

BELLADONNA RACING LLC

NO. 6 – VOL. 5
JUNE 2025

THE WINNING WAYS OF *Cherie!*

BREEDERS' CUP BREAKTHROUGH:

TDN
THOROUGHBRED DAILY NEWS
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

BY KATIE PETRUNYAK

DEVAUX'S RISE FUELED BY PATIENCE AND PURPOSE

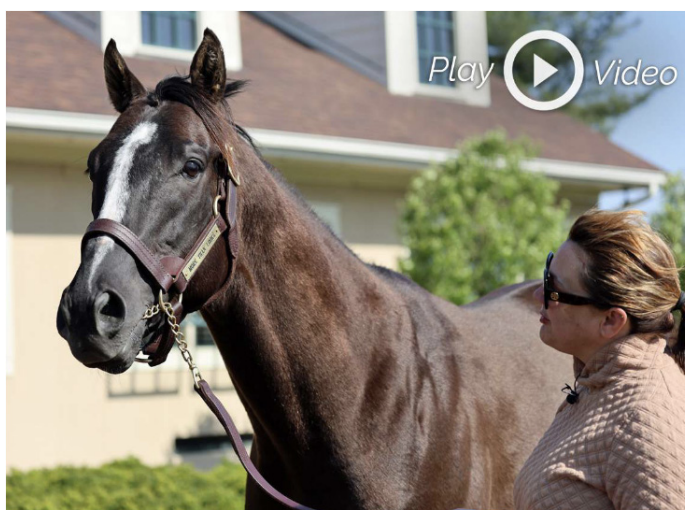
Knowing when a horse is ready to take a step up and when it's time to take a step back--it's one of the fundamentals of training. Get it right and you get rewarded. Get it wrong and, well, you'll likely know pretty quickly.

Some trainers just seem to have a feel for where that line is, a sense of when to ask for more and when the horse might need a little more time and preparation. Cherie DeVaux is learning to hone that intuition.

"It is a balance to be patient or know when it's okay to push," DeVaux acknowledged. "I'm not immune to losing sight of that. Sometimes we'll take a chance thinking the horse can do it, but then in hindsight I'll say, 'Did I think the horse could do it or was I wanting the horse to do it?' I've learned over the many years of doing this myself and doing it as an assistant that if you're not patient and you don't put the horse first, you're not going to get rewarded."

This spring, DeVaux had a promising filly on the Kentucky Oaks trail in Ahavah (City of Light), the half-sister to Grade I winner Vahva (Gun Runner). After a sharp debut and a runner-up effort behind Good Cheer (Medaglia d'Oro) in the GII Fair Grounds Oaks, the filly incurred a setback. Maybe she could have still made it to the Oaks, but DeVaux decided it was too much to ask of the 3-year-old in her third start and chose to take a step back with her.

Four years ago, DeVaux had another filly in a similar position-- talented and lightly raced--who took a different



Click to view the TDN's interview with Cherie DeVaux.

route. Tarabi (First Samurai) scored in her 2-year-old debut and then finished second in the GI Spinaway Stakes. After recovering from a minor infection that set her back several weeks, the Breeders' Cup was still on the table.

DeVaux called her mentor, trainer Chuck Simon, who leaned toward taking the conservative option. She spoke with another trainer and advisor, John Sadler, who thought Tarabi's numbers would make her com-

petitive. With differing opinions in hand, DeVaux went with her gut.

Her instincts proved correct when Tarabi finished third behind Echo Zulu (Gun Runner) in the 2021 GI Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies, putting in a fine showing for DeVaux's World Championship debut.

The race marked a milestone moment for DeVaux, who launched her stable in 2018, but the experience left her determined to return to the Breeders' Cup and do things differently the next time around.

"When you go there, you're bright-eyed and bushy tailed and there's so much action and so much going on," she recalled.

"I was a lot more nervous and had a lot more pressure going in. After that year, I promised myself that if I was fortunate enough to go again, I would focus more on enjoying it than just being nervous and worried, because that's not going to change anything."

BELLADONNA RACING^{LLC}

THE WINNING WAYS OF *Cherie!* (CONT.)

