



In the Game

By Deirdre B. Biles

While growing up in the Miami area, Barry Berkelhammer played youth football. But unlike his teammates, he didn't dream about becoming a college or professional star. Instead, he was more interested in the stable that was located near the playing field.

"When I was waiting for my mother to

pick me up after practice, I would wander over there; I was mesmerized by the horses," Berkelhammer said.

His interest eventually led to riding lessons and later to a career in the Thoroughbred industry. While there is no Super Bowl start on Berkelhammer's résumé—even though he is built more like a linebacker than a jockey—he has been connected to some of racing's biggest events, including

the Kentucky Derby (gr. I) and the Breeders' Cup World Thoroughbred Championships. As a key adviser to Jack and Laurie Wolf's Starlight Stables, Berkelhammer selected such standout performers as Ashado and Harlan's Holiday at public auction. He also prepared them for racing at AbraCadabra Farms, the 220-acre breeding and training facility near Ocala, Fla., that Berkelhammer operates in partnership with his wife, Tiki.

An earner of \$3,632,664, Harlan's Holiday captured the 2002 Florida Derby (gr. I) and Toyota Blue Grass Stakes (gr. I), the 2003 Donn Handicap (gr. I), and five other added-money events. His record also included a runner-up finish in the 2003 Dubai World Cup (UAE-I) and appearances in the 2002 Kentucky Derby, Preakness (gr. I), and Breeders' Cup Classic (gr. I). The 5-year-old son of Harlan now stands at Brereton C. Jones' Airdrie Stud near Midway, Ky.

**Barry Berkelhammer's
AbraCadabra Farms
has produced several
major players**

"It was a wonderful experience," said Berkelhammer of his association with Harlan's Holiday. "Even though I was just the bloodstock agent who picked the horse, the Wolfs treated me like family, letting me share the entire ride as though I owned a part of him with them."

Still racing and owned by Starlight in partnership with Paul Saylor and Johns Martin, Ashado, a daughter of Saint Ballado, won the Oct. 30 Breeders' Cup Distaff - Presented by Nextel (gr. I) at Lone Star Park. The probable champion 3-year-old filly also scored this year in the Kentucky (gr. I), Coaching Club American (gr. I), and Fair Grounds (gr. II) Oaks and won the Cotillion Handicap (gr.

(continued on page 6188)



Barry Berkelhammer (right) operates the 220-acre AbraCadabra Farms in partnership with his wife, Tiki

SOUTHEAST

2004 Leading Sires in Florida

State sire lists updated weekly online. Go to
<http://breeding.bloodhorse.com/sirelists.asp>

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in Florida (exported stallions are excluded), and have runners in North America. As supplied to The Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems, this includes monies earned in NA through Oct 31, 2004; Eng and Ire through Oct 28, 2004; France through Oct 29, 2004; Germany through Oct 24, 2004; Italy through July 31, 2004, and the United Arab Emirates through April 18, 2004. Stakes winners includes all countries; some foreign foals may be included in the foal count.

