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# Blood-Horse

A publication of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association dedicated to the improvement of Thoroughbred breeding and racing

**PLUS:**  
Dance With  
Fate's  
Blue Grass



## HE'S THE BOSS

Danza, a son of Street Boss,  
takes the Arkansas Derby at 41-1

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Len Riggio

Keeneland's April Sale

Stallion Showcase

NO. 16  
Danza, Arkansas Derby/Danza With Fate's Blue Grass/Keeneland April Sale

# DANZA DOES IT

BY ROBERT YATES

When Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners acquires an unnamed horse, typically members of the syndicate's inner circle have the opportunity to add a personal touch.

They can choose a name, said Aron Wellman, president of the ownership group. The eventual choice for Hip 614 at the 2012 Keeneland September yearling sale was rather straightforward.

The pitch from Kelsey Marshall, Eclipse's director of partner relations, was to play off the sire of the chestnut colt (Street Boss), and the star of the hit 1980s sitcom "Who's the Boss" (Tony Danza).

## Danza, at 41-1, surprises in the Arkansas Derby; Will Take Charge keeps charging

"We went with Danza," Wellman said. "Now the horse is famous, too."

Wellman's comment came moments after lightly raced Danza, under a ground-saving ride by Joe Bravo, recorded a stunning victory in the Arkansas Derby (gr. I) April 12 at Oaklawn Park.

With only a maiden victory under his belt, Danza, at odds of 41-1 in his two-turn debut, performed like a seasoned pro with a 4¾-length victory over Ride On Curlin.

Before a crowd of 63,186 on a warm, breezy day, Danza provided trainer Todd

### THAT HANDICAPPING SHOW

For handicapping analysis of upcoming races, visit [BloodHorse.com/Video](http://BloodHorse.com/Video)

Pletcher with a record fourth Arkansas Derby victory and will give Eclipse its first starter in the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I) May 3 at Churchill Downs.

"Hopefully, we'll make Arkansas proud in three weeks," Wellman said.

Wellman has been down the Kentucky Derby road before—even if Eclipse hasn't. He spent 3½ years as vice president of Team Valor International before resigning shortly after its Animal Kingdom won the 2011 Kentucky Derby.

Wellman, 36, launched Eclipse, which, like Team Valor, uses a partnership business model, in the summer of 2011.

Danza became the fourth grade I winner for Eclipse, following In Lingerie (Juddmonte Spinster Stakes) in 2012 and Byrama (Vanity Handicap) and Capo Bastone (Foxwoods King's Bishop Stakes) in 2013.

Eclipse had never started a horse at Oaklawn.

"Look, they're all big; they're all important to us at any level," Wellman said. "But, certainly, to come here on Oaklawn's marquee day, win a million-dollar race—this is our first million-dollar race. We did win the King's Bishop last year at Saratoga, which was incredible. But to win such an important Derby prep, it certainly ranks right up there near the top, if not the top."

Eclipse purchased Danza, from the first crop of multiple grade I-winning sprinter Street Boss, for \$105,000. The colt was bred in Kentucky by Rob Whiteley's Liberation Farm and Jim and Pam Robinson's Brandywine Farm.

Danza showed promise last summer, winning his July 12 debut at Belmont Park before finishing third, beaten a

*(continued on page 42)*



Danza and jockey Joe Bravo pull off a stunner in the seven-figure Arkansas Derby

COADY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTOS

# DANZA

**ARKANSAS DERBY** (gr. I), Oaklawn Park, April 12, \$1,000,000 guaranteed, value of race \$1,000,000, 3-year-olds, 9 furlongs, 1:49.68 (track record, 1:46.60), track fast.

