



## THE CHOSEN VRON JOINS EXCLUSIVE CLUB

**F**or more than a half century, the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association has honored state-bred champions, capped by the prestigious title of Horse of the Year. In that time, 11 horses have been dominant enough to win that award multiple times, including the most recent, The Chosen Vron.

The 7-year-old gelded son of Vronsky, bred by Tiz Molly Partners, retired with an ankle injury in March, only days after successfully defending his title as Cal-bred of the Year for 2024. He joined the crème de la crème of state-bred royalty that includes two-time Breeders' Cup Classic winner Tiznow (2000-01) and legendary former claimer Lava Man (2005-06), among other notables.

In fact, since the award was first given in 1973, there have been 10 multiple winners of Horse of the Year in consecutive seasons and one, California Chrome, who took the award twice in a three-year span (2014, 2016), en route to becoming the all-time leading Cal-bred earner by banking \$14,752,650.

Retirement prevented The Chosen Vron from attempting to join an even more exclusive Cal-bred club, that of three-time winners of the Horse of the Year. Only Preakness



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The Chosen Vron is the 11th to win California-bred Horse of the Year twice

Stakes winner Snow Chief (1985-87) and six-time Grade I winner Best Pal (1990-92) pulled off that trifecta.

Others on the honor roll of repeat Cal-bred Horses of the Year are Ancient Title (1974-75), Crystal Water (1976-77), Free House (1987-88), Acclamation (2011-12), and the only female in the group, Spiced Perfection (2018-19).

The Chosen Vron's career earnings of \$1,709,678 puts him 19th on the all-time Cal-bred earnings list, with 19 wins in 25 starts, a higher win

percentage than any of the 18 ahead of him. Of the 19 wins, 18 were in stakes, including the Grade I Bing Crosby Stakes twice.

Although breeding won't be in The Chosen Vron's future, his owners have indicated a second career as a therapy horse could be an option when he heals. His ultra-consistent record on the track and widespread popularity off it should also put him on the radar for at least one more crowning achievement.

From the group of 11 multiple Cal-bred Horses of the Year, five have been inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame—Ancient Title, Best Pal, Tiznow, Lava Man, and California Chrome. The Chosen Vron's career trajectory most closely resembles that of Ancient Title.

"He's been the horse of a lifetime for all of us," part owner and breeder John Sondereker said.

Sondereker, trainer Eric Kruljac, Richard Thornburgh, and Robert Fetkin bred The Chosen Vron in the name of Tiz Molly Partners, and the four have raced him throughout his career. **CTB**

*For the complete list of Cal-bred champions, see pages 28-29.*