



Patrick Byrne

Born: March 8, 1956 in London, England.

Resident: Louisville, Ky.

Family: Jill (wife), Devon (daughter).

Pat Byrne's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 41

Stakes wins (10)

- Won two Breeders' Cup races in 1997—the Juvenile with Favorite Trick and the Juvenile Fillies with Countess Diana.
- Trained two Eclipse Award winners in 1997—Favorite Trick, Horse of the Year and champion 2-year-old colt; and Countess Diana, champion 2-year-old filly.
- Won the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) in 1998 with Awesome Again, guiding him through an undefeated campaign.
- Became the third trainer in Keeneland history to sweep the track's most prestigious 2-year-old races in one year—the Breeders' Futurity (G2) and Alcibiades (G2)—with Favorite Trick and Countess Diana, respectively.
- Had 14 winners and three seconds in 17 starts at Churchill Downs' 1997 spring/summer meet. Six were in stakes of which he won five.
- Received the United Thoroughbred Trainers of America Award for Outstanding Trainer in 1997.
- Wife Jill works as a racing analyst and reporter for TVG.

Through Jan. 9, 2007, trainer Patrick Byrne had won 393 races, and his runners had earned \$19,907,690, according to Equine-line.com. He was credited with developing 37 stakes winners, including two champions.

He is pointing Son of the West, stakes-placed last year at 2, toward the 2007 classics. He is owned by a partnership that includes wife Jill along with Carl Bowling and Danny Pate.

Pat Byrne had a storybook year in 1997.

"Great horses can make you look good, awfully good and awfully smart," he said at the time. "It's been a great, great year because of them. That's where the credit goes—to the horses."

"But all you can do is be grateful and happy for the good times and keep working every day. You know how things go in this business. You're on top one day and you can be at the bottom the next. We're just going to work our hardest to do the best we can. If we can do that, then things will turn out."

Having two horses with the potential of Favorite Trick and Countess Diana was the starting point. But it was what Byrne did with them that made it such a memorable year.

Favorite Trick started eight times and won them all, including the Breeders' Futurity and Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1). He was voted Horse of the Year and champion 2-year-old colt. Countess Diana, a winner of five of six starts including the Alcibiades and the Juvenile Fillies (G1), was voted champion 2-year-old filly.

Byrne also had the speedy Richter Scale in his barn that year, who might have earned yet another Eclipse had he been victorious in the Breeders' Cup Sprint.

In the spring of 1997, starting at Keeneland and continuing on to Churchill, he won nine consecutive races and 14 of 17 starts with three seconds. It was a remarkable accomplishment by anyone's standards.

"My big philosophy is run them where they belong," he said, "and have them as fit and sound as you can and you'll get results."

Byrne attracted the attention of Frank Stronach and agreed to be his private trainer beginning in 1998, which meant giving up his two champions. But in return Stronach supplied him with such talented horses as Awesome Again, Touch Gold and Wild Rush.

For Awesome Again, Byrne mapped out a campaign of six starts. By year-end, he had won all six, including the Whitney (G1) and the Breeders' Cup Classic.

"That was one of the greatest thrills I've ever had," Byrne said. "When we started to win some good races, I knew we were going to have a good year. I just knew it."

Byrne and Stronach parted company the following year and a lawsuit that resulted was settled out of court.

He started up a public stable once again. In 2000, his barn included Rampart Handicap (G2) winner Bella Chiarra and Cardinal Handicap (G3) winner Illiquidity. In 2001 and 2002, it included Duckhorn, winner of the Hawthorne Gold Cup (G2) in 2001 and Ben Ali Stakes (G3) in 2002. Byrne also won stakes at Hoosier Park, Ellis Park and Gulfstream Park in 2002, including the Swale Stakes (G3) with Ethan Man.

In 2003, he saddled Pass Rush to win the San Fernando Breeders' Cup Stakes (G2) as well as Private Gold to win the Rushaway Stakes at Turfway Park and Desert Gold to win the Mariah's Storm Stakes at Arlington Park.

He won two stakes in 2005 with Sorcerer's Stone—the Arlington-Washington Futurity (G3) and the Honest Pleasure Stakes. He also saddled Magna Graduate for a victory in the John Battaglia Memorial Stakes.

"I always thought he'd be a Derby horse, but wasn't really thinking about the Breeders' Cup until that last race," he told Richard Rosenblatt of the *Associated Press* about Sorcerer's Stone.

Byrne was referring to the colt's impressive victory in the Arlington-Washington Futurity. After Sorcerer's Stone finished sixth in the Juvenile, he had a bone chip removed from an ankle and Byrne hoped he'd make the 2006 Kentucky Derby field. But that didn't materialize.

Byrne, who is half-Irish and a fifth-generation horseman, left his home in London, England, at 15 to embark on a riding career. At first, he went to Lambourne, the training center made famous in the Dick Francis novels. Later, he went to France, Ireland and Belgium before he came to the United States in 1978 and worked for trainer John Russell at the Phipps family's stable in New York.

He banged around the tracks as an exercise rider and had the opportunity to ride jumpers, including Sports Reporter in the 1982 New York Turf Writers Cup at Saratoga.

He worked for Tony Doyle for two years, then worked for LeRoy Jolley, David Whiteley and then as an assistant to Howie Teshler.

Byrne watched and observed each of the trainers for whom he worked. While working for Teshler, he met his wife-to-be, Jill, who was working for her father, Peter Howe.

"We're on the same page," he told Maryjean Wall in the *Lexington Herald-Leader* about Jill. "We know what needs to be done, whether it's talking to owners or watching the horses. She can train a barnful on her own, but that's not what she wants to do."

By 1986 he went out on his own and saddled his first winner that summer at Atlantic City. His first stakes winner was Diamond Knight, winner of the 1987 Buckram Oak Stakes at Gulfstream. He trained for Petelain Stable early in his career, and won his first graded stakes in 1988 with longshot Mr. Sea Sanders in the Tremont Stakes (G3). By 1990, he relocated to Kentucky from New York.

"Ideally, I'd like to have 30-40 of the right ones," Byrne said a few years ago. "We want to improve on the quality not the quantity. I'm in a position to get some decent 2-year-olds and cull out the lesser ones."

"I'm very competitive. I like to win. Of course, you can't win all the time. I love the horses and they come first. This lifestyle of seven days a week is demanding. We have a good workforce and that makes it a lot easier. Jill oversees the general operation when I'm not around. She's definitely a big help for me."

That was before Jill became a racing analyst for TVG and isn't at the barn as much. "We discuss things at great length," he said. "She doesn't gallop for me anymore."

He goes to Gulfstream Park for the winter and then returns to his home base of Churchill Downs.

"At the end of the day, you hope to have horses that can win allowance and stakes races," he has said. "I've been at the bottom and the top, and I'm sure I'll see the bottom again. You've got to be resilient. And you're only as good as your horses."