**DANZA** (ch c, 118 lb), A .....\$600,000

Street Boss—Champagne Royale, by French Deputy  
B—Liberation Farm and Brandywine Farm, Ky.; O—Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners; T—Todd A. Pletcher

**Ride On Curlin** (b c, 118 lb), A++ .....\$200,000

Curlin—Magical Ride, by Storm Cat  
B—G. Watts Humphrey Jr. and Louise Ireland Humphrey Revocable Trust - 2008, Ky.; O—Daniel J. Dougherty

**Bayern** (dkb/br c, 118 lb), B+ .....\$100,000

Offlee Wild—Alittlebitearly, by Thunder Gulch  
B—Helen Alexander, Ky.; O—Kaleem Shah

**Margins:** 4¾, ½, 2. Others: Tapiture 122 (\$50,000), Conquest Titan 122 (\$30,000), Commissioner 118 (\$6,667), Thundergram 118 (\$6,667), Strong Mandate 122 (\$6,666). Scratched: Knock Em Flat. Winning jockey, Joe Bravo.

STREET BOSS, ch, 2004	Street Cry, 1998 12s, SW, \$5,150,837 1,322 f, 79 SW, 2.19 AEI	Machiavellian, 1987 7s, SW, \$355,790 736 f, 78 SW, 1.93 AEI	Mr. Prospector Coup de Folie
	Blushing Ogygian, 1994 12s, wnr, \$48,300 6 f, 5 r, 3 w, 1 SW	Helen Street, 1982 10s, SW, \$177,894 13 f, 11 r, 10 w, 2 SW	Troy Waterway
DANZA ch, c April 17, 2011	French Deputy, 1992 6s, SW, \$195,200 1,193 f, 47 SW, 1.46 AEI	Ogygian, 1983 10s, SW, \$455,520 816 f, 24 SW, 1.19 AEI	Damascus Gonfalon
	All Tanked Up, 1989 33s, wnr, \$103,666 7 f, 4 r, 3 w, 1 SW	Fruhlingshochzeit, 1984 18s, wnr, \$72,812 16 f, 12 r, 9 w	Blushing Groom Fruhlingstag
CHAMPAGNE ROYALE, gr/ro, 2001		Deputy Minister, 1979 22s, SW, \$696,964 1,141 f, 90 SW, 2.53 AEI	Vice Regent Mint Copy
		Mitterand, 1981 17s, SW, \$446,830 7 f, 6 r, 4 w, 2 SW	Hold Your Peace Laredo Lass
		Tank's Prospect, 1982 14s, SW, \$1,355,645 330 f, 14 SW, 1.19 AEI	Mr. Prospector Midnight Pumpkin
		All Week End, 1973 40s, wnr, \$47,953 11 f, 10 r, 10 w, 2 SW	Al Hattab Weekend Fun

### DANZA'S RACE AND (STAKES) RECORD

Year	Age	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earned
2013	At 2	2	1	0	1(1)	\$62,000
2014	At 3	2	1(1)	0	1	\$604,428
	Lifetime	4	2(1)	0	2(1)	\$666,428

**Sire:** STREET BOSS, ch, 2004. Raced 2 yrs, 13 sts, 7 wins, \$831,800. Won Bing Crosby H (gr. I), Triple Bend Invitational H (gr. I), Los Angeles H (gr. III); 2nd Ancient Title S (gr. I); 3rd Sentient Flight Group Breeders' Cup Sprint (gr. I).

**Lifetime:** 3 crops, 243 foals, 152 mrs (63%), 98 wnr (40%), 35 2yo wnr (14%), 7 sw (3%), 1.44 AEI, 1.54 CI, 184 sale yrlds, avg \$50,436, 1.0 TNA.

**In 2014:** 2 sw, 4 sale yrlds, avg \$27,750.

**1st dam:** Champagne Royale, gr/ro, 2001. Bred by Budget Stable (Calif.). Raced 2 yrs, 11 sts, 4 wins, \$73,670. 2nd Lang Michener Matriarch H. Dam of 6 named foals, 4 mrs, 4 wnr, 2 sw. (\$29,000, 2006 keejan; \$40,000, 2012 keenov, Majestic Warrior).

**2007:** Consider Yourself, gr/ro f, by Affect Alex. Raced 4 yrs in Eng and Fr, 23 sts, 4 wins, \$71,633. (\$110,000 keesep yrld).

