



MORE GREAT MARES  
OF MODERN TIMES

# PERSONAL ENSIGN

Only two decades have passed since the phenomenon named Personal Ensign left the stage of racing in her glorious perfection. Thus, the long-term influence of her descent is not as calculable as it is with most other mares in this volume. Nevertheless, her produce record of three major stakes winners and her quickly earned status as second dam of a champion and dam of the sire of a Kentucky Derby winner create a confidence that this tale will continue. Besides, the story of an unbeaten racemare is inherently irresistible.

Personal Ensign was bred by Ogden Phipps, whose grandfather, Ogden Mills, had partnered with England's Lord Derby in a stable of runners in France. Lord Derby was dominant on his own in his home country, and the partnership for the Continent included victories by Kantar in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe and by Cri de Guerre in the Grand Prix de Paris. Indeed, these victories both were scored in 1928 and made the pair of Mills and Lord Derby the leading owners in France that year.

After Ogden Mills died, one of his twin daughters, Lady Beatrice Granard, took up the racing partnership with Lord Derby. Back home in the United States, the other twin daughter, Gladys — who had married Henry Carnegie Phipps — had founded Wheatley Stable in partnership with her brother, Ogden Livingston Mills, in the latter 1920s.

Mrs. Phipps survived both her husband and brother and ran Wheatley until her death in 1970. Her son Ogden followed her example closely and started his own racing stable less than a decade af-

ter the launch of Wheatley. He adopted his grandfather's silks of black, with cherry cap, and had some early success before serving in World War II. After the war he commenced a sustained sequence of the breeding and racing of champions that reached a dozen before his death at ninety-three in 2002.

Phipps had raced not just champions but elite horses such as Buckpasser, Easy Goer, and Numbered Account. Personal Ensign's career overlapped that of Easy Goer, the spectacular colt who suffered a setback the day of the filly's superb finale.

The leitmotif of Ogden Phipps' breeding operation was building upon the base of bloodstock he secured when he and two friends divided the bulk of Col. E.R. Bradley's renowned Idle Hour Stock Farm. Bradley died in 1946, and Phipps along with Jock Whitney of Greentree Stud and Robert Kleberg of King Ranch acquired Bradley's equine treasures, most importantly the produce of the singular mare La Troienne.

On the distaff side, though, Personal Ensign reflected another aspect of the Ogden Phipps approach, which was to be constantly aware of the pedigrees of the world and to choose judiciously when opportunity knocked. One of the bloodlines that impressed Phipps was that of the Argentine colt Dorileo, whom a cousin, Michael Phipps, acquired. The star of that Argentine family, in Ogden Phipps' view, was Dorine, a full sister to Dorileo. "I knew she was the best filly down there and from one of the best families," Phipps said. Dorine was from the outstanding Argentine sprinter Doria, and Dorine herself set a record for Argentine mares by earning \$151,027.

Phipps once told us that he was "pretty fussy" when it came to adding outside mares to his

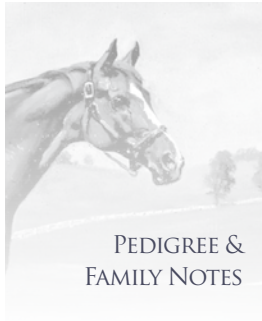
broodmare band, but he was highly impressed when bloodstock dealer Wayne Murty approached him about "an Argentine mare that might interest you." Phipps learned that it was none other than Dorine herself. The price quoted was \$125,000. Phipps did not stipulate whether any adjustment was forthcoming, but presently Dorine was his own.

The history of Dorine reflected the pattern of Argentine breeders importing the best representatives they could afford from the pedigrees of England. Dorine's sire, Aristophanes, was an example, being an imported son of the great English stallion Hyperion. Lord Derby, partner of Ogden Phipps' grandfather and aunt, had bred and raced Hyperion, the English Derby winner of 1933 and a sire of surpassing importance.

