

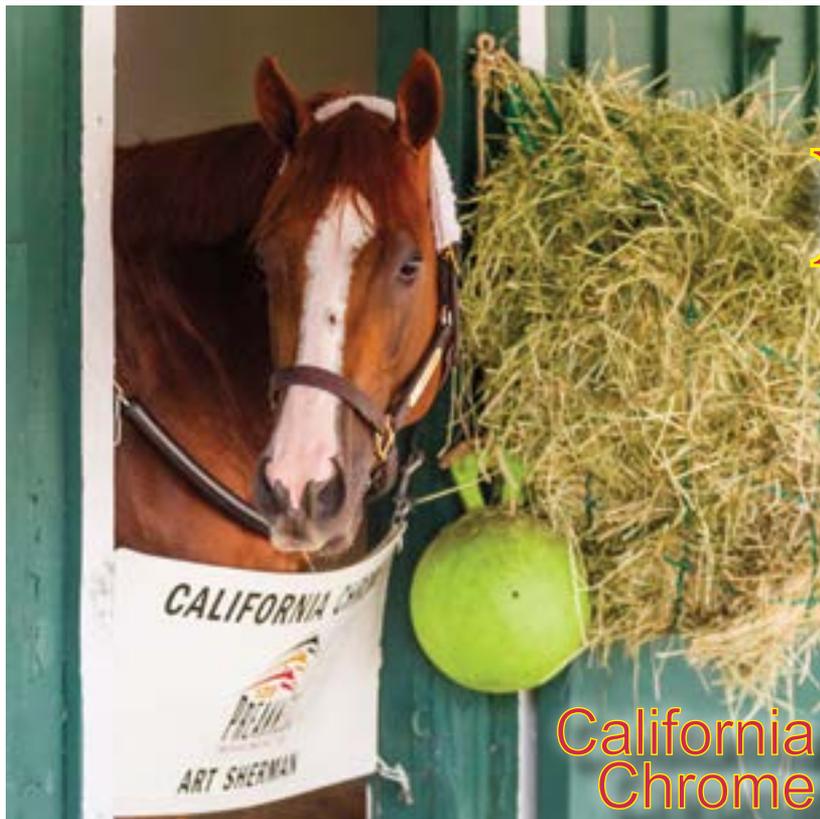


# PREAKNESS

# 139

STORY & PHOTOS BY: STEVE HEUERTZ

# 139TH PREAKNESS Stakes



California Chrome

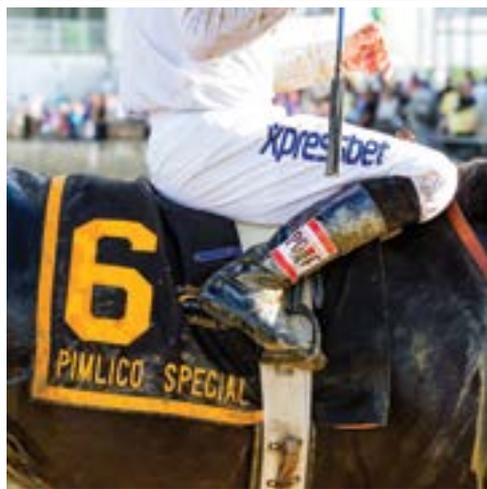
For 140 years, the routine has been the same. The first Saturday in May is met with pageantry and a tradition of spires, hats and juleps that eventually lend resolve to the countless questions that were asked just minutes, hours, days, weeks and even months before. While the answer is always in the form of a single horse draped in a garland of roses, another question almost immediately emerges; can this same individual accomplish a similar feat again in a mere two weeks? To answer this next question, he must first leave the Bluegrass of Kentucky and venture East to Baltimore, Maryland, at a place called Pimlico.



In 2014, “he,” is California Chrome. After his victory in the Kentucky Derby, the three-year-old, California-bred found himself bedded down in historic stall 40 at the Preakness Barn, behind the Pimlico grandstand. Here, he began preparations for the Preakness Stakes with the help of his connections of an old-school trainer in Art Sherman and Dumbass Partners in co-owners Steve Coburn and Perry Martin. ‘Chrome worked well over the Pimlico surface and appeared primed for another big effort in an American Classic. Still, the reviews weren’t all positive as many questioned the surprisingly slow final time of the Kentucky Derby as well as the “new shooters” he would be facing; horses that were fresher than he and potentially equally talented. Social Inclusion appeared the biggest threat of all after his third place finish in the Wood Memorial at Aqueduct. Despite fading in the stretch, many viewed his performance as a significant step forward and believed he could take a similar step if he could harness his incredible speed and set reasonable fractions on or just off the

Top L to R: Derby winner, California Chrome, per tradition settles into historic stall 40 at the Preakness Barn; Fashion, hats and of course, pink, can be seen around Pimlico on Black-Eyed

Susan day; Stopchargingmaria (outside) fights to the finish and wins the Black-Eye Susan on Friday before the Preakness; Trainer, Michael Matz, of Barbaro fame, takes a moment to sign autographs for fans; Revolutionary (outside) roars down the center of the track to win the Pimlico Special the day before the Preakness



