

= California Chrome =

California Chrome (foaled February 18 , 2011) is an American Thoroughbred racehorse . Winner of the 2014 Kentucky Derby and the Preakness Stakes , he was named the 2014 American Horse of the Year . After a difficult 2015 season , he returned to form in 2016 and won the Dubai World Cup . He is currently the all time leading North American horse in earnings won .

Bred in California , the chestnut @-@ colored horse was named for his flashy white markings , called " chrome " by horse aficionados . He was bred and originally owned by Perry Martin from Yuba City , California , and Steve Coburn of Topaz Lake , Nevada , who named their partnership DAP Racing , standing for " Dumb Ass Partners " ? a tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek response to a passerby who questioned their wisdom in purchasing California Chrome 's dam , Love the Chase . In 2015 , Coburn sold his minority share to Taylor Made Farm , and a new ownership group , California Chrome , LLC , was formed . The horse is trained by the father ? son team of Art and Alan Sherman . Dedicated fans ? called " Chromies " ? actively supported California Chrome , who has been called " the people 's horse " .

As a two @-@ year @-@ old , the horse ran inconsistently until being paired with the jockey Victor Espinoza . The rapport that developed between Espinoza and California Chrome led to a six @-@ win streak in 2013 ? 2014 . After winning the San Felipe Stakes and Santa Anita Derby , California Chrome was the morning line favorite for the Kentucky Derby . Critics downplayed his chances of winning , but were proven wrong when California Chrome won by 1 3 ? 4 lengths even though Espinoza eased him for the final 70 yards (64 m) . In the Preakness , he fended off two strong challengers in the homestretch and won by 1 1 ? 2 lengths . He then shipped to Belmont Park with hopes of winning the Triple Crown in the 2014 Belmont Stakes . In that race , California Chrome was stepped on by the horse next to him at the start , tearing some tissue from his right front heel . With no one aware of his injury until the race was over , he finished fourth in a dead heat with Wicked Strong . After healing and pasture rest , he returned to racing in September then ran in the 2014 Breeders ' Cup Classic , finishing a respectable third , only a neck behind the winner , Bayern . California Chrome returned to his winning form in his first start on a turf course in the Hollywood Derby in late November , becoming the only horse in the United States with Grade I wins in 2014 on both dirt and turf tracks . He won many accolades and awards for the season : The California State Legislature unanimously passed a resolution recognizing his outstanding performance , and the city of Fresno proclaimed October 11 , 2014 , as " California Chrome Day " . He won the 2014 Secretariat Vox Populi Award , his Kentucky Derby win was awarded the NTRA " Moment of the Year " , and he won Eclipse Awards for American Champion Three @-@ Year @-@ Old Male Horse and American Horse of the Year .

California Chrome 's 2015 season was tumultuous . He began the year with second @-@ place finishes in the San Antonio Stakes and Dubai World Cup . He then shipped from Dubai to the United Kingdom to train for the Prince of Wales 's Stakes at Royal Ascot , but was scratched a few days prior to the race due to a hoof bruise . Upon returning to the US in July 2015 , he was diagnosed with bruising on his cannon bones , which ended his 2015 season . Shortly thereafter , Coburn sold his ownership interest , and in the same week , Art Sherman announced that the horse would return to racing in 2016 . After a rest of several months at Taylor Made , he returned to training with Sherman at Los Alamitos Race Course and began his 2016 season by winning the Grade II San Pasqual Stakes at Santa Anita Park . He then was shipped to Dubai , where he won a second prep race and the 2016 Dubai World Cup . On July 23 , he won the San Diego Handicap in preparation for the Pacific Classic in August .

= = Background = =

California Chrome was foaled on February 18 , 2011 , near Coalinga , California , at Harris Farms , the horse breeding division of the Harris Ranch . He is a chestnut with four white stockings and a blaze . At four years old , he stood 16 hands (64 inches , 163 cm) tall .

As a foal , he was nicknamed " Junior " because of his resemblance to his sire , Lucky Pulpit .

Lucky Pulpit had won three races , placed in several graded stakes races , and hit the board in 13 of his 22 starts . However , a viral respiratory infection damaged his breathing and limited him to racing over short distances . California Chrome 's dam is Love the Chase , and he was her first foal . She was purchased for \$ 30 @, @ 000 as a two @-@ year @-@ old by an agent for a horse ownership group called the Blinkers On Racing Stable . As a two- and three @-@ year @-@ old filly , she was often so anxious in the saddling paddock , that she was , in effect , losing races before she ever got to the starting gate . She ran six times and won on her fourth try in a February 2009 maiden claiming race at Golden Gate Fields . After her win , Steve Coburn and Perry Martin became her owners , ran her two more times , then retired her later that year . They hoped she would become a good broodmare , as she had a promising pedigree . When she retired , it was discovered that she had raced with a breathing problem ? an entrapped epiglottis that restricted her air intake , but which could be corrected with surgery . As of 2015 , she had given birth to four foals , the two fillies and a colt , all full siblings to California Chrome . After California Chrome became a Kentucky Derby contender , Martin and Coburn turned down an offer of \$ 2 @. @ 1 million for Love the Chase .

= = = Ownership = = =

California Chrome was bred by Perry Martin of Yuba City , California , and Steve Coburn of Topaz Lake , Nevada . Their wives , Denise Martin and Carolyn Coburn , were closely involved with the partnership , though not listed as owners on official records kept by Equibase . Perry Martin held a 70 % share in the horse and was the managing owner . Coburn owned a 30 % interest in the horse and sold his share to Taylor Made Farm in July 2015 .

