

Dana Point becomes major player

By LINDA DOUGHERTY

LENHARTSVILLE, Pa. – A lot has happened in the fifteen months since California native Gayle Gerth purchased a piece of property on Long Road and christened it Dana Point Farm.

Gerth and her general manager, Maria Vorhauer, have transformed the once-vacant barns and overgrown fields into one of the finest new thoroughbred facilities in Pennsylvania.



Vorhauer (top) and Gerth

They have developed a partnership with historic Castleton-Lyons in Lexington, Ky., at first standing multiple graded-stakes winner Wiseman's Ferry for the 2009 breeding season, and now adding millionaire and track record-setter Sir Shackleton for the 2010 season.

Dana Point, in partnership with Xanthus Farms in Gettysburg, is also standing Southern Success, a stakes-winning son of Dixieland Band, for the 2010 season, as well as Spartan Victory, a son of Carr de Naskra.

What began as a dream for Gerth, the former president of InSeat Solutions, Inc. who lives in Dana Point, Calif., has now become a reality, and the farm has developed at a rapid pace despite being born in the teeth of the worst economic downturn in decades.

"The way I look at it is that I've got to be optimistic, yet realistic," said Gerth. "It will take time, but I believe that eventually the market will turn around."

In reflecting upon her first full year of owning Dana Point Farm, Gerth said, "I really love it. I have definitely found my passion. There is nothing I love more than being on that farm with the horses."

"But I've also learned," she said, "that a



Photo by Linda Dougherty



The barns at Dana Point (top) and Sir Shackleton.

farm is an ongoing process. There is lots of upkeep, and lots of work, but I am thankful that I have a wonderful team of people. Maria (Vorhauer) is the best, and I trust her implicitly."

When Gerth purchased the farm, there was much work to be done, as the barns and the pastures had been vacant for quite some time.

"A week after Gayle went to settlement, the economy tanked," recalled Vorhauer, "but we've made it. It was a lot of work, but the reward is that when people come out to see the farm, they say it's phenomenal. I am

(See DANA POINT, Page 36)

DANA POINT

(Continued from Page 33)

really so proud of it.”

Vorhauer recalls that, a half-hour after settlement was made on the property, the backhoes started digging. Chief among the first projects was correcting the drainage in the main barn, and then the renovation of the interior began. New white fencing and gates were

added, a stallion barn, office and breeding shed were constructed, and the refurbishing of a home on the property for the full-time workers was completed.

Also, living quarters in the main barn for Vorhauer and Gerth were added, as well as overnight accommodations for guests and clients.

Recently, Gerth added 38 adjoining acres on which she plans to construct a 15-stall training barn and perhaps a small track for

horses in training.

She has also started her own broodmare band, comprised of about 35 mares, and has begun a racing venture, claiming horses at Pennsylvania tracks and putting them in training with Sharon Banford at Philadelphia Park and Murray Rojas at Penn National. One of Gerth's claims, Queen of the Scene, has raced twice under the Dana Point Farm banner and won twice.

This past breeding season,

Dana Point stallions bred 55 mares. Vorhauer expects that number to increase with the addition of Sir Shackleton, who comes to Pennsylvania with his oldest foals now yearlings.

The son of Miswaki out of Naskra Colors, by Star de Naskra, is co-owned by Castleton-Lyons and Tracy Farmer, and will stand the 2010 season for \$2,500, stand and nurse, with special considerations available for multiple mares and Pennsylvania breeders and owners.

Wiseman's Ferry, a son of Hennessy-Emmaus, by Silver Deputy, was very well-received by Pennsylvania breeders in 2009, and is currently the state's second-leading sire, with progeny earnings approaching \$2 million. He stands for \$3,500, with special considerations available for multiple mares and Pennsylvania breeders and owners.

Gerth recently returned from a trip to Lexington, Ky., where she toured several famous stallion farms, including Lane's End and Three Chimneys. Seeing how their operations run has “given me lots of ideas,” she said.

“They do things differently in Kentucky – they've have it down to a science,” she said. “It was a great experience to see those farms first-hand, and it's given me a lot of inspiration to do a lot of things at Dana Point in the future.”