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# SPORTS

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SECTION

**C**



Times photo — DAWN REISS

Veteran Ocala trainer Marc Casse, right, and assistant Mike Anderson greet Seaside Retreat, Casse's ornery bay colt, who is a 50-1 shot in Saturday's Derby.

# Ocala-bred trainer riding on a dream

■ Marc Casse got his start picking up manure. Seaside Retreat soon will mark the veteran's first Derby start.

By **DAWN REISS**  
Times Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The silver tufts on Marc Casse's head contrast sharply in the early morning sun with his Pepto pink shirt and tanned skin. Standing outside Barn 17 on a muddy patch, the Ocala native reflects and jokes easily despite being several days away from having his first horse — Seaside Retreat — contend in the Kentucky Der-

by. A few feet away is long-time friend and fellow trainer Tom Albertrani.

When Casse found out what barn he was going to be in he called Albertrani.

"I asked if we could be together so we could plot out our strategies," Casse joked.

Their friendship goes back to their teenage years, when Albertrani was 18 and 15-year-old Casse didn't have a driver's license.

"It was scary," Casse said. "He wasn't a very good driver. But when you have don't have any other options . . ."

When Casse started training at age 17, Albertrani was a jockey for his father, Norman.

"Oddly enough Tommy was the longest priced horse I ever had win. It paid \$181. So I asked if he could make weight when he got to the barn," Casse said, joking. "I thought he could maybe ride Seaside Retreat in the Derby."

Both have 50-1 shots as first-time trainers on Derby weekend, Casse with Seaside Retreat, an ornery bay colt, and Top Notch Lady, a Bourbonette Breeders' Cup Stakes winner entered in Friday's Kentucky Oaks, and Albertrani with Deputy Glitters, who won the Tampa Bay Derby.

"It's what you dream about," Casse said. "It's nice to finally be here. But for it to mean a lot we

Please see **DERBY 7C**



## INSIDE

**DERBY DRAW:** Favorite Brother Derek, above, draws the 18th spot in Saturday's Kentucky Derby. **7C**

**ODDS:** Undefeated Barbaro is 4-1. **7C**

# Movie leading to dynamite results

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — **Marc Casse** owns a "Vote for Pedro" red and white T-shirt. It's a product of having seven children and watching the cult movie *Napoleon Dynamite* the morning

## NOTEBOOK

**Seaside Retreat** had his best showing this season — second to the late **With a City** in the \$500,000 Lane's End Stakes March 25 at Turfway Park in Florence, Ky.

"For some reason we had it on," said Casse's 22-year-old son, **Norm**, who will graduate Saturday from nearby Bellarmine University and move to Ocala to help with the family's farm. "We weren't necessarily watching it. But I think he's superstitious."

Casse had that original group, including jockey **Patrick Husbands**, watch the movie before the Blue Grass April 15 and plans another viewing this week.

"Every time I watch I say this is



## 132ND KENTUCKY DERBY

6:04 Saturday, Churchill Downs, Louisville, Ky. **TV:** Ch. 8.

**FIELD/DISTANCE:** 20 3-year-olds; 1¼ miles.

trapped inside. There is a lot of speed to the inside of us and if we can follow somebody we will be in good shape."

**FINISHING FIRST:** The first and fifth positions have had the most winners, 12 each, since 1900, with posts No. 4 and 10 next with 10 each. The last two Derby winners have come from the middle to outside in the 10 and 13 slots after **War Emblem** (2002) and **Funny Cide** (2003) won from post No. 5. . . . Brother Derek drew the No. 18 post. Only one horse has ever won the Derby from that spot — **Gato Del Sol** in 1982.

the stupidest movie, but they've got me watching it," Casse, 45, said. "I don't know if I can go through too many of these. But if it'll help me win I'll watch it."

**SOMETHING SPECIAL:** Trainer **Dan Hendricks** has the favorite in **Brother Derek** at 3-1.

"He's a real special horse to me, but he's still right below proving what I consider to be special like **Secretariat** or **Affirmed**," Hendricks said. "One of these horses is going to step up Saturday and be a real special horse. I think you should reserve that for the first that are proven to be that. Hopefully he'll be one of those real soon."

**NO WINNERS HERE:** Despite



**AT PACE:** Brother Derek works out with exercise rider Louis Ortega at Churchill Downs in preparation for Saturday's 1-1/16 mile race, the first leg of the Triple Crown.

AP

**Lawyer Ron's** 4-1 odds and unbeaten streak that extends to December, history is against him. Since 1900, no horse has won from Post 17 — the position trainer **Bob**

**Holthus** selected, after a lottery determined the selection order, over Post 3 or 18-20. History is also against **Kiaran McLaughlin's Flashy Bull**. No. 20 is the other

winless post position.

"The 15 would have been ideal, but it was taken," Holthus said after the draw Wednesday. "I'm happy. I did not want to be

**SECOND THOUGHTS:** Trainer **Bob Baffert**, who has three horses led by 12-1 **Sinister Minister** in the No. 4 post position, started second-guessing his spot. "After we took the 4, I thought maybe we should have taken the 11 (now occupied by **Sweetnorthern**). He will probably be your pacesetter."