Originally , the two couples each owned a five percent share in Love the Chase through membership in the Blinkers On Racing Stable . When Blinkers On Racing Stable dissolved the Love the Chase syndicate , both shareholders wanted to buy the filly , so they formed a partnership and paid \$ 8 @, @ 000 for her . A casual observer , knowing Love the Chase 's modest race record , remarked that only a " dumb ass " would buy her , so Coburn and Martin named their racing operation DAP Racing , for " Dumb Ass Partners " . They created a caricature of a buck @-@ toothed donkey to adorn the back of their racing silks , and put the initials " DAP " on California Chrome 's blinker hood and the left front of the jockey 's silks .

The Martins and the Coburns had in common a fondness for California Chrome , but otherwise very different personalities and backgrounds . The Martins seldom talked to the press . Melissa Hoppert of The New York Times described them as the " quiet thinkers , " noting that Perry Martin planned the mating of Lucky Pulpit to Love the Chase , mapped out a " Road to the Derby " racing plan for California Chrome , and promoted use of a nasal strip for the horse 's races . Originally from Chicago , they moved to California in 1987 , where Perry Martin was employed as a metallurgist by the Air Force and Denise briefly job shadowed a racehorse trainer in the Sacramento area . Today they own and operate Martin Testing Laboratories (MTL) , which tests high @-@ reliability items such as automobile airbags and medical equipment .

By contrast , Hoppert characterized the more outgoing Coburns as the " public relations arm " of the partnership . Steve Coburn , characterized by the media as " loquacious " , described himself and his wife Carolyn as " just everyday people " . He is a press operator for a company that makes magnetic strips , and Carolyn Coburn retired from a career working in payroll in the health care industry . Carolyn introduced Steve to horse racing , and when he was looking for a tax write @-@ off she encouraged him to buy into a racing syndicate instead of purchasing a small airplane .

Taylor Made Farm , who purchased Coburn 's share in California Chrome is headed by Duncan Taylor , the president and CEO of the family @-@ owned farm . Ben Taylor is the vice president of the company 's Taylor Made Stallions division . The brothers of the Taylor family have been the sole the owners of the corporation since 1986 . They were raised in the horse business , learning from their father and grandfather . They formed Taylor Made Sales Agency in 1976 , when Duncan was 19 , offering boarding for mares shipped into Kentucky . They expanded to sales consignments and then built their own facility on 120 acres owned by their father in Nicholasville , Kentucky . The farm now is 1 @, @ 600 acres today . By early 2016 , his ownership was officially listed as " California

Chrome , LLC " . Perry and Denise Martin were described as the " majority owners " by the Daily Racing Form , and Frank Taylor of Taylor Made said that both the Martins and Taylor Made had each sold " a few " shares in the stallion to " select breeders who would support the horse "

= = = Early years = = =

Harris Farms , where California Chrome was bred , foaled , and lived until the age of two , had previously nurtured champions such as two @-@ time Breeders ' Cup Classic winner Tiznow . In 2010 Love the Chase was bred to the Harris Farms stallion Lucky Pulpit . CNN reported that the stud fee for the breeding was \$ 2 @, @ 000 . Steve Coburn said he had a dream three weeks before California Chrome 's birth that the foal would be a colt with four white feet and a blaze . California Chrome was relatively large for a newborn horse , weighing 137 pounds (62 kg) , and active , " running circles around Momma " within two hours of birth . Love the Chase suffered a uterine laceration while foaling , and was placed on an IV due to internal bleeding . The mare and foal were stall @-@ bound together for over a month . She was kept on a catheter that administered anti @-@ bleeding medication , and the farm staff checked her two to three times a day . Because people gave the colt extra attention and affection when they cared for his dam , he imprinted on humans as well as his mother . As a result , California Chrome became very people @-@ focused , a trait that has served him well in race training .

The Martins and Coburns chose California Chrome 's official name in 2013 at Brewsters Bar & Grill in Galt , California , a town halfway between their two homes . Each of the four wrote a potential name on pieces of paper and asked a waitress to draw them out of Coburn 's cowboy hat . They submitted the names to The Jockey Club ranked in the order drawn . California Chrome , Coburn 's choice , was first drawn , and the registry accepted the name . The word " chrome " comes from slang for a horse with flashy white markings . The colt was started under saddle by Harris Farms ' trainer Per Antonsen , who described him as a " smart horse " who was " really nice to work with " .

= = = Sherman Training Stables = = =

Perry Martin considered California Chrome a Derby contender even before the colt raced . When the colt was ready to enter race training at age two , Martin asked Steve Sherman , who had trained horses for Martin at Golden Gate Fields , to recommend a trainer based in the highly competitive southern California area . Steve suggested his father , Art , who had an " old school " reputation for patience with young Thoroughbreds and a small racing stable of about 15 horses , which allowed each animal to be given individualized attention . Art Sherman liked the enthusiasm of Martin and Coburn , but when Martin emailed a " Road to the Kentucky Derby " plan outlining which races California Chrome should run , Sherman was dubious . Later , Sherman 's son Alan stated , " [Martin] mapped out a trail for this horse ; it 's actually worked to a ' T ' , so it 's kinda amazing . " Art Sherman downplays his role in training California Chrome , saying " This horse is my California rock star . I 'm just his manager . "

Sherman 's first exposure to a Kentucky Derby horse was in 1955 , when at the age of 18 he worked for Rex Ellsworth and was the exercise rider of that year 's Kentucky Derby winner Swaps . He was a professional jockey from 1957 until 1979 , when he turned to training racehorses . California Chrome was the first Kentucky Derby prospect that Sherman had trained . Art Sherman 's assistant is his son , Alan , who is also a licensed trainer . Rather than run a separate stable like his brother Steve , Alan has worked with his father since 1991 . He does most of the hands @-@ on day @-@ to @-@ day work with California Chrome and stayed with him throughout most of his travels when Art returned to California to oversee the rest of the stable .

