

March 2019  
\$5.00

# California THOROUGHBRED

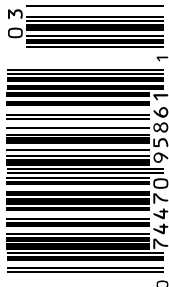
Official Publication of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association



## SPICED PERFECTION

2018 CALIFORNIA-BRED  
HORSE OF THE YEAR

www.ctba.com



# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CONNECTIONS OF SPICED PERFECTION

CHECKMATE THOROUGHBREDS SALE GRADUATE & GRADE 1 WINNER

2018 CALIFORNIA-BRED

- **Horse of the Year**
- **Champion 3-Year-Old Filly**
- **Champion Sprinter**

**Buyer & Owner:** Dare to Dream Stables

**Breeder:** Premier Thoroughbreds

**Trainer:** Brian Koriner



ADRIAN GONZALEZ (805) 720-5395

P.O. Box 2201 • Paso Robles, CA 93447 • Checkmateracing@yahoo.com

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



**CHECKMATE**  
*THOROUGHBREDS*



*Horse of the Year, champion 3-year-old female, champion sprinter*

# SPICED PERFECTION

BY TRACY GANTZ

**P**hil Lebherz dominated many of the California-bred championship categories in 2018, but he's the first to admit that he had a lot of help. It has taken the dedicated work of many, from Alan Klein, Lebherz' partner in Smiling Tiger, to bloodstock agent Mersad Metanovic, farm managers Graham Bell and Dennis Yokum, and many others at Lebherz' Premier Thoroughbreds.

It all started with Smiling Tiger, raced by Lebherz and Klein to seven graded wins and earnings of \$1,480,704. That led to Lebherz establishing the farm Premier Thoroughbreds in Oakdale and buying mares to breed to Smiling Tiger.

Metanovic purchased many of those mares, including Perfect Feat, who when bred to Smiling Tiger produced Spiced Perfection. That filly's outstanding career earned her the 2018 California-bred Horse of the Year title as well champion 3-year-old female and champion sprinter.

"He gave me free rein," said Metanovic. "He put a guideline on the pricing, but he told me to buy them as if I were going to own them."

Perfect Feat cost just \$7,500, and she was among the mares Lebherz sent to Smiling Tiger in 2014, the stallion's first year at stud. That year Smiling Tiger stood at Premier. Lebherz and Klein have since



© BENOT PHOTOS

Spiced Perfection's zesty season landed her three championships, including Horse of the Year

moved him to John Harris' Harris Farms in Coalinga, where he has proved immensely popular, especially after his first foals began running.

Spiced Perfection was foaled at Premier Thoroughbreds March 10, 2015, under the auspices of Bell. Lebherz also credited Bell with the raising of another of his champions, Miss Sunset. He also noted that brothers Oscar and Bobby Munguia, the farm foreman and assistant foreman, have been a great help with all of his champions.

Yokum, who now manages Premier for

Lebherz, recalls Spiced Perfection as "a nicely made filly—just a little on the small side." That small stature kept some buyers away throughout her career. But those who could look beyond it reaped plenty of rewards.

Lebherz sold Spiced Perfection through Sue Greene's Woodbridge Farm consignment to the 2016 Barretts October yearling sale. Trainer and bloodstock agent John Brocklebank purchased the filly for \$6,500. She was pinhooked back into the 2017 Barretts select 2-year-old sale via Adrian Gonzalez' Checkmate Thoroughbreds consignment.

Mike and Allen Faber, brothers from Chicago, examined the Barretts 2-year-old catalog for prospects to add to their Dare to Dream Stable partnership. Though they are based at Arlington Park in Illinois, they wanted to race some horses in California, where Brian Koriner trains for them.

Mike recalled the thinking that led to Spiced Perfection's purchase for \$50,000.

## SPICED PERFECTION

Smiling Tiger – Perfect Feat, Pleasantly Perfect

**Breeder:** Premier Thoroughbreds

**Owner:** Dare To Dream Stable

**Bay filly (March 10, 2015)**

	AGE	STARTS	1ST (SW)	2ND	3RD	EARNINGS
2018	3	8	4 (3)	1	1	\$455,125

"We were looking for a Cal-bred," he said. "She had the kind of body we like in a horse—she wasn't overly large and was well put together. She was a little green at the sale, but she still worked really nice."

As a 2-year-old in 2017, Spiced Perfection won twice, finished second three times, and ran third once in six starts. She became Smiling Tiger's first stakes winner when she and jockey Joe Talamo scored in the \$98,000 Generous Portion Stakes Aug. 30, 2017, at Del Mar.

"She's been doing really well since we brought her down here," said Koriner. "Every time Joe worked her, he gave me a thumbs up and said she was getting better and better."

Spiced Perfection expanded her stakes repertoire at 3 in 2018. In her second start of the year, she eked out a neck victory over odds-on favorite Show It N Moe It in the \$200,000 Evening Jewel Stakes April 7 at Santa Anita.

Koriner hadn't liked that Spiced Perfection had drawn the rail in the Evening Jewel, but the filly was able to overcome any potential disadvantage.