DeVaux returned to the Breeders' Cup in 2023 and again in 2024, where she came in with a strong hand of four starters. More Than Looks (More Than Ready) was the one that got the job done, giving DeVaux her first Breeders' Cup victory and, once again, underscoring the value of trusting her intuition.

A late-rallying sixth in the 2023 GI Breeders' Cup Mile, More Than Looks hit one roadblock after another as he attempted to launch his 4-year-old campaign last year. Injury and weather-related setbacks kept him on the sidelines until August, but DeVaux mapped out a plan that would get the Victory Racing Partners-owned colt back to the Breeders' Cup as his third start off a nine-month break.

"Throughout the process there were a lot of conversations with [Victory Racing managing partner] Anthony Bartolo about different paths to go," explained DeVaux. "I told him that we were just going to stick to the plan. The plan was to win the Breeders' Cup. So walking out to the paddock that day, it's the time when I'm nervous and everyone is around, and all I could think was, 'God, I hope the plan works out.'"

When More Than Looks swept past rivals around the final turn at Del Mar and crossed the wire in front, DeVaux's thoughts immediately turned to her old friend Chuck Simon, who had passed away just two months earlier.



DeVaux and Jose Ortiz celebrate their Breeders' Cup victory with More Than Looks | Breeders' Cup Eclipse Sportswire

Simon had played a pivotal role in launching her career. While studying pre-med in college, DeVaux got a job hot walking for Simon, who had once worked for her father at the harness track. Simon took her under his wing, first as an exercise rider and then as his assistant trainer.

"He always joked with me and said, 'I wish I had money and then I can retire and you could train all my horses,'" DeVaux recalled. "He would

say that I was better than he was. I don't know if he meant it or if he was just being nice, but that's really where I got my start."

After six years working for Simon and eight with Chad Brown, DeVaux launched her stable. From the outside, her rise through the training ranks has seemed relatively swift over the past seven years, but the early stretch of her career was anything but an instant success.

"It took me almost a full year to win my first race and that was a really hard pill to swallow," she admitted. "If you want to know about your fortitude and your tenacity, going from a juggernaut of where I was working and then going on my own was definitely testing. I had faith it would all work out, maybe blindly, but in the moment it was quite hard to fathom that we would be where we're at now as a stable."

BELLADONNA RACING LLC

THE WINNING WAYS OF *Cherie!* (CONT.)

After working with Breeders' Cup champions like Good Magic (Curlin), Rushing Fall (More Than Ready) and Lady Eli (Divine Park) during her time with Brown, DeVaux now considers her first Breeders' Cup win an important benchmark in her career.

"I'm going to be honest and say that I didn't really think it would happen so quickly," she admitted. "It's something that I can say I lost sight of when I worked for Chad, just because we had won a lot. Then you get humbled quickly when you go on your own and any race is hard to win, much less a stakes race and much less a championship race."

Before saddling her first Breeders' Cup runner in 2021 with Tarabi, DeVaux had only attended the event once before with Lady Eli. While working for Brown, DeVaux was responsible for heading up Brown's New York division during Breeders' Cup week, so most years she would watch the action from Belmont Park.

"If I could go back and have coffee with that person that was sitting watching it from a TV, I would say to just really enjoy it when it happens because it's not that easy," DeVaux reflected. "I definitely feel like I took a lot of experiences for granted and it's a goal now being on my own to not do that. I don't think it can be under-

estimated the number of disappointments, the highs, the lows and the preparation it takes to get there."

DeVaux has her sights set on a return to the Breeders' Cup this fall. Vahva (Gun Runner) could be in the mix for the Filly and Mare Sprint if she can return to her winning ways, turf star She Feels Pretty (Karakontie {Jpn}) has looked nearly unstoppable in her last three starts, and of course there are plenty of other talented trainees waiting in the wings.

Success has brought validation, but DeVaux remains focused on trusting her instincts as she builds on her stable's momentum and navigates its

next phase of growth.