Unlike many high @-@ end California Thoroughbred trainers , who usually are headquartered at Santa Anita Park , the Shermans kept horses at Hollywood Park , but when it closed in December 2013 , Los Alamitos Race Course picked up some of the Thoroughbred races and racing trainers who had stabled horses there , including Sherman Training Stables . The success of California Chrome , who was conditioned there over the track that had been recently expanded to

accommodate longer races , created good publicity for Los Alamitos .

= = Behavior = =

Observers commented that California Chrome appears to be a very intelligent horse , as he expresses curiosity about everything around him . He has certain idiosyncrasies , including a fondness for one specific brand of horse cookies . He has a tendency to perform a flehmen response for no obvious reason , particularly when he is being bathed , prompting the press to claim that he is " smiling " . He will deliberately stop and put his ears forward to " pose " for cameras when he hears them clicking . As Alan Sherman explained , " He 's a ham , he loves the cameras " ; and exercise rider Willie Delgado gave him an additional nickname , " Vogue " . Besides his frequent flehmen response , he was also noted for having publicly " studdish " behavior in conjunction with winning races , notably in the paddock before the Kentucky Derby and Preakness , and the day after the Hollywood Derby . As Sherman stated , " He 's ... a stallion , and he 'll let you know it every once in a while . " Another unusual behavior is that he would not walk forward out of horse vans designed for a forward exit ; he would only back out .

On the track , California Chrome has the ability to use tactical speed at nearly any point in a race . Early in California Chrome 's career he tended to be slow out of the starting gate ; if he had to wait too long for the start he sometimes expressed anxiety by rocking from side to side , preventing him from being oriented straight forward when the gate opened . He overcame this problem by the end of the 2014 season , and learned to break quickly . He generally did not run well on the inside or in close quarters ; two of his worst finishes were in races where he had the number one post position , and his fourth @-@ place performance in the Belmont Stakes was attributed to both his injury at the start and the number two draw . However , he won a 2016 prep race at Meydan Racecourse from the number one post . When outside and in the clear , he usually wins .

= = Racing history = =

= = = 2013 : Two @-@ year @-@ old season = = =

California Chrome 's first start was in a maiden race at Hollywood Park in April 2013 , where he placed second by a length . Three weeks later , he won a maiden race by 2 3 ? 4 lengths . In both races , he was ridden by Alberto Delgado . About a month later , California Chrome was entered in the Willard L. Proctor Memorial Stakes . He was one of four horses assigned to carry 120 pounds (54 kg) , the highest impost given by the handicapper . Alberto Delgado was out with a broken ankle , so Corey Nakatani was his rider . The colt was second for the first three furlongs but finished fifth in a field of nine . His next two races were at Del Mar racetrack . Delgado returned as his jockey , and California Chrome scored his second career win in the Graduation Stakes , a race limited to California @-@ bred horses , prevailing by 2 3 ? 4 lengths . He carried the same weight over the same distance as his previous race , but this time he wore blinkers and ran on Lasix for the first time in his career . Next was his first graded stakes race , the seven @-@ furlong , Grade I Del Mar Futurity . He ran strongly , but finished sixth after he got caught in traffic in a field of 11 horses and was accidentally hit in the face by another jockey 's whip . Two months later , California Chrome ran in the Golden State Juvenile Stakes held November 1 at Santa Anita Park , and at 1 mile (1 @.@ 6 km) , was the longest race he had run . He was assigned the number 1 post position and had to wait for all the other horses to load . He became anxious , reared in the gate , was last out , struggled throughout the race , and again finished sixth .

Sherman 's public assessment of California Chrome 's poor performances was that he was still growing and learning how to be a racehorse . But several things began to change . In the fall of 2013 , Alberto 's younger brother , Willie Delgado , an experienced rider and trainer whose career in Maryland was in the doldrums , moved to California and within a couple of months became the horse 's morning exercise rider . At roughly the same time , Alberto was taken off the horse as

jockey . In December , California Chrome began wearing a new type of horseshoe . He had developed low heels , and his farrier , Judd Fisher , found that a particular style of glued @-@ on horseshoe with a durable , hardrim pad that raised a horse 's heels was suitable for fixing the problem . Instead of gluing it on , Fisher custom @-@ drilled holes into the shoe so it could be nailed to the horse 's feet in the manner of a traditional metal shoe . According to Fisher , nailing on the shoes raised the soles of the horse 's feet a little bit farther off the ground . It may have been a contributing factor to California Chrome 's subsequent series of wins . Aside from that issue , Sherman described the horse 's hooves as generally healthy .

