



From the EXECUTIVE CORNER



DOUG BURGE

CTBA PRESIDENT

CALIFORNIA-BREDS BLAST OUT OF THE GATE IN 2025

The California Cup showcase of stakes races at Santa Anita on Saturday, Jan. 18, followed by the CTBA's Winter Mixed Sale at Fairplex three days later, provided a juicy January Exacta for the state's resilient Thoroughbred industry.

Shocking Grey was a star of both events. The 6-year-old daughter of Grazen won the \$125,000 Sunshine Millions Filly & Mare Turf Sprint on Saturday and was the sale-topper of the Winter Mixed Sale, purchased for \$170,000 by Françoise Dupuis, agent, for Rockingham Ranch.

Shocking Grey, and her Corniche yearling half sister selling for \$75,000, were bred by Donald Valpredo, the late industry stalwart and CTBA former president whose dispersal, consigned by Checkmate Thoroughbreds, helped the sale

blow away averages from the 2024 edition.

The average sale price of \$14,799 for 83 horses sold compared to \$8,568 from 111 sold last year, an increase in price of 73 percent. The median rose 23 percent, from \$6,500 to \$8,000.

Meanwhile, the Cal Cup card distributed more than \$1 million in purses to California horsemen, not counting breeder and stallion awards, with \$777,500 of that total for the five stakes races. With ideal weather, handle on the day was nearly \$10 million, despite the one-week delay and continued disruption caused by devastating Southland wildfires earlier in the month.

Fittingly, Valpredo's familiar silks were seen twice in the winner's circle on Cal Cup Day. In addition to

Shocking Grey, the Valpredo-bred Mayacama won a maiden claiming race. Reddam Racing also bred and owned a pair of winners on the day, Take Another Card in the \$177,000 Leigh Ann Howard Cal Cup Oaks and Check's On the Way in a maiden claimer.

January at Santa Anita also benefited by the influx of horses from Northern California, as races were written with conditions specifically tailored to fit those horses, including one exclusively for Cal-breds on Cal Cup Day.

Only one month is in the books for 2025, but January provided reason for optimism in the coming months. The next big Cal-bred date to circle on the calendar is Sunday, May 24, Gold Rush Day at Santa Anita, with five stakes restricted to state-breds worth \$550,000. **CTB**

It Pays To Be **CAL-BRED**