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), Year, Sire	2005 Stud Fee	Rnrs/Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/Wns	RstrctSW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2004 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	*A-E	Index
1	HALO'S IMAGE (91, Halo), Bridlewood Farm	\$7,000	102/52	2/4	0/2	(Southern Image, \$1,612,150)	\$3,105,558	206	4	1.64	1.38
2	MONTBROOK (90, Buckaroo), Ocala Stud Farm	\$20,000	121/64	8/10	2/7	(Shake You Down, \$258,654)	\$2,354,000	342	29	1.97	1.63
3	TACTICAL ADVANTAGE (90, Forty Niner)	Died, 2002	143/71	2/4	0/2	(Omar Alejandro, \$210,840)	\$2,253,859	427	13	1.26	1.45
4	FORMAL DINNER (88, Well Decorated), Hidden Point Farm	\$7,500	144/82	3/5	1/3	(Wacky Patty, \$118,600)	\$2,236,979	407	19	1.22	1.15
5	NOTEBOOK (85, Well Decorated)	Died, 2003	115/59	5/10	1/5	(Dusty's Lil Book, \$122,170)	\$2,111,565	527	40	1.80	1.50
6	PENTELICUS (84, Fappiano)	Died, 2002	149/82	2/2	0/2	(Fines Creek, \$71,524)	\$2,012,845	572	19	1.17	1.69
7	WEKIVA SPRINGS (91, Runaway Groom), Double Diamond Farm	\$5,000	133/74	3/3	0/2	(Merry Me in Spring, \$124,700)	\$2,007,212	276	10	0.96	1.43
8	FORTUNATE PROSPECT (81, Northern Prospect), Farnsworth Farms	NA	108/64	1/1	1/1	(Pokerfaced, \$88,290)	\$1,950,595	676	28	1.53	1.64
9	SWORD DANCE (Ire) (84, Nijinsky II)	Pnsd	137/62	3/4	0/2	(Friel's for Real, \$204,450)	\$1,921,001	501	22	1.43	1.46
10	DOUBLE HONOR (95, Gone West), Farnsworth Farms	\$3,500	116/63	5/6	2/5	(Honorable Buck, \$117,460)	\$1,908,471	192	7	1.09	1.45
11	SUAVE PROSPECT (92, Fortunate Prospect), Farnsworth Farms	\$2,500	100/51	2/3	0/2	(Umpateedle, \$215,560)	\$1,837,785	154	6	1.36	1.15
12	IS IT TRUE (86, Raja Baba), Hartley/De Renzo, Walmac South	\$7,000	95/52	3/4	1/2	(Sweet Problem, \$198,700)	\$1,829,174	503	24	1.32	1.28
13	TOUR D'OR (82, Medaille d'Or), Irish Acres Farm	\$5,000	127/63	2/2	0/2	(Tour the Hive, \$83,558)	\$1,647,685	396	20	1.50	1.17
14	LINE IN THE SAND (89, Mr. Prospector), Farnsworth Farms	\$2,500	151/72	1/1	0/1	(Run N Coke, \$66,660)	\$1,629,002	419	13	1.00	1.57
15	CONCERTO (94, Chief's Crown), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	63/37	5/6	0/4	(Bellamy Road, \$140,400)	\$1,532,397	106	8	1.65	1.43
16	MECKE (92, Mauldin), Ocala Stud Farm	\$3,500	82/36	1/1	0/1	(Supah Blitz, \$324,280)	\$1,518,595	160	7	1.44	1.53
17	EXPLOIT (96, Storm Cat), Cloverleaf Farms II	\$10,000	83/39	3/3	0/3	(Courageous Act, \$206,121)	\$1,471,706	147	4	1.05	2.47
18	CONCORDE'S TUNE (89, Concorde Bound), Ocala Stud Farm	\$3,000	70/41	6/8	1/6	(Melody of Colors, \$137,820)	\$1,425,849	219	12	1.41	1.12
19	MISTER JOLIE (90, Valid Appeal)	Died, 2003	86/49	1/3	0/1	(Coordinadora, \$110,562)	\$1,406,094	182	7	1.12	1.19
20	FAVORITE TRICK (95, Phone Trick), Cloverleaf Farms II	NA	86/47	4/4	1/4	(Tight Spin, \$107,930)	\$1,403,413	234	7	1.12	2.13
21	DILIGENCE (93, Miswaki), Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds	\$3,500	58/29	4/6	0/3	(Kaufy Mate, \$215,000)	\$1,263,249	106	4	1.09	1.32
