

Standing at stud (best of)



Years ago, after taking a whipping in the stock market, I decided to invest our money in a more secure and “stable” enterprise. I got into the race horse business. I started slowly, which, in retrospect, was not a good idea in an industry built on speed.

I started It's The Pitts Stud Farm with one animal, my wonder horse Gentleman, who was left a stud by a previous owner because it was thought any slight trace of ambition on his part might be erased if he was gelded. I also had three empty stalls that were not being used so I decided to make a killing in the race horse business.

The first step was to advertise Gentleman's services. I got some business cards printed up with my picture on them, which, in retrospect, was probably not a good idea for my stud service business. I then embarked on my worldwide marketing program. I have a “No Trespassing” sign on the road to the ranch, and on top of it I crudely painted the words “Standing At Stud.” Sure enough, somebody drove in and wanted to breed their mare to “No Trespassing.” That's how Gentleman got his stage name.

I'll admit that Gentleman was a little old to be embarking on a new career, after all, he was 27, but I couldn't catch him until he was 10 and I didn't need the money when he was 3. Gentleman never went to the racetrack, but he has lifetime earnings of one six pack, and that was back in the days when a six pack cost a lot of money.

He is easily the fastest horse in the world headed for home but not so much when he's outward bound. He can't run, but he did catch distemper twice. If speed kills, Gentleman will live forever. He is triple A ... asleep and apparently, asexual.

I was deluged with requests to breed to “No Trespassing.” I booked two outside mares. You have to keep good records, and to do that you have to be able to identify the mares that you bring in, and I had a heck of a time with the two mares. I couldn't use ear tags so I cut one's tail

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Written by Lee Pitts

off shorter than the other. Sure enough the other mare cut her tail off in the fence. Finally, it got so confusing I had to send the black mare back to her owner. I just couldn't keep the horses straight. The white mare stayed.

The secret to booking a lot of mares, I was told, is to have a high stud fee but cheap mare care. With this in mind I charged \$2,500 to breed to "No Trespassing" with a live foal guaranteed, but it only cost two bits a day to keep a mare at It's The Pitts.

I should have known that all was not right with the white mare when her owner made me sign a piece of paper that said if the mare had a foal I had to promise to keep it. The mare never did conceive so I called up her owner to come and get her but he let her stay an additional three years before he came to pick her up. On top of that, he wanted her manure for his garden. I told him at a quarter a day all the mare got to eat was the wood boards in her stable and there wasn't any manure.

I had a lot of new responsibilities as a stud master. I had to start going to the track and I also had to learn how to tease the mares. I did this by making fun of the white mare's roman nose and crooked hocks.

I learned real quick it's very expensive to be in the stud business. I had to buy Gentleman a halter with his name in fake gold, and I had to purchase another horse to use for my ranch work. I couldn't ride "No Trespassing" on the ranch anymore. I couldn't take the chance of getting him hurt.

Prematurely, as it turns out, I decided to sell syndicated shares in my good horse for a limited time, and the response was underwhelming, to say the least. To drum up business for "No Trespassing," I went to the track and passed out my business cards.

While I was there I did a little research on what mares would be a good nick with "No Trespassing." That research only cost me \$800 in lost wagers. In the end, would you believe that I couldn't find a single mare that I thought was deserving of "No Trespassing's" gene's?

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