

# Spring Rush



by LISA GROOTHEDDE

One of the annual rites of spring on the Hollywood Park racing calendar is the California Gold Rush program, a special day set aside to celebrate the state's breeding industry.



of the dual California Horse of the Year Free House. The five-year-old gelding outran the salty stakes winners Bestdressed, Rush With Thunder, Liberian Freighter and Star Nicholas in his 10-1 Tiznow upset.

Receiving the lion's share of attention during the event's 2010 renewal on April 24 was the prominent colt Alpie's Bet, a California-bred who flirted with the Triple Crown trail when he won Santa Anita Park's \$150,000 Sham Stakes (grade III) in March, but who was forced to settle for less lofty ambitions when he failed to fire in the track's \$750,000 Santa Anita Derby (grade I) on April 3, running sixth of 10 in that key Kentucky Derby (grade I) prep.

The Tribal Rule colt was installed as the 3-5 favorite for the \$200,000 TVG Snow Chief Stakes, the 1 1/8-mile feature race on the Gold Rush card in which he faced only his fellow state-bred sophomores. He did not disappoint this time out, rocketing from last to first to capture his second stakes trophy for breeder Teresa McWilliams, who campaigns him with co-owner Peter Johnson Sr.

Bringing home the hardware in the 1 1/16-mile distaff equivalent of the Snow Chief was Camille C, the front-running winner of the \$150,000 Melair Stakes for three-year-old females. The Roman Dancer filly powered to a 3 1/4-length victory under jockey Rafael Bejarano, who enjoyed two wins on the day to bring his career Gold Rush total to eight.

Jockeys Mike Smith and Joel Rosario also booted home two winners apiece on the restricted program. The most lucrative of these scores was achieved by Rosario, who was forced to maneuver around a loose horse in the \$147,000 B. Thoughtful Stakes for older females. His mount in that race was the heavily favored U R All That I Am, a Tommy Town Thoroughbreds homebred who emerged from the challenge with her second stakes title.

The final black-type event of California Gold Rush XI, the \$150,000 Tiznow Stakes, was captured by Fantasy Free, a son

of the Golden State or sired by a locally based stallion rounded out the special eight-race program. In the opener, Rancho San Miguel's homebred Marino Marini filly Money Lover led from gate to wire in the \$60,400 Alphabet Kisses Stakes at 6 1/2 furlongs. Contested at the same distance for males was the \$62,000 NTRA (National Thoroughbred Racing Association) Stakes, which closed the day's proceedings with another front-running winner, Fun and Frolic, a Freespool colt who is owned and trained by Paula Capestro, who bred the two-time starter in partnership with Special T Thoroughbreds.

The seven-furlong Grey Memo Stakes and Warren's Thoroughbreds Stakes were won, respectively, by the Kentucky-sired Cal-breds Uncle Don and Excellent News. Five-year-old Uncle Don, by Lemon Drop Kid, is the first stakes winner out of the grand state-bred mare Soviet Problem, a \$905,546-earner and five-time California champion, and was bred by Harris Farms, Donald Valpredo and Rob Johnson. Three-year-old Excellent News, meanwhile, defeated 12 rivals in her \$73,200 race. She is a Rahy half-sister to the state-bred grade III winner Here's to You, and was bred by Harmony Farms and Gainsborough Farm.

In all, 66 horses competed in the eight Gold Rush races of 2010, contributing to an all-sources handle of \$11,948,154 for the 10-race card. Hollywood Park reported 6,067 patrons in attendance. All three figures were down from the same event in 2009, when 91 horses faced off in 10 Gold Rush races; last year, all-sources handle was \$14,418,885 and attendance was 7,693.