22	JEBLAR (82, Alydar)	Died, 2002	69/38	3/4	1/3	(Speedy Falcon, \$209,112)	\$1,258,278	472	30	1.23	1.64
23	COLONY LIGHT (89, Pleasant Colony), Rising Hill Farm	\$2,500	79/43	2/3	1/1	(Dansetta Light, \$115,080)	\$1,218,811	225	8	1.16	1.30
24	PROUD AND TRUE (94, Mr. Prospector), Double Diamond Farm	\$5,000	68/37	0/0	0/0	(Bob's Proud Moment, \$118,290)	\$1,078,289	111	2	0.94	0.97
25	SKIP TRIAL (82, Bailjumper), Bridlewood Farm	\$5,000	71/29	0/0	0/0	(Lavender Lass, \$107,610)	\$1,074,086	375	26	2.23	1.75
26	WILD EVENT (93, Wild Again), Bridlewood Farm	\$7,500	48/25	2/4	2/2	(Aclassysassylassy, \$398,800)	\$1,058,654	78	2	1.24	1.42
27	FAMILY CALLING (94, Mr. Prospector), Hidden Point Farm	\$5,000	85/42	2/2	0/2	(Gamblin, \$107,450)	\$1,010,850	140	2	0.88	1.26
28	STACK (82, Nijinsky II), Pinecrest Stables (Home of Santa Cruz Ranch)	NA	46/15	1/3	0/1	(Stay Forever, \$581,946)	\$938,207	263	29	1.16	0.76
29	MASTER BILL (93, Forty Niner), Rising Hill Farm	\$2,500	51/24	2/2	0/2	(Maria's Image, \$124,660)	\$891,978	100	3	1.04	1.24
30	WEST ACRE (95, Forty Niner), Stonehedge Farm South	\$5,000	41/27	0/0	0/0	(Take Me There, \$87,088)	\$847,712	83	1	1.77	1.47
31	WILD ESCAPE (92, Wild Again), Emerald Pastures Farm	\$2,000	49/33	1/2	0/1	(Don Six, \$152,535)	\$820,539	103	1	1.10	1.12
32	ELTISH (92, Cox's Ridge), Live Oak Stud	\$5,000	54/30	0/0	0/0	(Smooth as Silver, \$101,825)	\$797,524	93	5	1.36	1.08
33	NOACTOR (89, Theatrical), Break Away Farm	NA	63/37	1/1	0/0	(Actxecutive, \$74,692)	\$778,124	191	6	0.96	1.39
34	MIGRATING MOON (90, Silver Buck), Ups and Downs	\$1,500	50/20	1/1	0/1	(Classy Migration, \$117,130)	\$750,518	116	3	1.23	0.94
35	DR. CATON (93, Seattle Slew), Rising Hill Farm	\$2,500	61/24	1/1	0/1	(Sweet Time, \$88,030)	\$703,111	143	1	0.74	1.18
36	DARN THAT ALARM (81, Jig Time)	Died, 2003	47/25	2/2	0/0	(Darn That Girl, \$60,234)	\$572,686	361	13	1.37	1.44
37	THATS OUR BUCK (90, Buckaroo)	Pnsd	46/18	1/2	0/0	(Paradise's Boss, \$116,400)	\$533,841	109	2	0.74	0.76
38	MEADOW FLIGHT (91, Meadowlake)	Died, 2001	40/22	1/1	1/1	(Pine Brook, \$71,399)	\$532,943	86	4	1.29	1.12
39	ISLAND WHIRL (78, Pago Pago)	Pnsd	38/20	1/2	0/1	(Foreverness, \$76,275)	\$507,672	482	26	1.37	1.38
40	LUCKY NORTH (81, Northern Dancer)	Pnsd	42/20	0/0	0/0	(Luckymata, \$62,605)	\$498,639	367	17	1.26	1.27
41	METFIELD (88, Seattle Slew), T-Square Stud	\$2,500	46/24	1/1	0/0	(Grillhouse, \$64,795)	\$494,475	294	11	1.00	1.28
42	QUAKER RIDGE (96, Forty Niner), Hartley/De Renzo, Walmac South	NA	27/19	0/0	0/0	(Shellseeker, \$59,900)	\$484,649	44	0	0.99	1.08
43	PREMIERSHIP (80, Exclusive Native)	Pnsd	60/27	0/0	0/0	(Snobby Princess, \$45,537)	\$482,523	621	34	1.31	1.38
44	SAFELY'S MARK (94, Danzig), Ups and Downs	\$1,500	16/6	1/3	0/1	(Weigelia, \$353,940)	\$465,433	24	1	1.60	1.07
45	TRAITOR (94, Cryptoclearance)	Died, 2003	46/18	0/0	0/0	(Box Cutter, \$63,360)	\$444,322	73	1	0.60	0.90