"Drawing the rail, she has a little speed, but Brian didn't really want to get in a speed duel," said Talamo. "At the quarter pole I was able to angle around, and she did her thing down the lane."

A very enthusiastic group of Dare to Dream owners crowded into the Santa Anita winner's circle.

"We're thrilled with her," said Mike Faber. "She's really done nothing wrong since we've had her."

In four races following the Evening Jewel, Spiced Perfection won an allowance optional claimer, placed in two stakes, and ran fourth in another stakes. Back at Del Mar for the fall meeting, she put on a show in the \$100,690 Betty Grable Stakes. With Flavien Prat riding, she defeated two of Nick Alexander's talented Grazen fillies, Just Grazed Me and favored S Y Sky.

"She's just a tough filly who runs great every time," said Koriner after the Betty Grable.

Spiced Perfection saved an even better performance to finish out the year. Dare to Dream did just that, entering Spiced Perfection in the grade 1 La Brea Stakes Dec.

---

## HORSE OF THE YEAR:

SPICED PERFECTION

FLY TO MARS

HECK YEAH

## 3YO FEMALE:

SPICED PERFECTION

PULPIT RIDER

JUST GRAZED ME

## SPRINTER:

SPICED PERFECTION

MISS SUNSET

GIVE ME A HINT

---

seems to thrive wherever we put her," said Mike Faber. He added that a recent lucrative offer to purchase Spiced Perfection had been withdrawn because of her size.

Her size obviously didn't deter trainer Peter Miller and some of his owners. Early in 2019 Adam Wachtel, Peter Deutsch, and Len Schleifer's Pantofel Stable bought Spiced Perfection privately from Dare to Dream.

In her first 2019 start and first for the new ownership, Spiced Perfection traveled to Laurel Park for the Barbara Fritchie Stakes (G3). She faced a powerhouse local runner, Late Night Pow Wow, who was riding an eight-race winning streak. Spiced Perfection almost upset Late Night Pow Wow, running second by just a head.



Spiced Perfection ended her 2018 campaign with a win in the grade 1 La Brea Stakes

26 at Santa Anita.

Dream Tree, an undefeated filly from the powerful Bob Baffert barn, was the 7-10 favorite. She set the early pace, but couldn't sustain it. Meanwhile, Prat bided his time in midpack.

"Around the turn I was going pretty well, so I thought I had a shot," said Prat. "As soon as I asked her, she responded well and ran big."

Spiced Perfection beat another Cal-bred, Hot Autumn, by 1¼ lengths, getting the seven furlongs in 1:23.54.

"She's a small, little filly, but she just

Spiced Perfection returned to California, but she might meet Late Night Pow Wow again in the April 6 Madison Stakes (G1) at Keeneland. She raised her lifetime record to six wins, five seconds, and two thirds in 15 starts for earnings of \$672,405.

Lebherz doesn't regret selling Spiced Perfection.

"I want people to understand that we're putting out a good product and we're willing to sell it," he said. "We sell the good ones. I think it shows that we have really good management out at the farm." **CTB**



## Broodmare of the Year



COURTESY OF PREMIER THOROUGHBREDS

Perfect Feat, shown with her 2014 Acclamation filly Stake My Claim, foaled two 2018 Cal-bred champions: Spiced Perfection and Cruel Intention

# PERFECT FEAT

BY TRACY GANTZ

**P**roducing one champion takes a special broodmare. Yet Perfect Feat managed to produce two foals that were honored as champion California-breds of 2018.

Like many of owner/breeder Phil Lebherz' racing and breeding stock, Perfect Feat arrived as part of a master plan to prove millionaire Smiling Tiger as a stallion.

"We bought a lot of mares," said Lebherz. "Mersad Metanovic purchased Perfect Feat for me. So he's responsible for Spiced Perfection and Cruel Intention. He also bought Tuscan Sunset, the dam of Miss Sunset. That was a world-class year of buying mares."

Dennis Yokum, ranch manager of Lebherz' Premier Thoroughbreds in Oakdale, remembers Perfect Feat as being "a kind mare to be around." She was well made

and had a particularly nice hip, Yokum said.

Diamond A Racing Corporation, which raced 2003 Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) winner Pleasantly Perfect, bred Perfect Feat in Kentucky. She was by Pleasantly Perfect out of the multiple stakes-placed Capote mare Bold Feat.

A \$19,000 buy-back at the 2007 Keeneland September yearling sale, Perfect Feat won four of 11 starts and earned \$52,630. She spent most of her career in the claiming ranks in Northern California.

After she started and won twice, Perfect Feat went through the 2011 Barretts January mixed sale. Trainer Kristin Mulhall purchased her for \$30,000. Mulhall consigned the mare to the 2014 January sale in foal to Acclamation. Metanovic bought Perfect Feat for Lebherz' Premier Thoroughbreds for \$7,500.

"I liked her pedigree and that she was a winner," said Metanovic. "Her conformation was about as good as you could find.

She had a great walk, was a very classy mare, and good minded.

