



Country Star named Aiken Trained Horse of the Year

Aiken Standard – January 11, 2008

By Ben Baugh

Staff writer

Stonerside Stable's Country Star, who stamped herself in 2007 as one of the best of her generation with consecutive victories in the Grade 1 Darley Alcibiades Stakes and the Grade 1 Hollywood Starlet Stakes during her juvenile campaign, was named the 2007 Aiken Trained Horse of the Year by the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum. Country Star will be honored with a ceremony at the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum on March 16 at 12:30 p.m., with a reception to follow. The public is invited to attend.

The filly joins 2002 Aiken Trained Horse of the Year Congaree and 2006 Horse of the Year Bob and John as Stonerside horses who have been recognized with the honor. Country Star is also a finalist for the Eclipse Award for outstanding 2-year-old filly.

"We're very honored," said John Adger, Stonerside Racing and Bloodstock manager in a phone interview Thursday evening. "We were fortunate to have Bob and John honored as the 2006 Aiken Trained Horse of the Year. We're tickled to death with the honor. There were a lot of good horses who won stakes races in 2007 who came out of Aiken, including Dogwood Stable's Cotton Blossom."

Country Star is by the 1993 Belmont Stakes winner Empire Maker, out of the Metfield broodmare Rings A Chime. Rings A Chime won the Grade 1 Ashland Stakes during her 3-year-old campaign, and retired with earnings of \$606,315, second most for a Washington-state bred filly.

A dark bay filly, Country Star placed second in her debut, a 1 1/16-miles maiden special weight race on the turf at Belmont Park on Sept. 20. She followed that race with a one-length victory in the 1 1/16-miles Grade 1 Darley Alcibiades Stakes on Oct. 5 at Keeneland, winning decisively on the Polytrack. Her third and final start of 2007 would see her establish a new track record over the cushion track at Hollywood Park in the Grade 1 Hollywood Starlet Stakes on Dec. 15, winning impressively by 2 3/4-lengths.

Country Star is campaigned by Hall of Fame conditioner Bobby Frankel, who also trained the filly's sire Empire Maker. Frankel is a five time Eclipse Award winning trainer. Country Star was broken and trained in Aiken by Stonerside Stable's trainer Tim Jones. "We're very pleased," said Jones. "Her record speaks for itself. We're very honored she was selected as the Horse of the Year." From three lifetime starts, Country Star has two wins and has placed second once en route to bankrolling \$575,900.