46	FIRST AND ONLY (87, Avatar)	NA	25/16	0/0	0/0	(True Dancer, \$105,231)	\$426,912	56	0	0.85	1.37
47	BRIEF RUCKUS (86, Bold Ruckus)	NA	44/15	0/0	0/0	(Mix It Up, \$60,280)	\$413,201	143	1	0.88	1.06
48	↑ RUNNING STAG (94, Cozzene), Adena Springs South	\$7,500	27/8	1/1	0/1	(Stag Nation, \$92,652)	\$397,684	77	1	1.01	1.43
49	ESKIMO (80, Northern Dancer)	Pnsd	34/16	1/1	1/1	(Shes Dixies Eskimo, \$91,550)	\$397,607	292	15	1.31	1.27
50	FROSTY THE SNOWMAN (85, His Majesty), Bridlewood Farm	NA	18/12	2/2	0/2	(Keep Cool, \$111,910)	\$378,580	113	12	1.53	1.46
51	HOLY MOUNTAIN (91, Devil's Bag), Emerald Pastures Farm	\$2,000	34/16	0/0	0/0	(The Finagler, \$108,460)	\$361,303	80	1	0.60	1.02
52	THE VID (90, World Appeal)	Died, 2000	29/20	0/0	0/0	(Angelic Morgan L., \$44,609)	\$359,763	69	1	0.71	1.07
53	NORTHERN TREND (88, Sunny North), Champagne Farms	NA	18/10	1/2	0/1	(Nicole's Dream, \$173,661)	\$359,060	51	1	0.48	0.74
54	WORLD STAGE (Ire) (93, Sadler's Wells)	Died, 2004	59/21	1/1	0/1	(Final Prophecy, \$57,784)	\$358,320	151	2	1.43	0.89
55	SLEW GIN FIZZ (91, Relaunch), Ocala Stud Farm	\$5,000	35/14	2/2	0/2	(La Sorpresa, \$105,820)	\$356,668	326	14	1.77	1.19
56	REGAL SEARCH (83, Mr. Prospector)	Died, 1999	34/19	0/0	0/0	(Searchfor Diamonds, \$67,248)	\$354,552	317	12	1.10	1.20
57	SILVER BUCK (78, Buckpasser)	Pnsd	36/14	1/1	0/0	(Classic Endeavor, \$115,598)	\$349,203	623	40	1.80	1.46
58	LIGHT OF MORN (86, Alleged), Newchance Farm	NA	26/12	0/0	0/0	(Eagle Time, \$71,224)	\$343,850	63	1	0.91	1.15
59	BON POINT (GB) (90, Soviet Star), Marablu Farm	NA	32/7	0/0	0/0	(Point Lily, \$108,430)	\$342,245	137	0	0.61	1.26
60	↑ TIGER RIDGE (96, Storm Cat), Hartley/De Renzo, Walmac South	\$7,500	19/8	1/0	0/1	(Anthony J., \$103,630)	\$315,759	58	0	1.14	1.20
61	D. J. CAT (89, Hurontario), Triple E Farm	NA	33/15	0/0	0/0	(Race With a Plum, \$55,410)	\$309,846	76	0	0.77	1.24
62	FAYGO (92, Mr. Prospector)	Died, 2003	19/11	0/0	0/0	(Beach Pizza, \$45,500)	\$308,681	29	0	0.90	0.96
63	↑ SWEETSOUTHERNSAINT (95, Saint Ballado), Ocala Stud Farm	\$2,500	24/10	0/0	0/0	(Alexandersrun, \$72,708)	\$301,995	51	0	0.87	1.04
64	REPRIZED (90, Kris S.), Meadowbrook	NA	21/12	0/0	0/0	(Girlsinthoffice, \$55,220)	\$288,088	82	2	0.71	0.95
65	STAR OF VALOR (93, Phone Trick)	Died, 2003	16/8	0/0	0/0	(Luisathebeachhouse, \$39,900)	\$285,356	25	0	0.98	1.71
66	↑ DANCE MASTER (97, Gone West), Padua Stables	\$3,500	8/4	1/2	0/1	(Flamenco, \$213,085)	\$279,966	17	1	2.42	1.05
67	↑ STRAIGHT MAN (96, Saint Ballado), Signature Stallions	\$6,000	25/8	0/0	0/0	(Lady Glade, \$41,340)	\$278,190	67	0	0.78	1.31
68	PRODEST ROMEO (90, Proud Truth), Tiffany Farm	\$2,500	24/11	0/0	0/0	(Quest for Truth, \$49,860)	\$276,363	46	3	1.53	1.14
69	SLEW SANGUE (92, Seattle Slew)	NA	20/12	0/0	0/0	(Sangue too Loud, \$37,852)	\$254,054	41	0	0.89	1.14
70	CRAFTY DUDE (89, Crafty Prospector), Rising Hill Farm	\$1,000	26/17	0/0	0/0	(Crafty Answer, \$29,212)	\$252,103	57	0	0.82	0.96

