



## Epic Power: Capable Of Change

by EMILY SHIELDS

Sometimes people forget that racehorses can go on to have long and fulfilling careers outside the racetrack, even the successful stakes-winning types.

The popular California-bred gelding Epic Power was retired from racing in January of 2010, after making 75 starts and earning \$778,173. The three-time stakes winner, best known for his narrow victory in the 2006 California Cup Mile Handicap worth \$175,000, had done more than enough on the track to earn his retirement, owner Ron Valenta and trainer Jack Carava had decided. They turned the son of Epic Honor over to Leigh Gray at Winner's Circle Ranch, effectively sending him on to a second career after eight seasons on the track and 13 wins, 13 seconds and 17 thirds.

Gray took two months letting Epic Power down from the track, then sent him from the Bradbury operation to Somis for training with her friend Laurie Canty. "She rode him for six months, going over all his basic flatwork and trail," Gray explained. "He turned out to be a fabulous horse."

Enter Tony and Elizabeth Tuoto, as well as their trainer Rebecca Morris, who traveled down to Moorpark, California, from their ranch in Gardnerville, Nevada, for a three-day event competition two years ago. Canty's farm was only five minutes from the show, prompting the group to go visit Epic Power. "We didn't really need another horse, but we always love to look," Tony Tuoto confessed.

At first glance, Epic Power did not make a favorable

impression. The gelding, a nine-year-old at the time, was thin and dull. "But he had a sparkle in his eyes that made me think we should give the guy a chance," Tuoto recalled. "Racehorses can have a rough time transitioning after leaving the track and Epic Power was having a tough go at it. I knew Laurie was doing everything she could for Epic, she really loves her horses. The groom let him out in the arena and we watched as he pranced around each step getting bigger and higher, I watched in awe as this dull looking, thin horse became bigger than life."

The Tuotos were sold, and took Epic Power home to Nevada. Tony started studying equine nutrition, and got the gelding to grow and shine. Morris took over the training, handling Epic Power's high jinx with her patient style. "His answer to anything he didn't understand was to go faster and move bigger," Tuoto said. "That is not what you want when you are trying to train a horse in dressage or cross country jumping where the obstacles are solid."

Epic Power now regularly competes in both dressage and three-day eventing, performing well with his notorious racetrack courage and durability on display in the ring. He spends the rest of his time relaxing in a pasture with another off the track Thoroughbred, Cal-bred El Guapo. He has had to learn about snow, loves to flirt with mares on the ranch and is beloved by his new human family. To see more photos of him, visit <http://www.facebook.com/tonys.incline.homes> and click on the album 'Epic Power.' 🐾



California-bred Epic Power, winner of the \$175,000 California Cup Mile Handicap in 2006, is now competing in both dressage and three-day eventing.