"One of my core beliefs as a trainer is to treat each horse as an individual," she said. "Part of when you're growing your stable and you win races is you get more interest from clients,

so it's a balance of how big is too big and where are you comfortable with the growth of your stable. That's really what my focus is every day – how we can continue doing what we've done to make us successful and make it better. Obviously I want to win many Breeders' Cups. I want our team to enjoy many highs. My goal is to continue what we're doing, but keep it at the highest quality we can."



DeVaux and She Feels Pretty at Keeneland | Katie Petrunyak

"It is a balance to be patient or know when it's okay to push,"

DeVaux acknowledged.

BELLADONNA RACING LLC

WHAT A CHICK *Magnett!*

RETRIBUTION

Earns First Stakes Win in Chick Lang S.

RETRIBUTION, coming off a nice 3rd-place finish at Keeneland after his debut maiden victory in mid-February, stepped up into stakes competition and handled it with professionalism at Pimlico on May 17th. The Maryland racetrack, scheduled for a complete renovation, put on a show for the 150th Preakness S. Day card, and the \$150,000 Chick Lang S. was the fourth of 10 stakes on the schedule of 14 races.

Breaking alertly from the far outside in the field of 11, RETRIBUTION and Irad Ortiz Jr. got themselves into stride and let the ample speed to their inside get the forward position. Going into the turn, RETRIBUTION took Ortiz toward the leaders and coming

out of the turn, the stalkers were making their move as the speed horses began to fade. Four wide and on the attack, RETRIBUTION kicked clear. A couple of horses made an attempt at him, but he drew away in the end by 1 ¾ lengths. Final time for the six-furlong sprint for sophomores was 1:11.27 over a fast dirt track.

Cherie commented, "I was really excited to move RETRIBUTION up a level with how he has been training. When we entered and I handicapped the race, I liked our prospects when combined with how well RETRIBUTION has been doing at Keeneland. Irad rode him to instructions, and I'm so excited to get that stakes win for us."

In this article from DRF.com <https://www.drif.com/news/lightly-raced-retribution-makes-it-look-easy-winning-chick-lang> Ortiz added, "'In the middle of the turn, he started making his move on his own. I said, 'Beautiful.' Then I got a horse next to me, and [Retribution] fights, and I said, 'Okay, let's do it.'"

RETRIBUTION is the 11th stakes winner from the first crop of Vekoma, from 120 starters at the time of this race. He is the second stakes winner for his dam, Granny's Drink, by Old Fashioned, and is named for the Retribution Distilling Company in England, known for their Vodka.

RACE RECORD: 3-2-0-1 \$134,400

▶ RACE REPLAY

BELLADONNA RACING LLC

What's GOING ON



RETRIBUTION
SHOWN WINNING THE
CHICK LANG STAKES

BELLADONNA STAKES STATS SINCE ITS INCEPTION

Against stakes company, Belladonna Racing stats stack up quite well, both on turf and dirt. We have wins at every level, from listed stakes to Grade 1 stakes, and at top tracks like Keeneland, Saratoga, Churchill, Fair Grounds, and Monmouth Park.

With Retribution's contribution, here are our latest stakes statistics:

47 STAKES STARTS • 7 STAKES WINS (14.9%)
5 SECOND-PLACINGS • 10 THIRD-PLACINGS
I-T-M: 46.8%

 **Maryland Thoroughbred** · Follow
11h · 🌐

The Maryland Horse Breeders Association is proud to announce renowned bloodstock agent David Ingordo will judge the 91st annual Yearling Show. Open to all yearlings eligible for Maryland-bred registration, the show will be held on Sunday, June 29 at the Maryland State Fairgrounds' Horse Show Ring in Timonium.