**2008:** MAJESTIC HARBOR, b c, by Rockport Harbor. Raced 5 yrs, 21 sts, 5 wins, \$331,764. Won Tokyo City Cup S (gr. III); 2nd San Pasqual S (gr. II). (\$20,000 keesep yrld).

**2009:** Totally Tucker, gr/ro f, by Elusive Quality. Raced 2 yrs, 12 sts, 2 wins, \$95,293. (\$20,000 keesep yrld).

**2010:** Champagne Sparkle, gr/ro f, by Street Boss. Unraced.

**2011:** DANZA, ch c, by Street Boss. (\$105,000 keesep yrld).

At 2: 3rd Saratoga Special S (gr. II).

At 3: Won Arkansas Derby (gr. I).

**2012:** Ch c, by Zensational. Sent to Japan 2013. (\$32,000 keenov wnl; \$100,000 keesep yrld).

**2013:** Majestic Champagne, dkb/br f, by Majestic Warrior. (\$50,000 keenov wnl).

**Inbreeding:** 4SX4D Mr. Prospector.

**Nicking:** STREET BOSS w/FRENCH DEPUTY mares: 3 foals, 2 str, 1 wnr (33%), 1 2yo wnr (33%), 1 SW (33%), 1 GSW (33%)

**Broodmare sire:** FRENCH DEPUTY, ch, 1992. Sire of 295 dams of 905 foals, 755 mrs (83%), 540 wnr (60%), 200 2yo wnr (22%), 1.64 AEI, 1.34 CI; 57 sw.

**2nd dam:** All Tanked Up, gr, 1989-2001. Bred by Marshall, Owens, and Klein (Ky.). Raced 3 yrs, 33 sts, 7 wins, \$103,666. Dam of HE'S HAMMERED (g, Rubiano; \$292,899, Won Buck's Boy H, R; 2nd Jim Edgar Illinois Futurity, R; 3rd Mac Diarmida S), Technocat (g, Saint Ballado; \$264,141, 3rd Cisk S, Presidents S).

## PEDIGREE ANALYSIS & HISTORY

Danza's \$600,000 winner's share of the \$1 million Arkansas Derby (gr. I) purse paid dividends almost six times the \$105,000 that Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners paid for him at the 2012 Keeneland September yearling sale.

The lightly raced colt heads to the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I) having made only four starts that include his debut win in July 2013 at Belmont Park followed by a third-place finish in the Saratoga Special Stakes (gr. II).

Big Brown won the 2008 Derby in his fourth start, and three other horses have won the Derby with just four previous starts: Alan-a-Dale in 1902, Exterminator in 1918, and Animal Kingdom in 2011.

Danza was acquired at Keeneland from breeders Rob Whiteley's Liberation Farm and Jim and Pam Robinson's Brandywine Farm, the latter of which consigned as agent. The partnership also co-bred 2011 Belmont Stakes (gr. I) winner Ruler On Ice.

With feedback from the Robinsons, Whiteley plans the matings for the mares they own together, and the Robinsons handle the foaling, raising, and sales prep at their Paris, Ky., farm.

Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners, which forms racing partnerships and saw its first runners hit the track just 18 months ago, is led by Aron Wellman, who was an executive with Team Valor International when Animal Kingdom won the Derby.

After his Keeneland purchase Danza spent the winter under the guidance of trainer Todd Pletcher's father, J.J. Pletcher, at Payton Training Center near Ocala, Fla. He joined the trainer's New York stable in the spring of 2013.

Danza is from the second crop of multiple grade I-winning sprinter Street Boss.

His dam is the French Deputy mare Champagne Royale, who won twice at 1½ miles and finished second at the distance in a listed stakes, all at Hastings Racecourse. Brandywine bought her for \$29,000 from James Keogh, agent, at the 2006 Keeneland January horses of all ages sale. Danza is her fifth foal and one of four winners from as many starters, including a Rockport Harbor half brother, Majestic Harbor, who won the 1½-mile Tokyo City Cup Stakes (gr. III) March 29 at Santa Anita Park.

Danza's second dam, All Tanked Up, is a winning daughter of 1985 Arkansas Derby winner and Preakness Stakes (gr. I) victor Tank's Prospect.

