

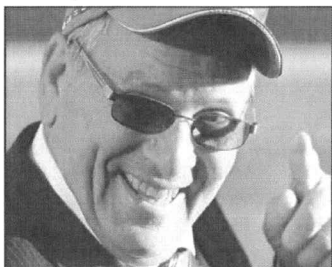


## GULFSTREAM PARK

With Debbie Nyman

# Rising to the Pinnacle of Racing

Thanks to a five year-old filly, a dream has been coming true for the connections of South Florida-based Pinnacle Racing Stable. Musical Romance was purchased for Adam Lazarus of Pinnacle for only \$22,000 at a sale a few years ago, under the critical eye of trainer/partner Bill Kaplan.



**Bill Kaplan**

The champion female sprinter has captured a 2011 Breeders Cup title, an Eclipse award, and with \$1.5 million in earnings; the filly was sold for \$1.6 million at the Fasig-Tipton auction in Kentucky in November to Northern Farm, the Japanese entity owned by Katsumi Yoshida, who placed the winning bid. Pinnacle's Managing Partner Lazarus said Yoshida plans to send Musical Romance to Japan, where she will be a broodmare.

Thanks to the amazing ride this horse has given her connections of Pinnacle, the partners have been able to grow their

business and gain prominence and credibility in an otherwise extremely challenging industry.

Kaplan and Lazarus met over a dozen years ago, thanks to the game of golf. Lazarus' father and Kaplan were buddies from the golf course and the elder Lazarus knew his son was developing a passion for the sport of kings.

Growing up in New Jersey, not far from Freehold, Lazarus often frequented the trotters, although he didn't love it as much as he did the thoroughbreds at nearby Monmouth. As an avid sportsman, he earned a baseball scholarship to Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. His family had relocated to South Florida and he joined them after graduation and worked in the business world.

Selling copiers and office machinery, Lazarus found his niche in sales and enjoyed much success. He is currently still working at his day job with the last five years as a Sales Manager at Zeno Office Solutions, located in Miramar.

Living in Aventura, Lazarus was able to enjoy his favorite activity, handicapping horses at nearby Calder and Gulfstream Park. With his interest and love for the thoroughbred industry growing, after a dinner arranged



**Pinnacle Racing Stable in the winner's circle**

by his dad, Lazarus met with Kaplan. He was on his way to purchasing his first horse with a \$45,000 investment, which was money saved from his bar mitzvah gifts many years ago.

Unfortunately, that first horse was not very successful, but Lazarus knew he still wanted to pursue this business although he needed to find a different avenue for financing his purchases.

"I knew I wanted to do something again, but I had to find a creative idea to get involved financially, I found the selling skills I used in my regular day job would help me find partners and soon I was fortunate enough to have nine partners for my first horse with Pinnacle Racing 11 years ago." It would take 20 starts until Lazarus

and Pinnacle would find their first winner, and it would take eight years to get to the level of Musical Romance.

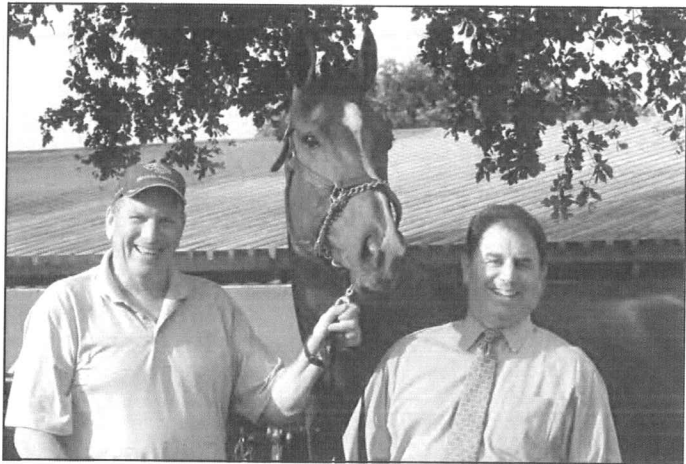
Bill Kaplan also came to the racing business in 1980 after an interesting journey that included a stint in the military with Kaplan receiving a bronze star and a purple heart for his bravery in Vietnam. He also tried careers in public accounting and later as a pilot and entrepreneur in the airline industry.

