

OTTB Showcase: Thor's Echo

by [Jen Roytz](#)
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Thor's Echo at Zabeel Stables

Normally the horses in OTTB Showcase are forgotten racers; those who may not have hit it big in their first career, but who succeeded and excelled in their secondí or third one.

This guy is different. Way different.

The name Thorø Echo might sound familiar to you. Probably so. He not only won the 2006 Breedersø Cup Sprint-G1, but also won the Frank J. Francis Memorial Dash-G1, the WinStar Derby, and the Real Good Stakes in a career that saw him achieve Eclipse Champion [honors in 2006](#).

It was on a trip to Dubai recently that I came across Thorø Echo, living the life of luxury in Dubai at Zabeel Stables.

øHe was a typical US sprinter,ö said Bhupat Seemar, assistant trainer at Zabeel Stables. øHe was nice and relaxed in his work, but when you pushed the button, he knew it was time to go!ö

Thorø Echo was purchased by Sheikh Rashid al Maktoumø Zabeel Racing Stable in 2007 and was soon exported to the Middle East.

øUnfortunately, the synthetic surface at Meydan [in Dubai] didnø suit his running style in the latter stages of his career,ö explained Bhupat. øThe owner and Satish Seemar made the right decision to retire him when he was sound.ö

Thorø Echo was always a stable favorite, both with his owners in the U. S. and with Zabeel Stables.

øIt was a joint decision between the owner and his trainer, Satish, to retrain him as a track pony,ö said Bhupat. øHe still loves the game and he very much enjoys his new life. It keeps him busy.ö

I can attestí this is the understatement of the day.



Zabeel Stables

Thorø Echo stays busy indeed. Heø stabled in the same posh, air-conditioned stalls as the rest of the Zabeel horses and spends ample time not only under saddle being retrained as a track pony, but also in the stableø equine spa, 100-meter equine swimming pool, the air-conditioned farrierø quarters when heø getting his monthly trim, and in the turn-out paddocks that overlook the Dubai skyline.

øHis typical day includes track work in the morning, after which he swims one lap of the equine swimming pool and then enjoys two hours of paddock time,ø explained Bhupat. øIn the evening he will return to the paddock for about an hour and have a session in the equine spa, all to maintain his conditioning and mental well-being.ø

This type of hybrid training routine is typical of racehorses, track ponies and riding horses at Zabeel. While the facility is in the middle of downtown Dubai, it is literally an oasis for horses. Trainer Satish Seemar explained that his concern is just as much about the horsesømental well-being as their physical soundness, and showed example after example of tailoring the daily routine and schedule to the horse, rather than the other way around.

øThe horses at Zabeel are very happy,ø explained Satish. øThey swim, they get whirlpool treatments in the equine spa with minerals and salts, they train on multiple surfaces, all in a calm, relaxed environment.ø



Walking around the grounds, I quickly noticed that the horses at Zabeel, though racing fit and ready for action, were much calmer than the typical racehorse. Satish explained that each horse is

given the sensory exposure that's best for him or her. Some have outdoor paddocks and are groomed outside of their stalls in the sunshine, while others have routines that include various types of mental and physical stimulation besides traditional track work.

These days Thor's Echo is mainly ridden by one of the stable's experienced outriders, however trainer Satish (who played polo for years) and Bhupet ride out with sets about three times per week.

Bhupat explained that Zabeel Stables still receives e-mails from all over the world inquiring about Thor's Echo, and the team at Zabeel is happy to update fans about his current vocation and lifestyle.

THE DEETS:

Name: Thor's Echo

Born: February 19, 2002

Height: 17 hands

Color: Chestnut

Sire: Swiss Yodeler

Dam: Helen of Troy

Sale History: none

Race Record: 28-5-4-6

Race Earnings: \$2,461,490

If you have or know of a retired Thoroughbred with an interesting story to tell, we'd love to hear about it! Just email Jen Roytz (Jenroytz@gmail.com) with the horse's Jockey Club name, background story, and a few photos.

*Jen Roytz is the marketing and communications director at Three Chimneys Farm in Midway, Kentucky. She also handles the farm's Thoroughbred aftercare efforts. She currently owns two retired Thoroughbreds: Point of Impact (by Point Given; a.k.a. Boomer), who retired from racing in late 2011 and is in training as a hunter/jumper, and Shotgun Shine (by Tale of the Cat, a.k.a. Gage), who is at Ohio State University taking part in a treadmill/bone density study. Contact Jen on [**Facebook**](#) and [**Twitter**](#).*