*A-E and COMPARABLE INDEX: The lifetime Average-Earnings Index indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned, on the average, in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00. The Comparable Index indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AEI higher than their mares' Comparable Index.

SOUTHEAST



Berkelhammer's first pinhooking score came in 1984

(continued from page 6184)

II). Last year, Ashado triumphed in the Spinaway (gr. I), Demoiselle (gr. II), and Schuylerville (gr. II) Stakes.

"I owe the horse business everything, and my family owes it everything," Berkelhammer said. "My life has been very rewarding."

Born in Greensboro, N.C., Berkelhammer moved to South Florida while only a toddler. His father was an entrepreneur involved in the dry cleaning business and several other ventures. His mother was an accountant.

"When I was about 12 years old, my parents went through a divorce," Berkelhammer said. "In an effort to help her four children keep their heads straight and handle the family being broken up, my mother was very aggressive in getting us all involved in various after-school activities. Actually, it got to be a family joke after a while. We would be driving along in the car and see some kids playing basketball. We'd say, 'Oh, that kind of looks like fun.' The next thing you'd know, you'd be signed up for basketball. So it got to where we would say, 'It looks fun, but don't tell Mom.'"

Berkelhammer's mother signed him up for football, but he ended up begging her for riding lessons. She said yes, even though riding was more expensive than other after-school activities, and Berkelhammer quickly advanced from lessons to competition in horse shows.

While in high school, Berkelhammer went to work for the Teigland, Franklin & Brokken veterinary practice as an assistant.

"It was supposed to be a summer job, but I ended up working for them for five years," Berkelhammer said. "It was my introduction to the racetrack. I got a vast amount of experience there and helped out in a lot of surgeries. I also learned equine dentistry through Dr. (Melbourne) Teigland."

The dentistry work helped finance Berkelhammer's education at a community college and Florida International University, where he studied accounting and business. Berkelhammer earned a bachelor's degree, but decided he was happier spending his days with the horses instead of adding up numbers.

He and Tiki Gibeau were dating at the time, and they leased some land near Calder Race Course in Davie, Fla. Tiki gave lessons and showed horses. Berkelhammer would work on the teeth of racehorses in the mornings and show horses in the afternoons. The couple also took care of racehorses that were recuperating from surgery.