Over the next eight pages, *California Thoroughbred* focuses on the highlights from California Gold Rush XI. 🐾



Alpie's Bet



Camille C



Fantasy Free



U R All That I Am

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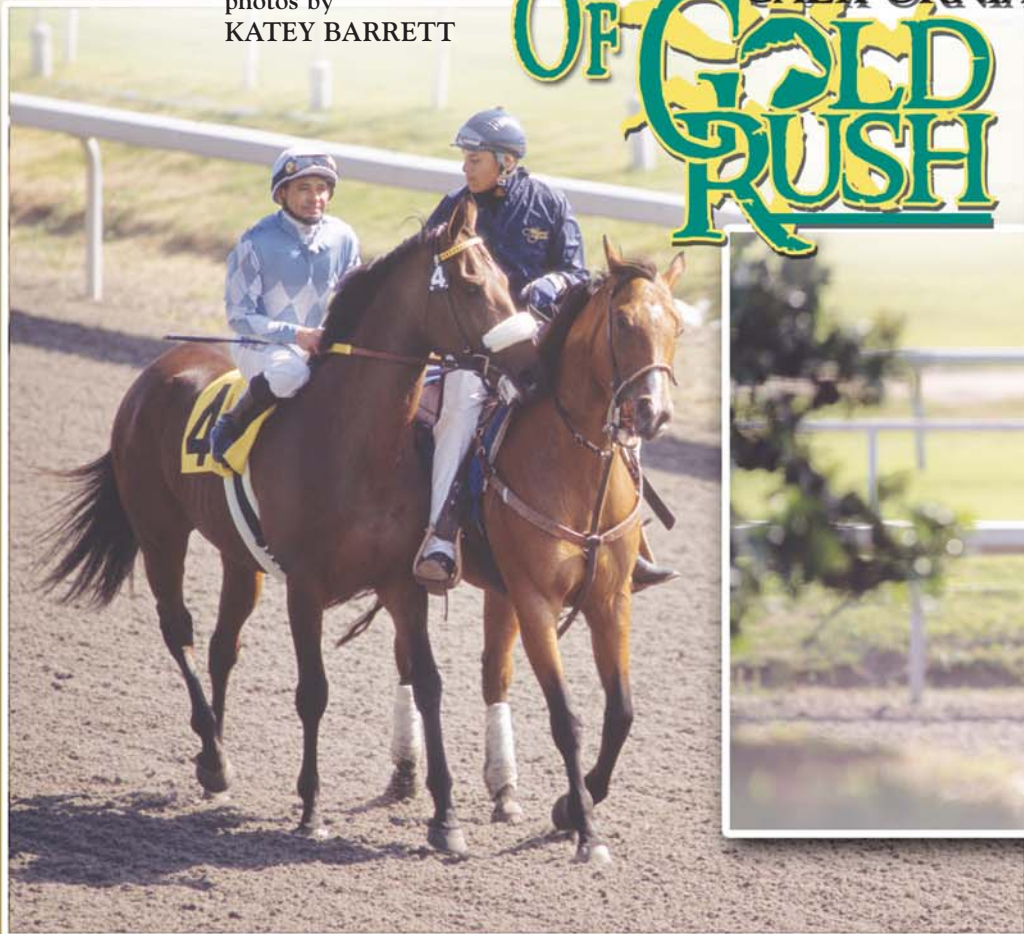
*California Gold Rush*



# GLIMPSES

photos by  
KATEY BARRETT

# Hollywood Park CALIFORNIA OF GOLD RUSH







## California Gold Rush

# A Smooth Transition

by EMILY SHIELDS

On paper, Alphonse's Bet stood out as the clear favorite in the \$200,000 TVG Snow Chief Stakes. The lone stakes winner in a field of eight California-breds, Alphonse's Bet was only in the race because he lacked sufficient graded stakes earnings to make it into the gate for the 136th Kentucky Derby (grade I) being held one week later.

In practice, Alphonse's Bet rewarded his backers at 3-5, winning the 1 1/8-mile contest, the crown jewel of Hollywood Park's 11th renewal of the California Gold Rush program, by 2 1/4 lengths. Although the victory was expected, the path to the wire was rough.

Under Hall of Fame jockey Mike Smith for the first time since December, Alphonse's Bet broke slowly and found himself trailing the field early. The 18-1 shot Working Capital bounded to the lead and controlled the pace through solid fractions. Smith began to urge Alphonse's Bet forward on the backstretch and, entering the far turn, the strapping sophomore had just two horses beat and 4 1/2 lengths to make up. Smith guided his mount to the inside, passed one rival, then swung him to the outside. Alphonse's Bet responded with a three-wide rally into the stretch, taking aim on Working Capital and then steadily putting him away before drawing clear to the wire. He stopped the clock in 1:51.15, giving Smith his first win in the 17th edition of the Snow Chief.

