



# Entrepreneurs to buy Hermitage Farm

By Bruce Schreiner • The Associated Press • April 28, 2010

**LOUISVILLE** - Hermitage Farm, known for its long honor roll of stakes-winning horses and stately pin oak trees, will be sold to local entrepreneurs Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson under a deal that will enable the current owner to continue his thoroughbred breeding operation.

Wilson declined Wednesday to disclose the sale price, but said he and his wife have no plans to venture into the thoroughbred breeding business. The couple previously acquired 180 acres of the nearly 700-acre farm in 2003 and leased that parcel back to the current owner, Carl Pollard.

The motivation for buying the remainder of the historic farm is to preserve it from urban sprawl from nearby Louisville, Wilson said.

"There's only one Hermitage," Wilson said in an interview. "So it represents the whole historic significance of the essence of our culture here."

Hermitage has produced more than 200 stakes winners over 60 years, including 1953 Kentucky Derby winner Dark Star. The farm produced a yearling that sold for \$13.1 million at the Keeneland sales in 1985.

Under the sale-leaseback deal announced Wednesday, Pollard will continue to live on the farm, which features a stately brick home, and will still operate his thoroughbred breeding business.

Pollard, who has operated the farm for the past 15 years, said he will continue to do so for at least the term of the lease, which runs through 2013. Pollard is chairman of the board of Churchill Downs Inc. and a former executive of Louisville-based health insurer Humana Inc.

"I'll be 75 when this lease expires, so this arrangement is the perfect way for me to continue to protect the farm and employees, and yet free my children of the responsibility of managing such an operation."

Wilson said that he and his wife plan to talk with architects and equine industry leaders to chart long-term plans for the farm.

One option is to allow thoroughbred breeding operations to continue after Pollard in another lease deal, Wilson said. The couple also is interested in perhaps hosting training and events for steeplechase, equestrian and other horse activities, he said. The actual events might be limited to once a year for each category.

"We don't want to just sit and look at it," Wilson said of the farm.

Brown and Wilson own 21c Museum Hotels and Kentucky Bison Co. Brown is a descendant of the founder of Louisville-based liquor giant Brown-Forman Corp.

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**NO, I have some rules!**

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