Aristophanes implanted his name in the U.S. racing scene when A.B. "Bull" Hancock Jr. imported Aristophanes' son Forli to campaign briefly and then to stand at his Claiborne Farm. The Phipps family long had boarded mares at Claiborne and obviously were well aware of Forli. Phipps' son, Ogden Mills "Dinny" Phipps, bred the high-class winners Intrepid Hero (1972) and Posse (1977), by Forli.

Dorine was sixteen when she foaled the Hoist the Flag filly Grecian Banner, destined to be the dam of Personal Ensign. Grecian Banner, a foal of 1974, won one of six starts and earned \$9,020.

While foaled from the daughter of an Argentine mare, Personal Ensign received her dose of the old Bradley bloodstock tradition via her sire, Private Account. Private Account was by the Claiborne stallion Damascus and out of Phipps' Numbered Account, the champion two-year-old filly of 1971. Numbered Account, in turn, was in the first crop of Phipps' three-time champion Buckpasser. Buck-



PRIVATE ACCOUNT b c, 1976	DAMASCUS, 1964	SWORD DANCER, 1956	SUNGLOW, 1947 HIGHLAND FLING, 1950
		KERALA, 1958	MY BABU, 1945 BLADE OF TIME, 1938
PERSONAL ENSIGN b f, 1984	NUMBERED ACCOUNT, 1969	BUCKPASSER, 1963	TOM FOOL, 1949 BUSANDA, 1947
		INTRIGUING, 1964	SWAPS, 1952 GLAMOUR, 1953
GRECIAN BANNER dk b/br f, 1974	HOIST THE FLAG, 1968	TOM ROLFE, 1962	RIBOT, 1952 POCAHONTAS, 1955
		WAVY NAVY, 1954	WAR ADMIRAL, 1934 TRIOMPHE, 1947
	DORINE, 1958	ARISTOPHANES, 1948	HYPERION, 1930 COMMOTION, 1938
		DORIA, 1949	ADVOCATE, 1940 DONATILA, 1933

**1st dam:** Personal Ensign. b, 1984. Bred by Ogden Phipps (KY). Raced 3 yrs, 13 sts, 13 wins, \$1,679,880. in USA. Won Beldame S (gr. I), Beldame S (gr. I), Breeders' Cup Distaff (gr. I), Frizette S (gr. I), Hempstead H (gr. I), Maskette S (gr. I), Shuvee H (gr. I), Whitney H (gr. I), Molly Pitcher H (gr. II), Rare Perfume S (gr. II). Dam of 10 named foals, 9 rnr, 8 wnrs, 3 sw.

**1990: MINER'S MARK**, b c, by Mr. Prospector. Raced 3 yrs, 18 sts, 6 wins, \$967,170. Won Jockey Club Gold Cup (gr. I), Jim Dandy S (gr. II), Colin S (gr. III); 2nd Dwyer S (gr. II); 3rd Travers S (gr. I), Jim Beam S (gr. II). Sire of 306 named foals, AEI 1.08.

**1991: Our Emblem**, dkb/br c, by Mr. Prospector. Raced 4 yrs, 27 sts, 5 wins, \$366,013. 2nd Carter H (gr. I), Forego H (gr. II), Tom Fool S (gr. II); 3rd Metropolitan H (gr. I), Vosburgh S (gr. I), Commonwealth Breeders' Cup S (gr. II), Gulfstream Park Breeders' Cup Sprint Championship H (gr. III), Westchester H (gr. III). Sire of 434 named foals, AEI 1.08. Sent to Brz 2005.

**1992:** Pennant Champion, b f, by Mr. Prospector. Raced 2 yrs, 7 sts, 2 wins, \$48,070. Dam of 9 foals, 5 rnr, 5 wnrs. Granddam of **STRETCHING, Wingspan**.

**1993: MY FLAG**, ch f, by Easy Goer. Raced 3 yrs, 20 sts, 6 wins, \$1,557,057. Won Coaching Club American Oaks (gr. I), Ashland S (gr. I), Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (gr. I), Gazelle H (gr. I), Bonnie Miss S (gr. II); 2nd Frizette S (gr. I), Davona Dale S (gr. III); 3rd Belmont S (gr. I), Alabama S (gr. I), Matron S (gr. I). Dam of 6 foals, 4 rnr, 3 wnrs, 1 sw. Dam of **STORM FLAG FLYING, On Parade, Leading the Parade**. Granddam of **PARADING**.