"All the 2-year-olds that came to the racetrack were from Ocala," Berkelhammer said. "We wondered what this place was that everybody was talking about, so we took a ride up there. After visiting, we decided if we were going to be in the horse business, Ocala was the place to be, so we moved and got married."

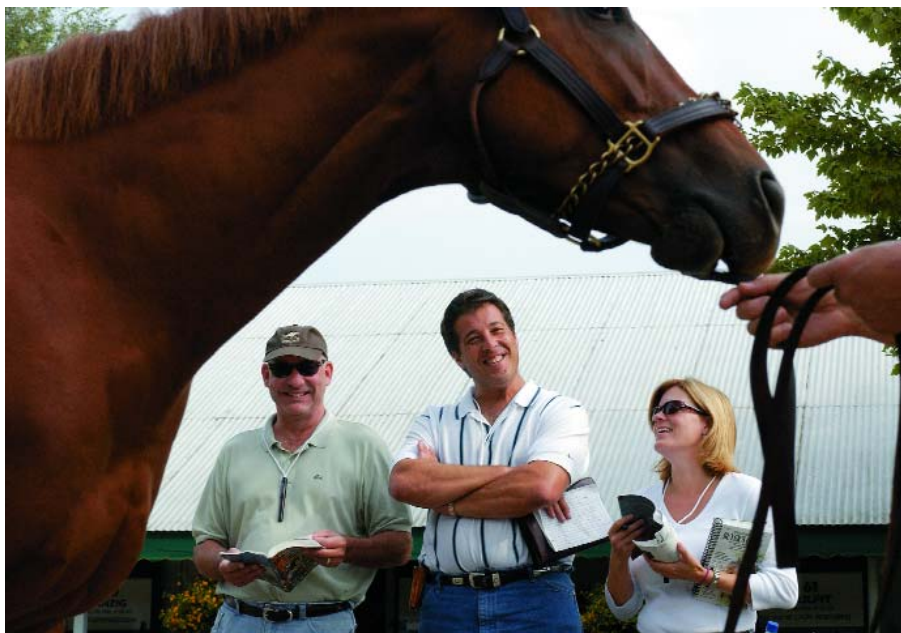
The Berkelhammers arrived in central Florida in the early 1980s with \$500 and a beat-up car. Their new home was a 20-acre farm (which would later be expanded to 40 acres) near Ocala in Anthony. Because many of his clients at the racetrack owned farms or had connections with farms, Barry had no trouble getting jobs as a horse dentist. The couple also picked up extra income by rehabilitating injured racehorses.

In addition, the Berkelhammers soon discovered a new equine venture—buying yearling Thoroughbreds and reselling them as 2-year-olds.

"At that time, the whole 2-year-old sale scene was still pretty unsophisticated," Barry Berkelhammer said. "It was grass roots—buy a horse, break and train it, go to the sale, and gallop it."

The Berkelhammers scraped together \$1,600 in 1983 and went to the Ocala Breeders' Sales Co.'s yearling auction, where they purchased a Break Up the Game filly. The following year at the OBS April sale of 2-year-olds in training and older horses of racing age, they resold her for \$4,700.

"It was a big deal to us, and we thought, 'This is fun,' " Barry said.



ANNE M. EBERHARDT

Berkelhammer (center) checks out a yearling at the Keeneland September sale with clients Jack and Laurie Wolf

Later in 1984, the Berkelhammers bought a First Albert colt for \$5,000 at the OBS yearling auction. Then, during the following year's OBS February select sale of Florida-bred 2-year-olds in training at Hialeah Park, the colt brought \$27,000. Named Timely Albert, he went on to win the Lecomte Handicap at Fair Grounds and two other added-money events.

Spurred by that success, the Berkelhammers decided to shop at the 1985 Keeneland September yearling auction, where they bought a Shecky Greene filly for \$7,500. They resold her for \$48,000 in 1986 at an

OBS select juvenile auction in Ocala. Named Highland Greene, she became a winner and finished second in the Ontario Debutante Stakes at Woodbine.

