



# Pedigree perspectives from the Breeders' Cup World Championships

by **Rommy Faversham**

As a group, the pedigrees of the 14 winners from the 2008 Breeders' Cup World Championships provide a useful survey of the order and nuance that is often expressed within the genetic backgrounds of our best contemporary Thoroughbreds.



Tony Leonard photo

### MR. PROSPECTOR

Eight of the winners demonstrated the dominant Mr. Prospector sire line. The Northern Dancer and \*Nasrullah sire lines collected a pair of winners while the \*Ribot and Hyperion lines were represented by one winner each.

The Mr. Prospector stallion Chester House distinguished himself as the sire of two Breeders' Cup winners. Ventura won the Sentient Flight Group Filly and Mare Sprint and Muhannak (Ire) won the Marathon.

Collectively, the winners demonstrated a rather even distribution in terms of the levels of inbreeding. Four were inbred 4x4 or closer, five were inbred in the fifth generation, and the other five were five generation outcrosses.

The closest family tie between two of this year's winners involves Classic (G1) winner Raven's Pass and Turf Sprint hero Desert Code. Raven's Pass's dam, Ascotney, is a full sister to Words of War, the dam of Desert Code's sire, E Dubai. These two multiple stakes-winning full sisters, Ascotney and Words of War, are by Lord At War (Arg) out of the Verbatim mare Right Word.

Two of this year's Breeders' Cup winners, Conduit (Ire), who won the Emirates Airline Turf (G1), and Ventura are descendants from the same extended tail-female line (family number one). Their common matriarch, Love-Oil (1915), is Conduit's ninth dam and Ventura's tenth dam.

These relationships suggest just how broad the spectrum of female families remain as compared with the increasingly narrowed selection of contemporary sire lines.

This year's Breeders' Cup winner with the most celebrated female family is Alain and Gerard Wertheimer's brilliant filly Goldikova (Ire), who captured the Mile (G1). Her dam is a full sister to a multiple Group 1 winner and her next three dams were all of Group 1 caliber

as well. These five generations were all bred and campaigned by the Wertheimer family.

Grey Goose Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf winner Donativum (GB) features a pedigree that is well off the beaten path. His sire line is as follows:

**Hyperion**  
**Owen Tudor**  
**\*Tudor Minstrel**  
**Will Somers**  
**Balidar**  
**Young Generation**  
**Cadeaux Genereux**  
**Donativum (GB)**

The once-mighty Hyperion sire line that flourished in America during the 1940s and '50s has, in recent years, become virtually extinct on this side of the Atlantic. Donativum's English sire, Cadeaux Genereux, appears a lonely vestige from this once powerful stirp. Unfortunately, gelded Donativum will not be able to extend his tail-male line. He is, of note, most closely inbred to the influential matron Mixed Marriage, 5x5.

Conduit's pedigree is marked by the highly successful cross of his two grandsires, Darshaan and Sadler's Wells. This is a reversal of the pattern exhibited by former Breeders' Cup winners High Chapparral (Ire) and Islington (Ire), who were both by Sadler's Wells out of a Darshaan mare. All of these pairings create inbreeding to the blue hen Lalun, since Darshaan's great-grand sire, Never Bend, is a half brother to Sadler's Wells's broodmare sire, Bold Reason.

Last year after the Breeders' Cup, I noted in this space that undefeated Bessemer Trust Juvenile (G1) winner War Pass had a pedigree that suggested distance limitations for the colt while on the Triple Crown trail.

There are no similar concerns for any of the first three finishers in this year's Juvenile as Midshipman (by Unbridled's Song), Square Eddie (by Smart Strike), and Street Hero (by Street Cry [Ire]) all have pedigrees that figure to enjoy the stretch out to longer distances next season.

*Rommy Faversham is a pedigree specialist and author living in Los Angeles. More of his work is available at <http://www.equicross.com>.*