

Alan Porter, April 13, 2005-Buzzards Bay
SANTA ANITA DERBY-GI, \$750,000, SAX, 4-9, 3yo,
1 1/8m, 1:49, ft.

It doesn't always cost a fortune to create the winner of the most sought-after prize in American racing. Of 13 renewals of the GI Kentucky Derby since 1992, eight have been captured by stallions who were standing at \$10,000 or less when they sired the Derby winner.

This year could well see another classic sire ... as the only Grade I Derby trials run this year--the Florida Derby, Wood Memorial and Santa Anita Derby--have fallen to High Fly (Atticus), Bellamy Road (Concerto) and Buzzards Bay (Marco Bay). The pedigrees of High Fly and Bellamy Road have been covered in detail in the TDN in the last week, so now it is the turn of Buzzards Bay.

Despite being prepared for the Derby in California, Buzzards Bay is, like Bellamy Road, a Florida-bred. He actually began his career at Calder and was purchased by Fog City Stables after breaking his maiden at that track in October. He ended his two-year-old campaign with a fourth in a Hollywood allowance event, but led throughout to capture the Golden Gate Derby by a nose in his three-year-old debut. He wasn't able to adopt front-running tactics in his next two starts which resulted in a disappointing 10th in the GIII Risen Star S. and a staying-on third in the GIII El Camino Real Derby. But for the Santa Anita Derby, Buzzards Bay held sway at every call, battling on gamely to deny another longshot, General John B., and the GI Breeders' Cup Juvenile victor Wilko.

Buzzards Bay's sire Marco Bay, does have a Derby win to his name, albeit in the Tampa Bay version. He also took the Sam F. Davis Breeders' Cup S. at Tampa the same year, and at four captured the Kelly Olympic Breeders' Cup S. on the turf at Atlantic City.

Marco Bay is a son of Fred Hooper's brilliantly fast two-year-old Copelan, but if Buzzards Bay's male line is predominantly speedy, there is plenty of stamina in the distaff side of the pedigree. Buzzards Bay's unraced dam Lifes Lass is by Seneca Jones, a modest performer, but a son of Alydar and GI Kentucky Oaks heroine Tiffany Lass (herself by Kentucky Derby and Belmont winner Bold Forbes).

Buzzards Bay's granddam, stakes-placed Letters of Life, is a daughter of another Belmont victor in the shape of Arts and Letters. A half sister to the prolific New York-bred stakes winner Elegant Life, Letters of Life is out of Life, who is by Bold Hour, a talented son of Bold Ruler who captured the Amory L. Haskell H. and Grey Lag H. at 10 furlongs.

Retired Manhattan businessman Jay Shaw, breeder of both Buzzards Bay and Marco Bay, reportedly purchased Lifes Lass specifically to breed to Marco Bay, as he felt that the bloodlines of Seneca Jones suited his horse. From our point of view, what is particularly interesting about the background of Seneca Jones is that his dam Tiffany Lass is a Bold Ruler/Ribot cross, and Marco Bay's granddam (and Jay Shaw's foundation mare) Mariwitch is a Ribot/Bold Ruler cross. For good measure, the Ribot/Bold Ruler cross is also repeated in Buzzards Bay's granddam Letters of Life.

There is a second interesting pedigree play at work here, too. Buzzards Bay's grandsire Copelan is inbred 3x4 to Fred Hooper's brilliant horse Olympia. Letters of Life, the granddam of Buzzards Bay, is inbred 4x4 to Olympia's sire Heliopolis, and her granddam Catch Phrase is bred on the same cross as Olympia.