

## ***Whiteley A Breed Apart...***

With a thoughtful, scholarly demeanor that evinces his Ph.D. in psychology, Rob Whiteley might seem like he would be more at home in a college lecture hall than a breeding farm. But take a look at his track record, and there's no doubt where Whiteley belongs. Over the past 25 years, the 63-year-old has proven himself an astute horseman and breeder who has planned the matings that have produced such top horses as Henny Hughes, El Corredor, Strong Hope, Roman Ruler and Badge of Silver. Over the last month or so, Whiteley's enjoyed a particularly fruitful month in the auction ring, especially with the offspring of Mr. Greeley, a stallion Whiteley supported in his early days at stud. In August, a chestnut son of Mr. Greeley--Win My Heart that Whiteley's Liberation Farm bred in partnership with Oratis Thoroughbreds topped Fasig-Tipton's Saratoga sale at \$2.2 million. Through consignors Trakside Farm and Brandywine Farm, Whiteley brought a total of 11 Mr. Greeley yearlings to Keeneland September, and he was on hand yesterday to watch seven of those go through the ring during Thursday's fourth session. Of the seven, five sold for \$1,270,000, an average of \$254,000. That included hip 1050, a colt which Brandywine co-bred and consigned that was hammered down to B. Wayne Hughes for \$500,000. Two others failed to meet their reserve.

**Whiteley cont.**

What first attracted Rob Whiteley to Mr. Greeley as a stud prospect? "My breeding method is first to start matching up physical qualities of mares with stallions," Whiteley explained. "Mr. Greeley is a beautiful horse



**Mr. Greeley**  
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himself, and gets a high percentage of well-balanced, athletic horses, and I found he fit a lot of my mares. I was especially impressed with him after I co-bred El Corredor, who was my best individual that year. That made me fully appreciate Mr. Greeley. As a commercial breeder, I need to get a high percentage of athletes who also gets a decent sale individual, and Mr. Greeley does that." El Corredor, whom Whiteley's Liberation Farm bred in partnership with Needham-Betz Thoroughbreds, sold for \$110,000 as a yearling in 1998 and went on to win seven of 10 races, including the GI Cigar Mile. He is now a successful young sire at Hill 'n' Dale. El Corredor's success compelled Whiteley to return to Mr. Greeley and, in a tactic he employs often, he bred a large block of his mares to the current Gainesway resident. Two years ago, he sent 15 mares to Mr. Greeley, and is now enjoying great success with the resulting offspring. While Mr. Greeley has been very good to Whiteley, it could also be said that Whiteley's been good to the stallion regarding mare support. Unfortunately, Whiteley was forced to abandon his blitzkrieg breeding to the stallion when his fee rose to \$75,000. "As they go up the ladder, I have to look for the next promising stallion," he laughed. "I'm a surfer looking for the next big wave on the horizon. I have to identify them as they're coming on." Other stallions who Whiteley supported heavily with blocks of mares include Grand Slam, the sire of Strong Hope; and Hennessy, the sire of Henny Hughes. Similarly, both stallions subsequently saw their fees rise to a level Whiteley didn't feel comfortable breeding at, though he says he is now using Grand Slam again since the Coolmore stallion's fee dropped to \$35,000. Whiteley currently sees a number of attractive opportunities out there, that "next big wave." "I bred a number of mares to Value Plus last year--and his foals impressed me very much," he said. "And I think since we got Bernstein, he's great value. And of course I'm partial to Henny Hughes, but he also fits a number of my mares. Basically, I'm trying to breed to talented milers who could maybe carry their speed a little farther."