

“View from the Winners Circle”

By: Claire Hohertz

Celebrity, eye-catching, glamorous, competitive, special..... When these words are spoken, our thoughts drift to well-known Hollywood actors on the big screen. But you would be surprised how well the American Quarter horse matches this same description. Just like a celebrity, tons of action goes on behind the scenes for an American Quarter horse in the racing industry. The short distance a horse runs with impressive power certainly captures the audience’s attention; but it is isn’t all just speed, flying dirt, and competitive betting that defines the racing industry.

I recently had the opportunity to peek behind the curtain of the Quarter Horse racing industry for three days to see the somewhat chaotic and without a doubt mesmerizing world of racing. A young horses’ success rate in the industry consists of many different contributing factors. Bloodlines, racing history, athleticism, training, and yes, of course speed factors into the equation. Paperwork and documentation for the horse must be 100% accurate down to their unique markings, no matter how microscopic they may be. Documentation is extensive with every detail important. Just as the paper work must be done with accuracy, so must every other aspect of the horses’ life. Before these athletes were even born, their trainers work with extreme dedication to ensure a profitable and successful animal is brought to into the world.

I saw firsthand at the yearling horse sale in San Antonio that these horses are the prize possession of the owners. They are trained with the same intensity of an Olympic athlete. Their feed, water, behavior, and overall condition is closely monitored because every detail counts toward performance on the track. When all of this is said and done, it comes down to the moment of truth when the bell rings and the starting gates fly open. For a short distance the horses lend wings to the jockeys and fly down the race track in a flash that leaves most on the edge of their seats.

I can never do justice with words my newfound appreciation for this amazing sport and the incredible animals known as the American Quarter horse. I am so grateful for the wonderful experience with Texas Quarter Horse Association and the positive impact it has on the racing industry. I hope that people of all ages will get bitten by the racing bug that I did, but more importantly, I feel it is important to thank the amazing animals that offer this experience; the American Quarter horse. God created an amazing thing called happiness; I call it a horse.