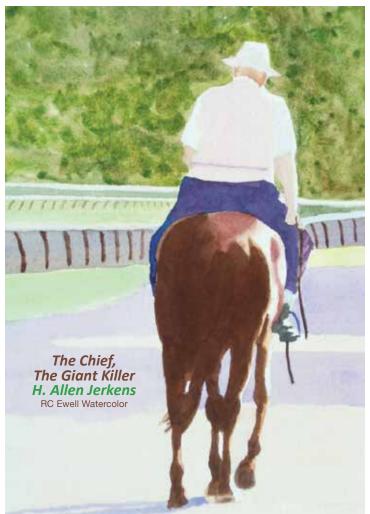


# 2023 GUIDE to Saratoga Race Course Trainers' Saddle Towels



# The BEST of the BEST for 160 YEARS! The Spa Endures, But Why?





n Friday, August 28, 2015, I wore a new blue short-sleeved t-shirt with yellow lettering on the front that read #PHAROAHTOGA 2015 as I entered the Saratoga Race Course.

By 7:30 a.m., the oldest sporting venue in the US was filled with a crowd of at least 15,000 people. This mass of humanity gathered not to watch a race, but to witness one horse complete a morning workout. That horse was American Pharoah – the first to win the Triple Crown since Affirmed in 1978 – and as the crowd roared, he went from a leisurely trot to a gallop as he passed the grandstands.

This was a day when everyone who was not there now says they were. That is because no one who was there for this morning workout was disappointed, while the same could not be said the next day when Keen Ice won the Travers and American Pharoah finished second.

Morning workouts in Saratoga are special even when there is not a Triple Crown winner in attendance. Here, the horses do not fly by you at their top speeds. Instead, some stand in one place for a few minutes or slowly walk along the rail. You are so close that you can hear them breath and sometimes you can chat with their exercise rider.

Bring the whole family, your own coffee, pastries, or breakfast sandwich, and of course this towel guide. Its production is a labor of love by my friend, Bob Giordano, and ThoroFan. They want to be sure those who attend morning workouts, and the races fall in love with the horses, this sport, this venue, and this amazing city we call home – Saratoga Springs.

With Kindness,

## **Todd Shimkus**

President, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce

# The Best of the Best!

elcome for the 15th time to the **ThoroFan Guide** to the Saratoga Race Course Trainers' Saddle Towels. The purpose of this Guide is twofold – to recognize the achievement of the 2022 leading trainer and also to continue the ThoroFan mission statement that "An Educated Fan is a Better Fan".

Chad Brown was the Best in2022, taking home the 2022 trading title with 42 wins and earnings of \$6.2M. This was 4 more than perennial challenger Todd Pletcher. Their rivalry ensues for this 160th gathering of the best of the best at The Spa. Maybe this year will be the first for a new leader?

While Steve Asmussen finished 4th in the trainer standings, Spa fans saw him become "the Best" last August when he became all-time wins record holder in North America with his 9,446th wins here, surpassing the mark set by late trainer Dale Baird. Having notched his 10,000th visit to the winner circle in February, Steve rolls on. He is currently 2nd in the world - 636 behind Peru's Juan Suarez Villarroel (10,397). Last year, fans saw the Asmussen colt **Epicenter** don the blanket of red and white carnations and take the **Man O' War Cup** in the 158th running of the Travers.



And in 2022 jockey John Velasquez became "the Best"- the all-time leading jockey at Saratoga notching his 1,000th career win. Jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. took the meet riding title with 55 wins, leading the rest by 16. Saratoga fans see the best of the best here, particularly in the mornings - arguably the best time to experience thoroughbreds at The Spa.

The 2nd purpose of this Guide is to give fans a better understanding of the sport. In these pages you will learn how to spot the horses trained by the more than 220 conditioners who set up camp here each year, what look for, and what makes these current and future Hall of Famers along with their Owners want to compete here, and answer the question "Why Saratoga?"

See you on the Morning rail...