## The Traditions



*Top L to R: Mike Smith celebrates his victory aboard Revolutionary in the Pimlico Special; The historic Pimlico Special may not have been consecutively run every year since inception, however the second running served as host for the famous match race between Seabiscuit and War Admiral in 1938; A saddle cloth featuring the official logo of the 139th Preakness; The Pimlico turf course is lined with post position numbers where the Preakness contenders will be saddled prior to the race; A couple lead pony's enjoy a well-deserved tasty snack before it's back to work; There is always a lot of "horsing around" in the Pimlico infield; Celebrating the 139th Preakness from the infield; The Black-Eyed Susan remains the drink of choice on Preakness day.*

pace. Another strong challenger was the West Coast invader, Bayern. Similar to Social Inclusion, he possessed raw, untapped potential and early speed with the only question of ability remaining how far he could carry that speed. Yet still, there were also two Derby entrants in Ride On Curlin and General A Rod aiming to take another crack at 'Chrome after reasonable excuses for their disappointing finishes.

However, equally if not more concerning was the post position draw resulting in California Chrome being assigned post 3 and even further inside than he was for the Derby. Again, the fear was that the early speed in Social Inclusion and Bayern for example, existed to his outside and could likely press him down and on the rail. Indeed the trip became of the utmost concern. If 'Chrome could break away from the unfavorable rail (a position he historically struggled racing in) and secure a similar trip to that of the Derby, he would be difficult to beat as he was supremely talented and more accomplished than his counterparts.

If that weren't enough, it was noted by media that California Chrome had been heard "coughing" just two days before the race. While speculation of his health swelled, assistant trainer and Art's son, Alan Sherman, explained there was a blister that resurfaced in 'Chrome's throat and briefly caused the cough. However, he stated that California Chrome had a similar incident prior to the Derby and that it was and will again be successfully treated. He assured the public that the colt was healthy and sound and that the blister would in no way impact his ability to race.

With that, the only remaining questions would be answered on the race track.

California Chrome broke cleanly from the gate as Victor Espinoza immediately looked to his outside and aimed 'Chrome for a clear path off the rail. Pablo Del Monte left quickly as well and crossed in front of



Top L to R: The starting gate awaits the eventual start of the second jewel of the Triple Crown; He's A Chance leaps over the finish line the first time under the wire in the Sir Barton Stakes. He's A Chance would eventually finish last in the race despite his acrobatic leap; Celebrating during the Preakness undercard; California Chrome trainer, Art Sherman, is all smiles before the start of the big race; California Chrome and his connections leave the Preakness Barn and make their way toward the track to be saddled in preparation for the Preakness; Steve Coburn and connections follow 'Chrome on his walkover to the track; "New-Shooter" and speedster, Social Inclusion, makes his way to the track and appears one of the strongest contenders to challenge California Chrome.



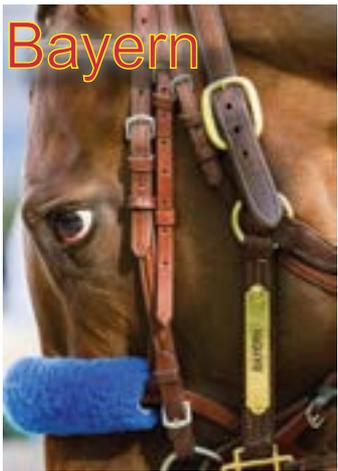
## 'Chrome Connections



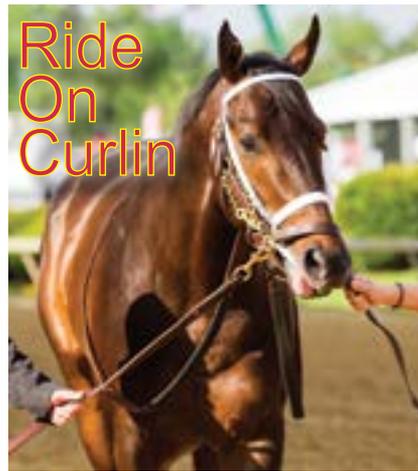
## Social Inclusion



California Chrome while aiming for the lead. Espinoza continued his move off the rail and tucked behind Pablo Del Monte while closing to the outside on Social Inclusion. Meanwhile, the filly Ria Antonia flashed unexpected early speed and moved toward the lead as the field crossed under the wire for the first time. Similarly unexpected, Social Inclusion didn't show his early speed and instead settled off the pace and in fifth to the outside and behind the Derby winner as the field moved into the clubhouse turn. Pablo Del Monte set an opening 1/4 mile of 23.56 seconds as he led his contenders around the turn with Ria Antonia to his outside and California Chrome safely just behind and outside her in third. General A Rod followed in fourth with Social Inclusion maintaining his surprising position in fifth. The field maintained this position down the backstretch and through a 1/2 mile in 46.85 seconds and 3/4 mile in 1:11.06. Heading into the far turn Ria Antonia began to fade and Social Inclusion moved around California Chrome and pushed for the lead. 'Chrome responded and fired into second while challenging Pablo Del Monte. California Chrome and Social Inclusion easily left the tiring pacesetter and rounded the edge of the far turn heads apart. Ride On Curlin moved from second to last and into contention in third and to the outside of Social Inclusion. However, as he had done in the Derby and previous races, California Chrome again showed tremendous turn of foot as he opened up daylight on Social Inclusion midway down the stretch. Ride On Curlin kept grinding until he over-