The victory offered vindication for trainer Alexis Barba, co-owner Peter Johnson Sr. and owner/breeder Teresa McWilliams. After winning the Sham Stakes (grade III) at Santa Anita Park on Mar. 6, Alphonse's Bet was considered a

leading West Coast contender for the Run for the Roses. Unfortunately, a sixth place finish in the roughly run \$750,000 Santa Anita Derby (grade I) stunted those dreams.

"I thought the Snow Chief was a great race," McWilliams said afterwards. "Mike (Smith) did a very good job of getting through the traffic; he's such a big horse that it's hard for him to weave around like that." She also acknowledged one of Alphonse's Bet's best traits is his fantastic turn of foot. "Alphonse has such a strong closing kick he was able to open up on the field so quickly."

The \$120,000 winner's share of the purse boosted Alphonse's Bet's earnings to \$261,320. He has three wins and a second place finish in seven lifetime starts, having broken his maiden one start prior to the Sham victory.

Alphonse's Bet is the first foal out of the Candi's Gold mare Miss Alphonse. He is by Tribal Rule, a leading California sire who stands at River Edge Farm for \$6,000 live foal. Miss Alphonse is a half-sister to group I winner Absolut Glam (Aus).

The Snow Chief Stakes is named for the popular dark Cal-bred who won the Preakness Stakes in 1986. Although the third leg of the Triple Crown, the 1 1/2-mile Belmont Stakes (grade I) at Belmont Park on June 5, was originally mentioned as a possibility for Alphonse's Bet, Barba will instead point him to a turf campaign this summer, starting with the Jim Murray Handicap (grade II) against older horses on May 15. Johnson and Barba's Make Music For Me, fourth in the Kentucky Derby, will run in the Belmont Stakes in Alphonse's Bet's place. 🐾



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## Alphonse's Bet

\$200,000 TVG Snow Chief Stakes



Saturday,  
April 24, 2010

# Never In Doubt



by JACKIE BARNES

In Thoroughbred racing, speed is a major asset. A runner blessed with this ability plays a major factor in controlling the outcome of a race. During California Gold Rush XI at Hollywood Park on April 24, California-bred Camille C won the \$150,000 Melair Stakes with a brilliant gate-to-wire performance.

Trained by Marcelo Polanco, Camille C was coming into the Melair Stakes off a fourth place finish in the grade II Providencia Stakes. Prior to that she was second, beaten 1 1/2 lengths in the one-mile China Doll Stakes by the Providencia winner City to City. Both races were run on the turf at Santa Anita Park.

As a two-year-old, Camille C was victorious in a gate-to-wire effort in the \$100,000 Generous Portion Stakes for Cal-bred fillies at the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. She followed that with a runner-up finish in the California Cup Juvenile Fillies Stakes and was third in the Anoakia Stakes at Santa Anita Park's Oak Tree Racing Association meeting.

The daughter of Roman Dancer lined up against six opponents with her main competition coming from stakes winners La Nez and Salty Fries. The fans made La Nez the 3-5 favorite as the horses approached the starting gate. Camille C, ridden by Rafael Bejarano, bobbled a bit at the start, but quickly gathered herself to command the pace.

Allowed to relax on an easy lead, Camille C put away her competitors and began to draw away as the field turned for home. In complete control, she lengthened her stride drawing off to an easy 3 1/4-length victory at the wire.

Northern California invader Salty Fries, trained by Terry Knight, rated just off the lead before launching a late run to finish in second. Stretch-running La Nez, who had

trained exceptionally well coming into the race, had no excuses finishing far back in third.

It was the third win in a row in the Melair Stakes for Bejarano, who was aboard previous winners Bel Air Sizzle (2009) and Pretty Unusual (2008) for trainer Barry Abrams.