**LOOKIN' GOOD:** **Bob** and **John** and **Point Determined** made their debuts Wednesday at Churchill Downs, galloping strongly for 1 3/8 miles. "They looked good out there," Baffert said. "But then, they're good horses. They're supposed to look good. We didn't bring any scraps here."

— DAWN REISS, Times staff writer

## KENTUCKY DERBY POST POSITIONS, ODDS

PP HORSE	JOCKEY	ODDS
1. Jazil	Fernando Jara	30-1
2. Steppenwolfer	Robby Albarado	30-1
3. Keyed Entry	Patrick Valenzuela	30-1
4. Sinister Minister	Victor Espinoza	12-1
5. Point Determined	Rafael Bejarano	12-1
6. Showing Up	Cornelio Velasquez	20-1
7. Bob and John	Garrett Gomez	12-1
8. Barbaro	Edgar Prado	4-1
9. Sharp Humor	Mark Guidry	20-1
10. A.P. Warrior	Corey Nakatani	15-1
11. Sweetnorthernairit	Kent Desormeaux	10-1
12. Private Vow	Shaun Bridgmohan	50-1
13. Bluegrass Cat	Ramon Dominguez	30-1
14. Deputy Glitters	Jose Lezcano	50-1
15. Seaside Retreat	Patrick Husbands	50-1
16. Cause to Believe	Russell Baze	50-1
17. Lawyer Ron	John McKee	4-1
18. Brother Derek	Alex Solis	3-1
19. Storm Treasure	David Flores	50-1
20. Flashy Bull	Mike Smith	50-1

Source: Churchill Downs Incorporated

AP



# Derby from 1C

have to be competitive in the Derby and competitive in the Oaks. I think we will be, otherwise we wouldn't be here."

It's a dream that started early for Casse.

"Some people are born. I was foaled," said the 45-year-old father of seven. "When everybody was reading comic books at 12 years old, I was reading the *Daily Racing Form*."

Being a horseman is all Casse said he knows. It's due in large part to his father. Norman Casse, chairman of the Ocala Breeder's Sale Co., started as a breeder in Indiana, opened Cardinal Hill Farms, then moved to Ocala after cold Indiana weather left water frozen in buckets and "mud up to your butt when it thawed."

Marc mucked stalls early and in 1973, at age 12, attended his first Derby with his father. They watched Secretariat complete the first leg of the Triple Crown in track record time.

"At the time, I didn't realize it then that it would be my favorite Derby," Casse said. "We rode in the horse van from Ocala. I could

Derby contender. And it nearly didn't happen.

Owner Bill Farish was preparing Seaside Retreat for the 2-year-old sale when Casse saw something that helped change their minds. Casse liked Seaside Retreat's stride and breeding for distance as the son of Kingmambo sire King Cugat, who was strictly a turf horse, earning \$1.3-million in seven stakes races.

"Marc has a great feel for horses," Farish said. "He's trained for a lot of years, more than one would expect given his age."

After winning three of four races at Woodbine as a 2-year-old, including the \$140,950 Display Stakes, Seaside Retreat finished fifth in the \$125,000 Sam F. Davis Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs, second at the \$500,000 Land's End and a disappointing sixth at the \$750,000 Blue Grass Stakes. Seaside Retreat, on the bubble at 20th on the graded stakes earnings list, drew the 15th post Wednesday. He's as long a shot as last year's Derby winner, Giacomo. Casse's plan is for Seaside Retreat and jockey Patrick Husbands to stay 10-15 lengths off the lead in the hope that the speedsters wear themselves out, opening the door for his closer.



hardly see because our seats weren't very good, but it was great being there with my dad, who has always been my idol."

By age 18 Casse was on his own training thoroughbreds. He's worked at Churchill Downs, where he was the leading trainer in 1988, and at Woodbine, the Toronto track where he was the leading trainer three years ago. His biggest win came in May 2001, with Exciting Story in the \$750,000 Metropolitan Handicap at New York's Belmont Park. He also has been the general manager for Mockingbird Farms in Ocala and recently opened his own farm, Moonshadow, with wife Tina.

But Casse has never had a

"Seaside Retreat is ornery, but he has a great mind," Casse said. "I think he'll do fine under pressure, where I'm not sure a lot of other horses will."

Either way Casse is happy to have a homecoming of sorts.

In addition to Albertrani, he is in familiar company with Kiaran McLaughlin, a former assistant trainer under Casse, and Danny Peitz, a friend he met when both had horses stabled at Belmont. McLaughlin is in his second Derby as the trainer of Jazil and Flashy Bull and Peitz trains Stepwolf.

"It's just kind of like old times," Casse said. "Of course I'd love to win, but if one of those guys could win I'd be happy too."



Getty Images

Seaside Retreat, with exercise rider Jose Castanaon, finished fifth in the \$125,000 Sam F. Davis Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs, second at the \$500,000 Land's End and sixth at the \$750,000 Blue Grass Stakes.