



KEENELAND SEPTEMBER Yearling Sale

Sept. 8-11 • 12 p.m.
13-21st • 10 a.m.

NEW CHAPTER FOR GREATHOUSE

By Lucas Marquardt

Glencrest Farm's John Greathouse, suffice it to say, has a keen eye for horses. Over the past 15 years, he has purchased no fewer than four Grade I winners:

Devil May Care (Malibu Moon), **Panty Raid** (Include), **Zoftig** (Cozzene) and **Honey Ryder** (Lasting Approval). He's also signed for the likes of MGSW **Disposablepleasure** (Giacomo), and the undefeated but ill-fated **Onlyforyou** (Malibu Moon), who aired in the GII Forward Gal S. and GII Davona Dale S. earlier this spring.

But because Greathouse has most often purchased on behalf of his family's Glencrest operation, he isn't generally viewed as a "public" bloodstock agent. Greathouse is hoping to change that image. He has recently run several ads announcing that he's buying for outside clients for the first time, and already has several orders for Keeneland September, which begins tomorrow in Lexington.

"In truth, I have bought horses for other people in the past, but it was just the odd horse, and it was something people didn't seek me out for because, I guess, they always thought I bought for Glencrest or our partners," Greathouse explained. "I'm a horse person; I'm not so much a people person. But people finally talked me into letting people know."

If the Grade I's on Greathouse's resume speak for themselves, so do the price tags of his purchases--both coming and going. Greathouse has always operated on something of a budget, and of the aforementioned horses, only Panty Raid--a \$275,000 juvenile-in-training purchase--cost more than \$115,000. That was what Greathouse paid for Onlyforyou at the 2012 Keeneland September Sale. Devil May Care, meanwhile, was a \$110,000 KEESEP yearling. Honey Ryder cost \$70,000. Zoftig was a \$50,000 September buy.

"No one does a better job of finding good horses with a moderate budget than John Greathouse," said trainer Todd Pletcher, who conditions most of Glencrest's horses. "He understands the business from every side."

That sentiment is underscored when one looks at what these horses later brought as broodmare

prospects. Adena Springs paid \$1.75 million for Honey Ryder in foal to Giant's Causeway; Darley bought Panty Raid for \$2.5 million.

One obvious similarity between Greathouse's purchases is that the vast majority are fillies. The reason, he says, is a combination of factors--most pragmatic in nature.

"First, pound for pound, you can probably buy a filly cheaper than a colt," he said. "Second, you try to buy a filly who has some residual value. A slow colt isn't worth anything. You buy enough pedigree, and a filly has residual value. Third, it's just as much fun to watch a good filly as a good colt, in my opinion. It's not that I'm uncomfortable buying colts, but if my money's involved, that's not where I'm going to go. But it's not like I haven't had some nice colts."

Case in point is a pair of 2-year-old colts who just broke their maidens at Saratoga for Pletcher, **Blofeld** (Quality Road) and **Designed for War** (War Front). At 1-2 on debut, Blofeld won a five-furlong maiden special weight in :57 4/5 Aug. 14. Designed for War took a two-turn grass maiden in his first start Aug. 9, then ran fifth in the GII With Anticipation S. Glencrest owns both horses with JSM Equine. Blofeld is a possible for the GII Futurity S. at Belmont. Designed for War is being pointed toward a Keeneland allowance race.

Greathouse also purchased the recent Sapling S. winner **Souper Colossal** (War Front) as a weanling (he resold the colt to Live Oak as a yearling), as well as last year's good juvenile **Diamond Bachelor**, yet another by War Front that he pinhooked as a weanling.

"It's not like I can't buy the daggone things," Greathouse said of buying colts. "I'm happy to spend your money on anything you want me to spend it on [laughs]."

Losing a Pillar...

Last October, Glencrest unexpectedly lost a key member of its team when John's brother David died at the age of 63 after a brief battle with liver cancer. David ran Glencrest, the farm started by their father John Sr. in 1950, along with John and brothers Edward and Allen, and his passing generated an outpouring of sympathy and support from the horse community. John admits it hasn't been easy.

"I still have his cell number in my directory," he said. "It's right in there with his son's and my two sons'. It's kind of strange. For the first two or three months, I found myself dialing up his number to ask him something, something he and I would usually talk about. You like this filly? What's your opinion of this? I miss him, and what we did together. His family misses him. I wish we were still fighting the battle together."