H. ALLEN JERKENS



# SARATOGA TRAINING TITLE

ThoroFan Congratulates the 2022 H. ALLEN JERKENS SARATOGA TRAINING TITLE Award winner, Chad Brown With his 42 WINS

#### CHAD BROWN 2022 SARATOGA WINNERS

7/16	Credit Event	8/10	Running Bee
7/16	In Italian (Diana)	8/10	Inflation Adjusted
7/16	Shutters	8/12	Bahamian Club
7/16	Higher Quality	8/12	Run Up the Score
7/20	Crowding Out	8/13	I'm Very Busy
7/22	Dolce Zel (Lake George)	8/13	Portfolio Company
7/22	Appraise	8/19	Oxymore
7/23	Stage Raider	8/19	Transactional
7/24	Blazing Sevens	8/20	Haughty (Lake Placid)
7/28	Price Discipline	8/21	Balthus
7/29	Artorius (Curlin)	8/25	Digital Future
7/29	Golden Alchemist	8/25	Gina Romantica
7/30	Marvelous Maude	8/25	James Jones
7/31	Rockemperor	8/27	Jack Christopher (Allen Jerkens)
7/31	Capital Structure	8/27	Technical Analysis
8/4	Emaraaty	8/28	Goodnight Olive (Ballerina)
8/6	Good Governance	8/31	Basis Risk
8/7	Digital Software	9/3	Virginia Joy
8/7	Raging Sea	9/4	Free Look
8/7	Pink Hue	9/5	Crowding Out
8/7	Goodnight Olive	9/5	Emaraaty
-, ,			'

#### Winners just won't say "no". The Chad Brown team just won't say "WHOA!"



For the 5th time in the last 7 years the H. Allen Jerkens Saratoga Training Title went to Chad Brown and his team. Once again, they were the "Best of the Best" in the showcase meet that is Saratoga. In 2022 they notched 4 more wins than perennial rival and Hall of Famer Todd Pletcher.

The Hall of Fame nomination criteria for trainers is 20-25 years as a trainer. Chad is now in his 16th year conditioning top level thoroughbreds. He could soon be wearing that blue jacket. We'll see if the CB Saddle Towel can be the Best of the Best in 2023.



Look for some of last year's Winners in the list above to make their mark in 2023. "In Italian" has already given notice that he is back!

Off to Work - RC Ewell

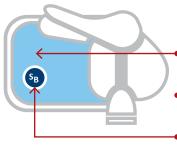


# HOW to locate a Trainers' Towel

# BY BACKGROUND COLOR

In this years guide, trainers' towels have been indexed by the background color of the towel, into 6 color categories:

BLACK & BROWN
BLUE, TEAL, & PURPLE
GREEN
RED, ORANGE, & PINK
WHITE & GREY
YELLOW & GOLD



# OR BY NAME INDEX

An alphabetical listing of trainers' towels is on pages 49-52.

Some trainers use Owners logos. In such cases the owner's name is in "()".

We encourage feedback at saddletowels@gmail.com. Photos of new Towels can also be sent for inclusion in our next edition.

# WHILE WATCHING THE MORNING WORKOUT:

- identify the main color of the saddle towel
- go to the towels' main color section in this booklet
- identify the trainer by additional colors, letters, and logos

# WHY ARE SADDLE TOWELS USED?

Racehorses are athletes and therefore have to condition their muscles, just like human athletes do, before racing.

