

DETERMINATION

INNOVATION

LEADERSHIP



THE STORY OF THE VICTORY RACING PLATE COMPANY



T H E S T O R Y O F
THE VICTORY RACING PLATE COMPANY

Compiled by David Erb



SIGNOLA – THE INSPIRATION

It all started in 1926 with a horse named Signola. Leonard Liepman, a successful Baltimore real estate lawyer, was racing his small string of thoroughbred horses at Woodbine Racetrack. There he observed several other horses being shod the day of the race with an aluminum racing plate from England. After learning that the aluminum racing plate was much lighter in weight than the steel plates he had been using, he decided to have his horse, Signola, shod in aluminum. Signola's time improved significantly! The only drawback was that the aluminum racing plate nearly disintegrated after just one race, requiring Signola to be reshod with the original steel plates worn before the race.

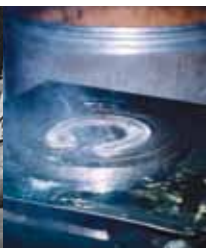


PERSONAL SACRIFICE

With a real estate law practice, a family and research and development associated with his new aluminum racing plate to support, Leonard Liepman nearly went broke. One of his clients, George Palmbaum a Baltimore men's clothing store proprietor, became enamored with the idea and invested in the fledgling operation.

