



Ronny Werner

Born: Dec. 19, 1959 in San Antonio, Texas.

Resident: Louisville, Ky.

Family: Cindy (wife), Rowdy and Will Clay (sons).

Ronny Werner's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 20

Stakes Wins (0)

- Won three stakes in 2005 with Flying Glitter, including the Monmouth Breeders' Cup Oaks (G3).
- Trained City Street, who set a track record at Churchill Downs and equaled one at Keeneland.
- Saddled five winners from seven starts during the 2001 Keeneland spring meet, including four 2-year-olds, all first-time starters.

Ronny Werner has successfully made the transition from Quarter Horses to Thoroughbreds, a process he began in 1998. Others who followed that route with great results have been D. Wayne Lukas and Bob Baffert.

His father, H.C. "Bubba" Werner, Jr., formerly trained Quarter Horses and among the big races he won were the Ruidoso Futurity in 1978 with Gentlemen's Feature and the 1974 Ruidoso Derby with Azure Teen. He now pinhooks and rehabilitates horses from his base in Stonewall, Texas.

During the summers, Ronny groomed horses for his father at Ruidoso beginning at age 12. He then galloped and broke horses before attending college on rodeo scholarships. His events were bull riding, bareback riding and bull dogging, and he went to nationals in all three.

"I rode bulls until I was 37," he said. "I still get itchy to ride them in the spring. Now I'm itching for other things, like winning the Kentucky Derby."

He served as his father's assistant in 1980 and obtained his first license in 1981, training his own string of Quarter Horses when he was 21. He continued in that endeavor for 15 years.

A few years ago, he explained to Jay Privman of *Daily Racing Form* why he made the switch: "I had one Thoroughbred at Lone Star. I had 35 Quarter Horses at Sam Houston. The one at Lone Star won a maiden race, and he made more in that month than my whole stable of Quarter Horses.

"Tom Durant gave me the opportunity to prove what I could do, just like Mike Pegram did with (Bob) Baffert."

Durant, who owns automobile dealerships in Texas, was a longtime client.

Early on, he won the Clever Trevor Stakes in 1999 with Native Diablo (his first stakes win as a Thoroughbred trainer), the 2000 Sugar Bowl Stakes and two other added-money races with Wild Hits, and the La Senorita Stakes in 2000 with No Other Name, all of whom Durant owned.

In 2001, he garnered national attention by winning five races from seven starters at

the Keeneland spring meet. It was his first spring in Kentucky. Four of the winners were 2-year-olds and all were first-time starters. The other was 3-year-old Touch Tone. Durant owned them all.

On Derby Day, he won the Three Chimneys Juvenile Stakes at Churchill with Durant-owned City Street who finished in a dead heat with Open Story. They set a then-track record of :57.28 for five furlongs.

City Street had equaled the track record at Keeneland in his first start, running four and a half furlongs in :51.04 while winning by 10 lengths.

In May, Touch Tone won his first stakes, the Alysheba Breeders' Cup at Lone Star, and on July 6, he added a second, the Iowa Derby.

On July 8, Werner and Durant won the Bashford Manor Stakes (G2) with Lunar Bounty.

Touch Tone then finished an excellent second to eventual Horse of the Year Point Given in the Haskell Invitational Handicap (G1), beaten just a half-length.

For the year, Werner's stable won 49 races and earned a career-best \$1,755,378.

Among the people who took notice of Werner's Kentucky debut was Ken Ramsey, who contacted him. That fall, he selected eight horses at the Keeneland September Sale for Ramsey, including Badge of Silver and Adopted Daughter.

Werner described Badge of Silver as "a very well-balanced colt with a real fluid stride. He stood out to me."

Badge of Silver captured the Risen Star Stakes (G3) by 10 lengths in 2003. "Badge of Silver is the best horse I've had so far," Werner said that spring. "Touch Tone was very fast and very talented, but Badge of Silver is running fast at an earlier stage."

Badge of Silver, sidelined by injury and forced to miss the Kentucky Derby, was later transferred to Bobby Frankel's barn.

Adopted Daughter also became a stakes winner, accounting for the Prairie Gold Lassie in 2002 and the Bourbonette Breeders' Cup in '03.

Werner also won the 2002 Crank It Up Stakes with Runaway Choice and the Debutante Stakes (G3) with Awesome Humor, both of whom Durant owned. Awesome Humor was subsequently sold to WinStar Farm and proceeded to win several more stakes, including the Spinaway (G1).

With Most Feared, he won the Continental Mile Stakes and the Arlington-Washington Futurity (G2) in 2002.

"We're still in the building process," he told *The Blood-Horse* after the Futurity, "but there are two reasons why this win is very important to me. I've been known for having a lot of speedy, precocious-type 2-year-olds, and I've been wanting to get those classic horses, but that really wasn't what we were buying at first. Now we are, and this is really my first 2-year-old that hopefully is of that caliber. The other reason is he's a homebred and it gives Texas a little credibility."

Most Feared was bred and owned by Durant. Werner and Durant have since dissolved their arrangement.

In 2003, in addition to the victories by Badge of Silver and Adopted Daughter, he also won the Bertram F. Bongard Stakes with Flagshipenterprise.

The star of Werner's stable in 2005 was Richard and Nancy Kaster's Flying Glitter, who won three stakes, including the Monmouth Breeders' Cup Oaks (G3) and the Indiana Breeders' Cup Oaks (G3). He also won the Zenobia Empress Handicap with Unbridled Sidney plus the Showtime Deb Stakes with Rich Fantasy, both of whom also remain in training.

He had 38 horses stabled at Oaklawn in early 2006 and was expecting a few more 2-year-olds to join him. Among the horses he had high hopes for was 3-year-old Ermine, who didn't disappoint, winning the Honeybee Stakes at Oaklawn and the Falls City Handicap (G2) at Churchill. He won three stakes with Unbridled Sidney, and two with Rich Fantasy, including the Lyrique Handicap, and Kingship, including the Arlington Classic (G3). He also had a promising stakes-winning juvenile, Cat on a Cloud.

He won 59 races during the year, and his horses earned \$2,777,321. Through Jan. 9, 2007, Equineline.com credited Werner with 403 wins, earnings of \$11,314,324 and 19 stakes winners.

From Oaklawn, he'll come to Kentucky and then possibly Saratoga before coming back through Kentucky in the fall.

He told K.T. Donovan in the Keeneland program a few years ago: "If you come to Keeneland, you'd better be ready, because there are a lot of trainers here with good ones. You can't make any mistakes."

