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## Book'em Danno honored as New Jersey-bred Horse of the Year

Atlantic Six Racing LLC's Book'em Danno has been named the 2023 New Jersey-bred Horse of the Year, champion sprinter, and champion 2-year-old by the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association of New Jersey.

Book'em Danno immediately showed his promise with a 9½-length win against New Jersey-breds in his first career start on Aug. 12 at Monmouth Park. The son of Bucchero out of the Ghostzapper mare Adorabella came back three weeks later to win the \$100,000 Smoke Glacken Stakes by 2 lengths in another

impressive score against open company. Book'em Danno traveled to New York for his next start, which was a resounding win in the \$150,000 Futurity Stakes at Aqueduct by 6½ lengths. The Derek Ryan trainee ended his 2-year-old campaign with a three-quarter-length defeat in the Nashua Stakes at Aqueduct.

Bred in by Gregory Kilka and Bright View Farm, Book'em Danno finished 2023 with three wins and a second in four starts and earnings of \$230,625.



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## Precious Avary named Champion 3-Year-Old Filly and Champion Turf Runner

Smith Farm & Stables' homebred Precious Avary is the champion 3-year-old filly and champion turf runner after winning four times, including two stakes, during her championship campaign.

The daughter of Divining Rod won three consecutive races that concluded with a win in the Jersey Girl Handicap at Monmouth Park in July against older mares in her first start on the turf. Precious Avary won her second stakes in the \$125,000 Maryland Million Ladies on the Maryland Million card on Oct. 14 at Laurel Park in gate-to-wire fashion.

Precious Avary has career earnings of \$274,448 and is trained by Timothy J. Shaw.



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## Great Navigator earns second consecutive NJ-bred honor

Holly Crest Farms homebred Great Navigator is the champion 3-year-old male after hitting the board in seven of his eight starts while earning \$199,407. The son of New Jersey Stallion of the Year Sea Wizard followed up on his championship 2-year-old campaign by winning the \$125,000 Charles J. Hesse III Handicap against older runners by 10 lengths and finishing third in Belmont Park's historic Vosburgh-G2 behind Cody's Wish. Trained by Eddie Owens Jr., Great Navigator has amassed \$282,707 in 10 starts during his first two seasons of competition.



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## Mia's Crusade named Champion Older Female

Mia's Crusade's three stakes wins in five starts earned her the honor of New Jersey-bred champion older female. The daughter of Greenpointcrusader out of the Mo Mon mare Mini Moneigh was campaigned by Joseph and Gayle Ioia and is trained by Chuck Spina.

Mia's Crusade began her championship campaign with a 1¼-length win in the \$85,000 Spruce Fir Handicap at Monmouth Park in May. She returned to the winner's circle in the \$100,000 Eleven North Handicap at 6 furlongs on the dirt during the New Jersey Thoroughbred Festival Aug. 27 against a full field of fillies and mares. Showing her versatility, Mia's Crusade ended her championship campaign winning the Pinot Grigio Handicap at 5 furlongs over the Meadowlands turf course.

Mia's Crusade was bred by Dianne Boyken and has career earnings of \$350,781.



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## He'spuregold repeats as Champion Older Male

John Bowers Jr.'s homebred He'spuregold repeated as champion older male after another successful stakes-winning campaign at age 5. The son of Vancouver out of the Smart Strike mare Smart N Classy started his championship campaign winning over the Gulfstream Park turf Jan. 1.

He showed his affinity for the Monmouth Park turf course winning the Irish War Cry Handicap at 1 mile on the turf at Monmouth Park for the third consecutive year. Kelly J. Breen trains He'spuregold, who increased his career earnings to \$463,370.

His dam, Smart N Classy, was a graded stakes-winning New Jersey-bred homebred for Bowers, earning \$466,209. As a broodmare, Smart N Classy also produced graded stakes winner Valedictorian (\$761,115) and \$268,080-earner Stay Smart, winner of the 2020 Smart N Classy Handicap.



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## Sea Wizard is Stallion of the Year for first time

Sea Wizard is the New Jersey Stallion of the Year after his progeny earned over \$796,000 in 2023. Sea Wizard's second crop of runners includes New Jersey-bred champion 3-year-old male Great Navigator, and he sired five 2-year-old winners in 2023, including stakes-placed runners Sea Streak and Ship to Shore. Sea Wizard stands the 2024 season at Pegasus Farm in Colts Neck.

## Adorabella is Broodmare of the Year

Adorabella was honored as Broodmare of the Year for the second consecutive year. Tracy Farmer bred the 8-year-old daughter of Ghostzapper out of Alydorable, by Arch. She was purchased by Gregory Kilka out of the 2020 Keeneland January Horse of All Ages Sale in foal to Fast Anna. The resulting foal was the 2022 New Jersey-bred champion 2-year-old filly Girl Trouble (\$283,890), a stakes winner in 2023. Adorabella's second foal is the 2023 New Jersey-bred Horse of the Year, champion sprinter and champion 2-year-old, Book'em Danno.

## Smithwick's Spice captures Leinster Turf Dash



"I liked him cutting back in distance [following a good second going 1 $\frac{1}{16}$  miles earlier in the month at Gulfstream Park], but these were not just New Jersey-bred horses," Nunn said once his state of near-hysteria subsided after the race. "I was all ready to scratch him, but the owner [New Spice Stable's Robert Matthies] said let's take a shot.

"He had never run against the big boys, and I didn't want to take his heart away. But he showed he can run with the big boys," added Nunn, who broke Smithwick's Spice as a yearling.

Once Smithwick's Spice showed Daniel Centeno he wanted the lead, the jockey rolled with the veteran campaigner and was richly rewarded. "He fought the entire way. I've ridden him before and he's always run good for me," Centeno said. "When I turned for home I saw [Antonio] Gallardo [on Yes I Am Free] outside me and I thought, 'he's not going to go by me.' My horse likes to fight, and he ran big today."

"The reason I'm still here doing this is this horse," Nunn said. "When this horse retires, I'll retire. He doesn't want to retire yet, so I guess I'm going to keep on going.

New Spice Stables homebred Smithwick's Spice went to front and never looked back in winning the 21st running of the \$100,000 Leinster Turf Dash Stakes going 5 furlongs on the turf at Tampa Bay Downs Feb. 24.

The 8-year-old son of Frost Giant out of Spicy McHaggis captured his second stakes and the \$45,000 winner's share

raised his career earnings to \$508,847 in 40 starts. The winner of 10 races, his other stakes victory came in the 2022 Joey P. Handicap at Monmouth Park.

Trainer Doug Nunn has always believed in Smithwick's Spice, but had doubts about entering him against the quality of competition in the Leinster Turf Dash.



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