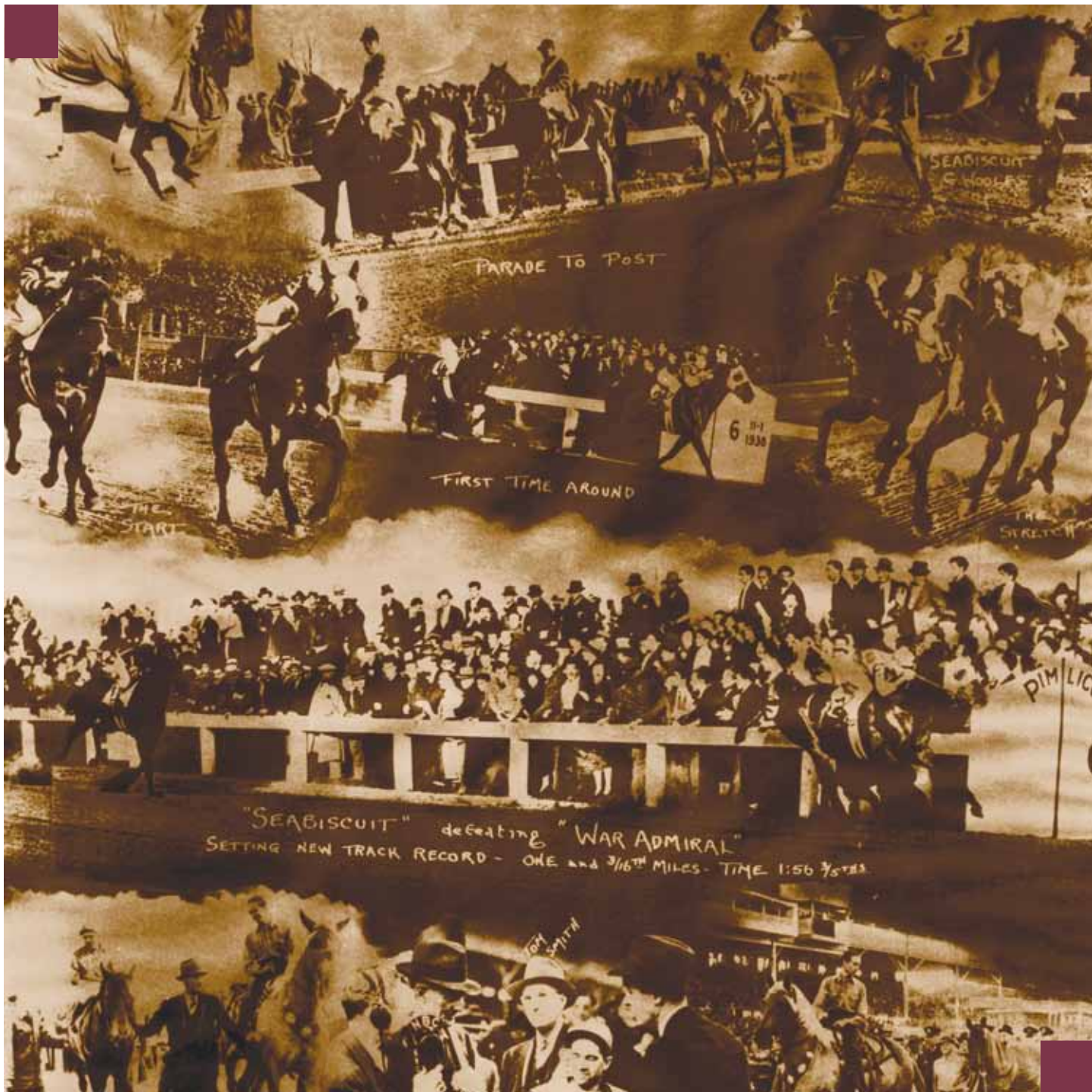
THE REVOLUTION BEGINS

By 1928 Leonard Liepman and ALCOA had conducted extensive experiments to determine the proper alloy of aluminum to be used for the new racing plates. Production began in 1929 in the garage of an apartment building owned by Leonard Liepman on Whitelock Street in downtown Baltimore. The company then moved to a larger facility at 341 Guilford Avenue in downtown Baltimore. The construction of Interstate 83 in 1971 caused the building to be condemned and the factory was moved to its present day location.



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Leonard Liepman returned to Baltimore believing that there was a better way to make an aluminum racing plate so that it could be worn continuously. He dreamed of making a racing plate of aluminum with steel inserts in critical areas to improve traction and to retard wear with the ability to withstand the abrasiveness of dirt racetracks. Determined to take this new product to market, Leonard conferred with metallurgists and engineers from Bethlehem Steel Corporation and ALCOA to determine the feasibility of manufacturing an aluminum-steel combination product. The engineers advised Leonard that because the metals are dissimilar, a product composed of both metals would not hold together. Aluminum and steel would not adhere to each other, which was a critical requirement of Leonard Liepman's new product. Another deterrent to making the product was the fact that, even with steel inserts in the racing plate, the aluminum available at that time was not resistant to abrasion.



PARADE TO POST

SEABISCUIT

THE START

FIRST TIME AROUND

6

19-1
1936

THE SECRET

PIMLICO

"SEABISCUIT" defeating "WAR ADMIRAL"
SETTING NEW TRACK RECORD - ONE AND 3/16TH MILES - TIME 1:56 7/8ths

TOM SMITH

“MISSIONARY WORK”

With racing plates in hand, Leonard set out for nearby thoroughbred racetracks to sell his idea to the trade. Trainers were cautiously accepting of the new products because they were lighter in weight. The logic was that if the horse ran with less weight on the hoof that would translate into less fatigue as the race progresses. The trainers believed that “an ounce on the hoof equaled a pound on the back ” so they viewed the new plate with cautious optimism. The blacksmiths, on the other hand, who hand made their steel plates in the off-season, saw the newfangled pre-manufactured aluminum racing plate as a threat to their livelihood. They believed that pre-made plates would open the door for trainers, grooms and hot walkers to shoe thoroughbred racehorses. Leonard tried to convince them that they could actually make more money by shoeing more horses per day if they purchased the pre-manufactured products. To drive home this point he gave them free samples... for four years!

A major boost for the floundering enterprise was the success and endorsement of leading trainer and two-time Triple Crown winner Sunny Jim Fitzsimmons, who was a staunch believer in the performance enhancing characteristics of the product. Other trainers soon supported the new aluminum racing plates as well. Hirsch Jacob, H. Guy Bedwell and Anthony Pelleteri as well as R. E. Handlen, W. A. Crawford, and Tom Smith, supported the use of the new VICTORY racing plates. Omaha, the 1935 Triple Crown winner, and Seabiscuit, the 1938 famous match race winner with War Admiral, helped to popularize VICTORY racing plates as “the shoe that changed thoroughbred racing”.

Winter racing in Florida, California and Arkansas helped blacksmiths to realize that more money



could be made shoeing horses than making steel racing plates. With no off-season blacksmiths had far less time to make the plates themselves. The warmer climates of winter racing states did not lend themselves easily to making steel plates over hot and smoky coal-fired forges.

Design differences also helped to popularize VICTORY racing plates with a wider web design for more support. Plates could be shaped cold, without the use of a coal forge, making them more economical and convenient.