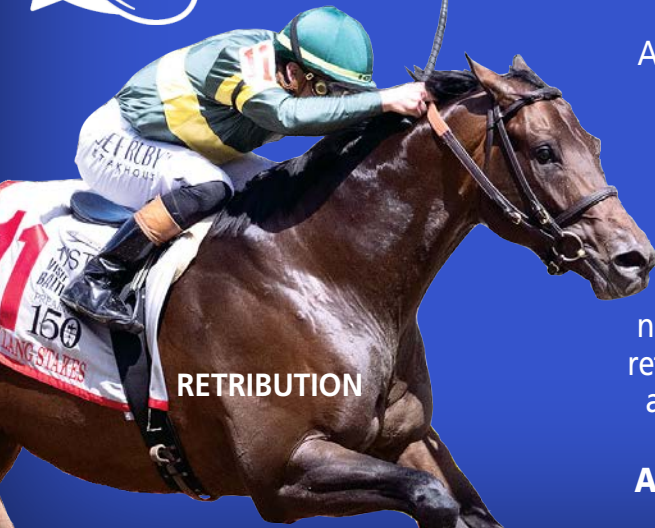
PHONE A FRIEND

Q: Why did Paul M. miss the running of the Chick Lang S. on Preakness Day when RETRIBUTION won?

A: He was at his daughter's college graduation.
But that's not why.

He dropped his phone in a small (safe!) area of the Port-a-Potty and needed (a lot of) assistance retrieving it, all the while his alarm that was set for the race was blaring.

All's well that ends well.



RETRIBUTION



BELLADONNA RACING LLC

What's GOING ON

TDN
THOROUGHBRED DAILY NEWS
SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2025


[CLICK HERE FOR
FULL TDN STORY](#)

TRUMP'S "BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL" COULD MEAN MAJOR TAX BREAK FOR HORSE OWNERS



The newest spending bill could bring big tax breaks for horse owners | Getty Images

by Bill Finley



David Ingordo | Keeneland

Bloodstock advisor David Ingordo said that passage of the bill would be a huge shot in the arm for the sport. "It's good because it allows owners to take the bonus depreciation in the year they purchase a horse or when it is put into service," Ingordo said. "That will be a big reason for people to come in and buy yearlings because they can 100% write them off in the first year. That's going to incentivize people to invest in the yearling market that we're getting ready to launch. This is massive. I can speak for myself and my clientele, we've been maximizing this tax strategy over the years and for it to go back up to 100% is huge. I think that a lot of the clients I work with will increase their budgets because of this. A lot of people in my position will be thinking the same way, especially if you're looking to upgrade your stock this is a great way to take advantage of a tax law."

VISIT OUR WEBSITE [BELLADONNATB.COM](https://belladonnatb.com)

It is an all-source site for entries, results, updates, stats, current news, archived newsletters, and photos. We encourage feedback so that we can provide the information you desire, so please let us know what you think of the overall content.



**CLICK HERE TO
VISIT OUR SITE**



BELLADONNA RACING LLC

TEAM *Spotlight*

KIM CARROLL

Full Name: Kim Carroll

Years in the Horse Business:
40 years

Years with the DeVaux Racing TEAM:
1 year

Position in the Barn:
In-house therapist and exercise rider

List other horse-related jobs you have had prior to joining DeVaux Racing:
I spent 8 years with Mark Casse racing after working 24 years with Carroll Racing.

How did your involvement in Thoroughbred Racing start?
I was working at a farm with babies in New York and someone mentioned if you work at a race track you get to travel, and that's where it all started.

What do you enjoy most about your current job?
Working with the horses and the relationship you develop, whether it be working or riding.

What is your favorite Race Track?
Keeneland - it caters to the horses' needs.

Do you have a favorite Belladonna-owned horse?
Retribution

What activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of horse racing?
Gardening and Reading

Do you have a favorite memory in racing?
Going to the Breeders' Cup at Santa Anita with Got Stormy

Who is your all-time favorite race horse?
I can't just pick one. I'm partial to fillies and mares; they're so courageous with a big heart.



BELLADONNA RACING LLC

Around THE TRACK



Atropa



Zverev



'23 Love On the Run



'23 Cara Sorella



BELLADONNA RACING LLC

Around THE TRACK

The Process



Retribution

Love and Poetry



'23 Allusion



'23 She's My Gem



Vahva



BELLADONNA RACING LLC

Around THE TRACK



'23 Bajan Girl



Love and Poetry



Ahavah



Atropa and '23 Love On the Run



'23 Finding Fame



'23 Tiffany's Gal (outside) and '23 Bajan Girl



Depiction