Bayern



Ride On Curlin



Top L to R: Bob Baffert trainee, Bayern, focuses on the difficult task of defeating California Chrome; Fellow Derby contender, Ride On Curlin, aims to take another shot at California Chrome in the Preakness; California Chrome and Victor Espinoza make the walk in the post parade prior to the start of the Preakness; California Chrome is ready for his Preakness bid; 'Chrome warms up and makes his way toward the starting gate; - Fighting off a late run by Ride On Curlin, California Chrome and Victor Espinoza fly home to win the Preakness and make it two for two on the Triple Crown trail



took second. While he and 'Chrome separated from the rest of the field and he closed some ground on 'Chrome, it wasn't enough and the Derby winner crossed the finish line first to add the second jewel of the Triple Crown to his growing and impressive resume. The speedy Bayern, was strangely never a factor in the race.

The final time was 1:54.84; a legitimate time and the fastest since Big Brown in 2008. 'Chrome had answered all the questions and asserted himself as a blossoming Superstar. In winning both the Derby and Preakness,

# And It's 'Chrome!

Top L to R: 'Chrome, Espinoza and fans celebrate the victory and the reality that the Triple Crown is on the line; Returning as Preakness champion, California Chrome exits the winners circle; The winning connections celebrate in the cupola while 'Chrome gets the colors of his silks painted on the weather vane; Victor Espinoza answers questions from the media about his sensational ride in the Preakness; California Chrome is indeed number one after a smashing Preakness victory; The Preakness weather vane dons the new colors of California Chrome.



he became only the 34th horse to accomplish the feat, and 13th to do so since Affirmed last won the Triple Crown in 1978. However, of the other twelve since Affirmed, none were able to win the Belmont Stakes and sweep the Triple Crown. In fact, most recently, the Belmont results were particularly difficult to accept when for instance Big Brown was eased and did not finish the race in 2008 and I'll Have Another never even entered the starting gate as he was scratched and retired the day before the race.

Those attempts, however, were all in the past. This is 2014, and "he" is still California Chrome. If ever there was a chance to end the 36 years full of heartbreak and missed opportunities, maybe this was it. Then, at the end of the day and much like before, one question was answered and another followed. Can this same individual accomplish a similar feat again in a mere three weeks? To answer this next question, he must first travel to New York City and attempt to pass "The Test of the Champion," the Belmont Stakes.



Top L to R: 'Chrome and his connections make the walk back to the Preakness Barn along with his new garland of Black-Eyed Susan's; 'Chrome is greeted back at the Preakness Barn with swarms of fans and media celebrating racing's newest Superstar; Steve Coburn hugs California Chrome and thanks him for all he has accomplished to this point; Victor Espinoza gives 'Chrome a kiss in appreciation for their tremendous ride together; With two down and one to go, California Chrome redirects his attention from the Preakness and toward the remaining task, the 1 1/2 mile Belmont Stakes and a shot at racing immortality



'Chrome!



**Steve Heuertz Bio**

*It started with a horse named Cowboy. Disregarded and discounted, this nine-year-old Red Dun Quarter Horse left his life as a ranch horse in South Dakota and ventured a new path into the life of Steve Heuertz in 2004. Shortly thereafter, a bond was formed that fully catapulted Steve into the world of the horse where he became fascinated with the wonderful capabilities of this majestic animal.*

*Of particular interest were the speed, endurance and competitive spirit demonstrated by the equine heroes within the sport of Thoroughbred Racing. Although initially satisfied with observing from afar, Steve became increasingly captivated by the sport and turned toward capturing the splendor of racing via his other passion, photography. The result was a recipe where he could combine his great love for horses, racing and photography into one harmonious blend that was greater than the sum of its parts.*

*Since then, racing has taken Steve across the country to such wonderful places as Saratoga Race Course, Churchill Downs, Santa Anita Park, Pimlico Race Course, Belmont Park, Keeneland and Hooiser Park. During these travels, Steve has been fortunate to witness and photograph equally wonderful races such as the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes (racing's famed Triple Crown) as well as the Travers Stakes, Santa Anita Derby, Indiana Derby, Stephen Foster Handicap and Breeders' Cup, among others. However, residing in the Chicago suburb of St. Charles, IL, Steve regularly frequents Arlington Park and Hawthorne Race Course where he has enjoyed capturing magnificent races like the Arlington Million and Hawthorne Gold Cup.*

*Today, Steve's passion for horses, racing and photography is like a fire that continues to be stoked. While either behind the lens capturing the thrill of a Grade 1 race or in the saddle loping around a field with Cowboy, Steve has learned to operate under the simple truth that the more he is able to involve the horse in his life, the happier his days become.*

Steve Heuertz; Steve's horse and loyal friend, Cowboy, an 19-year-old, Red Dun Quarter Horse

