

April 2017
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PA-BRED REMINDERS

- **Early registration:**
Within 365 days of foaling
- **Yearling registration:**
Dec. 31 of yearling year
- **Stallion registration:**
April 30 of year breeding
- **Broodmare domicile:**
Nov. 1 or 14 days after a public sale

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PA Bred: Unique Bella a Starlet

By Emily Shields

Unique Bella has turned heads from her beginnings as a foal at Brushwood Farm in Malvern, and now serves notice as the prohibitive favorite for the Kentucky Oaks-G1. The flashy gray filly has been so commanding in her four victories that many believe she should take on the colts in the Kentucky Derby-G1 instead of staying against her own gender.

Two more months will tick past before that decision must be made. Unique Bella is Triple Crown nominated, but is also more likely to stay against other fillies on the wishes of her trainer, Jerry Hollendorfer. In contrast, however, stablemate and fellow standout filly Songbird was never nominated to face the boys in the Run for the Roses, and Hollendorfer's assistant trainer Dan Ward noted that there is physically no comparison between the two at the same point in their careers.

"Unique Bella is bigger and stronger, much more like a colt," he said.

That's not to take anything away from Songbird, a two-time Eclipse Award winner and nearly two-time Breeders' Cup winner. The daughter of Medaglia d'Oro has won 11 of 12 starts, including the 14 Hands Winery Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies-G1 in 2015, then missed by a nose in the Longines Breeders' Cup Distaff-G1 last year. She has earned \$3,712,000 through 2016, and is gearing up for a 2017 campaign.

While Songbird won three of her Grade 1 races as a juvenile, Unique Bella didn't even break her maiden until November. She



was always oversized, even as a foal, said Brushwood's bloodstock manager Reiley McDonald. "She was a nice big foal, and was always quite pretty all the way through the time she was sold as a yearling," he said.

During the 2015 Keeneland September Yearling Sale, Unique Bella brought a final bid of \$400,000 from Liliana Solari and Carlos Heller's Don Alberto Corp. "I was always puzzled as to why she didn't light more people up," McDonald mused. "She's a big, rangy, two-turn filly with a huge shoulder, great length, and strong hip. She actually looked like a huge bargain then when the Don Alberto people bought her, but she's a much bigger bargain now."

Unique Bella sports a royal pedigree, being by Tapit and out of Breeders' Cup Ladies Classic-G1 winner Unrivaled Belle. The \$1,854,706-earner was purchased by Brushwood for \$2.8 million in 2011 and bred to Medaglia d'Oro the next year. While in the sales ring, Unrivaled Belle acted up so badly she had to be led away as the bidding continued on without her. Her retirement was necessitated when she flipped in the pad-

dock at Belmont Park prior to a race and broke her withers. Unique Bella has made training difficult by inheriting her mother's antics.

"Not only are the Tapits high strung," Ward explained, "but her mother was, too. Unique Bella is settling down now, but that's with schooling her seven days a week. It takes work, but she's getting better and better. She's a sweetheart in the stall, but she can be upset by things happening outside, like if people pick up and drag a garbage can. But if she gets stirred up, I just go in there with her and she settles right down really nicely."

After impressing clockers in the morning, Unique Bella was a heavy favorite for her debut, June 23 at Santa Anita. She broke slowly, was forced wide, and eventually settled for second behind 9-1 upsetter Chalon. She did not resurface until November at Del Mar, and put on a procession, running away to win by 10¼ lengths in a 6½ furlong maiden contest. The ease and brilliance with which Unique Bella broke her maiden placed her squarely on the top of many Oaks watch lists.

Unique Bella surprisingly did not go off favored in her sophomore debut, the \$200,000 Santa Ynez Stakes-G2 at Santa Anita in January. That honor went to Shane's Girlfriend, runaway winner of the \$400,000 Delta Downs Princess

Stakes-G3 by 13¼ lengths. Unique Bella effortlessly cruised past that rival and crushed the field once again, winning the 7-furlong race by 7½ lengths under Mike Smith.

