

Zochs Rely on BRD As Base for Horses

New horse owners at Blue Ribbon Downs (BRD), Bob and Cynthia Zoch, from Houston, Texas are in their third year of racing horses.

The Zochs have 23 horses at BRD, 13 competing and 10 still in training. They use BRD as a home base for their race horses, Bob Zoch said.

Besides Racing at BRD the Zochs send their horses out to compete at Ruidoso Downs in New Mexico, Trinity Meadows near Ft. Worth, Texas and Remington Park in Oklahoma City.

"After our horses are through running at these other places we always return them to BRD," he said. "Our trainer, Wendell Ouder Kirk, lives in Sallisaw so naturally the ideal place for us to keep our horses that are either competing or training is at BRD."

With the expected development of pari-mutuel race tracks in the state of Texas the Zochs could begin using a track near Dallas or Houston as their racing base, Zoch said.

"It would be more convenient for us if our racing base was somewhere in the state of Texas," Zoch said. "But until there is a track down there with a reputation for having good purses we will remain at BRD."

In the first few years as owners the

Zochs raced nothing but Quarter Horses because they liked the sprints, he said. But now with racing becoming more of a reality in Texas the Zochs are beginning to prepare Thoroughbreds for racing.

"I've heard a lot of people say that the Thoroughbreds will dominate when racing begins in Texas," Zoch said. "Both Dallas and Houston officials have said they will use a lot of Thoroughbreds."

"Besides all that, I like the Thoroughbred breed," he said. "After observing them race for a few years now I have grown to enjoy watching the Thoroughbreds, especially when they turn the corners on the race track."

Bob Zoch became interested in horse racing through his wife, Cynthia's, love for horses, he said.

The Zochs started out in 1990 with one Appaloosa. Today they own over 70 horses that they raise at their breeding farm near Giddings, Texas, located outside of Austin.

Not only do the Zochs raise race horses on their Giddings ranch but also cutting horses and show horses, Zoch said. With 23 of their horses either racing or training at BRD the Zochs have 47 horses preparing for competition at Giddings.

Since Bob Zoch is in the process of

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BOB AND CYNTHIA ZOCH, from Houston, Texas, are horse owners at BRD. The Zochs manage to make the trip up to BRD six to 10 times a year to watch the racing.

TIMES Photo by Richard Turner

ZOCH

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phasing out of his lifetime occupation in the environment business they plan to become more involved with their horse racing, he said.

"I am slowly retiring as a chemical engineer in the Houston area which gives me and Cynthia more time to come to Oklahoma and watch our horses run," Zoch said. "We really enjoy coming to Oklahoma and watching our horses run at BRD or Remington Park either one."

The Zochs like to visit BRD as many times a year as they can. This year they plan on attending the races at BRD six to 10 times, depending on how often their horses qualify for the futurities, he said.

The Zochs enjoy racing their horses at BRD because it is an established and well organized facility.

"The people here at BRD do a good job of keeping things organized," Zoch said. "The track could probably use a little work but that is not a major issue."

BRD is a stable and dependable place to race horses, he said. Businesses

throughout the nation have suffered in the last year because of the country's weak economy.

"It has been tough for the horse racing business over the last few years," Zoch said. "But BRD has hardly missed a beat, they have continued to have the good purses through it all."

BACKSIDE - The stable and training area of a racetrack.

BACKSTRETCH - Straight or far-side of track between the turns; stable area.

BANDAGES - For horses, come in two forms: 1) Standing--used in the stall at rest for therapeutic purposes, i.e., poultice, brace, liniments; and 2) Racing--using Vetrap or ace-type bandages for support of tendons and to prevent a horse from running down or burning his heels on the track surface as legs tire and strain more.