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# Country Life Press

## December 2019 Newsletter

*From Maryland's Oldest Thoroughbred Farm*

Established 1933



### 2019 BROODMARE DECISIONS PREPARE US FOR 2020

Racing partnerships are nothing new in the horse business. But until recently, broodmare ownership was still predominated by individual breeders. Not the case these days. Fewer mare-owners "breed-to-race." Some 80% of the foal crop gets pushed into public auction. The over-booking of Kentucky stallions continues to drain mares away from regional markets.

So, Country Life is adapting to the changing market conditions. We are cherry-picking broodmares who may be overlooked; we've tweaked our mare-ownership model by forming closely-held 4-and-5 share interests. "Buy a leg," we say. And be ready to "breed-to-race." That option is enhanced by the on-going success of the Maryland-Bred program, which rewards breeders who race their homebreds with 30% Breeder and 30% Owner Awards.

For example, at Saratoga in October, we bought the young mare Watrugonnadorosie, by super-commercial sire Curlin, in foal to Gr-1 winner Army Mule, for \$18,000. She was a \$700,000 Keeneland yearling. That's how wild the market can swing on mares. We kept "a leg" for Country Life, sold the other three legs.

Next, we went to Keeneland in November, and bought two young mares: Real Good Time, in foal to red-hot Freshman sire Constitution (by Tapit), for \$33,000, followed by Sister State, a mare by A. P. Indy from the Godolphin stable for \$40,000 (her dam is full-sister to Preakness winner Bernardini's mom). We split these two mares into 5-share syndicates to foal Maryland-breds

in 2020, and their partners are booking one mare back to Divining Rod, the other to Mosler. We're adding Kentucky-sired babies, while providing support to Maryland's next leading sires - sons of Tapit and War Front.

All our broodmare acquisitions, and all our sometimes painful culling, are in preparation for the day to come when new racing plants are built at Pimlico and Laurel, when Maryland rises to new heights in racing and breeding. The 2020 session of the Maryland legislature starts in January, and the entire industry is behind legislation efforts to keep the Preakness in Baltimore, to rebuild Laurel as a Breeders' Cup-worthy backstretch and frontside, and to lift Maryland to the forefront of this exciting sport. Thank you for having an interest in the great legacy that is Maryland's history in the horse business.

## COME RACING AT LAUREL OVER HOLIDAYS

Slip away for a holiday with the ponies.

Country Life's popular Racing Partnerships are featured:

On Thursday, Dec. 26, with our Maryland-bred Congrats filly COMBAT QUEEN in the 1st race (Post-time: 12:25);

On Friday, Dec. 27, with our Super Saver 2-year-old filly SAVEDBYTHEBELLE in the 1st race (12:25); and

On Saturday, Dec. 28, the exciting pair of our 10-length debut winner LET'S PLAY NINE in the 2nd race (12:53) and 2-X stakes-placed winner BELLA AURORA in the 5th race, the \$100,000 Gin Talking Stakes (2:18).

Send an email to:

[christy@countrylifefarm.com](mailto:christy@countrylifefarm.com)

if you would like to join our excited group of partners for lunch at Laurel on any of these race days.



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## **Stallion Show at Country Life Farm Saturday, January 25 11 am - 1 pm**

Country Life will be having our annual Stallion Show on Saturday, January 25, from 11:00 - 1:00. Come see the area's most exciting stallions, including G1-sire Friesan Fire, leading 2-year-old sire Super Ninety Nine, upcoming Freshman sire Mosler (first foals will race in 2020) and the best-bred son of Tapit in the mid-Atlantic Divining Rod.

Great food and drink, good friends, and super stallions--all in one place. Hope to see you here!

RSVP to [sallyellen@countrylifefarm.com](mailto:sallyellen@countrylifefarm.com) or call 410-879-1952

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## **Let's Play Nine Impresses on Debut**

Partnership runner LET'S PLAY NINE, by Super Ninety Nine, scored an impressive maiden victory in his first start on November 28th. The 3-year-old son of Super Ninety Nine burst through a narrow opening and drew off to a thrilling 10-length score on Thanksgiving Day. He will face a sterner test in a \$42,000 first-level allowance on Saturday, Dec. 28th.



## Goodbye to the Dam of a Champion

In this Christmas season, we remember the rewarding story of a mare purchased out of the Baltimore Sun classifieds for \$3,500 by the late, great Maryland breeder R. Brice Ridgely.

Named VEE VEE STAR, she ran 3rd in the Maryland filly classic event: the Gr. 3 Black-Eyed Susan Stakes. As a broodmare for Brice, she produced 2004 Eclipse Award Champion Juvenile Colt DECLAN'S MOON, who was favored for the 2005 Kentucky Derby before injury sidelined him. DECLAN'S MOON was a \$125,000 yearling in the second crop of Country Life stallion Malibu Moon. DECLAN'S MOON resides here in comfortable retirement, the only Eclipse Award-winning horse in Maryland.

At the height of DECLAN'S MOON's career in 2005, VEE VEE STAR was offered at public auction in Kentucky, where she just failed to meet her reserve of \$1-million. She was just shy of seven figures when she brought a Reserve-Not-Attained price of \$975,000. Brice continued to breed commercial foals out of his Sunpapers mare.

Following Brice's death in 2014, Country Life Farm bought VEE VEE STAR at his dispersal sale at Timonium for \$3,700. We bred a few lovely foals from her, including the promising Country Life colorbearer VEE'S SUPER STAR,



then retired her.

The good old mare became a weanling-favorite babysitter these past few years. Complications from arthritis overwhelmed VEE VEE STAR in November, and she was euthanized here on the farm.

All the way from the classifieds to the Eclipse Awards, VEE VEE STAR enjoyed a colorful and rewarding career.



## In the Winner's Circle

The latest winners by Country Life stallions Friesan Fire and Super Ninety Nine include:

### **Friesan Fire**

Mission Oberon, 11/21 at Laurel (SOC)  
Destiny's Charge, 11/21 at Finger Lakes (2 yo Maiden)  
Cowboy Mz, 11/29 at Laurel  
Whiskey and You, 12/7 at Laurel (2 yo Maiden)  
Tipsy Moose, 12/20 at Penn National  
Tappahannock, 12/21 at Laurel

### **Super Ninety Nine**

Be Bop a Lola, 11/23 at Laurel (2 yo Maiden)  
Let's Play Nine, 11/28 at Laurel (Maiden)  
Better Yet, 12/6 at Tampa Bay  
FortyfiveRocket, 12/6 at Laurel  
Liquid Hero, 12/6 at Laurel

Better Yet, 12/18 at Tampa Bay

\*Notable mention: Tommy Shelby, 3rd in MD Juvenile Futurity at Laurel on 12/7

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## Country Life Apparel for the New Year?

If you're looking for that last minute gift for friends or family, how about Country Life gear! Shop at the sites below for hats, tops and other items with any of our partnership horses names or the farm logos:

[www.zazzle.com/store/ellen107](http://www.zazzle.com/store/ellen107)

[www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com)

To quickly find a specific horse, type in your horse's name in the search bar and it will display all the items relating to that horse. Or type "Countrylife" to find items with general farm tags. You can also create your own items.

If you need help figuring it out email Ellen at [ellen@ellenpons.com](mailto:ellen@ellenpons.com) or text her at 443-807-6402. Happy browsing!





# Country Life & Merryland Farm



**Wishing you a Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year !**



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