

The Laps of Luxury

PHOTOS BY CLAUS ANDERSEN • STORY BY DAVE BRIGGS

Jamie Millier and his partners weren't interested in building just another training centre.

"I didn't want to go into competition with people. I figured that I would try to build something upscale and then you really don't have the competition," Millier said. "If you just build a plain-and-simple track there's lots of them out there."

Two years and multi million \$ later, Classy Lane Stables was born on a picturesque patch of land in Puslinch, ON, located south of highway 401 and east of Cambridge. There's no question Classy Lane is not just another training centre.

Consider just some of its features:

- a seven-eighths mile track with mile-track turns
- a third-of-a-mile sand track
- a half-mile wood-chip jogging track that runs through the woods
- an equine swimming pool
- two equi-cizers
- 23 paddocks
- and an onsite vet, blacksmith and tack shop.

No wonder all 178 stalls, spread throughout four barns, were filled before the facility

opened on April 1 of this year.

The list of trainers based at Classy Lane includes many of the top conditioners in the game. Currently, Ben Wallace, Brett Pelling, Mark Harder, Noel Daley, Duane Marfisi, Kevin O'Reilly, Whitesand Valley Stables and Scott Forbes from Team Pinske call the upscale spread home.

And to think it all started two years ago when Millier, an excavator by trade, was staring at a gravel pit.

"I was looking at a piece of property for a friend of mine for something totally different and I looked at it and I thought, 'Geez, that would make a nice racetrack in there.' It was an old abandoned gravel pit. That's how it started," Millier said.

Millier and his partners, Terry Budden and Dean Hannah, operate Classic Excavating. Before long they were out searching for property.

"I really didn't start looking for property until last spring," Millier said. "This property I only looked at last August, about the second week of August."

Having an excavating company certainly help speed the project along and keep costs down. "We started construction the 8th of

September and the first horses moved in April 1st, with a very bad winter," Millier said. "We wanted the track to settle through a winter. So, that was our main concern was getting the track down first. We didn't start the barn construction until the week between Christmas and New Year's."

Millier said Classy Lane was modelled perhaps most on Showplace Farms in New Jersey.

"The biggest thing was the asphalt and at Showplace the way they disposed of their manure. They didn't have it sitting in piles, they loaded it onto trailers and I have it loaded right into containers and taken away from the barns so that everything stays neat and tidy around the barn," Millier said.

Already Classy Lane can lay credit to producing champions less than a week after its grand opening on June 15. Both North America Cup winner Yankee Cruiser and runner-up Allamerican Native were based at Classy Lane while in Canada.

While a race card at Classy Lane is likely out of the question, Millier is hoping one day to have qualifiers and schoolers at Classy Lane.

"Who knows in the future? I know they won't give me slots, so I might as well try something else," Millier said, laughing.



Classy Lane part-owners Jamie and Barb Millier.



Training centres in Ontario may never be the same by comparison after the opening of Classy Lane Stables in Puslinch, ON.

Classy Lane

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