"Her being by Pleasantly Perfect, who I love as a sire, I thought would give a little more stamina to a sire like Smiling Tiger. That whole bloodline to Pleasant Colony is incredible. Then you go down to her mother, Bold Feat, by Capote, who is by Seattle Slew."

Perfect Feat's Acclamation filly, Stake My Claim, did not race, and unfortunately the mare died in late 2016 at age 10. But Perfect Feat's two foals, both by Smiling Tiger, solidified her Broodmare of the Year status.

Spiced Perfection arrived first, in 2015. Lebherz sold her through Sue Greene's Woodbridge Farm for \$6,500 at the 2016 Barretts October yearling sale. Spiced Perfection has won the 2018 La Brea Stakes (G1) and three other stakes so far, earning \$672,405. She was voted the 2018 Cal-bred Horse of the Year, champion 3-year-old female, and sprint champion.

The next year Perfect Feat produced Cruel Intention, who sold for \$200,000 to Solis/Litt Bloodstock, agent, at the 2018 Barretts spring 2-year-old sale. Andy Havens' Havens Bloodstock Agency consigned the colt to the sale. Cruel Intention defeated Galilean in the 2018 Golden State Juvenile Stakes and was named Cal-bred champion 2-year-old male of 2018.

Lebherz was happy that Spiced Perfection and Cruel Intention have gone on to do well for others.

"Part of our philosophy is to collaborate with other people," he said. "Good horses are good for all of us." **CTB**



# AWARDING PERFECTION

BY TRACY GANTZ

PHOTOS BY RON MESAROS

When Boyd Browning of Fasig-Tipton presented the award for Miss Sunset as champion older female, he quipped, “I’d like to thank all of you for inviting me to the Phil Lebherz show tonight.”

Indeed, Lebherz collected many of the 2018 California Thoroughbred Breeders Association awards, including for Spiced Perfection as California-bred Horse of the Year. While he had an outstanding year, many other individuals did as well, including Paul and Zillah Reddam, also honored multiple times.

Lebherz earned his awards for horses associated with his desire to prove Smiling Tiger as a California stallion. Two of Smiling Tiger’s offspring, full siblings Spiced Perfection and Cruel Intention, were named California-bred champions of 2018. Miss Sunset, bred by Lebherz and Alan Klein, came about because they bought her dam, Tuscan Sunset, to breed to Smiling Tiger. Lebherz also received the award for Perfect Feat, the dam of Spiced Perfection and Cruel Intention, as the Broodmare of the Year.

In the Horse of the Year voting, Spiced Perfection beat out Gary Barber-bred Fly to Mars, champion older male and turf champion, as well as multiple stakes winner Heck Yeah, bred by the late Michael Pageler.

“It’s an honor to win Horse of the Year,” said Lebherz. “You don’t think this is going to happen.”

Each time Lebherz stepped to the podium, he thanked more people who had

helped him. Those included his farm managers, Graham Bell and Dennis Yokum; bloodstock agent Mersad Metanovic; brothers Oscar and Bobby Munguia, his farm foreman and assistant foreman; the team at John Harris’ Harris Farms, where Smiling Tiger stands; and trainers Jeff Bonde and Brian Koriner.

Kasey Bennett, manager of Ocean Breeze Ranch, represented the Reddams at the dinner. Their stallion Square Eddie received three awards, and the Reddams were honored as the 2018 leading breeders of California-foaled Thoroughbreds. Stallions Lucky Pulpit and Boisterous were also honored during the evening.

John Barr and Crystal Water were inducted into the CTBA Hall of Fame. Barr proudly spoke of the four generations of his family at the event to witness the honor. Legendary jockey Laffit Pincay Jr., who rode Crystal Water many times, accepted the horse’s award to a standing ovation.

Jeff Bonde, the 2017 California trainer of the year, presented the 2018 trainer of the year to Phil D’Amato.

“This really means a lot to me,” said D’Amato. “This award could not be achieved without a great team. I’m really fortunate to have great assistants, exercise riders, grooms, hot-walkers—they’re the ones who win this award.”



## SPICED PERFECTION Horse of the Year

CTBA chairperson Pete Parrella, left, presented Spiced Perfection’s Horse of the Year award to her breeder Phil Lebherz, accompanied by her trainer Brian Koriner



## REDDAM RACING

**Leading Breeder of California-Foaled Thoroughbreds by Earnings**

Tom Robbins of Del Mar presents the leading breeder award to Reddam Racing rep Kasey Bennett

## PHIL D'AMATO

**Trainer of the Year**

Trainer Jeff Bonde, left, presented the trainer award to Phil D'Amato and Phil's son, Ryan D'Amato



## GIVE ME A HINT

**2yo female** CTBA vice chairperson Terry Lovingier presented to Cathy and Paul Schroeder, Bob Hess Jr., and Amy Hess

## HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



## JOHN BARR

CTBA director Don Valpredo, right, presented to John Barr



## CRYSTAL WATER

CTBA director John Barr, left, presented to Laffit Pincay Jr.

## PERFECT FEAT

**Broodmare of the Year**

CTBA director Sue Greene presented to Phil Lebherz