All smiles after the race, Polanco, who trains the winner for his brother Carlos, commented, "She ran pretty good the other day when she went a mile and an eighth against grade two horses. She's always trained well, but the last two weeks she's been training awesome." He continued, "I think she stole the race. She can do anything. She's blooming."

Camille C was bred by Rod and Lorraine Rodriguez, who have been CTBA members since 2001. They are the owners of Cottonwood Creek Ranch in Northern California.

Old Fashioned, a grade II winner by Unbridled's Song, was also bred by the couple. He was a Triple Crown contender in 2009, until his career was cut short due to an injury. Old Fashioned stood his first season in 2010 at Taylor Made Stallions in Nicholasville, Kentucky.

Standing at Cottonwood Creek is the promising young stallion Roman Dancer. The son of Polish Numbers won the grade III Bay Shore Stakes and earned \$269,329. Along with Camille C, he has also sired the stakes winner Rockin Roman and stakes-placed Roman Account.

Paris Operetta, the dam of Camille C, has produced six other foals with four of them winners from five to race. She is by Rahy, broodmare sire of more than 80 stakes winners, including the nation's leading sire of 2009, Giant's Causeway.

Camille C was purchased as a two-year-old for \$4,200 at the Barretts January Mixed Sale. Her record now stands at 13-3-4-2 with earnings of \$269,551. 🐾



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## Camille C

\$150,000 B. Thoughtful Stakes



Saturday,  
April 24, 2010



## California Gold Rush

by **MARCIE HEACOX**

Fantasy Free beat a more fancied stablemate and overcame his jockey's doubts to win the \$150,000 Tiznow Stakes during California Gold Rush XI at Hollywood Park on April 24.

Trainer A. C. Avila entered Fantasy Free and grade I-placed Rush With Thunder in the race named after the richest California-bred of all time.

"I told (jockey Omar Berrio) that I thought he was going to beat Thunder today, but he didn't think so," Avila said. "I told the owners of Rush With Thunder that if you want to go, let's go, but Fantasy Free's going to beat you."

Fantasy Free was sent off at odds of 10-1, twice that of Rush With Thunder.

He broke evenly and stalked a fast pace set by One Track Mind. As that leader and the 2-1 favorite Liberian Freighter drifted out, jockey Omar Berrio steered Fantasy Free through an opening on the rail. The leaders gradually tired and Fantasy Free inherited the lead, holding it to the wire to win his first stakes race by half a length.

Bestdressed and Mobilized closed quickly down the middle of the track to get second and third, respectively. The order was completed by One Track Mind, Rush With Thunder, defending champion Liberian Freighter, Earnednevergiven and Star Nicholas.

"He's been feeling real good in the morning and training well, but I actually liked the other horse more than mine," Berrio said. "Avila told me to stay inside the whole way because this horse likes to run on the rail. It worked out great."

Fantasy Free carried 118 pounds over the 7 1/2 furlongs on the all-weather Cushion Track surface in a time of 1:28.76. His backers received payouts of \$22.80, \$8.60 and \$5.60.

Fantasy Free earned \$90,000 for the victory, pushing his career earnings to \$299,884. He has earned \$143,444 for current owner Roddy Valente. Including the Tiznow, the

five-year-old gelding has raced a hearty 41 times with eight firsts, seven seconds and four thirds.

Katy Cowan created the winning breeding combination in 2004. Fantasy Free's dam Cat Ballado placed just once at the races and Fantasy Free is the only winner she's produced.

Fantasy Free became the fifth stakes winner and the third black-type winner for the late Free House. House Of Fortune and Freesgood are that sire's only other black-type winners. Fox in the House, another five-year-old gelding by Free House, won the \$27,750 Hasta La Vista Handicap at Turf Paradise on May 2, to become his sixth stakes winner.

A two-time California Horse of the Year, Free House died from a freak accident in July of 2004, only four years after entering stud in 2000. His 2005 crop, which includes Fantasy Free and Fox in the House, is his last.

Fantasy Free took eight starts to break his maiden on Nov. 29, 2007. He then entered the \$138,375 California Breeders' Champion Stakes but could only manage a sixth-placed finish.