**1994: Proud and True**, b c, by Mr. Prospector. Raced 2 yrs, 9 sts, 3 wins, \$96,170. 3rd Baltimore Breeders' Cup H (gr. III). Sire of 172 named foals, AEI 1.08.

**1995:** Slipped.

**1996:** Slipped.

**1997: TRADITIONALLY**, ch c, by Mr. Prospector. Raced 4 yrs, 20 sts, 5 wins, \$495,660. Won Oaklawn H (gr. I). Sire of 196 named foals, AEI 1.08. Sent to NZ 2002.

**1998:** Dead foal.

**1999:** Not bred.

**2000:** Possibility, b f, by A.P. Indy. Raced 2 yrs, 7 sts, 1 win, \$43,278. Dam of 1 foal.

**2001:** Barren.

**2002: Salute**, b f, by Unbridled. Raced 3 yrs, 10 sts, 1 win, \$103,838. 2nd Demoiselle S (gr. II); 3rd Tempted S (gr. III). Dam of 1 foal.

**2003:** Title Seeker, b f, by Monarchos. Unraced. (\$1,700,000, keenov, Seeking the Gold).

**2004:** Barren.

**2005:** Baronial, b c, by Kingmambo. Raced 1 yr, 2 sts, 0 wins, \$1,840.

**2006:** ch c, by Forest Wildcat. Died 2007.

**2007:** Barren.

passer went back to La Troienne via one of her daughters, Businesslike, and on the female side, the Buckpasser filly Numbered Account traced to another of La Troienne's daughters, Baby League. La Troienne's daughters crossed well with Man o' War's Triple Crown-winning son War Admiral, resulting in the closely related Busanda (out of Businesslike) and Striking (out of Baby League). Busanda was the dam of Buckpasser and Striking was the third dam of Numbered Account.

Private Account was a good racehorse but not one of the champions. He won the grade III Jim Dandy at Saratoga at three in 1979 and the following winter added the grade I Widener and Gulfstream Park handicaps in Florida. Private Account won six of thirteen races and earned \$339,396. That record, shored up by his wonderful pedigree, earned him a place on the Claiborne Farm roster.

Private Account sired sixty stakes winners. Personal Ensign was his flagship accomplishment, and the others included her full brother, Personal Flag, winner of the grade I Suburban Handicap, and Private Terms, winner of the grade I Wood Memorial. Private Account's status was sufficient that the established French breeders, the Niarchos family, once sent their champion mare Miesque to him, with the result being another French champion filly, East of the Moon.

Personal Ensign came to trainer Shug McGaughey at two in 1986. The future Hall of Fame trainer waited until September to start her and she drew clear to win a 7-furlong maiden race in the mud at Belmont Park by more than twelve lengths. The high-class future stakes winners Graceful Darby and Nastique followed in second and third, respectively.

Moved immediately into grade I company, Personal Ensign survived a head-to-head duel with

the nice filly Collins to win the Frizette Stakes at a mile. Such had been the impression she created in her debut that some reporters implied disappointment in her Frizette score. McGaughey found it implausible that anyone would hint of criticism of a winning performance from a filly making only her second start and winning a grade I race, no matter the margin. Of course, there was no way of knowing at the time what a defeat would have meant to her overall record.

Although Ogden Phipps had had a half-century of seeking largely established and traditional races, he responded eagerly to the advent of the Breeders' Cup in 1984. He and McGaughey were game to ship Personal Ensign to Santa Anita, where the third Breeders' Cup was to be held, but two days before the scheduled flight, Personal Ensign severely injured her left rear pastern during a workout. The trip was off and, quite likely it seemed, Personal Ensign was through as a race filly.

Phipps told us, in fact, that after equine surgeon Dr. Larry Bramlage inserted five surgical pins in the leg and spoke of her having a chance to "make it," the owner thought he was talking about just surviving. Conjecture that she might race again was not realistic, Phipps initially thought.

