

Best Of the Best

Florida's 2010 champions were honored last night during the FTBOA's 51st annual awards dinner.

By MICHAEL COMPTON

Florida's stars of 2010 were honored last night during a ceremony at the Hilton Ocala. Awesome Feather was recognized as Florida-bred Horse of the Year, as well as champion juvenile filly. The Jacks or Better Farm homebred captured last year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (G1) to cap off her undefeated 2-year-old season. In January, she was honored with an Eclipse Award as last year's champion juvenile filly.

Breeder of the year went to J. Michael O' Farrell Jr.'s Ocala Stud. The family-owned farm, founded in 1956, recorded one of the best years in its 55-year history last season. The farm was represented by eight Florida-bred stakes winners in 2010, five of them graded winners. O'Farrell received a standing ovation following his moving acceptance speech in which he shared some of the struggles his family endured to keep going through the years.

Florida's stallion of the year and leading juvenile sire was Journeyman Stud's Wildcat Heir. He led all Florida-based sires in 2010 with progeny earnings of \$4,584,404. It was the second consecutive year that Wildcat Heir claimed dual titles. In 2009, he was Florida's leading juvenile and freshman sire.

Leading freshman sire of 2010 was Hartley/De Renzo Thoroughbreds' With Distinction. The son of Storm Cat was represented by 19 winners in his initial crop with a total of \$794,889 in progeny earnings last year.

Riveting Drama, dam of Florida-bred stakes winners Little Drama and Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1) winner and Eclipse champion Big Drama, was honored as broodmare of the year.

The 2010 Needles Award, established to honor Florida breeders who own small operations, went to Y-Lo Racing Stables, which is comprised of partners Lolita Raquiza and Yvonne Cordova. Y-Lo was represented last year by Florida-bred Grade 1 winner Wickedly Perfect. Y-Lo was established in Ocala in 2003 and has a breeding and training division.

The 2010 Joe O'Farrell Memorial Award went to Ocala Stud, consignor of Florida-bred Turbulent Descent. The Joe O'Farrell Memorial Award is presented annually by the Ocala Breeders' Sales Company to the original consignor of the year's best Florida-bred racehorse offered at public auction in Florida. Turbulent Descent won the Hollywood Starlet Stakes (G1) and Moccasin Stakes at Hollywood Park last year and earned \$328,350 on the season.

In other awards; Martin Wolfson was the leading trainer of Florida-breds by earnings (\$1,457,600) and stakes wins (11); Kathleen O'Connell was the leading trainer of Florida-breds by races won (56); and Jacks or Better Farm was the 2010 leading owner of Florida-breds by earnings (\$2,090,319).

For profiles of divisional champions, see the digital version of *The Florida Horse* magazine (January issue) online at www.ftboa.com.



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- 1) Jay Friedman and J. Michael O'Farrell Jr.
- 2) Harold Queen
- 3) Crystal and Brent Fernung
- 4) Jeanine Edwards and the Jacks or Better Farm team
- 5) Harold Plumley
- 6) Yvonne Cordova and Bonnie Heath



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