Danza is the second grade I winner for Street Boss, the other being Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners' sprinter Capo Bastone from the first crop. The 10-year-old son of Street Cry stands for a 2014 fee of \$10,000 at Darley near Lexington.—M.L.

(continued from page 40)

half-length, in the \$200,000 Saratoga Special Stakes (gr. II) Aug. 11 at Saratoga.

"He's a colt that we've always thought a lot of," Pletcher said. "I think if you look at his form, he's never run anything but good races."

Danza didn't race again at 2 after coming out of the Saratoga Special with a "little issue," Wellman said, referring to a knee.

The colt resurfaced March 1 at Gulfstream Park in an entry-level allowance/optional claimer at seven furlongs.

In what would be his audition for the Arkansas Derby, Danza finished third, beaten 7½ lengths.

Wellman and Pletcher, however, called Danza's performance "sneaky good" because he was racing against a track bias.

"In the back of our minds, we were always kind of thinking, 'OK, well, we're

\$750,000 Toyota Blue Grass Stakes (gr. I) the same afternoon at Keeneland.

"Just seemed like the more we put things together, the more it seemed like the Arkansas Derby was the race for us to step out and take our shot in," Pletcher said.

Danza delivered.

Pressed by longshot Thundergram, unbeaten Bayern—the 8-5 favorite following two blowout victories earlier this year at Santa Anita—towed the eight-horse field through moderate fractions of :23.72 for the opening quarter and :47.71 for a half-mile.

Bayern and Thundergram had battled through three-quarters in 1:12.29 when Bravo began pushing on Danza near the three-furlong marker.

Danza, in third, quickly erased a two-length deficit and slipped through an opening along the rail turning for

horses 50 minutes earlier.

"He's been under the radar," Wellman said. "After he ran his bang-up third in the Saratoga Special, I think, he came on to the scene. He earned respect right there and then. But as a lot of 2-year-olds will do that go to the sidelines after that, they kind of fall by the wayside and get overlooked."

Wellman credited another member of Pletcher's family, his father J.J., for having Danza ready to excel in the biggest race of his young career.

Danza rehabbed at Pletcher's Payton Training Center near Ocala, Fla., before returning to Todd Pletcher's barn in December.

J.J. Pletcher—as a trainer—also won races in Hot Springs, notably the 1980 Oaklawn Handicap with Uncool.

The younger Pletcher, honored a record six times with an Eclipse Award as the nation's top trainer, has won each of Oaklawn's four biggest season-ending races (Arkansas Derby, Apple Blossom Handicap, Oaklawn Handicap, and Fantasy Stakes) at least once.

"Always happy to win there," said Pletcher, who wasn't in attendance for Danza's victory. "It's a favorite track of mine. My dad raced there when I was a teenager, and I have a lot of fond memories of Oaklawn."

### Charging Down the Stretch

Will Take Charge needed a little less than two minutes to cross the wire first in the \$600,000 Oaklawn Handicap for older horses, but last year's champion 3-year-old male had to wait about 10 minutes before being declared the official winner.

Will Take Charge, the 2-5 favorite under regular rider Luis Saez, survived a lengthy stewards' inquiry and two foul claims to capture the race by three-quarters of a length over an unlucky Revolutionary.

"I didn't see that much of a problem," said Willis Horton of Marshall, Ark., Will Take Charge's colorful co-owner. "I feel better than I did before the race."

Will Take Charge surged to the lead on the outside in midstretch but drifted in under right-handed urging to bother a tiring Golden Lad, then Revolutionary, who was searching for a seam between horses.

After finding a clear path approaching the sixteenth pole, Revolutionary closed strongly but ran out of time under Mike



Arkansas Derby field, with Danza on the rail, breaks from the gate

going to have one chance at a Derby prep," Wellman said. "And we got the race into him down at Gulfstream going seven-eighths. It was a time of the meet when speed was virtually impossible to beat, and he prefers to come from a little bit out of it."

Within an hour after the race, Wellman said he and Pletcher were on the phone discussing where they would take their "big swing" with Danza—provided he trained well in the ensuing weeks.