Jockeys on horses entered in the afternoon races wear the unique colors of the horse's owners. When horses train in the mornings, the trainers use unique saddle towels on their horses so that they, the Gap Attendants, and the Clockers can identify them as they conduct their workouts in accordance with New York State Racing and Wagering Board Rule 4003.53 which states:

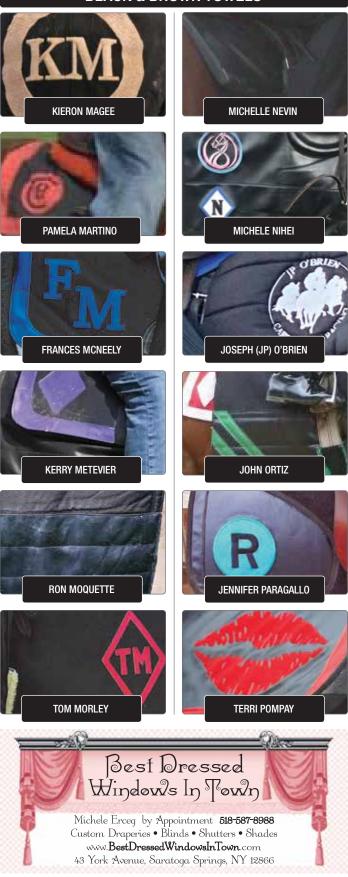
"...A trainer desiring to engage a horse in a work-out shall, prior to such work-out, cause the following to be specified to a work-out coordinator: the name of the horse, the distance the horse will work-out and at what point on the facility the work-out is intended to begin..."

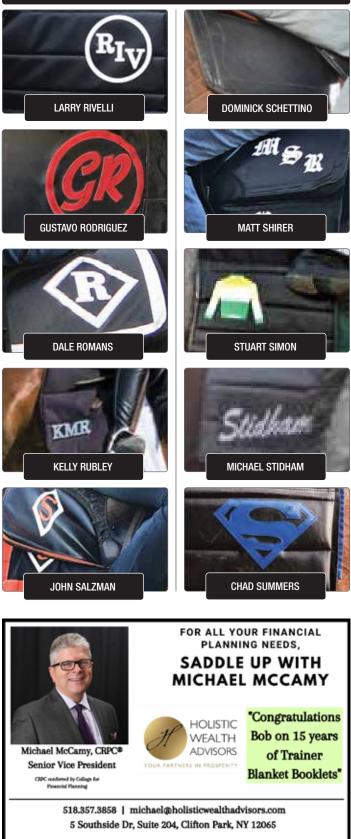
The people who time the horses as they workout in the morning are called Clockers. The Clockers not only time the horses and note the distance that they run, but also how hard they were ridden and urged by the rider.





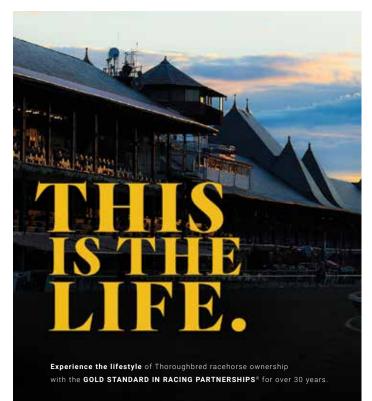






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# Empty Easel

aratoga Springs native R.C. (Bob) Ewell said farewell to the Saratoga backstretch community last Thanksgiving weekend. He was 91. And he was a friend.

For decades Bob woke with the birds to begin his trek through the Saratoga barns to chronicle the behind-the-scenes activity of thoroughbred horse racing daily life. His camera captured everyday early morning images of the horses and workers as seen through his creative eye. Saying that he



"did not want to invest time nor money to pursue formal training and also ensure I was influenced as little as possible by others", this self-taught watercolorist, would transform these images to produce over 2,000 paintings in his unique style. Every two years he exhibited his works at the Saratoga Springs Heritage Area Visitor Center – a highlight of the summer season. R.C. "Bob" Ewell paintings are found in many homes in the horse racing world.

Bob was a friend of the *Guide to Saratoga Trainers' Saddle Towels* as well. For each of the 15 editions, he donated new images spotted during morning workouts to help make this publication what it is today. As you thumb through this 15th Edition you will find examples of what Bob put to canvas during his 31 year journey through Saratoga's mornings.

And if you find yourself watching Oklahoma workouts from the Whitney Viewing Stand look for exercise riders tipping a crop as they pass the ranch style home at the 5/8 pole where Bob lived.

Part of him is still there ....





