



DOCUMENTARIES ON DVD WORTH VIEWING

Two excellent documentaries dealing with Thoroughbred racing have recently hit the DVD market with appeal not only for the sport's regulars, but for general audiences as well.

On the Muscle: Portrait of a Thoroughbred Racing Stable is an inside look at the barn of trainer Richard Mandella over the course of nearly a year, while *Laffit: All About Winning* is a biography of the all-time leading rider.

On the Muscle comes from the husband and wife filmmaking team of Bill Yahraus and Robin Rosenthal, who have brought forth three one-hour episodes included in the DVD. They gained unbridled access to the Southern California-based Mandella, and are there when the trainer gets under a horse with a spotlight to examine a hoof at 5 a.m., as well as in the box seats with him as he agonizes over tough losses or celebrates big wins.

The couple's previous documentary, *A Circus Season: Travels With Tarzan*, fol-

lowed a family-owned circus on tour and was broadcast nationally by PBS. "We have our own riding horses, but we were very green about racehorses when we started this," Rosenthal said.

Someone recommended Mandella to the couple, and it would be hard to imagine the project succeeding with any other trainer as its focus. "Once Richard made up his mind to do this, there was never any hesitation," Rosenthal said. "He

never acted differently when we came with the cameras, and he never, ever said, 'Don't shoot this.' I don't think we would have gotten that access anywhere else."

The documentary follows the ups and downs of six horses in the Mandella barn throughout 2002, with added coverage of the 2003 World Thoroughbred Championships, which Mandella dominated. The DVD is available at

www.ponyhighway.com or www.ExclusivelyEquine.com for \$30 plus shipping. Mandella will do a signing at Santa Anita Oct. 8.

Laffit: All About Winning features the retired jockey's life told mainly in his own words. Pincay proves to be a fascinating subject, and producer/director Jim Wilson, who won an Academy Award as producer of *Dancing With Wolves*, gets him to open up about all facets of his life on and off the racetrack.

The documentary features gorgeous footage of 1960s and '70s racing, much of it from the collection of the Joe Burnham Estate, as well as a wealth of still photographs. Footage of Bill Shoemaker and Johnny Longden is particularly evocative. Wilson takes Pincay back to the rider's native Panama, where he visits his birthplace and reunites with his childhood baseball team.

Footage of notable Pincay rides aboard the likes of Landaluce, Crystal Water, Swale, Affirmed, and Phone Chatter are liberally mixed in. Actor Kevin Costner narrates. "This is a work that racing fans, their families, and people not even into racing can enjoy," Wilson said. "Teachers in the Hispanic community here in Los Angeles are getting copies for their schools. It is a human story that goes beyond racing.

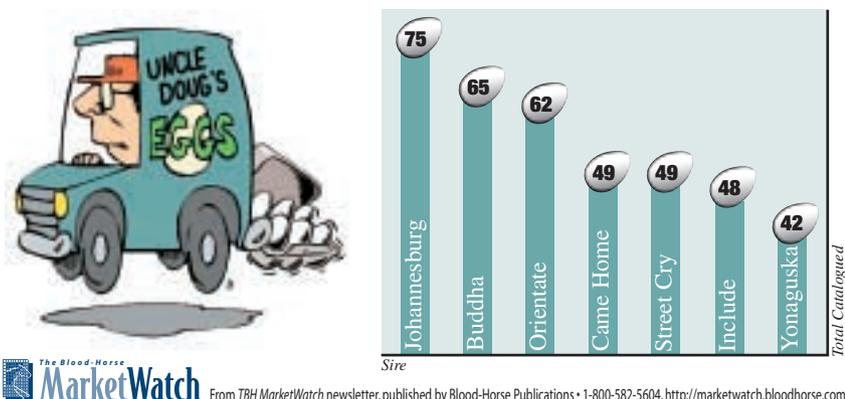
"I'd asked Laffit five years before he retired, but he didn't want to do this then. Now I know why. It was about winning and discipline, and he wouldn't have anything get in the way of his daily routine. Now, he has really opened up, and he's a star—a very likable character."

Copies of the documentary will be given away to the first 20,000 fans at Santa Anita Oct. 15, with Pincay on hand for a signing. The documentary is also available at www.laffit.net for \$19.95 plus shipping.



GRADE A EXTRA LARGE

Taking a look at this year's first-crop sires at the Keeneland September yearling sale, *TBH MarketWatch* lists the leaders by number offered in this year's sale:



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