

# A Fitting Home for Maryland's Top Stallions

by Hope Holland



© Ann Litz

The Maryland Stallion Station in Worthington opened on January 9, right on schedule. Nearly 500 people enjoyed the opening day festivities.

The entire installation sports a well-planned footprint in the old manner, with all of the modern accoutrements that can make life pleasant for both horse and handler. This is not surprising, given the qualifications of the men who contributed to the planning and execution of the grand design.

The landscaping of the grounds, still raw from the recent construction, show the planning and forethought of an older and more elegant age as well. Their promise of beauty and functionality complements the setting as well as the construction of the handsome buildings and paddocks. The place retains the charm of an old-world farm, complete with satellite dish capability.

The party at the opening sported all the necessary ingredients, including good food that made a statement of place—Maryland crab soup and a nod to Virginia with Smithfield ham on biscuits. The hospitality tents were placed with a good flow pattern for the ease of the guests. Both the catering staff and the horse staff handled the opening like ducks, looking serene and unruffled on top while they undoubtedly paddled like heck underneath.

During the parade of stallions, the horses were well-mannered and undeniably elegant. The presentation of the horses was handled by Donald Litz, who introduced them, and by Alan Porter, publisher of Owner Breeder International, who offered his expert opinions on the potential optimum nicks for those mare owners who were present.

But, as at every party, there are unexpected guests, and among those present this day were the hallowed shades of every great Thoroughbred stallion that galloped across Worthington Valley during its heyday.

The Stallion Station itself is set at the beginning of the cusp of the



**Herb May, Don Litz, David DiPietro** (Hope Holland photo)

valley. The view from the presentation circle is of the once-famed acres of Sagamore Farm, home of Native Dancer, possibly Maryland's most honored equine son.

The person who steps from the barn after admiring the stallions in their palatial stalls is immediately struck not only by the beauty, but also by the import of the view, This is The Valley, where these young, important stallions belong and should be standing.

The dream that gave birth to the reality of the Stallion Station was the love child of Don Litz and his passion for the Thoroughbred.

Litz is doubly blessed in the fruition of his design: not only did he have the practicality to call upon the correct humans to accom-



**The chestnut Bowman's Band, who won or placed in 17 stakes during his racing career, is among the five stallions now standing at the Maryland Stallion Station.** (Maureen Freeman photo)



**The Litz Family: Ann, Don, Taffy, Paige, Ashby, & Westie** (Maureen Freeman photo)

plish it, he also had the desire of the true horseman to showcase his charges in a manner befitting their nobility, a desire that has largely vanished in the hectic days of the modern horse world.

On this day and in this place, it was easy to believe that the blessings of his ghostly guests lay lightly upon the withers of stallions of the Maryland Stallion Station. ■