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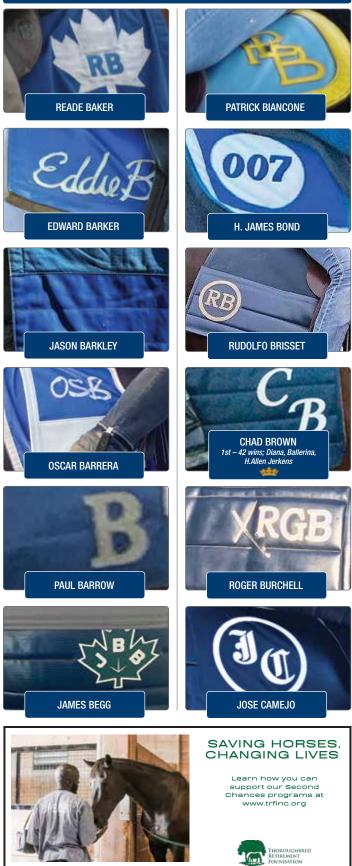
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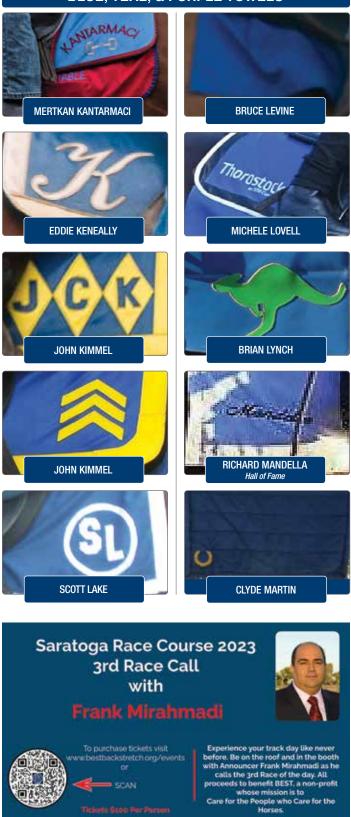


2023 Summer Tours Jul. 1-Sept 2 , Tues.-Wed.-Thurs. Fri. -Sat. 9:00-1:00

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All Alone - RC Ewell







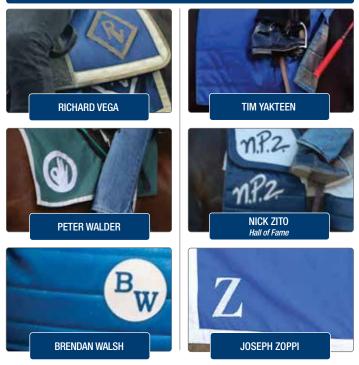


View from my Back Yard - RC Ewell



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SUMMER 2023

#### **GREEN TOWELS**



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Floater - RC Ewell

## **GREEN TOWELS**



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AND

HALL • OF

FAN

and more! www.racingmuseum.org

# Why Saratoga?

Saratoga has the **Best of the Best** competing at the top level of the sport for the most money at any US meet. Racing is a business, and taking home a check is good for business!

Success in any business is fueled by a driving passion and hard work. There are no "days off" in this business. There is overhead. Success in the horseracing business is entering and placing in races. "There's no money to be made if the horse stays in the barn." Purses keep a trainer in business, and a smart trainer knows his horse and the

best spot to for it to compete.

This year's Kentucky Derby winning trainer, Gustavo Delgado, – another "Giant Killer" – said it best after winning Saratoga's Grade 1 "The Test" with **Paolo Queen** in 2016 – "If you work hard, and you have a good horse- a really good horse – he can take you to Dubai, to the moon, to outer space, and to Saratoga!" Kinda says it all for Saratoga, doesn't it?



