

Catherine Parke Makes the Right Call

Her action rewarded when Algorithms wins the Holy Bull

Catherine Parke faced a dilemma at the 2010 Keeneland September yearling sale. A handsome Bernardini colt in her Valkyre Stud consignment wouldn't allow his throat to be examined endoscopically.

If she didn't force the issue, it could reduce his appeal to prospective buyers. If she did, he might injure himself and his handlers.

In the end Parke said she decided "to put the horse first" and let Algorithms avoid the close scrutiny. That choice hurt his value in the auction ring, but it paid off in the long run.

On Jan. 29, the bay 3-year-old romped to a five-length victory in the Holy Bull Stakes (gr. III) at Gulfstream Park. His beaten rivals included last year's champion 2-year-old and Grey Goose Breeders' Cup Juvenile (gr. I) winner Hansen.

The victory was Algorithms' third in three career races and his first in an added-money event. Todd Pletcher trains the colt for Starlight Racing.

"Mr. (Jack) Wolf (of Starlight) and Mr. Pletcher have been very excited about him," Parke said. "I thought he would win, but I was really blown away by how easily he won and how he did it. He took a deep breath and was very relaxed on the backside. Then he moved off and was still going away at the wire, so it was pretty exciting."

California resident Patricia Klussman bred Algorithms in the name Oakbrook Farm. He was foaled and raised at Parke's Valkyre operation near Georgetown, Ky.

"He was very intelligent," Parke remembered. "He was

a good mover—a beautiful mover—and very athletic in the field. He also was a very correct horse with good size and good length."

Algorithms' conformation and attitude made him a top sale prospect, as did his

encode's foals are lovely, and he (Algorithms) was too, but he was different from the rest because his head and neck didn't sit quite as high on his shoulder and he moved a little differently," Parke said. "He had more of a two-turn

cost Mrs. Klussman a lot of money. But, if he had gotten injured, we would have had nothing."

Parke hoped the result of the endoscopic exam on the farm and her promise to stand behind Algorithms "100%" if something was found to be wrong would satisfy prospective buyers. Apparently that strategy didn't work.

Wolf and his Starlight team, which includes former trainer Frankie Brothers, purchased Algorithms for \$170,000 in a year when Bernardini's yearlings brought an average price of \$202,400. Prior to then, Ava Knowsthecode's offspring had sold for as much as \$400,000 as yearlings. In 2011 a full brother to Algorithms named Encode brought \$625,000 at the Keeneland September auction.

"I guess Mr. Wolf was the only person who truly believed me, and that's why he was able to get him (Algorithms) for such a reasonable price," Parke said. "We were disappointed at the time because everyone who looked at him said they really liked him. But it was just one of those things. Mrs. Klussman feels the same way I do and has always chosen to do the right thing for the horse. The return for us wasn't immediate; we had to wait a little while. But it was certainly worth the wait."

The Holy Bull victory was good publicity for Parke and Valkyre Stud, and it also enhanced the value of Ava Knowsthecode and her offspring. The mare is carrying a foal by Tapit and is due any day. She will be bred back to Bernardini.

By Deirdre B. Biles



Algorithms

bloodlines. The colt's sire was a champion and he is out of the winning Cryptoclearance mare Ava Knowsthecode, who finished third in the 1997 Senorita Stakes (gr. IIIT). Her previous foals include Keyed Entry (by Honour and Glory), who captured the 2006 Hutcheson Stakes (gr. II) and 2007 Deputy Minister Handicap (gr. III) for Starlight, Don Lucarelli, and Paul Saylor while running third in the 2006 Wood Memorial Stakes (gr. I); 2011 Woody Stephens Stakes (gr. II) winner Justin Phillip (by First Samurai); 2011 Miami Mile Handicap (gr. IIIT) and Elkwood Stakes winner Successful Mission (by Successful Appeal); and 2005 Senorita Stakes winner Alex's Allure (by Sky Classic).

"All of Ava Knowsth-

look than a sprinter look to him."

Prior to being shipped to Keeneland for the yearling sale, Algorithms willingly underwent an endoscopic exam to make sure his throat was in good working order. But after he arrived on the sale grounds, he wanted nothing more to do with the routine test.

"He was going to literally flip over and hit his head; he wasn't kidding," Parke said. "It wasn't because of his personality; he was a very quiet horse. It was just something at the sale. He was nervous, and he really was going to hurt himself. Several veterinarians tried to scope him, and after about the third try I just had to tell people they couldn't. The horse is the most important thing to me and I realized it could