

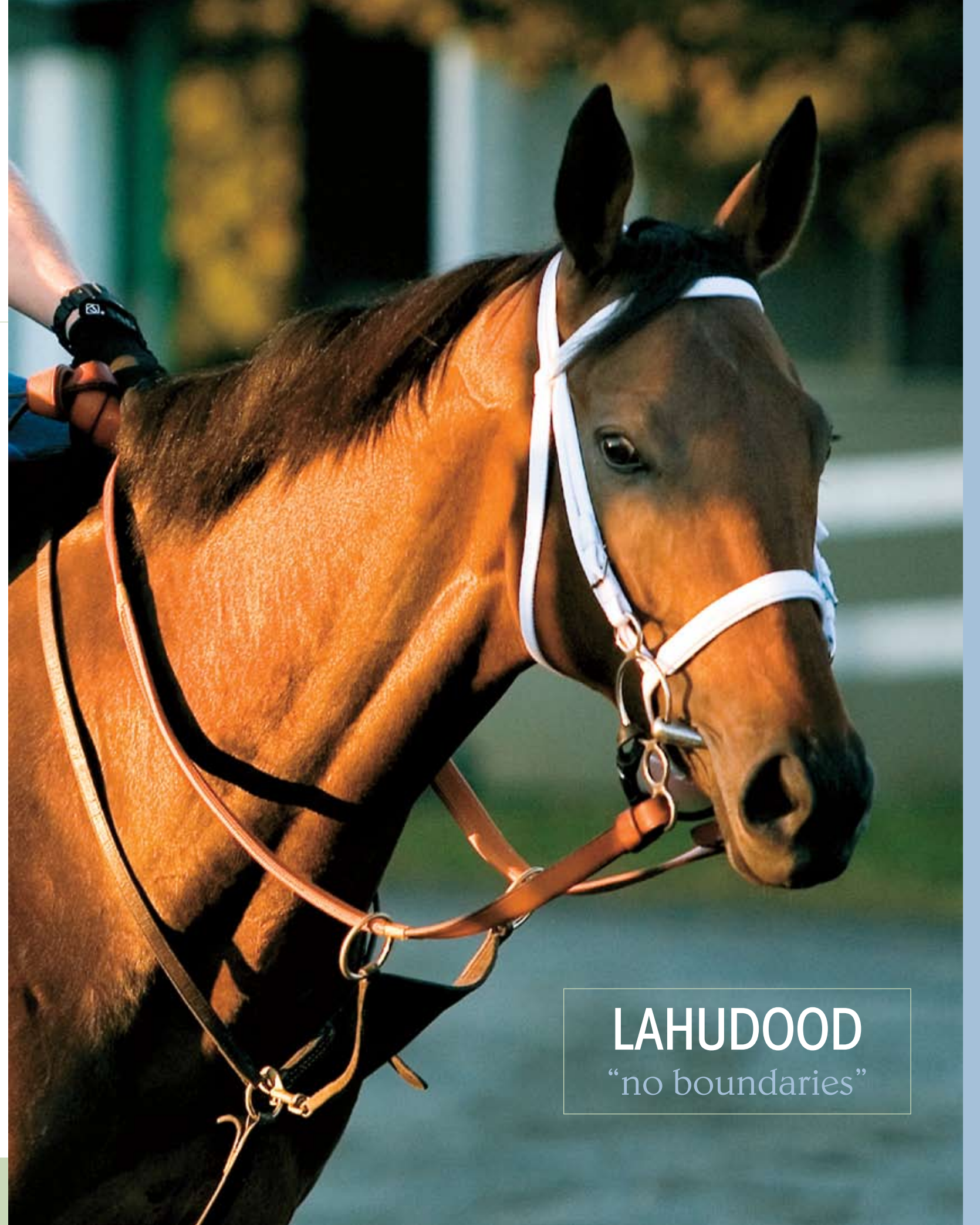
NAME Game

Thoroughbred Monikers Subjected to Stringent Rules

By Coleman Larkin | Photo (right) by Barbara D. Livingston

Close to 40,000 Thoroughbreds are foaled each year in North America. Consider them part of an enormous royal family. Each horse's DNA must be categorized, and its pedigree must be traceable in all of its lines to horses recorded in *The American Stud Book* or a foreign stud book approved by the 114-year-old organization in charge of all such records, The Jockey Club.