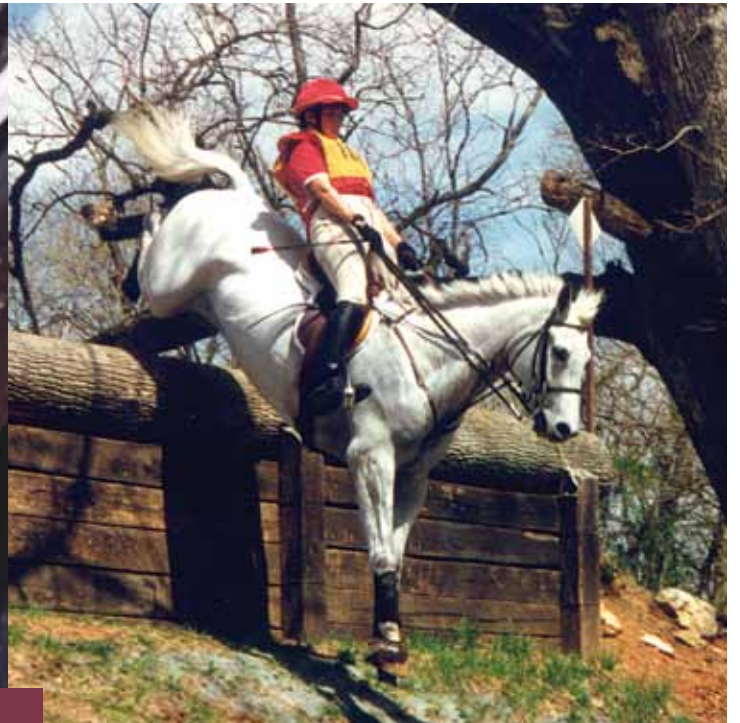
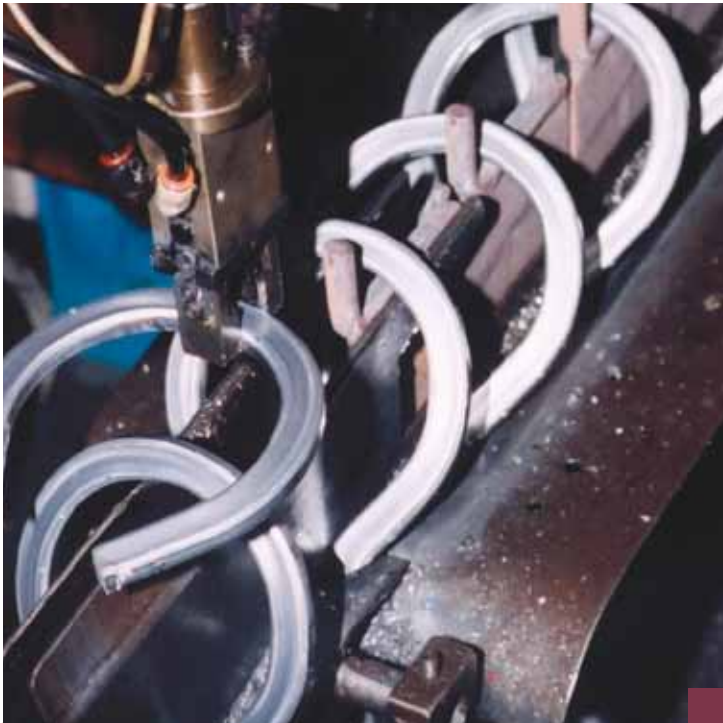
Through the mid 1960's, ninety-eight percent of all thoroughbred stakes race winners in the United States wore VICTORY racing plates, including Secretariat, 1973 Triple Crown winner.

WORLD WAR II

As with all other industry in the United States, World War II affected the manufacture of aluminum racing plates. Production was diverted to making steel eyebolts for the Navy to support the War effort.

THE INNOVATIONS CONTINUE

In the early 1970s, awareness of the effects of concussion on the thoroughbred racehorse's forelimbs became an increasing concern. In 1974, the Victory Racing Plate Company pioneered the application of concussion reducing pads bonded to the racing plate at the factory. Farriers and trainers immediately identified the value of a high quality factory produced product that ensured consistent performance and reduced concussion.