Hollywood Park hosted California Chrome 's final race of 2013 , the King Glorious Stakes on December 22 . He had a lighter impost of 119 pounds (54 kg) , a shorter distance of seven furlongs , and a new jockey , Victor Espinoza . California Chrome won the race by 6 1 ? 4 lengths , becoming the final stakes winner at Hollywood Park Racetrack , which held its last races that day . Sherman was pleased with Espinoza 's riding , and Espinoza was impressed in turn with California Chrome . Alan Sherman later said that it was after this race that he began to think that California Chrome could be a Kentucky Derby contender .

= = = 2014 : Three @-@ year @-@ old season = = =

California Chrome began 2014 with the California Cup Derby on January 25 . Espinoza returned as his jockey . California Chrome was slow coming out of the gate but quickly moved up to third , took the lead coming into the homestretch , and won by 5 1 ? 2 lengths . Sherman noted that it was the second consecutive race where the horse pulled clear and won by a decisive margin , stating , " It 's like the light bulb has gone on . "

California Chrome 's first graded stakes win was the March 8 Grade II San Felipe Stakes . Espinoza tried a different riding tactic and let the horse go to the lead right out of the gate . California Chrome led most of the way , and after Espinoza gave him one tap on the shoulder with the whip , the horse pulled away from the field at the top of the homestretch and won by 7 1 ? 2 lengths . Alan Sherman said , " My jaw dropped " , while Art Sherman joked , " I 'm glad I 'm training at Los Alamitos , because he looked like a 350 [yard] horse coming out of the gate " ; a reference to Quarter Horse racing sprint distances . Espinoza remarked , " I wanted to let him enjoy his race , " later adding , " I wanted to see if he [could] go wire to wire ... that was the day I found out how much he loves to run . " The San Felipe was California Chrome 's first win in a race open to all three @-@ year @-@ olds , not just California @-@ breds , and earned him 50 points in the Road to the Kentucky Derby system .

California Chrome 's first Grade I win was the Santa Anita Derby on April 8 . California Chrome was at the front of the field by the quarter pole and went on to win the \$ 1 million race by 5 1 ? 4 lengths . Prior to the race , his owners had turned down a \$ 6 million offer for a 51 % controlling interest in the colt that would have mandated putting the horse with a different trainer . Coburn later explained , " This isn 't about the money , this is about the dream . "

California Chrome 's time of 1 : 47 @.@ 52 earned him a Beyer Speed Figure of 107 , the fastest for any horse in the Road to the Kentucky Derby 's final prep races of 2014 . It was also the second fastest time in the history of the Santa Anita Derby ; the only horses to run faster were Lucky Debonair , Sham , and Indian Charlie , who hold a three @-@ way tie for the record at 1 : 47 : 00 . The decisive win made him an early favorite to win the 2014 Kentucky Derby and raised speculation that he had the talent to win the Triple Crown . California Chrome 's four consecutive wins had a combined victory margin of 24 1 ? 4 lengths . After the Santa Anita Derby , Sherman began to describe the colt as " my Swaps " . Of his growing popularity , Denise Martin commented , " He 's not just our horse anymore ; he 's ... the people 's horse . "

= = = = Kentucky Derby = = = =

Prior to 2014 , only three California @-@ bred horses had won the Kentucky Derby : Morvich in 1922 , Swaps in 1955 , and Decidedly in 1962 . Besides Swaps , other horses to win both the Santa

Anita Derby and the Kentucky Derby were I 'll Have Another (2012) , Sunday Silence (1989) , Winning Colors (1988) , Affirmed (1978) , Majestic Prince (1969) , Lucky Debonair (1965) , Determine (1954) , and Hill Gail (1952) . (1952) Steve Coburn predicted a win : " I 'm not being cocky , just positive " , he said .

Prior to the May 3 race , rival trainer Bob Baffert compared California Chrome favorably to War Emblem . Trainer D. Wayne Lukas , who had no entries in the 2014 Derby , told a reporter that he intended to bet on the horse and commented , " He 's looked like the real deal ... I like everything about him . " On the other hand , Dallas Stewart , trainer of rival Commanding Curve , dismissed California Chrome 's chances due to his pedigree and the supposed lack of competition in his prior races . Others doubted his ability because the colt had never raced outside California . In contrast to the critics , reports surfaced that the owners had turned down a new offer of \$ 10 million .

The colt arrived at Churchill Downs in Louisville , Kentucky , on April 28 , 2014 , and was one of the last Derby contenders to arrive . He was flown in from California , his first time on a plane , and traveled quietly . Once the plane landed , however , his travel idiosyncrasy was discovered by the waiting press when he refused to be unloaded until he was turned around and backed down the ramp ; Alan Sherman explained later that this was also his typical manner of egress from ground @-@ based transportation . Upon arrival at Churchill Downs , the horses entered in the Kentucky Derby each were given a special saddle cloth to wear while exercising on the track , identifying them as Derby contenders and including their name . The one given to California Chrome contained a typographical error , with California misspelled as " Califorina " . He wore it the first day and then the track management obtained one with the correct spelling . Critics commented that bringing the horse in late and not giving him a full workout on the track was a mistake , but Sherman 's strategy was backed by Lukas . In the days leading up to the race , California Chrome galloped on the track , was walked in the saddling paddock , and schooled at the starting gate . Willie Delgado later remarked that the horse did not particularly like that particular track , saying " he never actually felt comfortable on it . "

California Chrome 's connections drew post position five for the Derby . He was the morning line favorite at odds of 5 ? 2 . The press suggested that the number five spot , relatively close to the inside rail , could be a problem owing to the " speed horses " that would go to the front early in the race , surrounding him on both sides , especially if the colt was slow out of the gate . Espinoza countered by pointing out that he won the 2002 Kentucky Derby on War Emblem from the same post position .