Fantasy Free was claimed by trainer Rafael Becerra in July of 2008, and won two of his next seven starts. He was then tagged by Mike Marlow and won once before being claimed back by Becerra. He went winless for six starts until Bob Hess Jr. put a tag on him and won two of five races.

He was claimed a fifth time on Dec. 12, at Hollywood Park, this time by Avila for \$22,500. He won in his second start for his current connections. A second place effort in a Mar. 28 allowance optional claiming race at Santa Anita Park propelled him into the Tiznow win.

Avila said Fantasy Free will run next in an allowance race as a prep for the grade I Triple Bend Handicap at Hollywood Park on July 10. 🐾



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# At His Peak

## Fantasy Free

\$150,000 Tiznow Stakes



Saturday,  
April 24, 2010

# Keeping Her Cool



by EMILY SHIELDS

A horse's racing connections—the owner, trainer, exercise rider and groom—can only do so much before a race. After weeks of thorough preparation, with stiff gallops, timed workouts and painstaking care, a horse is led to the paddock and is turned over to the jockey. Once the gate opens, the horse's success is in the hands of the rider, who must make flash decisions as the race unfolds.

Prior to the \$147,000 B. Thoughtful Stakes at Hollywood Park on April 24, U R All That I Am looked the picture of health and happiness. The chestnut filly's coat dazzled in the sunshine on her way to the post, and she simply looked the part of her heavy favoritism at 1-2 odds. However, once the gates opened, drama quickly played out as the race's 15-1 longshot Witchy Meeting reared and lost rider David Flores at the break.

Jockey Joel Rosario sat quietly aboard U R All That I Am, letting the riderless Witchy Meeting storm past before taking his mount back behind horses early in the 7 1/2-furlong race. The front-running Lady Alex chased the loose horse early, but Witchy Meeting dropped out on the turn, backing up into U R All That I Am. Rosario steadied his filly, angled her inside to pass Witchy Meeting, then swung wide into the stretch to run down Lady Alex and the closing Ruffled Feathers at the wire.

After the race, Rosario noted that all he wanted was, "to keep her as far away from that loose horse as (he) could." In doing so, the pair completed the distance in 1:30.81 to give trainer Jerry Hollendorfer his third win in the B. Thoughtful, following Fleet Lady (1998) and Somethinaboutlaura (2008).

U R All That I Am is a homebred for Tom and Debi Stull's Tommy Town Thoroughbreds. Her sire Valid Wager stood at Tommy Town from 2001 until his death in 2007, and was best known for his New York grade I-winning son Valid Video.

U R All That I Am's winning dam, the Fort Calgary mare Fort Silver, has become quite well known in California by producing nine winners—five in stakes company—from 12 foals. Seven of her foals have earned over \$100,000; U R All That I Am has banked \$270,188 from seven wins, three seconds and a third in 14 starts. Tommy Town sold Fort Silver for \$2,700 to Roger Stein at the 2007 Barretts January Mixed Sale.

Tommy Town Farm Manager Mike Allen was pleased with Rosario's ride. "I thought U R All That I Am was really professional in the race, considering the loose horse. She handled that really well, and then won easily; she could have won by more but didn't need to."

U R All That I Am will start next in the \$60,000 Fran's Valentine Stakes at Hollywood Park on May 23. Although the race is on the turf, a surface the four-year-old Cal-bred has yet to win on, she finished second by a head to subsequent graded stakes winner Unzip Me in March's \$100,000 Irish O'Brien Stakes on the grass. "She can run on either surface," Allen noted. "The goal down the road is to get her a graded stakes win. If the distance is right, she can run anywhere."

As proven in the B. Thoughtful, she can also overcome race adversity. 🐾



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## U R All That I Am

\$150,000 B. Thoughtful Stakes



Saturday,  
April 24, 2010



*California Gold Rush*

# The Deciding Factor

by RUDI GROOTHEDDE

Speed made the difference in the four added-money stakes races contested during this year's California Gold Rush at Hollywood Park in Inglewood on April 24, as the 11th renewals of these events for California-breds and California-sired progeny, three-year-old and up, all resulted in gate-to-wire victories on the all-weather Cushion Track surface by Money Lover, Uncle Don, Excellent News and Fun and Frolic.