NEW TERRITORY

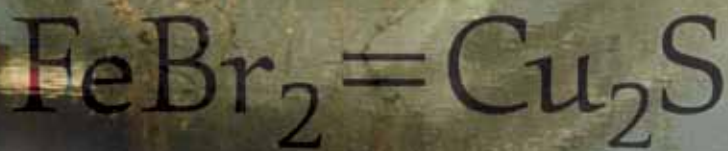
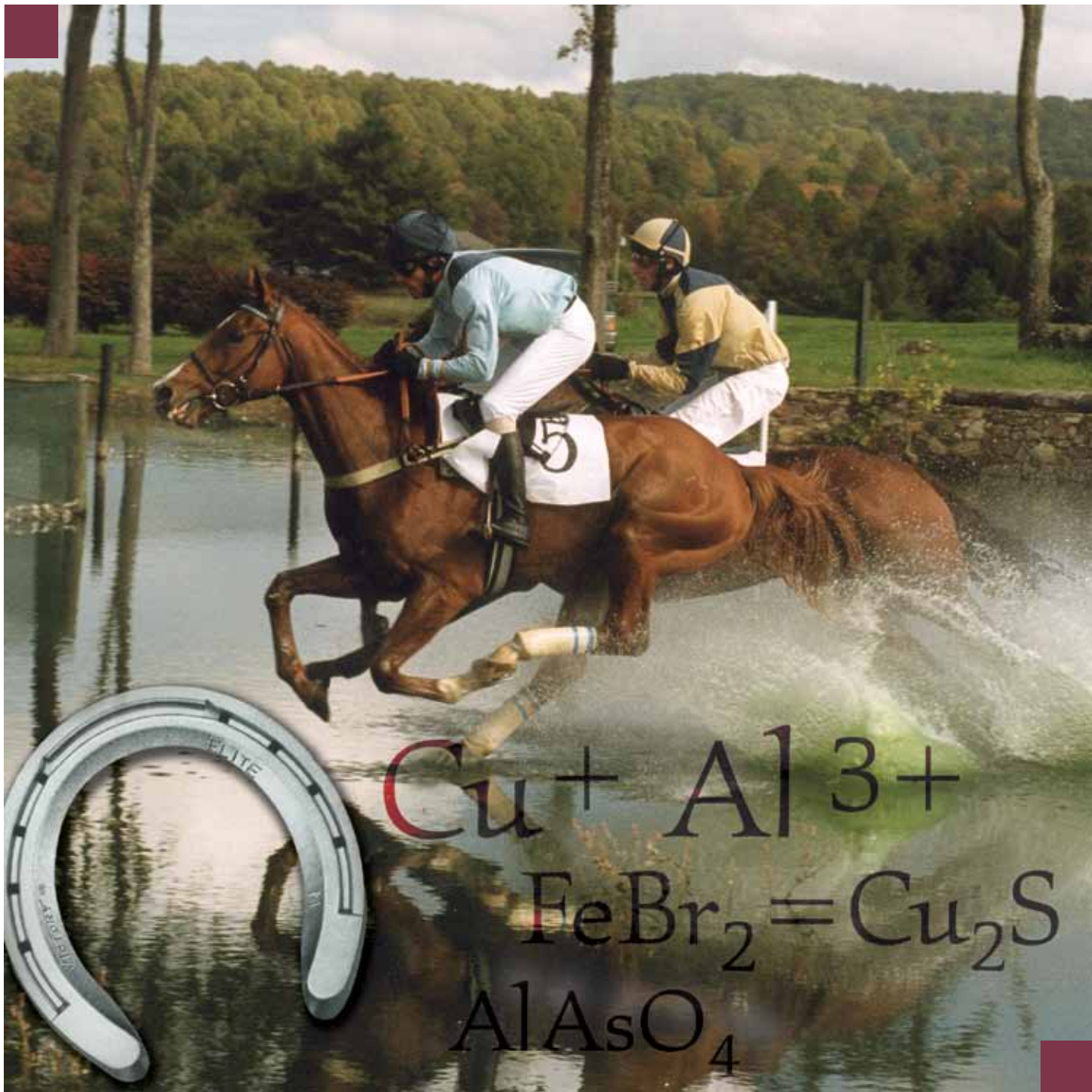
1988 was a watershed year for The Victory Racing Plate Co. Aluminum horseshoes were becoming more popular for horses that competed off the racetrack. Farriers made their own wide-web aluminum horseshoes from bar stock or purchased ready made shoes from one of several producers, some of which made their shoes from pre-fabricated straight lengths of aluminum cut to length, turned into a horseshoe shape and drilled with round holes for four-sided nails.

Other producers made thick forged unpunched aluminum shoes that were bulky and difficult for the farrier to work. These shoes would often spread and wear out prematurely because of the soft aluminum used to make them.

