronado and Anodin (later second in the GI Breeders' Cup Mile) in the G1 Queen Anne S. at Royal Ascot was a very good run. My second point is that he is out of a Giant's Causeway mare from another of those very good, resurgent King Ranch families.

KELSEY: More Than Ready has the accomplished young sire Sebring (Aus) set to carry on his line in Australia, and it is likely Verrazano will be his heir apparent in the North. Verrazano won at first asking by 7 3/4 lengths at Gulfstream in 2013, won an allowance by 16 1/4 lengths with a 105 Beyer four weeks later then wired the GII Tampa Bay Derby by three lengths. He earned his first Grade I in the Wood Memorial and after finishing well back in a sloppy Derby, he roared back in the summer to take Monmouth's GIII Pegasus S. by 9 1/4 lengths followed by the Haskell by 9 3/4 and a 116 Beyer--the highest of his generation. Verrazano wrapped up a busy 10-start 3-year-old campaign with a third in the GI Cigar Mile with a 104 Beyer, and was sent to trainer Aidan O'Brien in Ireland for an ambitious 4-year-old campaign. Verrazano didn't win there, but he recorded a career second-best figure (an RPR of 122) when second, beaten three-quarters of a length, by Toronado (Ire) (High Chaparral {Ire}) in the G1 Queen Anne S. at Royal Ascot. Verrazano has a pedigree to match his racing ability; he is a half-brother to Grade II winner El Padrino (Pulpit), and his second and third dams are Grade I winners. In summary: Two Grade I's, two Grade II's and a 116 Beyer on the dirt at three and an RPR of 122 on the turf at Royal Ascot at four, and a pedigree to back it up. He has to be a great bet.

NEXT WEEK: Our picks among unproven European sires. In the meantime, your comments, observations, and your own picks are very welcome.

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