



CTBA Member
PROFILE

LUCY LAWRENCE

BY EMILY SHIELDS

ALIGATO
TAKING OWNER/
BREEDERS ON
EXTRAORDINARY
JOURNEY

Very few people get to win a stakes race with their very first homebred, but Lucy Lawrence was that kind of lucky.

When California-bred Aligato won the \$196,000 Unusual Heat Turf Classic Presented by City National Bank at Santa Anita Jan. 15, he not only became Lawrence's first homebred stakes winner, but he also overcame several obstacles that made him an unlikely victor. After numerous setbacks, the California-bred son of Kitten's Joy – Pretty Hard, by Rock Hard Ten, didn't debut until midway through his 4-year-old season and was making

his stakes debut in the Turf Classic. He was stretching from six furlongs to 1½ miles and was facing a field of seasoned runners, including 2020 California Champion Big Fish, multiple graded stakes placed Camino Del Paraiso, and stakes winner Indian Peak.

Unlikely though it was, Aligato won anyway, swooping under Flavien Prat to give Lawrence and Bob Liewald's Double L Racing its first stakes winner. Lawrence and Liewald did not have to wait very long.

"We both grew up loving horses," she said. "After we moved to California 10 years ago, we thought it was good timing for us to look into

horse racing."

Because both Lawrence and Liewald—together they make up both Ls of the Double L moniker—have backgrounds in e-commerce business and technology, there was no better place to search for an "in" than the Internet.

"We found Little Red Feather," Lawrence said.

The well-known racing partnership, run by Billy Koch and Gary Fenton, brought Lawrence and Liewald into the fold.

"By our second conversation we'd bought into a horse," Lawrence said. "They've been great teachers."

Two years later Lawrence and Liewald bought into a horse with Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and then into horses with Starlight Racing. Among the horses they were involved with was Authentic, ultimately the winner of the postponed 2020 Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (G1).

Perhaps the best thing that Koch and Fenton did was introduce Lawrence to Travis White at Taylor Made Farm.

"He got me into breeding and kept me into breeding," Lawrence said. "He called me after the race to say it's been a long road, but I said it's been a great road."

White found the Rock Hard Ten mare Pretty Hard for Lawrence, who bought her privately after she was a \$37,000 buyback at the 2017 Keeneland January mixed sale. The mare had one win in four starts and was a half sister to stakes winner Within Reason.

"She was already in foal



Lucy Lawrence and Bob Liewald have spent time with Aligato since his birth



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LUCY LAWRENCE



to Kitten's Joy," Lawrence said. "We brought her out to California, and she gave birth at what was Magali Farms. We couldn't get to the farm until two hours after Aligato was born; we were so sad to miss the actual birth."

The dark chestnut colt was feisty from the beginning, but also a bit of a problem child. He was a \$190,000 RNA at the 2018 Keeneland September yearling sale, and then bone bruising set him back.

"We almost sold him at Keeneland, and I've never been happier not to have a reserve met," Lawrence said. "He had one incident after another. We thought he would make it by the end of his 3-year-old year. We found out that Pretty Hard had another Kitten's Joy the year before Aligato was born that hadn't made it to the races yet, and we were under a little cloud about that."

Aligato spent time at Flag Is Up Farms in Solvang under the tutelage and care of Monty, Pat, and Laurel Roberts.

"They did a great job of getting him strong again," Lawrence said.

Trainer Mark Glatt took over when Aligato finally got to the races.

"Mark has been very open, we communicate, and he doesn't mind that I'm in the barn every other day to visit Ali," said Lawrence.

The stable staff often warns Lawrence that Aligato can be tough, but Lawrence just laughs.

"He's on his best behavior when Bob and I show up," she said. "He doesn't care much for anyone else, but he



Aligato soars in Unusual Heat Turf Classic



Lawrence and Bob Liewald, who make up Double L Racing, with jockey Flavien Prat

knows us."

Between breaking his maiden in his second start and winning the Unusual Heat Turf Classic just three months apart, Lawrence's beloved Aligato has taken her on an extraordinary journey. She and Liewald often stand at the rail to watch the races, occasionally running alongside the field to the finish

line. But Aligato is not the only horse in the stable to keep an eye on.

Pretty Hard has a 2-year-old filly by Frosted named Icy Josie and a yearling filly by Outwork. She is in foal to Nick Alexander's Grazen for 2022 and is scheduled to visit Lovacres Ranch's Oscar Nominated, a son of Kitten's Joy, later this year.

"I'm very happy about her having a Grazen," Lawrence said. "I think the world of Nick Alexander; he is another person I aspire to follow in his footsteps."

Lawrence and Liewald also have part ownership of the well-bred graded stakes-placed winner Hudson Ridge, a son of American Pharoah and the Galileo mare Shell House. They campaign that colt with Jill Baffert. Another homebred, Altruist, broke his maiden at first asking over the Santa Anita Park turf course in October, scoring at odds of 31-1.

"We have a total of four on the track and five broodmares," Lawrence said. "Four are in Kentucky right now, but we want to bring one or two of them out to California this spring."

Lawrence is doing her part to expand her ownership role into the breeding side of things.

"Racing is becoming more popular with the digital evolution happening right now," she said, noting that she would like to see an increase in horse ownership over the next few years. "There are opportunities out there. We should try to involve some of these new audiences coming to us through digital." **CTB**