In the race , California Chrome had a clean start and could have taken the lead , but Espinoza kept him behind two speed horses and only moved him to the front at the final turn when other horses began to tire . In the homestretch , he opened up a lead of five lengths before Espinoza eased him the last 70 yards of the race , narrowing his winning margin to 1 3 ? 4 lengths . Sherman later explained that Espinoza slowing the colt down at the finish was " saving something for the next one " , a reference to the Preakness Stakes to come two weeks later . The winning time of 2 : 03 @.@ 66 was relatively slow for a Kentucky Derby , but Sherman described Espinoza 's ride as " picture perfect " . This win was Espinoza 's second Derby victory , and 77 @-@ year @-@ old Sherman became the oldest trainer to ever win the race .

In a post @-@ race press interview , Sherman said he had visited Swaps ' grave at the Kentucky Derby Museum prior to the Derby and prayed for success . Trainer Dale Romans , who had asserted that California Chrome had no chance to win , said , " I was very , very wrong ... We might have just seen a super horse and a super trainer . You don 't fake your way to the winner 's circle at the Kentucky Derby . "

= = = Preakness Stakes = = =

California Chrome shipped on May 12 to Baltimore to run in the 2014 Preakness Stakes on May 17 . On the plane were the other two Derby competitors to enter the Preakness : Ride On Curlin and General a Rod . Once on the ground , their van had a police escort from the airport to Pimlico Race Course . When California Chrome arrived at Pimlico , the management at that track welcomed him

with two saddlecloths for his workouts , one with the " Califorina " misspelling and the other with the correct spelling ; Just as at Churchill Downs , the colt exercised on the Pimlico track but had no timed workouts . Delgado compared the long and narrow Pimlico oval favorably to their home track at Los Alamitos . Sherman did not like having the horse race again with only a two @-@ week break , but was confident because California Chrome had gained back weight he had lost running the Derby , plus another 35 pounds (16 kg) .

News stories continued to question the colt 's ability , noting the relatively slow pace of the Derby and the low Beyer Speed Figure of 97 earned in his win . One trainer said , " California Chrome has to prove again he 's the best 3 @-@ year @-@ old . " The horse was assigned the number three post position in a field of ten horses , and was the morning line odds @-@ on favorite at 3 ? 5 . Followers noted that Secretariat had also run the 1973 Preakness Stakes from the number three post . The Thursday before the race , California Chrome was observed coughing after his morning gallop , prompting speculation about his health . He had a small blister in his throat , which he also had prior to the Kentucky Derby , both times treated with a glycerine throat wash . The intense press attention paid to the relatively minor issue was dismissively dubbed " throat @-@ gate " by sportswriter Bill Dwyre of the Los Angeles Times .

On race day , California Chrome made a clean start from the gate , was close to the front through the backstretch , made his bid for the lead at the far turn , and was first by the top of the stretch . The second @-@ place finisher was Ride on Curlin , who made a strong move late in the race to finish 1 1 ? 2 lengths behind California Chrome . Both held off a challenge from Social Inclusion , who tired and finished third . General a Rod was fourth . The winning time was 1 : 54 : 84 , earning a Beyer Speed Figure of 105 . Social Inclusion 's owner , Ron Sanchez , said , " He 's the real deal ... My horse came to challenge him , but he found another engine . He was gone . " Espinoza 's ride was described as " flawless " , and the press noted the special affinity between the horse and jockey .

California Chrome became the only California @-@ bred horse ever to win both the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness . The press considered the Preakness to be the horse 's strongest victory to date . Baffert , who had won the first two legs of the Triple Crown with Silver Charm (1997) , Real Quiet (1998) , and War Emblem (2002) , sent three different horses against California Chrome , and after Bayern had finished second to last in the Preakness , said , " I 'm done chasing him , " adding , " he 's super the real deal . " In post @-@ race interviews , Coburn stated that California Chrome had become " America 's Horse " .

== == Belmont Stakes == ==

The day after the Preakness , a new round of minor press excitement , dubbed " nasalgate " , erupted when Sherman commented that Martin might not let California Chrome run in the Belmont Stakes if the New York Racing Association (NYRA) did not allow the horse to wear a nasal strip as he had in his previous six races . Nasal strips are not considered performance @-@ enhancing , but may reduce airway resistance , lower the risk of exercise @-@ induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH) , and aid post @-@ race recovery . Sherman submitted a formal request for permission to use them , and the following day , the NYRA approved the use of nasal strips for all horses on New York tracks , thus resolving the matter .

