



**Take Two**  
With... **PAUL POMPA, JR.**  
Sponsored by National Association of 2YO Consignors

**Co-owner of Big Brown**  
(c, 3, Boundary--Mien, by Nureyev)  
Consigned by Eddie Woods, agent  
**\$190,000 2yo KEE April 2007**  
**Lifetime Record: 3-3-0-0, \$662,700.**

Big Brown is not the first son of the mare Mien to have carried Paul Pompa Jr.'s colors. In January of 2007, Pompa took a chance on a first-time starter by Gulch out of the daughter of Nureyev, tossing a slip into the claim box at Gulfstream Park. The bay, named Snake River Canyon, was beaten less than a length when third that afternoon, and his new connections had high hopes.



**Big Brown** A *Coglianese*

Unfortunately, Snake River Canyon would spend only a short time with Pompa's trainer, Pat Reynolds.

"I claimed him from Frankie Brothers from his very first start, and he ran a bang-up race right out of the box--it was very gutsy," Pompa related. "I took him for \$62,500, and we ran him back for \$75,000. He ran

a tremendous race. Horses kept coming at him and he kept putting them away. He won--then his original owner [Greg Besinger] claimed him right back. But he made a very big impression on us."

Less than a month later, Snake River Canyon's little brother by Boundary was offered at Keeneland April. Consigned by Eddie Woods, agent, he was the only horse Pompa purchased from the sale.

"Big Brown was on our short list," the New Jersey native said. "He vetted good, we stuck with him and we got him."

Pompa does not rely on a single venue when it comes to adding to his stable. In addition to claiming and two-year-olds sales, he frequently shops at the yearling sales. But, when it comes to the sales ring, he always relies on the same team.

"We have a sharp team at Hidden Brook Farm," the owner explained. "Jack Brothers, Dan Hall, Mark Roberts and Sergio de Sousa--they go through all the horses and compile the short list, and then it's my responsibility to get the veterinarians there. I make the final decisions based on what the vets say, and what the page says. That's the way we go about it, and then it's on to the auction process."

Pompa, the president of Truck Rite Corp in Brooklyn, got into the game eight years ago.

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**Take Two cont.**

"I've always had an interest in sports," he said. "I like the competition, and this was an outlet for that. I had reached success on a professional level, and I didn't have any real bad habits. I was looking for some action."

"I'm not a real bettor--I don't hit the windows hard," he added. "But I wanted to see what it was like to own racehorses."

What started out as a hobby has quickly become a business as well. Pompa's horses, which now number about 25, broke \$1 million in earnings for the first time in 2005; last year, he had 149 starters, 27 winners and purses of \$1,325,667.

"Initially, I got into racing just to have fun, but as you get into it and start to get educated, you start to believe you can do certain things--you want to keep moving forward."

Pompa progressed from horse owner to pinhooker several years ago, and hit a homerun at Fasig-Tipton Calder this year with a son of Street Cry (Ire). The \$425,000 KEESEP yearling went to John Ferguson for a sales-topping \$2.1 million.

"I have been involved in pinhooking for the last several years because it can be very lucrative," Pompa said. "Hidden Brook has also picked out the horses we've sold at auction--we had a Not For Love that sold for \$550,000 and a Tiznow that sold for \$600,000. We also sold Bujagali (Johannesburg) [a \$170,000 KEESEP yearling] for \$475,000."

The money invested in the Street Cry colt was the most that Pompa had ever spent at auction, but he was not surprised that the return was so high.

"We thought he would bring that kind of money," he said. "He breezed like a freak, in :10 2/5 like he was in a gallop. He vetted beautifully, and there was buzz about the stallion."

In addition to Team Hidden Brook, Pompa credits David Scanlon for his success at the two-year-old sales.

"He is the one who prepares them for the sales," he remarked. "He has done a great job for me."

Not all of the yearlings bought as pinhooking prospects find new homes. Hidden Brook signed the ticket on Backseat Rhythm for Pompa as a \$75,000 KEESEP yearling, but she RNA'd at \$240,000 as a BESMAR juvenile. The El Corredor filly went on to finish second in the GI Frizette S. and third in the GI Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies.

But it is Big Brown who has provided the most excitement. The bay cruised to an 11 3/4-length debut score at Saratoga last summer, catching the attention of IEAH Stables. IEAH purchased a 75-interest in the colt after that performance.

They had to wait until 2008 to see what their money had bought, but Big Brown more than made up for that patience with his overpowering win in Saturday's GI Florida Derby.

"It was thrilling--the biggest thrill I've had in racing," Pompa said of Big Brown's latest performance. "To break from the 12 hole and cut out the fractions he cut out--it was amazing."

Does Pompa ever second-guess his decision to sell?

"Not at all," he said. "The IEAH people are young, aggressive successful businessmen, and they paid me a lot of money for him. I was able to retain a quarter share--there are no regrets."

And Pompa isn't taking his profits and tucking them into a savings account.

"I keep the money in the sport," he said. "When we make money, I put it back into racing; I don't take it off the table."

"I just want to have a real nice stable," he continued. "My trainer, Pat Reynolds, has done really well for me, and I always emphasize quality over quantity. But you have to be fiscally responsible--that's very important."

Still, when it comes time to head to Churchill Downs for the 134th running of the Kentucky Derby, Pompa will go all out.

"I'll bring my family, a lot of relatives, a few close friends," he said. "We'll probably have 25 people there." ...*Andy Belfiore*