Only four fillies would start in the \$200,000 Las Virgenes Stakes-G2 Feb. 5, as few wanted to try Unique Bella, although one was Breeders' Cup champion and 2016 Eclipse Award-winning 2-year-old filly Champagne Room, making her 2017 debut. Both the competition and the one mile distance—Unique Bella's first try around two turns—were cause for concern, but Smith had his charge leading by 5 lengths at the top of the stretch, and they went on to score by 8¾ lengths, with Champagne Room finishing third.

Her march continued in the \$100,000 Santa Ysabel Stakes-G3 March 4, a race that drew seven runners but was reduced to a field of six with the scratch of Noted and Quoted. Unique Bella broke slowly from the rail, bulled her way between horses to take the lead around the first turn, and had a few tense moments in the stretch as Grade 1 winner Abel Tasman threatened, but ultimately drew away to win. Jockey Smith admitted after the race, "I was extremely anxious," but added that Unique Bella's "extreme, superior talent" sets her apart from the competition.

Now a dual Grade 2 winner, Unique Bella has four wins in five starts for earnings of \$342,400. She makes Brushwood Stable proud every time she goes to the track. "It's always great to see horses you had something to do with perform at the highest levels," McDonald said. "It's great to even win a race with a horse you've bred or raced, but to have a filly that's become this good? Fingers crossed she can go on and win the Oaks."

Betty Moran's Brushwood has since sold Unrivaled Belle, who topped the 2016 Keeneland November Sale with a bid of \$3.8 million from Mandy Pope. The Don Alberto Corp. were the immediate under-bidders, hoping to obtain more members of the family. Unrivaled Belle, who produced a Malibu Moon filly in 2015, and was barren in 2016, foaled a Tapit filly in January and will visit that stallion for the third time in 2017.

"It was a business decision," McDonald said of selling Unrivaled Belle. "She was the highest-priced horse sold in America last year."

Although he is excited about Unique Bella's prospects this spring, McDonald is too wise a horseman not to temper his enthusiasm. "I always say, one race at a time," he cautioned. "But I'd like to see what comes beyond the Kentucky Oaks."

A few words from the Executive Secretary

One of the most exciting racing days of the year is coming up! Unique Bella is working her way towards the Kentucky Oaks and is the heavy favorite in the future pool. We wish Unique Bella and her connections the best of luck. In 2016, PA-Breds were winners of 12 graded stakes. Pennsylvania breeding can take you places you've only dreamed about—the winner's

circle in some of the biggest races in the country.

It's not too late to pick your next champion and share in one of the best breeding programs in the country. Go to our website and view or download a copy of our 2017 Stallion and Boarding Farm Directory or give us a call for a free copy.

Don't forget about our Annual Member-



ship Meeting at the Kennett Square Country Club on May 17 at 4 p.m. and mark your calendar for our Awards Banquet at the Hotel Hershey on June 9 at 5 p.m.

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Bensalem, PA • 215-639-9000

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Bensalem, PA • 215-638-2012



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JOIN THE PHBA

Whether you are currently a breeder or an owner, or if you are just considering getting involved in this exciting industry, there are many reasons to join the PHBA. The PHBA is devoted to those involved in Pennsylvania's Thoroughbred breeding industry. A not-for-profit organization founded in 1948, we provide a number of services to members, including informational assistance, educational opportunities and a variety of social events.

The goal of the organization is to advocate on behalf of the state's breeding industry. We are mandated by statute as administrator of the Pennsylvania Breeding Fund program, and as official registrar of the Pennsylvania-Bred roster of eligible program participants.

Working with industry leaders over the years, PHBA has achieved several goals that have brought reform and benefits to breeders, owners, race tracks and the public. The PHBA is vital to everyone involved in breeding throughout Pennsylvania. Your support and participation can help Pennsylvania's breeding industry continue to grow and prosper.