The ELITE division of The Victory Racing Plate Co. was established to create products for the off-track segment of equine competitors. In June of 1988, the ELITE Competition Shoe debuted as the first lightweight forged alternative durable enough to withstand the rigors of equestrian competition. First introduced in two styles (flat and 2 degree wedge) and 3 sizes, the ELITE competition shoe line of products now extends to six styles (flat, flat with toe grab, 2 degree wedge, 3 degree wedge, blunt, inner rim) available in up to seven sizes clipped and unclipped.

VICTORY ventured outside the realm of aluminum racing plates and horseshoes in March of 1995 by purchasing the TRUE FLITE hoof pad product line from Ken Davis and Sons of Richwood, Ohio who first introduced TRUE FLITE pads in 1968. The high quality and consistent performance characteristics of these products are ensured by the injection molding facility maintained in VICTORY's Baltimore factory.

Yet another brand name was introduced into the VICTORY family of products with the



introduction of HOOF-LIFE in May of 2001. By incorporating recent advances in adhesive technology, HOOF-LIFE makes it possible for farriers to maintain useful and productive horses by repairing quarter cracks or rebuilding missing hoof sections. HOOF-LIFE can also be used to glue aluminum racing plates or horseshoes to the hoof without the use of nails.

THE SECOND REVOLUTION

The trend in shoeing horses during the 1980's shifted toward full-fit and wide webbed shoes for more support. In March of 1990 the European Contour Queens Plate made its debut, offering features not available from any other manufacturer. This racing plate created a worldwide revolution in shoeing practices! Prior to the introduction of this product, the standard shoeing practice around the world was to train the horse in steel plates, change to flimsy aluminum plates for the race, and back to steel after the race. Many holes were created in a horse's hoof during this process causing deterioration over time. With the introduction of the stout and more durable new VICTORY European Contour (EC for short) racing plates, thoroughbred racehorses could now train and race in the same plates, which promoted healthier hooves!

The trend toward wider webbed full fitting racing plates arrived in the United States in 1995 when VICTORY introduced the European Contour racing plate with toe grabs under the brand name of ELITE with the byline... ***"Sport footwear for the Equine Athlete"***

THE PRESENT

VICTORY continues its innovative history with the introduction of the SPORT series of VICTORY racing plates. VICTORY's traditional close association with working farriers assists in the development of top quality products at reasonable prices to meet their exacting needs. In



addition to new styles currently under development within the company, VICTORY is working closely with a leading university to develop a racing plate design that reduces the physical stresses of racing while enhancing performance.

VICTORY racing plates are distributed in 45 countries worldwide and are worn by more thoroughbred racehorses than any other brand. Smarty Jones, Funny Cide and Empire Maker are but a few recent champions to wear VICTORYs.

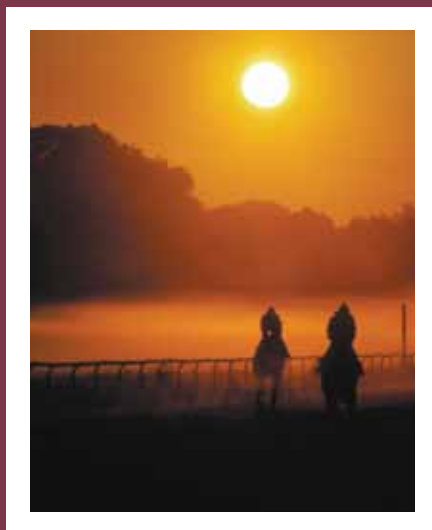
Today The Victory Racing Plate Company remains an independent locally owned company. George L. Ohrstrom is VICTORY's second owner, who acquired the company in 1964 and is an avid horseman, competing primarily in thoroughbred and hunt cup racing events.

THE FUTURE

Since 1929 The Victory Racing Plate Company has been and continues to be committed to providing quality products designed to enhance the performance of the equine athlete while protecting the hoof and maintaining a healthy hoof structure. VICTORY has historically provided durable products designed to withstand the stresses of competition while maintaining the ease of application required by farriers. VICTORY is committed to maintaining its leadership position in the industry through new product development. No other company has done more to develop aluminum as a suitable material for use as a racing plate or horseshoe. No other company has influenced the shoeing practices of thoroughbred racehorses worldwide more than VICTORY. No other company offers the variety of aluminum horseshoes and racing plates offered by VICTORY.

As true tomorrow as today and yesterday...

There's nothing like a VICTORY!



The Victory Racing Plate Company

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