Following four half-mile workouts at Palm Meadows Training Center in South Florida, the last coming April 6, Danza was flown to Arkansas. Pletcher opted for the Arkansas Derby over the

home, inside a leg-weary Bayern and Thundergram.

"It was textbook, just textbook," said Bravo, who was riding the colt for the first time. "Everything unfolded like a dream. That was pretty cool down the lane. It's really fun to have a special horse like that and have him run like that."

Danza opened a 1½-length advantage in midstretch and continued to pull away in the final furlong under steady handling.

Carrying 118 pounds, he ran the 1½ miles over a fast track in 1:49.68. The final time was just .13 slower than champion Will Take Charge had needed to win the Oaklawn Handicap (gr. II) for older



Will Take Charge bears in during the stretch run of the Oaklawn Handicap, but still prevails

Smith.

Both Gary Stevens, the rider of Golden Lad, and Smith claimed foul against Will Take Charge.

"It was a 50-50 call, and I understand that," Smith said. "It was a judgment call, and it just didn't go my way."

Will Take Charge ran 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  miles over a fast track in 1:49.55. He carried top weight of 123 pounds. Revolutionary carried 117.

Will Take Charge, a flashy chestnut son of Unbridled's Song—Take Charge Lady, by Dehere, began his rise to national prominence with victories in last year's Smarty Jones Stakes and Rebel Stakes (gr. II) at Oaklawn, where he has been based the last two winters with Hall of Fame trainer D. Wayne Lukas.

A \$425,000 Keeneland September yearling sale graduate, Will Take Charge has bankrolled \$3,665,148 off seven victories in 18 starts. The colt was bred in Kentucky by Eaton and is co-owned by Three Chimneys Farm.

### Hatching Another Gr. I

The country's older female division appears stacked this year, and Juddmonte Farms' Close Hatches figures to be one of its major players.

Close Hatches padded an already sterling résumé with a front-running 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -length victory in the \$588,000 Apple Blossom Handicap (gr. I) April 11.

"We had been pointing for this race for three months," Hall of Fame trainer Bill

Mott said. "It's always nice when a plan comes together."

The Apple Blossom, the seventh victory in 10 lifetime starts for Close Hatches, increased her earnings to \$1,847,300. She was a two-time grade I winner last year for Prince Khalid Abdullah's Juddmonte operation.

Close Hatches is a 4-year-old daughter of First Defence, who stands at Juddmonte Farms near Lexington. Close Hatches was bred by Abdullah's Millsec subsidiary.

"She was from the first crop of First Defence, so we were obviously paying close attention to what they all looked

like," said Garrett O'Rourke, Juddmonte's farm manager. "She was always the star of his first crop. I'm glad to say she's got a full sister born this year, a foal who's like a clone of her. Hopefully, she can run half as good as her. She was always pretty special."

The Apple Blossom was a virtual repeat of the March 15 Azeri Stakes (gr. II)—the final major local prep—when Close Hatches, again breaking from the rail, grabbed the lead and controlled the pace from the outset under Joel Rosario.

Defending Apple Blossom champion On Fire Baby, who chased Close Hatches from the start, finished second. Under top weight of 121 pounds, Close Hatches covered 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  miles over a fast track in 1:42.75. She was the 7-10 favorite.

Following his record fourth Apple Blossom victory, Mott said Close Hatches will be pointed to the \$1 million Ogden Phipps Stakes (gr. I) June 7 at Belmont Park. The race is also expected to lure two-time champion Beholder and multiple grade I winner Princess of Sylmar.

Beholder and Close Hatches ran 1-2 in last year's \$2 million Breeders' Cup Distaff (gr. I), while Princess of Sylmar was last of six after stumbling at the start.

"I'm sure the Phipps, having a million-dollar pot, will nearly be like a Breeders' Cup race," Mott said. "I'm sure everybody with a good one is going to show up."

Beholder, Princess of Sylmar, and Close Hatches were 2013 finalists for an Eclipse Award as the country's 3-year-old filly champion. **BH**



Close Hatches has a date in the Ogden Phipps after her Apple Blossom score