California Chrome shipped to New York on May 20 in a semi @-@ trailer horse van together with Ride On Curlin . They had a police escort through New York City from the Throgs Neck Bridge to Belmont Park . The press reported that Art Sherman believed the misspelled saddle cloths at the Derby and Preakness were a good luck charm , and that he specifically asked Belmont Park for another misspelled cloth along with a properly spelled version . The first week California Chrome spent at the Belmont track was generally uneventful , other than galloping past an opossum that wandered onto the track the morning of May 23 . The horse paid little attention to it , but the press pounced on the story ; the animal was labeled " Dumb @-@ Ass Possum " , and someone created a Twitter account for the creature . Delgado commented , " I can tell you he loves this track , and I don 't see him (having) any problem getting a mile and a half . " On May 31 , Espinoza arrived to give

the colt a short workout known as a " breeze " . Horse and jockey were greeted by a large contingent of fans and press at about 6 : 30 a.m. , and ran a " sharp " half @-@ mile (0 @-@ 80 km) officially clocked at 47 @-@ 69 seconds . A clocker for the Daily Racing Form stated , " He 's going to be tough to beat . I think we 're going to have a Triple Crown winner . "

Eleven horses entered the Belmont Stakes on June 7 , and California Chrome drew post position 2 , the same post position as Secretariat in the 1973 Belmont . Ride On Curlin and General a Rod also entered ; they were the only other horses besides California Chrome to contest all three legs of the Triple Crown . Four entries had run in Kentucky Derby but skipped the Preakness , and there were four " New Shooters " who had not run in either of the previous Triple Crown races , including Tonalist and Matterhorn , who each wound up playing a major role in the race . Anticipating the possibility of a Triple Crown champion , several people connected to the last three Triple Crown winners came to the Belmont , including 92 @-@ year @-@ old Penny Chenery , owner of Secretariat ; Patrice Wolfson , who co @-@ owned Affirmed ; and some of Seattle Slew 's connections ? trainer Billy Turner and co @-@ owner Jim Hill . The jockeys of the three past Triple Crown winners , Steve Cauthen , Jean Cruguet , and Ron Turcotte , also attended . Cauthen , jockey of Affirmed , stated , " This horse has got a great chance of pulling it off , " but added , " you never know , that 's why they have to run the race . "

On race day California Chrome did not break boldly . Espinoza later explained something felt " off " and he held the horse back a bit instead of going to the lead . When asked to move to the front , the horse did not unleash his usual burst of speed . Immediately following the race , Espinoza said " He was just a little bit empty today " . Tonalist won the race , and California Chrome finished fourth in a dead heat with Wicked Strong . Initial post @-@ race analysts criticized Espinoza for not taking the horse to the front early on , but noticed that California Chrome had had some blood on his right front heel . After the race , review of photos taken at the start showed that the horse next to him , Matterhorn , moved too far to the left and stepped on California Chrome 's heel as both horses broke from the gate . As a result , California Chrome had run the race with a " chunk " of tissue taken out of his right front heel and a small cut on his tendon . The tendon injury was superficial , but the heel injury may have been a factor in his loss . Sherman explained that he knew that something was not right when he saw the horse throw his head up in the homestretch , and speculated later that the sand and dirt of the racetrack caused pain in the open wound . The following day , Sherman assured the press that both injuries would heal .

Coburn generated controversy after the race , when he said the current Triple Crown system allowed " the coward 's way out " because fresh horses who had not run in the Kentucky Derby or Preakness Stakes could challenge horses who contested all three legs . Sherman downplayed the outburst , saying , " [Coburn] was at the heat of the moment ... Sometimes the emotions get in front of you . " Two days later , Coburn apologized , saying he wanted to congratulate the owners of Tonalist and adding , " I wanted so much for [California Chrome] to win the Triple Crown for the people of America . " Steve Haskin of Blood @-@ Horse magazine summarized the race stating , " when I think back ... the one image that will last forever will be of an exhausted colt walking back through the tunnel with a bloodstained foot , his head down and breathing hard , and every vein protruding from his sweat @-@ soaked body . He had given every ounce of himself , and with it all , still was beaten only 1 3 ? 4 lengths . "

California Chrome returned to Los Alamitos , where Sherman 's crew treated the wound for about 10 days . After that , they sent California Chrome to Harris Farms where he was turned out on pasture . By early July , his foot was fully healed , he had gained weight , and Sherman was pleased enough with his recovery that he brought the colt back to Los Alamitos to resume training on July 17 , two weeks earlier than anticipated .

= = = Remainder of 2014 season = = =

California Chrome was the top @-@ ranked three @-@ year @-@ old in the nation by the NTRA in its post @-@ race poll of June 9 , 2014 , in spite of his Belmont loss , and was fifth @-@ ranked among American horses of all ages . In the June 12 World 's Best Racehorse Rankings , published

by the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities , he was ranked fifth in the world , one point behind the only American @-@ based horse rated higher , Santa Anita Handicap winner Game On Dude , who was tied for third .

California Chrome raced next in the September 20 Pennsylvania Derby at Parx Racing . He was the favorite , but drew the inside number 1 post position . Kentucky Derby rivals Candy Boy and Tapiture also entered . Bayern , who had a poor performance in the Preakness Stakes but later won the Haskell Invitational , was the second favorite . Parx provided significant financial incentives to any horse entering who previously won a triple crown race or other selected Grade I races , so California Chrome 's connections earned \$ 200 @,@ 000 simply for having him start . Trapped on the rail , first by a speed horse in the initial stages of the race , and again on the far turn by a challenger who faded in the stretch , California Chrome was unable to gain momentum and finished sixth . Bayern had a clean trip , leading wire to wire , and won by 5 3 ? 4 lengths . Espinoza explained , " I never really had a chance to let him run the way he had been running . "