Nevertheless, Personal Ensign recovered completely, and the next September McGaughey brought her back to two allowance victories, then stepped her up to win the grade II Rare Perfume. On October 18, a little more than a year after she won her grade I debut in the Frizette, Personal Ensign raced home by 2¼ lengths in the grade I Beldame.

She thus was unbeaten in six career starts. McGaughey did not mince around with her unbeaten status and look for an easy spot when she was ready to start her four-year-old season. In

mid-May 1988, she came out to win the grade I Shuvee, and then she gave a lovely and stunning exhibition of superiority when she glided home by seven lengths in the grade I Hempstead Handicap at 1½ miles.

All of her races through that point had been run at Belmont Park. McGaughey next vanned her to Monmouth Park, where she survived being bumped and forced wide and drew out to win the grade II Molly Pitcher by eight lengths.

Despite the building tension of an unbeaten career, Phipps did what he had done often when he had a good filly. He let her have a chance to see if she could handle males. In the past he had won the Suburban Handicap with Busanda and the Gallant Fox Handicap with Relaxing. Now Personal Ensign was aimed for the grade I Whitney at Saratoga. Going 9 furlongs, she was set to face the versatile colt Gulch, he carrying 124 pounds to her 117. Although one of Saratoga's noted August rains turned the track sloppy, Personal Ensign was not withdrawn. She stalked the early pace, then made her move and drew out to defeat Gulch by 1½ lengths.

That spring Winning Colors became the third filly to win the Kentucky Derby. She was a big, powerful sort and at her best was capable of testing any horse. Winning Colors loomed as a challenge to Personal Ensign in the mile Maskette, a grade I race in which they carried scale weights, 123 on Personal Ensign and 118 on the younger filly.

Winning Colors was on her game that day and opened a five-length lead early. She still led by two after a half-mile in :45½. Personal Ensign had her in her sights, but after six furlongs in 1:09, Winning Colors was still slightly in front. Through a testing stretch run, both dug deep and it was only a gradual grinding down of the younger filly that

carried Personal Ensign to victory. The Phipps filly won by three-quarters of a length in 1:34½. It was the first time since the Frizette, her second race at two, that she had not won by daylight.

Any who saw the Maskette would have scoffed at a comment of "you haven't seen anything yet," but the next meeting of the two would, indeed, bring even more heightened drama.

Personal Ensign bounced out of her severe Maskette effort with a 5½-length romp for her second Beldame Stakes. Winning Colors was beaten fifteen lengths in the Spinster, adding to the difficulty in foreseeing which version of herself would show up for the Breeders' Cup Distaff.

The Breeders' Cup was run at Churchill Downs that year and on a dark, rainy, and foreboding sort of day. Easy Goer was upset as favorite for the Breeders' Cup Juvenile two races after the Distaff, and then the Phipps colt Seeking the Gold lost by only a half-length to Alysheba in the gathering darkness of the Classic.

For many, the day's emotional high spot came in the weight-for-age Distaff. The high, however, had come only after a sinking feeling in Phipps' heart told him he had made a mistake to let the filly run in the muddy going. Meanwhile, "not today" was trainer McGaughey's message of resignation to himself as he watched Personal Ensign struggling early. The prospects of ending her career unbeaten were seemingly slipping away with each dismal furlong.

Winning Colors, meanwhile, was seemingly happy on this muddy version of the track where she had earned immortality in the Derby. She was two lengths in front early and still had that margin after six furlongs. Her main challenge seemed likely to come from Goodbye Halo, another very good three-year-old. Personal Ensign was eighth

early and still was only up to fifth after six furlongs, eight lengths off the pace. Turning for home, Personal Ensign began to shed the cloak of futility and came wide to begin a wrenching bid. She did not seem likely to make it, but at least she was going to go down fighting. Then the picture changed. Perhaps she could get there!

On they rushed to the wire, Personal Ensign now finally in powerful flight, but Winning Colors was not fading. It was a desperate moment, heightened by the burden of perfection hanging in the balance. At the finish, it was too close to call with certainty, but Personal Ensign had just pushed her nose in front in time. She won by that margin and thus was thirteen for thirteen and had earnings of \$1,679,880. She was, of course, the older filly champion, finally getting her Eclipse Award, and but for the sterling campaign of the colt Alysheba, she might have had a good shot at Horse of the Year.

