

## RISING OF THE PHOENIX

By Christina Bossinakis

For all of his success and professional accomplishments, Bradley Wayne Hughes probably never imagined himself becoming a hero in the horse racing industry. However, with the purchase and the subsequent restoration of historic Spendthrift Farm in Lexington, some might argue that is exactly what he has become. On June 25, 2004, Hughes purchased the 733-acre tract of land from a partnership headed by Bruce Kline, who previously bought the property from Ted Taylor in 2000. Throughout most of the 20th century, Leslie Combs II developed Spendthrift into the epitome of racing, breeding and sales, but in the final decade of the century, the



**B. Wayne Hughes**

*Horsephotos*

Kentucky showplace had fallen onto hard times, with many of its structures and edifices deteriorating from disuse.

"The history of Spendthrift is an intriguing subject," said Hughes. "The stallion barn is a big piece of the Spendthrift history."

Among the equine luminaries to have graced the barns and fields of Spendthrift Farm are Triple Crown heroes Seattle Slew and Affirmed; nine Kentucky Derby winners, including Foolish Pleasure, Proud Clarion, Swaps, Decidedly, Nashua and Dark Star; and leading sires Caro, Raise a Native, My Babu, Gallant Man and Exclusive Native.

"We are basically caretakers of that history, and if we are going to take good care of it, it doesn't seem like ripping down that barn, where the best part of our history resides, would be the best approach," said Hughes.

"We put in new barns, and the main house, which was run down, we have now made into an office. We built a few houses on the farm. There has been quite a bit of change on the property over the last few years."

While plenty of time and resources have been channeled into returning Spendthrift to its former splendor, Hughes acknowledged that the restoration of the Kentucky landmark has granted him a level of satisfaction beyond financial reward.

"Many of the breeders in Kentucky have come to me and thanked me for improving and trying to bring Spendthrift back to its better days, when the reality is that I should be thanking them for breeding their horses here, and once again making this a historic place for the Thoroughbred industry," he said.

### Early Start...

Born in Gotebo, Oklahoma, in 1933, Hughes moved to the West Coast with his family at a young age and grew up in the San Gabriel Valley in Southern California. At the tender age of 11, Hughes was first introduced to racing by his father, a factory worker, who would frequent nearby Santa Anita Park in Arcadia. Having been bitten by the racing bug early, Hughes continued to go to the races, on his own accord, through his high school and college years.

"When I was in high school, I would go out to Santa Anita with my friends, because you could get in free for the last race," explained Hughes. "We had a lot of fun in those days, and that was basically what attracted me to the sport."

After graduating from the University of Southern California, Hughes embarked on a career in real estate and moved to San Marino, where he met fellow horseracing enthusiasts Jim Mamakos and Marc Stubrin. At a sale in Pomona in 1970, the trio purchased three mares, the highest of which cost a mere \$600. Later named Winston Stable--after the street on which the three friends lived at the time--the partnership invested in its first two-year-old at a sale at Hollywood Park in 1971. Named Patmos, the colt--trained by Warren Stute--proved to be only a modest winner in the claiming ranks, but Hughes's fortune--at least at the professional level--was about to change. Inspired by an over-loaded self-storage facility in Texas in 1972, Hughes conceived of, and later founded, Public Storage, a multi-billion dollar operation that vaulted him onto the Forbes 100 list of the nation's wealthiest people. In 1991, Hughes secured his first horse farm, a 10-acre tract of land in Malibu, which is currently managed by Seth Semkin and used as a lay-up center.



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## What I love About Thoroughbred Racing cont.

### Taste of Success...

Hughes enjoyed his first taste of graded-stakes success in 1994 when Trishyde (Nureyev) landed the GIII Fleur de Lis H.



**Action This Day**  
*Horsephotos*

at Churchill Downs. Campaigned in partnership with Tracy Farmer and Three Chimneys, Hughes raced the \$450,000 KEEJUL yearling purchase Joyeux Danseur (Nureyev), who won four stakes during the 2004 season, including the GI Early Times Turf Classic and the GIII Explosive Bid H. Having also celebrated graded-stakes success with Don't Get Mad (Stephen Got Even), Siphonizer (Siphon {Brz}), Greeley's Galaxy (Mr. Greeley), Teton Forest (Forestry) and Osidy

(Storm Cat), Hughes admittedly enjoyed his greatest success with Action This Day (Kris S.) in 2003. Secured for \$150,000 at the Keeneland July Sale in 2002, the bay rounded out his juvenile season with a score in GI Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Santa Anita, earning a divisional championship in the process.

"Probably my best moment in racing so far has been with Action This Day when he won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile," confirmed Hughes. "It was a big surprise to us. I never go into a race like that expecting to win. The fact that we did was just great. My friends told me afterward that I didn't want to leave the winner's circle. Racing is just fantastic. Getting to the winner's circle is a very good thing, and everything we do is a means to that end. That win was very satisfying and rewarding."

### A Piece of History...

In the early part of the '90s, Hughes became increasingly active in a variety of segments of the racing industry, and by the early part of this decade, Hughes began to take an interest in finding a farm in Central Kentucky.

"We raced our horses for about 10 years, and during that time, we ended up with some mares when our fillies would come off the track," explained Hughes, who previously sent his broodmare prospects to Lexington-area Three Chimneys, Lane's End and Walmac.

"Pretty soon, we had a bunch of mares, and I decided that I wanted to have my mares all in one place, so my family could enjoy them more," he said.

"We had been looking for a couple of years, trying to find something that matched up with what we wanted. We absolutely fell in love with Spendthrift--the history and the farm--even though it was much larger than we anticipated. I'm happy with the purchase. It makes me feel like a part of Kentucky."

Hughes sells all of the young stock bred at Spendthrift, and looks to the sales to stock his racing team. Currently standing at Spendthrift are Don't Get Mad, Into Mischief, Malibu Moon, Notional, Teton Forest and Tiz Wonderful.

"We buy at the two-year-old sales, yearling sales and breeding stock sales," he said. "We operate in every segment of the industry, and I don't really see any change on the horizon, since it has worked well for us. In fact, we're very happy to be going to the sales every year. We were fortunate to do well at the sales this year, especially during a time

when some others didn't do as well."

While the desire to restore Spendthrift to its former splendor is strong, Hughes points toward a greater purpose that keeps him moving forward in the sport of horse racing.

"Spendthrift has this marvelous history, and I am the caretaker here," he said. "I take that responsibility very seriously, but what I like the most about the sport is

the horse itself. I think they are magnificent creatures, and I really enjoy the racing game."



**Don't Get Mad**  
*Horsephotos*