"We were having a good time, and it kind of evolved from there," Barry Berkelhammer said. "We then started pinhooking 15 to 20 horses a year, and we were producing some very good horses. People were very happy with the horses we produced, and some buyers became our clients and asked us to do their lay-ups or break their yearlings."

Other graduates of the Berkelhammers' pinhooking and breaking programs includ-

ed 1987 Tyro Stakes winner Unzipped, seven-time added-money winner Wayne's Crane, and the grade III-placed runner Impersonator. By the early 1990s, they were making a good living, but the couple thought they could be doing much better.

"There were many times when a buyer would be happy with a horse they bought from us and would inquire about sending him to our farm," Barry Berkelhammer said. "But when they found out that we only had a 40-acre farm and a little half-mile track, the horse got sent somewhere else.

"We decided if we were ever going to be really competitive, the thing to do was get a big, fancy farm, and one of our very dear clients, Gary Mottola, offered to become our partner. We bought a nice piece of property near Ocala. It was 150 acres, and it had a three-quarter mile track on it."

The Berkelhammers built a turf course and made other improvements. As the couple had hoped, their client base grew and more land was added to the farm, which now includes a broodmare division in addition to the training operation that breaks 60-80 yearlings each fall.

But even though there were changes, a couple of things remained the same. The Berkelhammers' program continued to churn out talented runners such as Canadian champion Fantasy Lake; graded winners J J'sdream, Gold n Delicious, and Soto; stakes winner Kaufy Mate; and grade II-placed Deeds Not Words. They also kept the AbraCadabra business name that they had started using early in their careers.

"My wife thought of the name AbraCadabra; it was a show horse thing," Barry said. "When we first moved to the Ocala area, we wanted to change it and go with something more traditional. We decided to do business under our own names, but everybody complained, so after one year, we went back to AbraCadabra."

The couple's business got one of its biggest boosts when a client introduced the Berkelhammers to hedge fund manager Jack Wolf and his wife, Laurie. The Wolfs were interested in racing, but after a bad experience with a bloodstock agent, they were looking for a new adviser.

Jack Wolf told Barry he wanted "to buy some yearlings and get into the horse business from a racing standpoint and try to run a stable that was self-sustaining."

Berkelhammer said he recommended buying "10 to 15 yearlings, averaging about \$150,000" and added: "If I don't

find you a good horse, fire me.' ”

Berkelhammer was confident he wouldn't lose the job because “we had been pinhooking horses we purchased (as yearlings) in the \$50,000 or \$60,000 range and coming up with a stakes horse every year. I knew if I ever had a little bit more spending power and could reach for the ones I wanted and not be constrained by how much I could sell them for later, I could be successful. That was the premise of the whole program, and Jack said, ‘OK.’ I presented what I thought was a conservative budget, and he said, ‘If you run out of money, I'm done.’ ”

As both men remember it, they went to yearling sales in 2000 and bought about a dozen horses. In that group was Harlan's Holiday, a \$97,000 purchase at the Fasig-Tipton July select auction. Another notable selection was Zawzooth (by Unbridled's Song), a \$200,000 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale graduate who became a stakes winner and placed in a pair of grade II events.

At the suggestion of Berkelhammer, who wanted to maintain cash flow, the Wolfs pin-

there are others that seem to say, ‘Wow, this is a lot of fun.’ They take it all in, and they enjoy the interaction with people. When you come back and look at them over and over again, they still have a positive and perky attitude. Those are the kind of horses I like to buy.”

In subsequent trips to yearling auctions, the Wolfs and Berkelhammer have found even more standouts. In 2002, they bought Ashado for \$170,000 at Keeneland in September.

“I was just beside myself to have her,” Berkelhammer said. “She was poised and so strong and elegant. She was like a ballerina; when she walked, she floated over the ground.”

