

AMEETA MEHRA'S USHA STUD FARM BREEDS BEST THOROUGHBREDS

The daughter of the legendary founder of the Usha Stud Farm, Major Pradeep Mehra, has successfully donned her father's mantle by offering the racing world magnificent and mentally well-balanced horses



*Ameeta Mehra:
Putting her best foot
forward in whatever
she undertakes*



Among the leading breeders of horses in India, the name Ameeta Mehra is in a class of its own. A highly competitive professional in her own right, she has a pedigree which goes back to her illustrious father, Major Pradeep Mehra, who established the Usha Stud Farm in 1973. Ameeta never imagined that in 29 years her father's enterprise would become the most successful breeding institution in India. This spacious green paradise for horses, spread over 32 acres of prime land in Gurgaon, Haryana, occupies a pride of place in her life.

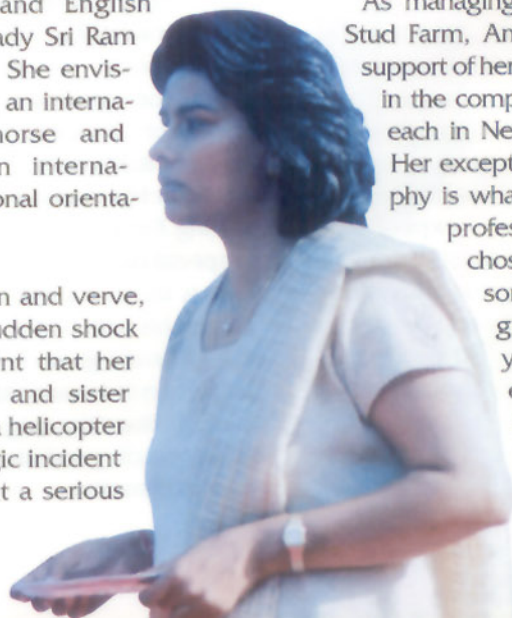
It was in 1991, when she was only 27 years old, that Ameeta caused ripples in the annals of the Usha Stud Farm. That was the first time she entered her family business. The young, enterprising woman was well equipped with for the task she had decided to take upon herself - diploma in Equine Management from the Irish National Stud, Ireland, knowledge in nutrition from Kentucky-based world-renowned nutritional experts, diploma in Business Management from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and English (Hons) from Lady Sri Ram College, Delhi. She envisaged breeding an international race horse and developing an international professional orientation at Usha.

Full of vision and verve, it came as a sudden shock when she learnt that her father, mother and sister were killed in a helicopter crash. This tragic incident last year meant a serious

setback to the stud farm and it left a great vacuum in Ameeta's personal and professional life. But no matter what the cost, she was determined to continue her father's precious legacy. "My father was not only a great stud master, but he was also my great teacher and guide. Now that I've taken over the mantle from him, I want to expand his vision and continue to produce champion race horses of world standard," asserts Ameeta.

Going by the preview of the past and present winners, it won't be long before Ameeta's dream is fulfilled. Among the 196 Classic winners which Usha has bred over the last 24 years, a few deserve a mention, if not all. They are: Indictment and Lei (1993), Forest Fantasy (1994), Alameda (1996), Altenburg (1997), Running Flame (Horse of the Year 1999), Allaire (2000-2001) and Noble Opinion (2000-2001). Starting mid-year in 2001, the Usha Stud Farm had perhaps the greatest offer of the year. There was a private previewing of the 2001 crop at its Delhi property, and the sale crop included full- or half-siblings to Razeen and Steinbeck.

As managing director of the Usha Stud Farm, Ameeta enjoys the loyal support of her 300 staffers employed in the company's two offices, one each in New Delhi and Gurgaon. Her exceptional business philosophy is what sets her apart in the profession she has chosen for herself. "Live for something higher and greater than yourself" and "Set an example on how best business should be managed and treated as worshipful."



As a child Ameeta loved horses and enjoyed riding them, just like her father did. Her dream of owning race horses came true years later and she even won 204 Classics in national and international events

This worthy outlook towards life in general and business in particular was perhaps evolved when she observed those qualities in her own father as a schoolgirl in New Delhi's Loreto Convent and Modern High School. As a child Ameeta loved horses and enjoyed riding them, just like her father did. Her dream of owning race horses came true years later and she even won 204 Classics in national and international events.

The farm's very first celebrity horse was Grey Gaston whose first foal, Manitou (born in 1974) won the Indian Derby in 1978 in record time. Grey Gaston sired 11 crops of 89 foals, including 5 Indian Derby winners: Manitou, Track Lightning, Nelston, Enterprising and Revelation.

A grand list of achievements is a worthy tribute to Major Mehra's legendary vision - to name a few, the stud has produced 8 Indian Derby winners, 6 Indian Turf Invitation winners, 11 Sprinters' Cup winners, 9 winners of the Bangalore Derby (summer), 4 winners of the Poonawalla Breeders' Million and 5 Indian Oaks winners in successive years. In the years 1996-97 and 1998-99 the farm was adjudged the Champion Stud Farm of the Year - an award which was instituted in 1997.