The next race was the Breeders ' Cup Classic on November 1 . Because many leading older horses retired in 2014 , most of the main contenders for the 2014 Classic were the three year olds : in addition to California Chrome , former foes Bayern , Candy Boy and Tonalist entered . His chief rival was considered to be the then @-@ undefeated American Champion Two @-@ Year @-@ Old Colt , Shared Belief , a gelding who missed the Triple Crown series due to hoof problems ; the two had never faced each other . California Chrome was 4 @-@ 1 on the morning line , second favorite to Shared Belief . In the race , Bayern bumped into Shared Belief at the start , then took the lead for the duration of the race . California Chrome was clear of traffic , maintained third place for most of the race , was closing at the end , and finished a very close third , only a neck behind winner Bayern , who won by a nose over second @-@ place finisher Toast of New York . Shared Belief was fourth . Post race analysis noted that California Chrome stayed on the outside throughout the race , and actually ran 44 feet farther than the winner . Sherman spoke in positive terms of the horse 's finish , stating " My horse ran his eyeballs out . He was right there , right down to the money . I thought it was a great effort . He came back strong . " Espinoza was less enthusiastic : " On the backstretch I thought I had a chance to win ... The last sixteenth [California Chrome] was digging as hard as he could , but getting just a little tired . I wish he had one more race . It was a little too much for him today . " Coburn visited the colt the following day and stated , " He was full of himself . I think he thought he won . And if the race had been just a little bit longer , I believe he would have . "

Later in the month California Chrome shipped to Del Mar , and following workouts on the turf course Sherman entered him in the Hollywood Derby on November 29 . It was his first start on a grass race track . Sherman believed that California Chrome would do well running on grass , and it also would open up a variety of potential races to enter in 2015 . He was the morning line favorite , with his toughest competitor viewed as Lexie Lou , a filly who defeated colts to win Canada 's equivalent of the Kentucky Derby , the Queen 's Plate . California Chrome won handily by two lengths and the Canadian filly was second . With the win , California Chrome earned four Grade I wins for the year , and was the only horse in the United States to have Grade I wins in 2014 on both dirt and turf tracks . Espinoza summed up the race by saying , " he 's back . "

= = = 2015 : Four @-@ year @-@ old season = = =

California Chrome had a tumultuous four @-@ year @-@ old season . Martin originally intended for California Chrome to be retired to stud at the end of the year . The horse began 2015 at Santa Anita in the San Antonio Stakes on February 7 , a return matchup with Shared Belief , whose traffic problems in the Classic prevented a true match against California Chrome . Art Sherman and Shared Belief 's trainer , Jerry Hollendorfer , were longtime friends and rivals from the Northern California racing circuit and each anticipated the rivalry between their two horses . Said Sherman , " I just want both of us to be at the head of the stretch with no excuses and then it 's who gets to the wire first . " Shared Belief went off as the favorite and although California Chrome took the lead by the 3 ? 4 pole , Shared Belief edged him in the final sixteenth and won , with California Chrome second by a length and a half . California Chrome next shipped to Meydan Racecourse for the

Dubai World Cup on March 28 , where he needed to run at night , under artificial lighting , and without Lasix . He went off as the favorite , but finished second to the Irish @-@ bred longshot Prince Bishop , owned by Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum of Godolphin Racing . Sherman noted that his horse ran wide on the turns , but said , " He tried every inch of the way . There 's nothing wrong with finishing second in this type of a race . "

After the Dubai World Cup , California Chrome was shipped to Rae Guest 's Newmarket stables in England to prepare for Royal Ascot week in June . The decision to go to England was made by Perry Martin , against the wishes of both Coburn and Sherman . Martin explained , " I was trying to think in terms of what 's best for the horse . It was my decision to send him to Newmarket . It 's a beautiful place , with trees and pastures for gallops ... It 's good for his mind . I know Art didn 't take the decision well . But he 'll be okay . " The horse 's exercise rider in England , Robbie Mills , who was acquainted with the Shermans and advised them to stable the horse with Guest , stated that California Chrome was making a good transition from the flat dirt tracks of the United States to the undulating turf gallops of England . The horse was pointed to the Prince of Wales 's Stakes at Royal Ascot , with European jockey William Buick , who rode Prince Bishop in Dubai , tapped to ride . The day before the race , the horse was scratched because of a bruised hoof that was draining pus . Guest stated , " he 's been X @-@ rayed and there 's no damage . " Martin wanted to run him in Chicago 's Arlington Million in August , and the requirements of quarantine upon his return to the United States combined with the setback to his training foreclosed any other UK start . Upon California Chrome 's return to the US in early July , a veterinary radiograph revealed he had bruising on his cannon bones that would require at least three months to heal , effectively ending his four @-@ year @-@ old season . The veterinarians at Rood and Riddle Veterinary Hospital in Kentucky explained , " California Chrome 's x @-@ rays showed all of his joints to be remarkably clean . He has the early signs of bruising to the bottom of the cannon bones ... The return rate for horses with this problem is very high ... we found that recovery rate was 95 % after giving time in the paddock to heal . "

On July 15 , the racing press reported that Steve Coburn sold his 30 % interest in the horse to Taylor Made Farm of Nicholasville , Kentucky , but that the abrupt end to the 2015 season opened the door to racing the horse for an additional year . Duncan Taylor of Taylor Made Farms said , " You won 't find many horses of his quality that made 18 starts in 23 months . He 's just now getting his first break from training . " On July 19 , Art Sherman announced that after California Chrome had paddock rest at Taylor Made Farm , the horse would ship back to Sherman 's and prepare to race in 2016 . On October 13 , California Chrome returned to Sherman 's barn . He finished the year being named Champion California @-@ bred Older Male .