2017 PA-Bred Stakes Schedule

ALL BREEDING FUND STAKES WILL INCLUDE A 25% PA-SIRED BONUS FOR 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD.
Proposed 2017 schedule—dates and conditions for all the PA-Bred Stakes are subject to change.
Please contact the Racing Offices for the most current schedules.

Sat., April 29 Parx	\$100,000 Lyman S , 3 & up, 7 fur.
	\$100,000 Foxy J. G. S , 3 & up, fillies & mares, 7 fur.
Sat., June 3 Penn	\$100,000 Lyphard S , 3 & up, fillies & mares, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi., turf
	\$100,000 Danzig S , 3YO, 6 fur.
	\$100,000 New Start S , 3YO fillies, 6 fur.
Sun., July 9 PID	\$100,000 Leematt S , 3 & up, 1 mi.
	\$100,000 Northern Fling S , 3 & up, fillies & mares, 1 mi.
Sat., July 22, Parx	\$100,000 Crowd Pleaser S , 3YO, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi., turf
	\$100,000 Power by Far S , 3 & up, fillies & mares, 5 fur., turf
Sat., Aug. 5, Penn	\$100,000 Robellino S , 3 & up, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi., turf
Sun., Aug. 6, PID	\$100,000 Malvern Rose S , 3YO fillies, 1 mi.
Sat., Sept. 2 Parx	\$100,000 Banjo Picker Sprint S , 3 & up, 6 fur.
PA Day At Races	\$100,000 Roanoke S , 3 & up, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi.
	\$100,000 Marshall Jenney S , 3 & up, 5 fur., turf
	\$100,000 Dr. Teresa Garofalo Memorial S , 3 & up, fillies & mares, 6 fur.
	\$100,000 Mrs. Penny S , 3 & up, fillies & mares, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi., turf
Sun., Sept. 3, PID	\$100,000 Mark McDermott S , 2YO, 6 fur.
Sun., Sept. 17, PID	\$100,000 Mrs. Henry D. Paxson Memorial S , 2YO fillies, 6 fur.
Sat., Sept. 23, Parx	\$100,000 Alphabet Soup S , 3 & up, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi., turf
Sat., Oct. 7 Parx	\$100,000 Plum Pretty S , 3 & up, fillies & mares, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ mi.
Wed., Nov. 22, Penn	\$100,000 Blue Mountain Juvenile Fillies S , 2YO fillies, 6 fur.
Sat., Dec. 2, Parx	\$100,000 Pennsylvania Nursery S , 2YO, colts & geldings, 7 fur.

Total: \$2,750,000



PENNSYLVANIA

**HORSE BREEDERS
ASSOCIATION**

2016 Iroquois Award Finalists

Please join us at our Annual Awards Banquet on
June 9, 2017, 5 p.m. at The Hotel Hershey

2 Year Old Colt

Downhill Racer
Trooper John

2 Year Old Filly

Diamond
Item
Rose Tree
Tulsa Queen

Turf Male

Edge of Reality
Granny's Kitten
Saratoga Jack

Turf Female

Al's Gal
Illuminant

Steeplechase

Senior Senator
Tempt Me Alex

3 Year Old Colt

Mor Spirit
Tom's Ready

3 Year Old Filly

Dark Nile
Lucy N' Ethel

Male Sprinter

Page McKenney
Res Judicata
Tom's Ready

Female Sprinter

Finest City
Lucy N' Ethel
Spelling Again

Broodmare

Be Envied '01
Dans La Ville '95
Goodbye Stranger '03

Older Male

Granny's Kitten
Page McKenney
Res Judicata
Roxbury N Overton
Saratoga Jack

Older Female

Al's Gal
Finest City
Illuminant
Spelling Again

PA Preferred: PA-Sired, PA-Bred

New Category:
Male & Female

Horse of the Year

Als Gal
Finest City
Tom's Ready