In the same Taylor Made Sales Agency consignment with Ashado was a Pulpit colt that Berkelhammer thought had “a fast, determined look and a lot of pizzazz.” The Wolfs got him for \$180,000 and named him Purge. Raced in partnership with Saylor and Martin, the colt scored in this year's Jim Dandy (gr. II) and Peter Pan (gr. II) Stakes.

Bham, a \$100,000 yearling purchase at

ple who can pick good horses (out of sales), but it's what you do with them after you buy them that's important. My farm manager and assistant trainer, Rafael Obeso, has been with me about 10 years, and we have a very good working relationship. My head exercise rider and assistant, Carlos Belmonte, also has been with me for a long time. We've created a well-rounded program that allows a horse the opportunity to be the best it can be.

“We introduce the yearlings to tack and riders like anybody else would do,” Berkelhammer continued. “But we might differ from other people when we send the horses to the track. We train by using a lot of switching up in company. We let horses gallop side by side and look other horses in the eye. We also do a lot of starting gate work.”

In addition, Berkelhammer said, “we are in a nice position with the Wolfs and other clients that we have a lot of horses for. Most people don't dictate to us that a horse has to go to the races in April or even make the races as a 2-year-old. They let them evolve, and I get to make the judgment about where they fit best and when they need to move on. If one tells me it's ready to go to the races early, we go to the races early. If it's a little immature, we give it more time. If, based on stride and how they train, they show me they would be happier going long in the fall, we wait and send them to the racetrack in the middle of July. If a soundness issue comes up, we back off.”

Berkelhammer, 44, doesn't do much pinhooking anymore.

“Maybe I'll pinhook a couple just for fun, but this (preparing horses to go directly into racing instead of for sales) is far more gratifying, relaxing, and enjoyable,” he said.

Tiki Berkelhammer spends most of her time doing office work and managing AbraCadabra's broodmare divisions. She also shows Quarter Horses, an activity also enjoyed by the couple's two daughters, Erinn and Kaylee.

“The horse business is a struggle for a lot of people, but it's been very good to me and my family,” Berkelhammer said. “I owe the Wolfs a debt of gratitude. They believed in me and gave me a chance when I was trying to make it as a pinhooker. But it all goes back to when I was a little kid at football practice and all I wanted to do was go over by the fence and hang out where the horses were. Horses have been in my blood nearly all my life. I'm so blessed I can be a part of the horse business and be successful. I hope the ride never ends.” 🐾



The training operation at AbraCadabra breaks 60-80 yearlings each fall

hooked a Saint Ballado colt they had bought for \$275,000 at Fasig-Tipton Saratoga. Named Axis, he was resold for \$700,000 at the 2001 Fasig-Tipton Florida select juvenile auction.

“I pick out all my horses the same way,” Berkelhammer said. “I look at the overall group that's on the grounds, and I try to find the horse I think is a balanced athlete and well-proportioned. It's not necessarily a horse that's big or small, or an early foal or a late foal. I want them to have a package that fits together and to have a long, lovely walk.

“I also look for the horse that seems smart and has a good attitude. When these babies get to a sale, it's a new environment for them. You can see some of them kind of wither. They're worried, and they're nervous. Then

Fasig-Tipton Saratoga in 2001, was second in the 2002 Remsen Stakes (gr. II) and third in the 2003 Holy Bull Stakes (gr. III) for the Wolfs and Barbara Kurtin. Also for the same partnership, Pick'em finished second in the 2003 Jack Dudley Sprint Handicap at Calder Race Course after being purchased for \$310,000 at the 2001 Fasig-Tipton Kentucky July yearling sale.

“Barry has a very good eye for a young horse, and he's very honest in his appraisals,” Jack Wolf said. “But it's not only his selection of the horses that we like. It's how he breaks the horses and the consistency in the way they are trained. Barry has a nice operation and a very good staff of riders. There's not much turnover.”

Said Berkelhammer: “There's a lot of peo-