Kaplan's uncle had turned him onto horse racing at a young age in New York and later convinced him to buy a racehorse after he was ending his airline business. The first horse was named Brash Doctor, who won the second time Kaplan

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saddled her as the trainer. "I was thinking how easy this is," he recalled. "It took me six months before I won my second race."



**Bill Kaplan, Musical Romance and Adam Lazarus**

Kaplan developed his knack for finding two-year olds at the annual sales and found a big winner with Castlebrook, capturing seven stakes between 2000 and 2004, and setting track records at Calder. During that same time frame, Kaplan enjoyed great success with Mr. Livingston, a colt whose career parallels Castlebrook's.

At the OBS April auction in 2006, Kaplan took home three of the best colts in the sale for three different clients, for less than \$100,000. Recognizing he doesn't have the budgets to come close to the sales-toppers, he focused instead on athletic ability, "If they have athletic ability, they can overcome a lot of other things."

The philosophy of Pinnacle Racing Stables is to allow investors the opportunity to enter into the world of racing for a very reasonable initial investment. Each horse is set up as it's own Limited Liability Corporation, and the average initial investment ranges from \$1000 to \$2500.

"We want to give our partners the total experience of owning horses, and with Bill Kaplan, we are extremely fortunate he is so accessible to our owners," explained Lazarus. The partners

are able to visit the barn where the horses are trained, watch their morning workouts and participate in all the behind the scene activities that make the racing business exciting.

Pinnacle has eight horses being trained by Kaplan at the moment. There are currently over 60 owners involved in the business. Lazarus is hoping to get more young people and women interested in the industry. Pinnacle only purchases Florida-breds, and races primarily in the South Florida area.

Most of the horses purchased are under \$35,000 two year olds, and the purchases are left to trainer Kaplan. Jockey Juan Leyva has also been an important part of the Pinnacle success equation. Leyva has been aboard 75% of Pinnacle's

winners and is highly regarded by Kaplan and Lazarus.

As the rider of Musical Romance, the jockey has been there from the development stage to the winner's circle as well. "Juan is an integral part of our success and we appreciate his hard work, above and beyond the racetrack. He is very involved with the training and development of these two year-olds."

For Lazarus, the rise of Musical Romance has been a fairy tale, a dream come true. "I know how hard it is to win in this business and most of the time, it's a very risky business. We warn investors this is risky, but the rewards can be great."

While Lazarus has found passion in the industry, the bachelor has concentrated all his romance on the business, with little time for a personal life. Since his success in the business, Lazarus' family has taken great pleasure in their offspring's rise to the top. He hopes his parents and sister who lives in Maryland will also enter into the business with him at some point.

Lazarus spends his days divided between his two jobs and would like to make the horse business his full time vocation one day. He has recently become more involved with the horsemen's issues, serving on the horsemen's board as an

alternate. He has developed strong feelings about an industry that is struggling in the South Florida community and with the overall view of horse racing.

"I want to see the marketing of horse racing accentuated more than casinos," Lazarus explains. "I would hope that the tracks remember that the reason they even have the casinos is because of the pari-mutuels and work harder to bring in people to the track."

Looking forward to the upcoming winter racing season at Gulfstream, Lazarus has concerns about future of Calder and Churchill Downs. "We have had so many champions come from the two year old training season at Calder and I worry how Calder will be able to continue as it is." Now that he has become involved with horsemen's issues, Lazarus has seen the many layers of the industry.

Number one priority for the Pinnacle folks is educating people about the racing industry and introducing them to all the aspects, from gambling, handicapping and statistics to the financial ups and downs as well. Using the tools of social media would help as well; Lazarus wants the industry to be relevant and interesting.

Preparing for the 2012-2013 racing season at Gulfstream, the hope is for the next Musical Romance of the group. Watch out for the new horses including Uptown Anthem, Another Romance, and Cool Vixen. Another Romance won the Grade III Azalea Stakes at Calder in July.

"Take a step in, and have fun and enjoy the business without breaking the bank," Lazarus urges fans. "It's not just about winning, it's about getting closer to the game and we're offering an experience of a lifetime."

To learn more, anyone interested in Pinnacle may go to the website [www.pinnaclestable.com](http://www.pinnaclestable.com) and contact Lazarus and Kaplan.



**Musical Romance winning 2011 Breeders Cup Filly and Mare Sprint**