



Tom Amoss

Born: Nov. 17, 1961 in New Orleans, La.

Resident: Louisville, Ky.

Family: Colleen (wife), Ashley and Hayley (daughters)

Tom Amoss's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 55

Stakes Wins (6)

- Tied for leading trainer at Churchill Downs in the spring of 2002.
- Leading trainer at Kentucky Downs in 2002.
- Leading trainer at Fair Grounds eight times, including a tie with Steve Asmussen in 2000-2001. Has also finished second three times.
- Topped trainers' standings at Ellis Park in 1996.
- Won the 1,000th race of his career at Fair Grounds on Feb. 28, 2000.
- Posted a record of 16-8-2-2 at Oaklawn Park in 2000 for stable earnings of \$532,342.
- Saddled the 1-2-3 finishers in three stakes at Louisiana Downs—the 1990 Old South Handicap, the 1994 Spanish Moss Handicap and the 1995 Barksdale Handicap.
- Inducted into the Fair Grounds Hall of Fame in 1999.
- Has worked as a TV analyst for ESPN2's "2Day at the Races" and TVG's "The Works."

Tom Amoss represents the new generation of horse trainers. He's articulate, ambitious and knowledgeable. Add accomplished to that mix. The New Orleans native, who turned 45 last November, had been successfully plying his trade at the Louisiana tracks before deciding to expand his horizons several years ago, adding Keeneland and Churchill Downs to his annual circuit and then relocating to Louisville, Ky.

"Horse racing used to be a country boy's game," Amoss once told *The Blood-Horse*. "Their Dads did it; they did it. The fact is that if you come from that angle today, you are at a disadvantage. It's a city boy's game now. It rewards education and handling yourself in almost an executive fashion."

The most prominent horse he has trained to date is Jack Garey's Heritage of Gold. She won five of her eight starts in 2000, including the Apple Blossom Stakes (G1) and Go For Wand Stakes (G1), and earned more than \$1 million. In her last start that year, she ran third in the Breeders' Cup Distaff (G1), for the second straight year. In 2001, she added a victory in the Oaklawn Breeders' Cup (G3) before being retired. Amoss described her win on opening weekend at Saratoga in the Go For Wind as "a real thrill."

During 2006, Amoss saddled the winners of 118 races and earners of \$3,527,244 to rank 29th. He won with a terrific 29 percent of his starters. Leading the way for the stable were Baghdadia and Rush Bay, both of whom started in Breeders' Cup races. Baghdadia won two Grade 3 races—the Iowa Oaks and the Indiana Breeders' Cup Oaks—before running seventh in the Distaff. Rush Bay, a dual stakes winner, was sent off at 32.60-1 in the Turf and finished fourth, beaten only four and a quarter lengths.

A year earlier, the stable won 109 races and earned \$2,753,840. The runners included five stakes winners, including Rush Bay,

who won the Jefferson Cup (G3); Premium Saltine, winner of the Prairie Express and Prairie Meadows Sprint; and Silver Axe, who won both the Shecky Green and the Jim Rasmussen Memorial.

Equine.com had Amoss with 1,801 victories and earnings of \$44,132,392 through Jan. 9, 2007. It credits him with 98 stakes winners.

A graduate of Louisiana State University in 1983 with a degree in marketing, he readily acknowledges that he could be doing other things with his degree. "Racing has its ups and downs," he said, "but I wouldn't trade it. There isn't anything else I'd rather do."

While still in high school, Amoss started hot-walking for trainer Jack Van Berg's stable. While attending LSU and then after graduating, he worked for Frankie Brothers. A short stint as a veterinary assistant followed and then two years as Larry Robideaux's assistant and a year with John Parisella in New York as his assistant.

"I incorporated a little from each of them," he said.

By 1987, he had a small string of horses and saddled his first winner, Prize Dream, at Sportsman's Park that year. He was represented by his first stakes winner, Fire the Shot, in September of 1988 when he won the Gator Handicap at Louisiana Downs, and his first graded stakes winner in 1990, when Festive won the New Orleans Handicap.

Since then, he's been the leading trainer at Fair Grounds eight times, at Ellis Park once, at Kentucky Downs once, and in 2002 he finished in a tie with Dale Romans at the spring Churchill meet. He's modest about his success: "When I look back, I've had very lucky breaks."

Three times Amoss saddled the 1-2-3 finishers in stakes at Louisiana Downs, once in 1990, and again in '94 and '95. He was the leading trainer of the 1990s at Fair Grounds

by number of stakes wins and was inducted into that track's Hall of Fame in 1999.

His initial stakes victory at Keeneland was the 1997 Thoroughbred Club of America Stakes with Sky Blue Pink and his first at Churchill was the 1995 Crown Royal Turf with Unanimous Vote. He has added five other stakes wins at Keeneland, including the 2003 Maker's Mark Mile.

Besides Heritage of Gold, other career highlights have been saddling a Preakness starter (fourth-place finisher Hot Wells in 1998, who had been a \$12,500 claim) and Jarraar's 1992 victory in the New Orleans Handicap when his entire family was in attendance at Fair Grounds to share in the excitement. Other good horses he has trained include multiple stakes winners Fly Cry and Blissful Union.

Highlighting his stable's efforts in 2001 were graded winners Williams News, winner of the Elkhorn Stakes, and Hattiesburg, who won the Azalea Breeders' Cup. In 2002, his graded stakes winners were Miss Lodi (Safely Kept) and Lone Star Sky (Bashford Manor).

In 2003, he won two graded races at Keeneland—the Maker's Mark Mile (with Royal Spy) and the Shakertown (No Jacket Required) and other stakes at six additional tracks.

His stable won 140 of 484 races in '04, for an excellent winning percentage of 29, and earned \$3,616,785 to rank 26th nationally. Stakes winners were Anna Em, Cat Genius, Movant, Jimmy Cracked Corn and Blazing Exploit.

Of goals he has set for his stable, he said: "I'd like to be part of the Derby some time and win it. It's hard to say, though. I want to be in the Top 10. But you have to play the cards you're dealt. Some years you're dealt good athletes and other years you're not."

His circuit typically consists of Fair Grounds, Keeneland, Churchill, Saratoga, and then back through Kentucky to New Orleans. Amoss, whose New Orleans home was lost to Hurricane Katrina, is hopeful Louisiana racing will rebound. "I'm very confident that not only will Louisiana racing get stronger, as it has over the last few years, but that we'll see a resurgence at the Fair Grounds as well," he told *Daily Racing Form*.

"We've got the reputation as a stable that wins a high percentage of races and deals with clients on an honest basis," he said. "We've won a solid number of races. There's nothing more flattering than to hear that your horses are well meant always. If someone was asking for a recommendation on me and is told I'm straightforward and honest, I'd take that into my later years and I'd be very proud of that."

He admits there is a special place in his heart for Heritage of Gold, Rush Bay, Williams News and Fly Cry. "The smartest ones touch me the most," he said.