Greathouse said that Glencrest will continue to be a family run operation, with his son John III and David's son Deuce taking on leadership roles

"Deuce is picking it all up; he's been good at picking out horses for a long time," said Greathouse. "My son John basically runs the farm. I just act like an old man now. My son asks, 'What time are you coming out? I'd like to have an idea.' I say that you'll have an idea when



John Greathouse



I show up [laughs].”

Greathouse added that he'll continue to purchase for Glencrest, as well as for various pinhooking partnerships. “But the opportunity for me to do that is sometimes limited,” he said.

Smart Buys...

One thing that quickly becomes clear when talking to John Greathouse is his adherence on the idea of value. That doesn't necessarily mean buying horses inexpensively. But it does mean pricing horses smartly.

“I wouldn't buy something for somebody that I wouldn't own myself,” he said, explaining that neither a horse's physical appearance, nor its pedigree, is enough to solely convince him to raise his hand at auction.

“I do it differently than most people,” he explained. “Let's say we're talking fillies. Other people will go look at all the fillies. I don't look at all of them. Because there are pedigrees that just won't work for me. I'll go look at only those horses whose pedigrees I can see something in. If there are 200 horses in a catalogue, and half are fillies, I'll probably look at half of those.”

So what is he looking for? “Pedigree-wise, the dam had to run herself, or has shown she can get foals who can run,” he said. “If a mare has 6 or 7 who can't run, why would I think it would work for me when it hasn't worked for someone else? If you look and see those earlier foals didn't bring much money, then you can reason that maybe they weren't very good looking, and this is the first good one. But you start thinking about value when that's the case.”

Given Greathouses's sensibilities, it was probably a huge tip-off when he told people before the 2009 Fasig-Tipton Florida Sale that he wouldn't take less than \$600,000 for a filly Glencrest was pinhooking through Ciaran Dunne's Wavertree Stable--Devil May Care.



Devil May Care
NYRA/Coglianesse

“As soon as I saw her as a yearling, I said that I was going to buy her,” he remembered. “Darley had a 2-year-old Distorted Humor half-brother [Regal Ransom] who had just won at Saratoga, and I thought that I'd never be able to afford her. But I don't think they were ever

on her. I didn't really want to go to the 2-year-old sales with her, but we went to Calder. She worked okay, but she had some minor vet issues that someone was going to have to take care of. I let it be known that I was going to get \$600,000 for her or I wasn't going to sell her, and I bought her back for \$400,000.”

Devil May Care won the GI Frizette S. six months later, and at three added the GI CCA Oaks and GI Mother Goose S.

“I'm kind of amazed that, in today's market, when people see something they don't like that is still fixable-

-a little chip or something like that--that they'll just turn them down flat,” said Greathouse. “Devil May Care had a chip, I think, but we took it out, and she still ran a few months later at Saratoga. Would she have run before that if she didn't have the chip? No.”

Devil May Care never got to show what she could do as an older horse. She was diagnosed with lymphosarcoma, a rare form of cancer, and died in 2011.

“She was a very, very talented horse,” added Greathouse. “I saw her work with some really good horses that Todd had, and on a day-to-day basis, she was just the best horse. Todd makes those horses stay head-and-head [during the works], and then you begin to separate the men from the boys in the gallop-outs. She would just pull away from them.”

Sadly, Glencrest lost another brilliant filly when Onlyforyou broke down in a work at Palm Meadows in March after winning each of her starts by daylight.



“We really don't know how good she was going to become,” said Greathouse. “She did all she could do. She started four times and won four times. Whether she would have gone on to become the leader of the 3-year-old division, we'll never know. But she did everything we asked.”

Despite all the ups and downs Greathouse has experienced in the last few years, he says he still loves the Thoroughbred business as much now as he did when he was learning the ropes from his father some 50 years ago.

“I wouldn't trade what I do for anything,” he said. “Everyone needs something to live off of. Other than that, I don't need money. I like what I do. I like horses. I like coming out and looking at this farm in the morning. I like seeing these kids get started in the farming business. And I hope this farm will be theirs for another 40 years to come.”

With the foundation that the Greathouse family has set, it's a good bet that Glencrest's future is secure. It's also a good bet that Greathouse has a few more Grade I winners up his sleeve.

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