Gustavo Delgado

Why do trainers make the trip from all over the Americas, Europe, and sometimes the Far East

try for a win at this oldest racing venue in the US? Of the 65 racetracks in the country, only 12 offer competition at the highest level – Grade I Stakes. There are only 97 sanctioned Grade 1's in the country. After discounting the rolling venues for the Breeder's Cup races, in 2023, the most – 19 (22%!) – were held at Saratoga (see page 42). The highest purse money for Grade I's awaits here – over \$10M. Purses for the 416 races held over the 40 days of racing here in 2022 totaled \$49.6M – averaging \$192,000 a race! More than 200 trainers shipped their stables to compete at this elite race meet in 2022. Many walked away with satisfied Owners.

The competition between the very best horses, trainers, and jockeys, offering the best racing in the country for the highest purses in the only racecourse within city limits of a community that works hard to welcome these stars and their fans is here at Saratoga. For those involved in the game, nothing tops a win photo at America's Race Course. It makes that hard work and dedication worthwhile. And it is certainly good for business – especially when you beat the odds and make it another "Graveyard of a Favorite." Champions have lost here at The Spa – as the "Giant Killer" depicted on the Cover proved when his horse **Onion** surprised the world when he defeated that "Tremendous Machine" – **Secretariat** in the 1974 Whitney!



#### Every trainer's question: "What race class do I want to enter my horse?"

acing classes categorize horses based on experience and skill levels, pitting horses at similar stages of their careers against each other to make races competitive. The trainer's decision to select the race to enter is strategic. Choosing the right race to enter is a combination of many things. A *"Condition Book,"* published by the track racing office, gives trainers a choice of race classes to enter their horse to have a good chance to win – or, as in some cases, - put the horse up for sale to allow another trainer to condition him. Many claimed

horses have gone on to achieve real success

 Stakes Races – top horses, largest purses; entry fee (stake) require which is part of the purse. Criteria for each class established annually by the Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association (TOBA). Nominations and entries made weeks to months in advance. Purse criteria assigned. One recent example is trainer **Eric Reed** who claimed a horse for \$30,000 and parlayed that into \$1.86M by winning the 2022 \$3M Kentucky Derby with Rich Strike. He picked the right race!

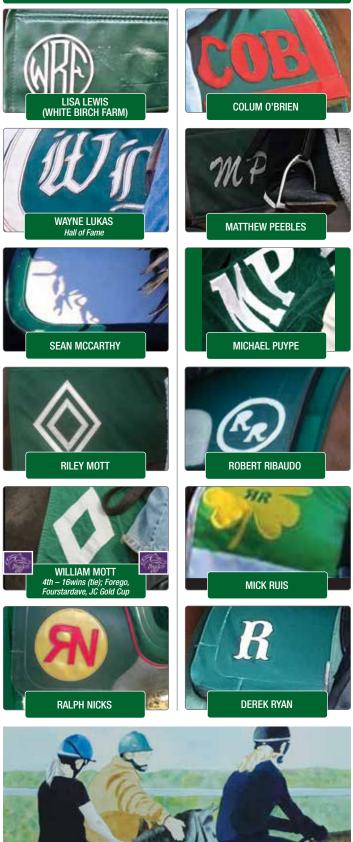
- Graded horses of same age group and sometimes sex. Assigned weights can vary depending on age and sex and number of races won.
   G I – \$300k minimum; Grade II – \$200k minimum; Grade III – \$100k minimum.
- o Listed, Restricted, Unlisted Minimum purse \$75k
- o Invitational Stake
  - $\checkmark$  Special horses "Invited" to enter without owners contributing to the purse.
- o Handicap Stakes
   ✓ Official handicapper assigns weights to each horse, to equalize the competition.
- Overnight A race of any type developed during the meet; entries close a specific number of hours before running. Usually, a lesser caliber than regular stakes.
- Classified Allowance Last level of race before entering a Stakes race.
- Allowance A step up in class for Maiden and claimed horses. No claiming price.
  - o Most variety: weight assigned to even the field, (speed affected by the weight carried).
  - o Horses not yet ready for stakes competition.
  - o An "allowance" is given horses not winning since a specific date or a set amount of money.
  - o Typically, 5 pounds less than other horses in the race carry.
  - o Many sub-classes of allowance races.

