



GONE WEST

Gone West leaves mark as sire of sires

As Gone West nears the end of his final season as a stallion, the 25-year-old Grade 1 winner has established his own branch of one of the most important sire lines in the world.

Due to declining fertility, Gone West will be pensioned at the end of the 2009 breeding season and will live out his retirement at Alice Chandler's Mill Ridge Farm in Lexington, where he has stood since 1988.

Although he is by Mr. Prospector, one of the keys to Gone West's marvelous stud career may lie on the female side of his pedigree. Gone West is out of the stakes-winning Secretariat mare Secrettame.

"He is not your typical Mr. Prospector. He had more size than most and quite a bit of scope, yet balanced," said Headley Bell, managing partner of Mill Ridge. "When you think of Gone West, you think of the Mr. Prospector line, but I think he had a lot of his dam side, a lot of Secretariat in the blend."

Gone West's sons at stud include champion sprinter Speightstown, John Deere Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) winner Johar, multiple Grade 1 winner Grand Slam, Grade 2 winner Proud Citizen, Grade 3 winner Mr. Greeley, Grade 3 winner and leading sire Elusive Quality, and leading French sire Zamindar. Another sire by Gone West, European champion two-year-old Zafonic, died in 2002.

"Initially, Gone West started off as a very successful sire of racehorses, but I think his lasting legacy will be his line through his sons," Bell said. "That's a rare accomplishment, and it makes us very, very proud that he can help carry on this line. He has done more than anyone could have expected."

Gone West does take after his famous sire line in the variety of surfaces and distances at which his progeny performed—and found success.

Speightstown was a champion sprinter

on dirt; Zafonic won Group 1 races on the turf in Europe at six, seven, and eight furlongs; Johar won the Breeders' Cup Turf at 1½ miles; and Commendable won the Belmont Stakes (G1) at 1½ miles on dirt.

"He was such a versatile stallion. I can't say he stamped his progeny specifically," Bell said. "He was versatile enough to have sprinters, to have a champion two-year-old, to have horses that could go a mile and a half, and they could run on grass, dirt, and all-weather [surfaces]."

Gone West has sired 98 stakes winners, 50 who won graded stakes.

"He'll just enjoy his retired life in the same place he's been for all these years," Bell said. "It's just been such a privilege to be associated with him. When you stand stallions, your hope is to contribute to the breed, to provide a lasting impression if at all possible, and then to be financially successful, and he's done it all."—*Pete Denk*