Historians harked back eight decades for comparison among major careers of American racehorses, arriving at Colin's fifteen-for-fifteen mark in two campaigns in 1907–08.

## **IMMEDIATE IMPACT**

The night of the Breeders' Cup, Personal Ensign was vanned to Claiborne Farm, where the broodmare crew was introduced to the proud aloofness McGaughey's team knew so well.

The remarkable leading stallion Mr. Prospector, one of the most distinguished on the Claiborne roster, sired Personal Ensign's first three foals. Her first foal, born in 1990, was named Miner's Mark. He came around to win the grade II Jim Dandy Stakes as well as the grade III Colin, named for his dam's history partner across the ages. He was third in the grade I Travers and placed in two grade II stakes.

Miner's Mark was not looking like a top-rung winner, but in the autumn of his three-year-old season he edged Belmont Stakes winner Colonial Affair in a tight battle for the grade I Jockey Club Gold Cup. The victory was the third for Phipps in the Gold Cup, following Buckpasser and Easy Goer. It was the climax to what was regarded as Breeders' Cup Preview Day at Belmont Park. The Phipps family won four graded stakes on that card, and McGaughey also added a fifth with Claiborne Farm's Lure.

Miner's Mark was sent to stud at Lane's End Farm, where he had limited success. He was later sent to stand at Dunhill Stud in Florida before being pensioned to Blue Ridge Farm in Virginia.

Personal Ensign's second son was the Mr. Prospector colt Our Emblem. He proved frustrating, for he was an impressive closer who placed in eight stakes — some of them top class — without ever winning a stakes. Our Emblem won five of twenty-seven career starts from two through five and earned \$366,013.

Given his demonstrated class and his wonderful pedigree, Our Emblem was taken into the stallion barn at Claiborne. Disappointing early results included a \$27,570 average for his sale yearlings in 2000. Our Emblem was sold to Mr. and Mrs. E. Allen Murray, who syndicated him for \$7,500 a share and set his stud fee at \$4,000 at their Murrum Farm in Darlington, Maryland. Then, in the spring of 2002, Our Emblem hit the big time. His Private Emblem won the Arkansas Derby and War Emblem won the Illinois Derby. Bigger still, War Emblem went on to win the Kentucky Derby and Preakness. Our Emblem was such a hot commodity that the Taylor brothers of Taylor Made Farm, along with Bill Casner and Kenny Troutt of WinStar Farm, purchased him for \$10.1 million. Our

Emblem returned to Kentucky to stand at Taylor Made. He had also shuttled to Brazil since 2004 but was sold permanently to TNT Stud, the Brazilian farm of Goncarlo and Regina Torrealba, in early 2006.

Personal Ensign's third foal, the filly Pennant Champion, was a winner twice in seven starts to earn \$48,070. She has no stakes-winning progeny, but one of Pennant Champion's daughters, the unraced Broad Brush filly Broad Pennant, foaled the stakes winner Stretching. A Red Ransom filly, Stretching won the Jersey Lilly Stakes at Sam Houston Race Park and placed in the grade III WinStar Distaff. She also placed in France.

### **MY FLAG TO THE FORE**

In 1993 Personal Ensign had her first foal by a stallion other than Mr. Prospector. She was My Flag, a rangy, dark chestnut filly by Easy Goer, Phipps' superb champion who stood at Claiborne before his early death in 1994 at the age of eight. My Flag did not earn a championship, but she brought home two of the most coveted races for a stable with the background of Ogden Phipps'. One was a relatively recent attraction, the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies, while one harked back to the beginnings of the Wheatley and Phipps stables, the Coaching Club American Oaks.

The Breeders' Cup win came on the same card in 1995 when the Phipps fillies Inside Information and Heavenly Prize ran one-two in the Breeders' Cup Distaff on a wet, cold day at Belmont Park.

