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Legends Racing Ready to Roll in 2009

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Nick Zito, one of three conditioners who will be training for the "Legends Racing" group

Photo: Anne M. Eberhardt

Legends Racing, which was 2008's biggest-spending new shopper at Thoroughbred yearling sales, is preparing for its inaugural season at the racetrack. According to Olin Gentry, one of the venture's founders, the stable's 39 horses have been divided equally among Legends' three trainers – Bob Baffert, D. Wayne Lukas, and Nick Zito – and are in Florida being prepared for competition.

"For the most part, we're very pleased with how they're doing at this point," Gentry said. "There are probably 10, I would say, that are going to be speedy and probably 10 of them are going to be two-turn horses. The rest are somewhere in between."

Legends Racing purchased 38 yearlings for \$15,285,000 at public auction and privately acquired another yearling that had been bought back for \$140,000 by its consignor at the Keeneland September yearling sale. All three trainers were involved in the selecting the yearlings, and a draft to determine the horses each would condition was held last September in Lexington.

"We did it while they were in town for the Keeneland September sale before the sale was over with, so we added two or three more horses afterward," Gentry said. "I can't remember exactly how we established who picked first, but I think Wayne went first. There were a couple of horses that went earlier in the draft than I thought they would and a couple that went probably a little later than I thought they would, but there was nothing too off the wall. It (the order in which they were chosen) didn't mirror price exactly, but it wasn't that far removed from it either."

The 13 horses chosen by Baffert had the highest aggregate cost, \$6,005,000. They included a \$1-million [El Prado](#)–Swift and Classy colt that is a half-brother to stakes winner Gold Wonder and a \$1-million [Mr. Greeley](#)–Tempest Dancer colt that is a half-brother to grade III winner Windrush and added-money winner Sarawat.

Among Lukas' 13 horses, purchased by Legends for \$5,940,000, were a \$1.2 million Storm Cat–Turko's Turn colt that is a half-brother to 2001 Horse of the Year Point Given and a \$1.15-million Unbridled's Song–Zing colt that is a full brother to grade II winner [Half Ours](#).

"There was some irony," Gentry said. "For example, Bob is going to train the (\$500,000) Storm Cat colt out of Spain (who was conditioned by Lukas) and Wayne is training the Storm Cat half-brother to Point Given (who was conditioned by Baffert)."

Zito ended up with 12 horses that Legends had purchased for \$3,340,000 and the yearling that was a \$140,000 buy-back.

"Nick got his favorite horse, the (\$700,000) [Tiznow](#) colt out of Indian Snow," Gentry said.

David Scanlon is preparing Zito's horses for racing. Bryan and Holley Rice of Woodside Ranch are preparing Lukas' horses and four of Baffert's horses. Eddie Woods is preparing nine of Baffert's horses.

"We could have grouped the horses all together somewhere, but we left it up to the trainers," Gentry said.

"We think that it's important that each trainer has rapport and a relationship with the person who is getting his horses ready. For example, Nick is used to dealing with David Scanlon, and he can tell him, 'Hey, watch this or that about a particular horse.' They have a history, and a confidence, and a trust. They know how to speak to each other and that's important."

Gentry and Thomas Gaines of Gaines-Gentry Thoroughbreds developed the idea for Legends Racing in partnership with investment banker Tripp Hardy. They announced their plans for the venture, known officially as the Thoroughbred Legends Racing Fund, in June of last year in New York and began recruiting investors. Two of Legends' three trainers—Zito and Lukas—are members of racing's Hall of Fame.

Gentry said Legends Racing "probably" would be purchasing more horses at this year's sales of 2-year-olds in training.

LEGENDS RACING ROSTER

Bob Baffert

(Horse, purchase/buy-back price)

- c. [Roman Ruler](#) – Brooklynsangel, \$180,000
- c. [Indian Charlie](#) – Emptythetill, \$240,000
- f. [Gulch](#) – Mutton Maniac, \$170,000
- c. [Closing Argument](#) – Accountess, \$330,000
- c. [Afleet Alex](#) – Restored Hope, \$225,000
- c. Harlan's Holiday – Shadow On the Moon, \$310,000
- c. Storm Cat – Spain, \$500,000
- c. El Prado – Swift and Classy, \$1,000,000
- f. Unbridled's Song – Critical Crew, \$325,000
- f. [Tiznow](#) – Katz Me If You Can, \$400,000
- c. [Broken Vow](#) – Tango Passion, \$625,000
- c. [Rock Hard Ten](#) – Tapstress, \$700,000
- c. Mr. Greeley – Tempest Dancer, \$1,000,000

D. Wayne Lukas

(Horse, purchase/buy-back price)

- f. [Pulpit](#) – Cherish Destiny, \$210,000
- c. [El Corredor](#) – Destination Mir, \$350,000
- f. [Songandaprayer](#) – Irene's Talkin, \$475,000
- c. [Gone West](#) – Laptop, \$625,000
- c. Indian Charlie – Noble Cause, \$150,000
- c. Yes It's True – Scarlet Tango, \$400,000
- c. [Fusaichi Pegasus](#) – Big and Beautiful, \$410,000
- f. Unbridled's Song – Celtic Melody, \$325,000
- c. [Malibu Moon](#) – Goes Around, \$325,000
- c. Maria's Mon – Prop, \$200,000
- c. Malibu Moon – Stephie Brown Eyes, \$120,000
- c. Storm Cat – Turko's Turn, \$1,200,000
- c. Unbridled's Song – Zing, \$1,150,000

Nick Zito

(Horse, purchase/buy-back price)

- f. Fusiachi Pegasus – Crystal Downs, \$300,000
- c. Tiznow – Indian Snow, \$700,000
- c. Maria's Mon – Pember, \$190,000
- c. [Eddington](#) – Appealing Jewel, \$325,000
- c. Malibu Moon – Carson's Vanity, \$335,000
- c. [Elusive Quality](#) – Costume Party, (\$140,000)
- f. Giant's Causeway – Girl Warrior, \$230,000
- f. Vindication – Kiss a Miss, \$240,000
- f. Silver Deputy – Literary Light, \$200,000
- f. Rock Hard Ten – Party Chatter, \$160,000
- c. Mr. Greeley – Potential Pleasure, \$280,000
- c. [Successful Appeal](#) – Saratoga Honey, \$240,000
- f. Vindication – Unique Creek, \$140,000

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