## Nothing Like A Quick Return

Opening proceedings on the 10-race program that included \$914,200 in purses for the day's eight stakes races was Money Lover, who won the \$60,400 Alphabet Kisses Stakes by 2 3/4 lengths over Myra G, while finishing in a dead heat for the show spot were California Heat and Sibersky. As the 2-1 favorite in the six-strong field, the four-year-old filly clocked 1:17.41 for the six furlongs after setting fractions of :22.61, :46.01 and 1:10.87 for the 6 1/2-furlong test.

The runner-up in her debut going 5 1/2 furlongs at Santa Anita Park on March 31, Money Lover is trained by Eric Kruljac and was again ridden by Mike Smith for her breeders and owners, Tom and Nancy Clark's Rancho San Miguel. By that farm's promising young sire Marino Marini, she is out of the winning Unbridled daughter Affordability and has now earned \$44,800.

## A New Lease On Life

Away from the races with a tendon injury problem since November of 2007, Uncle Don's 2010 campaign now includes three consecutive wins and two seconds from five trips to post after his victory by 1 1/2 lengths over Killer Bear in the \$71,600 Grey Memo Stakes. With regular pilot Joel Rosario aboard, the 2-1 favorite in a field of nine set fractions of :22.83, :45.79 and 1:09.73 before posting a final time of

1:22.59 for the seven furlongs in which Scofield Barracks finished third.



## Money Lover

\$60,400 Alphabet Kisses Stakes



## Uncle Don

\$71,600 Grey Memo Stakes



Saturday, April 24, 2010

Owned by Antonio Ocampo and Ulises Alan Alguin and trained by Richard Rosales, Uncle Don is by Lemon Drop Kid out of Moscow Ballet's Soviet Problem (\$905,546), the 1994 California Horse of the Year who finished second in that year's grade I Breeders' Cup Sprint. Bred by Soviet Problem's breeders Harris Farms Inc. and Donald Valpredo in partnership with Rob Johnson, the five-year-old gelding boasts a record of 7-3-2-0 and \$72,320.

**Good Story In The Making**

It was another 2-1 favorite who won the \$73,200 Warren's Thoroughbreds Stakes at seven furlongs, when Excellent News defeated 12 rivals for her second win in six starts to date that have also yielded three placings and earnings of \$106,930. Ridden by Rafael Bejarano, the three-year-old filly got to the wire in 1:23.20 after setting fractions of :22.76, :46.06 and 1:10.66 in her 1 1/2-length win over Our Road Scholar, who nudged out Taro for the place.

Trained by Bob Baffert for Kaleem Shah, who purchased her for \$250,000 at Fasig-Tipton's Calder Selected Two-Year-Olds in Training Sale in Florida during March of 2009, Excellent News was bred by

Harmony Farms and Gainsborough Farm LLC. A daughter of Rahy and the dual stakes-placed Mstoyou, by El Baba, she is a half-sister to Here's To You who won the \$175,000 Fran's Valentine Stakes during the inaugural California Gold Rush day in 2000.

**Great Time Had By All**

The closing event of California Gold Rush XI was the \$62,000 NTRA (National Thoroughbred Racing Association) Stakes which saw Fun and Frolic race to a 1 1/4-length victory as the 11-2 fourth wagering choice in the field of 10 who went to post. His fractions of :22.48, :45.31 and 1:10.18 resulted in a final time of 1:17.03 for this three-year-old colt who was followed home by My Boy Walsh and Dana Dynamo, respectively.

Owned and trained by Paula Capestro, who bred him in partnership with Rick and Kathy Taylor's Special T Thoroughbreds in Temecula, Fun and Frolic's only previous start had been a fourth-placed effort, also with David Flores in the irons, going 5 1/2 furlongs at Santa Anita just 15 days earlier. By the Special T sire Freespool and out of the winner Western Blondy, by Gilded Time, he now boasts a bankroll of \$38,640. 🏇



**Excellent News**

\$73,200 Warren's Thoroughbreds Stakes



**Fun and Frolic**

\$62,000 NTRA Stakes



Saturday, April 24, 2010