In addition to those grade I wins, My Flag won the grade I Ashland Stakes and Gazelle Handicap and the grade II Bonnie Miss. She was tested against males in the classic Belmont and finished third behind Editor's Note and Skip Away. My Flag also placed in the grade I Alabama and Ma-

tron stakes. She won six of twenty races at two through four, earning \$1,557,057.

When My Flag was two, Golden Attraction had won the Frizette, Matron, Spinaway, and Schuylerville and thus had sufficient ammunition to counter her loss in the Breeders' Cup and prevail as the division's Eclipse Award winner. When My Flag was three, Yanks Music defeated her in the Alabama, also won the Mother Goose, and then defeated older fillies in the Ruffian Handicap and the Beldame Stakes to deny the Phipps star that season's division Eclipse.

My Flag's second foal, though, carried the day. Named Storm Flag Flying, this filly was by Storm Cat and came to the races in 2002, the year Phipps passed away. When a grandson, the young Ogden Phipps, led in Storm Flag Flying following her Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies triumph at Arlington Park, there were tears of sentiment in the family as well as the satisfaction of knowing a posthumous honor had been earned.

Prior to the Breeders' Cup, Storm Flag Flying had won the key New York autumn races in which her dam had merely placed. These were the grade I Matron and Frizette, so when she came on again after relinquishing the lead in the stretch to defeat Composure by a half-length in the Breeders' Cup, she also sewed up an Eclipse Award.

Storm Flag Flying suffered several problems at three and failed to win either of her two races that year. Rather than retire her, Ogden Mills "Dinny" Phipps left her with McGaughey for a four-year-old campaign, and the family-owned Phipps Stable was rewarded by her victory in the grade II Shuvee Handicap that spring. Storm Flag Flying continued to be competitive in top company, adding a special victory in a stakes named for her unbeaten granddam, the grade I Personal Ensign

Handicap (formerly the John A. Morris) at Saratoga. In addition, one of her four grade I placings came in the Ogden Phipps Handicap honoring her breeder; the race formerly had been known as the Hempstead and had been won by Personal Ensign.

In addition to Storm Flag Flying, My Flag is the dam of two stakes-placed foals, Leading the Parade and On Parade. My Flag's first foal, On Parade (also by Storm Cat) produced a stakes winner in her first foal, a Pulpit colt named Parading.

Returned to Mr. Prospector, Personal Ensign foaled the graded stakes-placed colt Proud and True in 1994, then aborted Seeking the Gold foals in both 1995 and 1996. In 1997 she had her third stakes winner, the Mr. Prospector colt Traditionally, whose single stakes win was a major one. Traditionally won the grade I Oaklawn Handicap at four in a career of five wins from twenty starts and earnings of \$495,660.

If the successful foaling of a major winner after two aborted foals were read as the mare's troubles being behind her, this was far from an accurate prediction. The courage Personal Ensign had shown as a race mare and the strength she had shown as a patient were summoned again. In the spring of 1998, her Mr. Prospector foal was

delivered dead and the mare began hemorrhaging severely. Rushed to the Hagyard-Davidson-McGee veterinary facility in Lexington, Kentucky, Personal Ensign lost so much weight so quickly that Dinny Phipps was convinced they would lose her. Yet, her "grim determination," as he put it, was in evidence.

Personal Ensign not only survived but, after skipping a year, was sound and able to produce another foal. She had an A.P. Indy filly, Possibility, who was a winner once in seven starts to earn \$43,278.

Personal Ensign was barren to Unbridled in 2001, but the following year foaled the stakes-placed Unbridled filly Salute. A winner once in ten starts at two through four, Salute showed good class in finishing second in the grade II Demoiselle Stakes and third in the grade III Tempted Stakes in 2004.

Personal Ensign had an unraced Monarchos filly, Title Seeker, in 2003; was barren to Kingmambo; then foaled Baronial, by Kingmambo, in 2005. Her 2006 Forest Wildcat colt died, and she was barren the next year to the same stallion. Personal Ensign was then pensioned at the age of twenty-three.

When age eventually becomes her conqueror, it will be the first one she has known.