

# Narvick International Nicoma Bloodstock

"Our consignments in 2001 were not as large as they were last year, but there is a reason for that," said Emmanuel de Seroux, who with his wife, Laura, owns Narvick International. "In 2000, we conducted the Marshall Naify/505 dispersal, along with the Allen Paulson living trust reduction. This year, we handled nothing along those lines. Still, I would have to say our bloodstock business continues to prosper. And our training operation, which is headed by Laura and based here in Southern California at San Luis Rey Downs, has done very well."

Narvick's clientele can be found on every continent, with the exception of Antarctica. "They neither have racing nor breeding there," noted de Seroux, with a touch of detached amusement. "We continue to do a great deal of work for the Allen Paulson family trust and for the Japan Bloodstock Breeders' Association."

"Until Sundown, who Laura trains, won this year's Affirmed Handicap (G3) at Hollywood Park," de Seroux said. "He also was second in Hollywood's Swap Stakes, which is a Grade 1, so we were very pleased with that."

Until Sundown is owned by a partnership of our clients. We have lots of young horses in training, so I anticipate that in the stretch from 2002 through '04 our racing profile will increase.

"To me, middle portions of the markets seem to be where the most difficulties are. There is a lack of buyers for these horses, and I think



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**Narvick International**  
**Principals:** Emmanuel and Laura de Seroux  
**Location:** Rancho Santa Fe, California  
**Founded:** 1983  
**Focus:** Advises and assists an international range of clients in the entire range of bloodstock purchases and consignments for breeding and racing; training of racehorses

## EMMANUEL DE SEROUX

the major reason is that very few new people are coming into the game. I look around at the sales, and I don't see many unfamiliar faces. Those who are purchasing horses are not seeking large numbers of them. They are being very selective.

"In 2002, I expect that conditions will continue to be difficult in the bloodstock markets," de Seroux said. "People already in the business will continue to purchase horses, but I don't expect newcomers. We are living in a very cautious country right now, and I don't see that changing soon."

"I judge success by how well my clients do," said P. Headley Bell. "They are the people I serve, and they've been very loyal to me. One of the statistics I'm most proud of is my company ranked second, trailing only Demi O'Byrne, in the percentage of yearlings purchased between 1994 and '98 who became graded stakes winners. Our ratio was 18%. And, while Demi averaged something like \$500,000 per yearling purchase, we averaged about \$100,000. Consistently finding value for our clients is one of our most important goals."

The son of Mill Ridge Farm owner Alice Chandler and the grandson of Hal Price Headley, P. Headley Bell (along with his brother, Reynolds Bell Jr.) represents the fifth generation of horsemen within his family. "My mother has always credited my grandfather with being her guiding light, and over the decades she has filled the same role for me," Bell said. "I'm 47 years old now, but I'm still learning about the business from her. I hope that never ends."

"But it's the clients who really make our business a success," said Bell. "We work with Darley Stud, Gainsborough Stud, and Juddmonte Farms. George Strawbridge Jr. is with us, as are Roy and Gretchen Jackson. Like George, they're from Pennsylvania. Audrey Otto, who with my mother co-owned Keeper Hill, has been with us for a long time, as has Charles de Moussac from France, and Lazy Lane Farm. We're blessed to have all these



**Nicoma Bloodstock**  
**Principal:** P. Headley Bell  
**Location:** Lexington, Kentucky  
**Founded:** 1979  
**Focus:** Consultant work for leading breeders and owners in North America, Europe, and Africa

people. "Bloodstock markets have continued to be selective in 2001. Now is not

the most apt time to be shedding mares from your broodmare band. Most of our clients don't rely on the Thoroughbred industry for their livelihood. For them, horses are more their passion. We're in challenging times for our country, and I think people are welcoming the distractions breeding and racing bring.

"Remember, nobody has to own racehorses. People do it because of the thrills and pleasure the sport provides, which are things that will always inspire the human spirit."

# Mike Ryan Bloodstock

"Of the horses we've purchased, 15 of them were stakes winners this year," said Mike Ryan. "Oh, certainly, I take a great deal of pride in that. One of the highlights of recent times involves a trio of yearlings we purchased at Keeneland in September of 1999—Caressing, Yonagaska, and Kurofune. All three of them have become either Grade 1 or Group 1 winners."

"I bought Twenty Eight Carat as a yearling; she's the dam of A P Valentine. I bought Bright Feather as a maiden; she became the dam of Albert the Great. These things look very good on one's record."

Ryan, 47, is originally from County Meath, Ireland. In 1974, he migrated to Canada and secured a job at E. P. Taylor's Windfields Farm. Taylor set up his first bloodstock enterprise in 1979, and the Lexington-based agency that bears his name has been in operation for two decades. "I don't have a big clientele; it's small and select," Ryan said. "Carl Pollard, Tom Carey—they've been with me a long time. I've got a new client from New York this year named Randy Hill. I'm always trying to cultivate new ones. Our business desperately needs them."

"One of the things we've learned this year is that our bloodstock activities are not immune from the infirmities of the global economy. We, as a nation, are in tough times, but we'll survive, just as we always have in previous wars."

"Taking things into perspective, the Amer-



**Mike Ryan Bloodstock**  
**Principal:** Mike Ryan  
**Location:** Lexington  
**Founded:** 1981  
**Focus:** Purchases yearlings for a select core of clients; purchases weanlings and yearlings for pinhooking purposes

ican stock markets have actually held up pretty well. Corporations are downsizing their work forces. But most people have kept their jobs. People have money. For the time being, they're very careful about how they spend it. That's not bad.

"It's amazing how racing keeps going," Ryan said. "There remains plenty of purse money up for grabs. Stakes continue to be run every weekend, year-round, from one coast to the other. We might not have the depth of activity in the sale pavilions that we'd like, but that will improve as things become more stable." ■

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