In a short span of 24 years (1973-1997) it produced no less than 196 Classic winners - a no mean achievement. And also earned itself a mention in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The Major himself was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Turf Authorities of India.

The secret of the extraordinary success belongs to a fine team of experts in the business and to the choice breed of horses. A band of 100 brood mares have been hand-picked from different parts of the world, based on their pure pedigrees and racing achievements. The company's two stallions, Razeen and Steinbeck (commendable sons of world champion series, Northern Dancer and Mr. Prospector) have the same lofty class stamped on their progeny.



Above:
Major Pradeep Mehra
receives the
Lifetime Achievement
Award from the
Turf Authorities of India



Left:
Ameeta Mehra with
a Silver Trophy



The Usha breeds have won 22 of the 46 'Top Ten' races over the last five years for an amazing strike rate of 47.8 per cent. Their nearest rivals have a score of 14 out of 46 races, that is, 30.43 per cent. The foals born at Usha receive personal care of the highest degree from the moment they are born. Meticulous attention is given by the company's veterinarians and farriers from the start



Major Mehra shares an affectionate moment with his fine equine friends



Northern Dancer's line of legacy continues in Razeen



With such a versatile string of race horses trained at the stable, is it any wonder that the Usha breeds have won 22 of the 46 'Top Ten' races over the last five years for an amazing strike rate of 47.8 per cent. Their nearest rivals have a score of 14 out of 46 races, that is, 30.43 per cent.

Behind the making of their champions lies the Usha Stud Farm's maxim: "Nothing fattens a horse more than the master's eye." Naturally, the foals born at Usha receive personal care of the highest degree from the moment they are born. Meticulous attention is given by the company's veterinarians and farriers from the start. Routine check-ups are done every day. The horses are vaccinated and dewormed regularly. The feet are trimmed as required to provide a good balance and conformation. The nutrition and feeding programmes are fine-tuned to provide a balanced diet for each horse. A strict regime of grooming is followed, and each horse's exercise programme is closely monitored.

In fact, the entire management routine personally supervised by experts, prepares the horse into a physically well-developed and mentally sound athlete - with all the right ingredients to give it an edge as a champion of the future.

With her grand legacy and accomplishments at national and international level, one would imagine that a great dreamer and achiever like Ameeta must maintain a high profile. But while talking to her one discovers what a modest person she really is. Because she talks at great length about the Usha Stud Farm, but when it comes to revealing something personal, she almost shies away. Perhaps this is due to her belief in the maxim: 'Silence is golden.' This late-to-bed-early-to-rise young entrepreneur reckons that the best advice she ever received was when a friend told her 'life is like a mirror, it reflects what you are.' This is why she is so careful about putting her best foot forward in whatever she undertakes - whether it means breeding horses or practising yoga and meditation.

Ameeta has been fortunate enough to grow up in close proximity to nature which she has been observing since she was a toddler - the big stud farm with its green lawns, tall, thick trees, hills in the distance, horses munching grass on the lawns, birds in the trees. For her nature is almost the second part of her existence in which she finds peace and love. With all the plans she has for Usha to keep her busy for the next decade, she makes time for reading, relaxation and recreation by getting up early. Add to that her



Plans are afoot for her next big business enterprise which is a deemed university called the International Centre for Integral Studies. She feels that opportunities for major investment in India are in the field of education

preference for colours such as blue, sea green and mauve and a true environmentalist is born.

Her three favourite books include *The Alchemist* by Paulo Freu, *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran and *Savitri* by Sri Aurobindo who, along with the Mother, has been the single most influential person in her life. To help her develop a wholesome personality she listens to music (Indian classical and Western pop), plays tennis, reads philosophy and practises yoga and meditation regularly.

When *Indian Millionaire* asked her about her luxury lifestyle, Ameeta coyly replied that she drives 270ML-CDI and her favourite is Jaguar. She has homes in London, Delhi and Bangalore and her dear vacation spot is Pondicherry where Sri Aurobindo's ashram and institutes are located. For business and pleasure she visits the United Kingdom, the USA, Malaysia, Europe and Singapore, and relishes French and Italian cuisine.

With such a fulfilling life, one would think she has no regrets. But she has one. "I couldn't devote enough time to my studies." So in

order to make up for what she missed out, she has started a research centre, Gnostic Centre and L'Avenir, a school for children. Plans are afoot for her next big business enterprise which is a deemed university called the International Centre for Integral Studies. She feels that opportunities for major investment in India are in the field of education. And in the next 10 years that's where she finds herself more and more involved - education, and of course the stud farm.

As owner and manager of the most successful breeding establishment in India, Ameeta Mehra is proud of her father's legendary legacy. The Usha Stud Farm stands tall in the new millennium with a grand heritage and solid base to move forward into the future.

Here is a warm invitation from Ameeta to all race horse owners: "Winning counts and actions speak. We provide you with the best thoroughbreds in India. Come, be a winner with the Usha Stud Farm." One couldn't have hoped for a more warm and articulate assurance.



*Stallion Steinbeck,
a worthy son of
world champion sire
Mr. Prospector*