#### Starter Allowance

- o Gives horses a chance to race without being claimed.
- Maiden
  - o Maiden horses that never won a race Special Weight.
- Claiming Lowest class of racing; horses in the race are for sale.

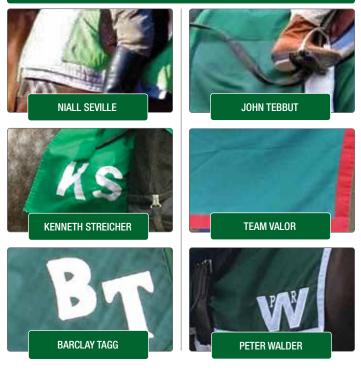


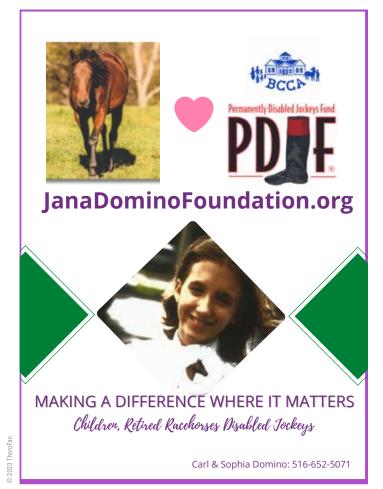
#### **GREEN TOWELS**



A Horseman's Touch - RC Ewell

## **GREEN TOWELS**



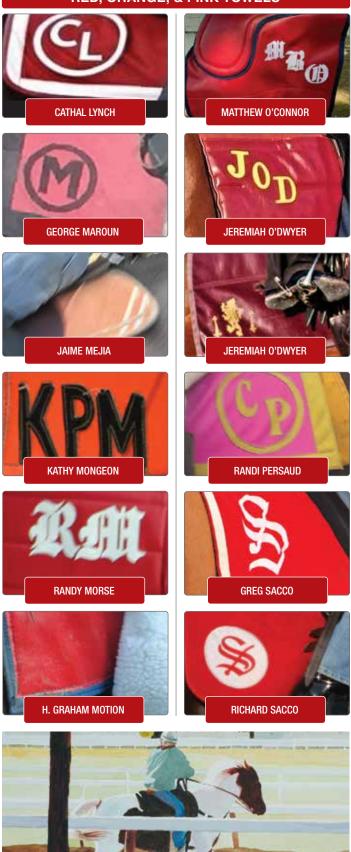




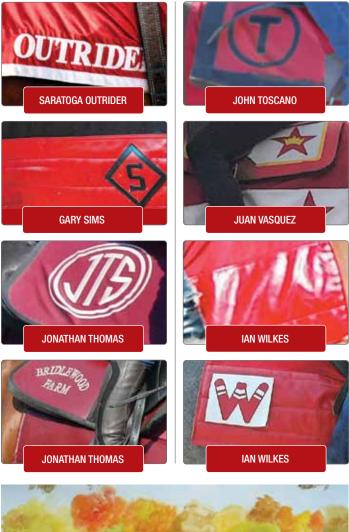
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inted Pony - RC Ewell







#### 2022 SARATOGA LEADING TRAINERS (BY WINS)

	Name	Wins
1	Chad Brown	42
2	Todd Pletcher	38
3	Christophe Clement	18
4	Bill Mott	16 (tie)
4	Michael Maker	16 (tie)
5	Linda Rice	14
6	Brad Cox	11
7	Wesley Ward	9
8	David Donk	8
9	D. Wayne Lukas	7 (tie)
9	Thomas Morely	7 (tie)
10	Mark Casse	6 (tie)
10	George Weaver	6 (tie)
10	Jorge Abreu	6 (tie)
10	Phil Serpe	6 (tie)
10	Saffie Joseph	6 (tie)
10	Horacio DePaz	6 (tie)
10	Joe Sharp	6 (tie)
10	Jeremiah Englehart	6 (tie)
10	Phil Bauer	