With offices in Lexington and New York City, The Jockey Club's stated mission is to preserve the integrity of Thoroughbred breeding and racing. To that end, its primary responsibility is the maintenance of the aforesaid stud book, an exhaustive family tree dating back to the original Thoroughbred breeding stock of the late 17th century and containing the monikers of nearly 2 million horses. But don't let the numbers fool you. It's still a relatively exclusive group, and The Jockey Club prefers to emphasize that exclusivity with some velvet ropes in the form of stringent policies regarding everything from racing silks to the very names it records.



LAHUDOOD
“no boundaries”

According to The Jockey Club's rule book, the name of a registered Thoroughbred must not contain in excess of 18 characters. It cannot contain initials. It cannot contain the words "filly" or "colt" or any other horse-related term. A registered Thoroughbred's name cannot consist entirely of numbers, although numbers above 30 may be spelled out. It cannot end with a numerical designation such as "2nd" or "3rd." It cannot contain the name of a racetrack. It cannot contain the names of people deemed "famous" or "notorious" by The Jockey Club. A registered Thoroughbred's name must not be commercial in nature, it cannot consist of copyrighted material, it cannot be vulgar, it cannot be offensive, and on and on and on and on ...

So what is acceptable in the eyes of The Jockey Club? Quite a lot, actually. It just requires a little extra creativity. Sheikh Hamdan al Maktoum, owner of Lexington's Shadwell Farm, for instance, christens his horses with classical Arabic names. "The sheikh names all the horses himself, usually in September when he sees them as yearlings," explained Shadwell vice president and general manager Rick Nichols, "and when we register them we have to supply The Jockey Club with a translation."

Most of the translations are simple. Lahudood, for instance, means "no boundaries." Daaher means "emerging," and Unfuwain refers to "an athlete at his peak." Sheikh Hamdan named Erhaab as soon as he saw the colt's jet-black body and the proud way he walked. The name means "intimidator." However, a few of the Arabic names don't have an immediate English corollary. Nashwan, the name given to one of Shadwell's many superstars, is a word used to describe the feeling one gets when unexpectedly receiving a gift that was secretly desired.

Michael Blowen, owner of Old Friends Thoroughbred Retirement Farm near Georgetown, has his own superstar stallion with Middle Eastern nomenclature: Awad. "He was the second of two foals born," said Blowen. "The first died. There was an Arab visiting the farm at the time and he suggested Awad. It means 'the second will be strongest.'"

Old Friends is also home to Ruhlmann, so named because of his black coat and French furniture designer Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann's proclivity for ebony. Resident

Swan's Way takes his name from a volume of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Danthebluegrassman is named after Dan Chandler, free-spirited son of former Kentucky Gov. A.B.



PINK PIGEON

"When she was born, she was gray. She'd stand in the sun though, and you could see these really subtle pink tones." — ANITA MADDEN

Below, Preston and Anita Madden in the winner's circle



BLOOD-HORSE LIBRARY PHOTOS

"Happy" Chandler. Dan was a legendary Las Vegas casino host, and when high rollers like Frank Sinatra caught wind of his origins in the commonwealth they called him Dan the Bluegrass Man thenceforth. The first horse Blowen brought to his retirement farm, saving her from a certain trip to the nearest slaughterhouse, has a fitting name as well: Narrow Escape.

But not all names have such fantastic stories attached to them. Some are beautiful in their simplicity. Perhaps because of the sheer volume of Thoroughbreds they've produced, Preston and Anita Madden have sought their inspiration in the everyday life of Lexingtonians. Liberty, Winchester, and Cadentown, for instance, take their names from nearby communities. "For a while," Anita Madden said, "I was on this kick where I was naming all my horses after wine bottle sizes like Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Popocatepetl was named after a Mexican volcano. But I think my all-time favorite is Pink Pigeon. When she was

DAAHER
"emerging"

ERHAAB
"intimidator"

born, she was gray. She'd stand in the sun though, and you could see these really subtle pink tones." One of Preston Madden's favorite names, due to the remarkable fact that it had not yet been registered with The Jockey Club, is Kentuckian.

