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CONNIE SNYDER

Lutess (above) is the dam of 2022 California-bred Horse of the Year Fun to Dream (left)

Lutess

FUN TO DREAM'S DAM HONORED SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

BY TRACY GANTZ

California broodmares have added to the breed worldwide. The exemplary California Broodmare of the Year list includes dams of champions in this state and throughout the country.

Lutess has already added to that rich history with four winners in four starters, including California Horse of the Year Fun to Dream and multiple stakes winner Heck Yeah. Those runners have led to even more opportunities.

"She's in foal to Justify," said Phil Lebherz, who now owns Lutess. "I'm partners with Jill Baffert. They provided the breeding and I provided the mare."

Jill Baffert co-owned Fun to Dream with Connie Pageler, a story that began with Connie's late husband, Mike. Bob Baedeker, a partner with Mike in Heck Yeah along with Michael Sigband, asked Jill's husband, Hall of Fame trainer Bob

Baffert, to train Heck Yeah. Under Baffert's care, Heck Yeah, a son of California sire Acclamation, won the 2018 California Cup Derby, Echo Eddie Stakes, and California Cup Turf Sprint Stakes, ultimately earning \$397,949.

The Bafferts partnered with the Pagelers to get Lutess in foal to Baffert-trained champion Arrogate, resulting in Fun to Dream. Mike didn't live long enough to see Fun to Dream compete, but Jill and Connie had a two-year run with the filly, who earned \$670,190 and won four stakes, including the 2022 La Brea Stakes (G1) and 2023 Santa Monica Stakes (G2).

Connie knew she wanted to honor her late husband by racing his final Thoroughbreds, but she wasn't in a position to carry on an extended breeding program. Thus, she sold Lutess to Lebherz early in Fun to Dream's racing career, and last fall she and Jill sold Fun to Dream for \$1.9 million through Hill 'n' Dale at Xalapa to K I Farm at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky November sale.

Jerry and Ann Moss bred Lutess, a three-time winner and a daughter of Maria's Mon—Alchemia, by Menifee. Lutess' third dam is stakes winner Careless Moment, and this is the family of millionaire and sire Practical Joke.

During her racing career, Lutess finished second in a maiden claiming race to Perfect Feat, who would go on to produce two-time California-bred Horse of the Year Spiced Perfection for Premier Thoroughbreds, of which Lebherz is the principal. Perfect Feat was named California's Broodmare of the Year in 2018 and 2019.

Lutess has produced three foals by Smiling Tiger, a leading California sire that Lebherz and partners stand in the state. Now 17, Lutess will likely remain in Kentucky, Lebherz said, instead of undergoing the stress of travel back to California. She was due to foal in early March.

"Hopefully, she'll have a healthy baby and we'll get her in foal to Constitution," Lebherz said. **CTB**