## 2022 SARATOGA LEADING TRAINERS (BY PURSE)

	Name	Purse
1	Chad Brown	\$6,182,875
2	Todd Pletcher	\$ 5,228,755
3	Bill Mott	\$ 3,262,117
4	Steve Asmussen	\$ 2,558,096
5	Christophe Clement	\$ 2,212,291
6	Michael Maker	\$1,382,036
7	Brad Cox	\$1,224,229
8	Wesley Ward	\$ 1,190,253
9	Linda Rice	\$ 1,075,540



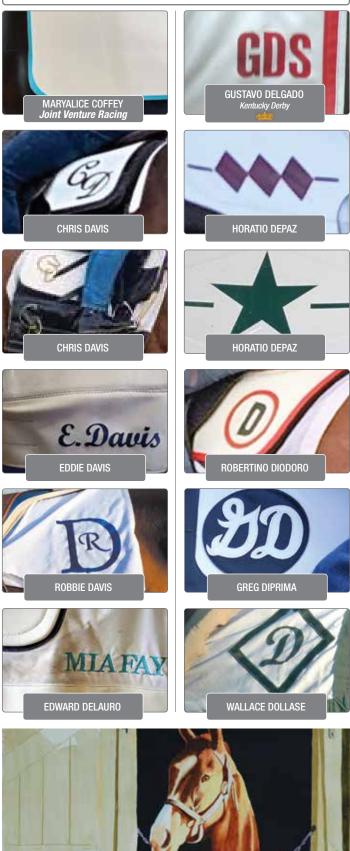
#### WHITE & GREY TOWELS



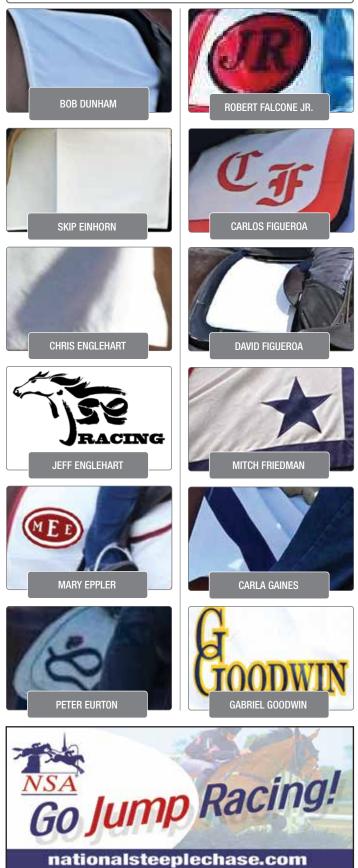
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#### WHITE & GREY TOWELS



Strike a Pose - RC Ewell



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Shug's Barn – RC Ewell







#### 2022 SARATOGA GRADE 1 WINNING TRAINERS

Race	Trainer	Purse	Winner
The Diana	Chad Brown	\$ 500,000	In Italian
CC American Oaks.	Todd Pletcher	\$ 500,000	Nest
AG Vanderbilt	Steve Asmussen	\$ 350,000	Jackie's Warrior
A.P. Smithwick	Kate Dalton	\$ 150,000	Down Royal
The Whitney	Todd Pletcher	\$1,000,000	Life Is Good
The Test	Wesley Ward	\$ 500,000	Chi Town Lady
The Alabama	Todd Pletcher	\$ 600,000	Nest
The Jonathan Sheppard	Jack Fisher	\$ 150,000	Snap Decision
The Sword Dancer	Christophe Clement	\$600,000	Gufo
The Travers	Steve Asmussen	\$1,500,000	Epicenter
The Ballerina	Chad Brown	\$275,000	Goodnight Olive
The Forego	Bill Mott	\$600,000	Cody's Wish
The Fourstardave.	Bill Mott	\$ 500,000	Casa Creed
The Personal Ensign	Todd Pletcher	\$600,000	Malathaat
The H. Allen Jerkens	Chad Brown	\$500,000	Jack Christopher
The Spinaway	Phil Serpe	\$ 300,000	Leave No Trace
The Hopeful	Todd Pletcher	\$300,000	Forte
Jockey Club Gold Cup	Bill Mott	\$1,000,000	Olympiad