Many of horse racing's most enduring names were almost too simple, mere afterthoughts in the minds of owners. Secretariat, for example, was chosen by a secretary at Meadow Stable after The Jockey Club had rejected five other suggestions. Seabiscuit was simply a synonym for his sire's name, Hard Tack. Incidentally, Secretariat and Seabiscuit — along with the names of all Hall of Fame inductees, major award winners, and horses with cumulative earnings above \$2 million — are forever off limits. The same goes for any name similar in spelling or pronunciation. There will never be another Seabiscuit. Nor will there be a Seebisket, a Street Cents, or a Jockomo.

That's not to say that a few otherwise illicit names don't make their way under The Jockey Club's radar. There's a surprisingly long list of borderline pornographic names that somehow sneaked into the registry. There is also a handful of overtly racist names on the books, which is probably why, three years ago, The Jockey Club balked when a horse breeder sought to name his Banker's Gold filly Sally Hemings after the slave who was the reputed mistress of Thomas Jefferson. In the breeder's defense, the filly's dam was Jefferson's Secret and her grandsire was Colonial Affair, so the name certainly fit. He also maintained that the name was meant as a memorial to the former slave. Nevertheless, the incident resulted in lengthy litigation and a heightened sense of propriety at the already fastidious Jockey Club. The breeder eventually registered his filly

SECRETARIAT

Chosen by a secretary at Meadow Stable



SEABISCUIT

Synonym of his sire, Hard Tack

intended as memorials do. In the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Thoroughbred owners expressed their patriotism by naming their young racing prospects in tribute to the victims. Among the names accepted by The Jockey Club were America the Brave, Patriot's Pride, Some Gave All, Unfurl the Flag, Infinite Justice, and We Will Prevail.

More often than not, however, the names submitted to The Jockey Club are lighthearted and fun, reflective of current events and popular culture. In the months following the controversial 2000 presidential election, for example, names such as Count the Chads, Dangling Chad, Florida Recount, No More Chads, and Palm Beach Ballot were being registered left and right. In 2004, when the Boston Red Sox swept the St. Louis Cardinals to win the team's first World Series in 86 years, there was an immediate influx of names like Curse Reversed, Red Sox Parade, Sweep the Series, Bambino's Curse, and Walkoff Homer.

Likewise, the series finale of *Seinfeld*, the popular sitcom, in May 1998, inspired the names Summer of George, Vandelay, Hello Newman, Puffy Shirt, Kramerica, Low Talker, Serenity Now, Hipster Dufus, Yada Yada Yada, and Manhands. Having won nearly a quarter of a million dollars, the most successful of the *Seinfeld*-inspired Thoroughbreds was the gelding Nosupeforyou, a name taken from the infamous "Soup Nazi" episode.

Some names have sentimental or personal connections to owners. The 2006 Kentucky Derby winner Barbaro, for example, was named for one of five foxhounds portrayed in a painting that hangs in Roy and Gretchen Jackson's home in Pennsylvania.

An increasing number of the 40,000 or so Thoroughbreds foaled each year in North America are being registered via the Internet with The Jockey Club's Interactive Registration (IR). For those interested in the name game, the most indispensable feature of IR is the Online Names Book (www.registry.jockeyclub.com). Visitors can browse The Jockey Club's database of 430,000 Thoroughbred names in active use. The Online Names Book is also accurate up to the minute it is accessed, so if you're an owner or a breeder (or just pretending to be one), you have a greater chance of securing a desired name for your Thoroughbred by checking its availability before submitting the requisite paperwork. 🐾

Secretariat was the sixth choice for the name of the 1973 Triple Crown winner.

as Awaiting Justice.

Sally Hemings might not have passed the test, but many names

BARBARO

Named for a hound portrayed in a painting

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