



*Thoroughbred Farms
In California*

Tranquility Farm: A Horse Haven

Article and Photos by ANTHONY ANDREWS

Upon my first visit to Tranquility Farm, The Harry A. Bizantz Memorial Center for Equine Retirement, I was excited about what I was going to see. In speaking with Priscilla Clark, I was moved by her love and enthusiasm for the horses whom she cared for, and the mission that she had been a part of for almost 12 years. It seemed as though in a world where even champions are forgotten, Priscilla has found a place that they can call home; either until their final days or until they were placed into a permanent, loving home forever.

I myself was moved by what I saw. Mares and foals playing beneath a beautiful sunlit afternoon. Or the simple joy of being able to stand amongst them as they grazed in a field of green grass. Upon my initial visit (I have been there three times to date), I was greeted by many of the horses. They included I Love Silver and Fly to the Wire, both of whom greeted me with a kind eye and a warm and gentle rub of their noses. I had always heard that Thoroughbreds were flighty and hi-strung, yet the ones whom I met then were anything but. They were kind and curious, thoughtful and observant. Like most horses, they loved the idea of having their pictures taken. They even posed for some pictures while grazing in their pasture. All in all, it was a wonderful experience.

It is difficult in this day and age, to find something of such beauty and authenticity. I find such beauty in horses, Thor-

oughbreds or not. What Priscilla and her partners have done at Tranquility Farm is something that is equal in its beauty and authenticity. What they bring is a love for the horse. The type of love that is tried, true, tested and authentic.

For anyone who possesses such a love for the horse then they should take it upon themselves to visit her farm, even for just one afternoon. I am confident that what they will find will be precisely what I found upon my first visit on June 13, 2009. They will see the beauty of the horse, and its transcendent nature that propels it well above and beyond

the racetrack. They will find friends and companions. They will find an intelligence and depth within a creature who was made to provide us with a lasting companionship.

What Tranquility Farm provides in service to its horses will certainly be passed on to those who walk through its gates. What they will see are the reflections of proud and spirited champions. What

they will hear is a voice reflective of that innate human bond which man has with the horse.

In my many excursions to Hollywood and Santa Anita Park and Keeneland and Bay Meadows Racecourse, I have always awestruck by the beauty of the Thoroughbred athlete. It was not until my trip to Tranquility Farm that I realized the true grace and beauty of these magnificent animals. Horses have provided so very much for human-



Full Moon Madness



kind. Tranquility Farm is a measure of the human race's desire to simply love and give back to a creature who has done so much, especially for the history of the great sport of Thoroughbred racing.

Tucked away in the Tehachapi Mountains of Central California, this special non-profit ranch exists solely for the purpose of providing a retirement haven for some of racing's brightest stars. The transformation of Tranquility Farm from an abandoned property to the vibrant facility it has become today, began with its purchase and donation by Gary Bizantz in 1998. Since that time, the combined support of the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC), Thoroughbred Charities of America (TCA), California Retirement Management Account (CARMA) and many private philanthropists has helped develop the 40-acre property into a well-equipped farm that can comfortably house and paddock up to 100 horses.

One of the many California-bred racing stars retired at Tranquility Farm is millionaire Full Moon Madness. Bred by Mr. and Mrs. John C. Mabee, "Mooney" was beloved by racing fans as a veritable iron horse, starting 71 times for 19 wins, 12 in stakes company, from the ages of two to 12. His career was highlighted by two wins each in the Answer Do Stakes and Robert K. Kerlan Memorial and Valiant Pete Handicaps, a victory in the \$150,000 California Cup Sprint Handicap, two graded stakes placings, and a win at Golden Gate Fields in the final start of his stellar career. Still sound and strong today, Full Moon Madness literally ran out the clock in his 10-season racing career.

Fellow Cal Cup winners Areyoutalkintome and Lennyfromalibu also make Tranquility Farm their retirement home, spending their leisurely days roaming the farm's green pastures.

Although the retirement of worthy warriors like this trio of geldings is essential to the mission of Tranquility Farm, an equally important function of the program is to rehabilitate injured horses who are able to then go on to second careers or be found an adoptive home. In 2008, the program placed

more than 50 such horses, and consistently offers the public a wide selection of healthy, sound horses for show and pleasure riding. Every horse donated to Tranquility Farm who is physically able and has a suitable temperament is considered adoptable in order to make room for future residents.

One of Tranquility's main fundraisers each year is the November Stallion Season Auction, that has been very well-supported by the membership of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association (CTBA) for many years. Aply chaired by volunteer Barbara Corey, the revenues from this annual event come just at the time when the winter bills for hay and bedding put the greatest strain on the farm's finances. Because of their close association with many of California's breeding farms, Tranquility Farm has made a special effort to assist whenever possible in aiding breeders who need to find new homes for surplus broodmares and young horses deemed unsuitable for racing. Each spring will find a small band of broodmares who have been given sanctuary at the farm to raise their foals, much to the delight of sport horse enthusiasts who appreciate purchasing these young, unraced prospects.

What the future holds for a fragile horse farm that is dependant upon the charity of horse lovers in a time when racing is so challenged, is hard to say. Priscilla, who has managed the farm and raised the funding to keep the horses thriving since the farm's inception, is realistic about the number of horses who can enter the program. "We have so many wonderful retirees here who need, and have always needed, our charitable support, that we must now ask donating owners to step up and help us manage the costs for the rehabilitation and adoption of their horses."

And stepping forward they are, with generous sponsorships and by contributing to the new CARMA funding option for retirement farms. Tranquility Farm's rehab barn is still full of new recruits who will someday make wonderful riding horses, and their pastures are overflowing with happy old warriors living the good life that they so richly deserve. 🐾



Areyoutalkintome