# what to look for in a Workout

Owners, trainers, jockeys, clockers, handicappers and pretty much anyone else in racing watch morning workouts and try to learn something. How fast is that horse? How competitive is this horse? How fit? How ready? Expert or not, it can be great fun to watch training at a racetrack, especially one as historic and meaningful as Saratoga. A racehorse trains almost every day. He or she gallops (slower than race speed) sometimes as far as 2 miles; jogs (trots) to warm up or to get some light exercise. Racehorses work or breeze (race speed) once a week or so, usually a half-mile or 5 furlongs though sometimes longer. While watching the action, look for riders trying to teach horses how to switch leads (left on the turns, right in the stretch), how to relax, how to wait for their cues. Riders don't want horses to pull too hard, or to be too lazy. It's all about balance. A galloping racehorse should be energetic, bouncy, light on its feet, but manageable. Even a novice can tell if a horse is pulling too hard – its rider will be leaning back, tugging on the reins. A rider on a relaxed horse will look just the opposite - hands down, reins comparatively loose, weight balanced over the saddle. Working or breezing, the same thoughts apply. A breezing racehorse should be doing it at least somewhat on its own – with little encouragement or urging. Discerning names can be difficult in the busy atmosphere, but morning exercise offers a rare chance to find some heroes. Keep an eye on the saddle towels and other clues and you might just recognize a superstar such as Horse of Year, Eclipse, & Whitney winner Knicks Go, Travers winner Essential Quality and Hopeful winner Gunnite. Before and after a training session, you can see horses "standing in" to face the track. It's a way for them to relax, take a deep breath and realize life's not always about running.

- Joe Clancy "The Saratoga Special" (thisishorseracing.com)

#### **YELLOW & GOLD TOWELS**





New York's horse racing industry provides jobs and supports families. Farmers, breeders, trainers, veterinarians, local small business owners, union workers, racetrack employees and more all contribute to New York Horse Racing. The impact of our industry is felt far beyond the 11 racetracks that exist in New York State.





#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.NYHORSERACING.COM

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Bond NY Breds - RC Ewell

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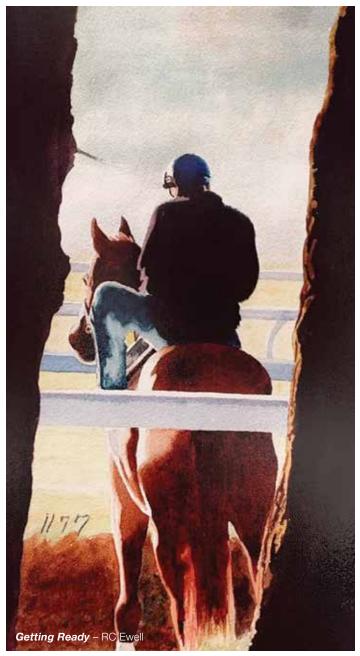
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#### **MISSING TRAINERS**

Listed below are the 74 trainers that entered races at Saratoga in 2022 whose saddle towels are not listed in the 2023 Guide. Please send images of these and any others that you spot this season so that they may be included in the 16th edition, should they enter in 2023. Send to giordanorj@aol.com to help continue to improve this publication. Working together works!

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#### One last one...



The workout clock stopped this year for Clocker, Elmer's Gap, and Morning Line Gap Attendant Dave Lynett. When this publication began 15 years

ago, Dave would help identify unknown towel logos for us and let us know to be on the lookout for new arrivals. He was present every day from "Tom Law" day

in mid-April to the Oklahoma Closing day in late October.

All Photographs used in this booklet were given to ThoroFan for use in this and similar projects that may follow.



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