= = = 2016 : Five @-@ year @-@ old season = = =

Martin 's plans for the horse in 2016 included a return to the Dubai World Cup , and ultimately another try at the Breeders ' Cup Classic . Sherman 's barn had a new exercise rider for the horse , Dihigi Gladney , a former bull rider and ex @-@ jockey who grew up in Watts , who also runs a pony ride concession at Santa Anita . Beginning at the San Pasqual Stakes , the purple and green DAP silks were replaced with a new silver @-@ gray design representing the California Chrome , LLC partnership that now owned the horse . Martin stated that his goal for the horse was to become the leading money @-@ winning horse of all time .

California Chrome 's 2016 season began with the San Pasqual Stakes on January 9 . He faced a seven @-@ horse field that included a former rival from the Derby trail , Hoppertunity , and older foes Imperative and Hard Aces . Stalking the front runner until the final turn , he took the lead in the homestretch and won by 1 1 ? 2 lengths . Sherman said of his modest margin of victory , " He could 've opened up turning for home , but Victor put the full nelson on him . It was just what we needed . " Espinoza , back on California Chrome after winning the Triple Crown with American Pharoah , said , " He 's one of the best horses I 've ever been on . I am so proud of him . American Pharoah and California Chrome are too hard to compare , so I won 't . " The win boosted his lifetime earnings to \$ 6 @,@ 442 @,@ 650 , breaking the previous record held by Tiznow as the highest @-@ earning

California @-@ bred racehorse in history . He shipped to Dubai shortly after the San Pasqual to acclimate to the area , the same training tactics used by the trainers of Curlin . He was entered into a 2 @,@ 000 metres (6 @,@ 600 ft) handicap race on February 25 , where he drew the number one post position and was assigned a career @-@ high weight of 60 kilograms (130 lb) , an impost 7 @.@ 5 kilograms (17 lb) more than any other horse in the eight @-@ horse field . Alan Sherman , who accompanied the horse to Dubai and conditioned him there , was unconcerned , noting that Gladney weighed 150 pounds (68 kg) . He handily won by two lengths .

Entering the 2016 Dubai World Cup , California Chrome had the number 11 post position in an international field of 12 . He faced both old American rivals in Hoppertunity and Candy Boy , as well as three younger horses who had challenged American Pharoah the previous year , Keen Ice , Frosted and Mubtaahij . The horse stayed wide and had a clear trip the entire race , took the lead 300 metres (980 ft) out and won by 3 3 ? 4 lengths . The race took a dramatic turn when Espinoza ? s saddle began to slip backwards in the homestretch , and after the race he said , ? I just kept looking forward and thinking ' where 's the wire ? It was not coming fast enough . " The purse money for the victory made him the all @-@ time leading North American horse in earnings won . Martin commented that the horse had to pass three horses from Japan to become the all @-@ time world ? s money leader , but declared , " I believe we 'll do that before the end of the year . "

Upon his return to the United States , California Chrome was turned out for a month at Taylor Made Farm , then resumed training with Sherman . On July 23 , the horse was entered in the San Diego Handicap where he faced Dortmund , who had finished third in the 2015 Kentucky Derby to American Pharoah . California Chrome tracked behind Dortmund until the far turn , then moved to the front . Dortmund fought back and the two dueled down the stretch , with California Chrome prevailing by half a length . Noting that his horse had carried five pounds more than Dortmund , Espinoza said , " I have a lot of respect for Dortmund and he made me run hard ... When we came down the stretch , I was concerned . This horse was carrying a lot of weight . That was the challenge , but he was a runner all the way today . "

= = Awards and honors = =

California Chrome won many honors in 2014 . A concurrent resolution was introduced in the California State Assembly recognizing the " outstanding performance of California Chrome " and all of his connections including not only his owners and trainers , but also Willie Delgado and groom Raul Rodriguez . The resolution passed both chambers of the legislature unanimously on August 14 . It was the first time that the California Legislature had honored a racehorse . The city of Fresno proclaimed October 11 , 2014 , as " California Chrome Day " . In March 2015 , the Los Angeles Sports Council ranked California Chrome 's Kentucky Derby and Preakness wins third at the LA Sports Awards ' Sports Moment of 2014 , behind only the Los Angeles Kings Stanley Cup win and Clayton Kershaw 's Cy Young and National League MVP Awards .

California Chrome won the Secretariat Vox Populi Award given each year to recognize " the horse whose popularity and racing excellence best resounded with the American public and gained recognition for Thoroughbred racing . " His Kentucky Derby win was named the NTRA " Moment of the Year " . At the Eclipse Awards , he was named American Horse of the Year and American Champion Three @-@ Year @-@ Old Male Horse . He was the second California @-@ bred to win Horse of the Year , the first since Tiznow , the first three @-@ year @-@ old to be Horse of the Year since Rachel Alexandra , and the first Kentucky Derby winner since Charismatic . The California Thoroughbred Breeders ' Association gave California Chrome and his connections multiple honors , naming him the 2014 California @-@ bred Horse of the Year , Champion Cal @-@ bred Three @-@ Year @-@ Old and Turf Champion . Lucky Pulpit was named Champion Sire , Love the Chase was Champion Broodmare , Martin and Coburn were named Champion Breeders , and Sherman was named Trainer of the year .

2016 saw the inauguration of the California Chrome Stakes , a 1 1 ? 16 mile race with an introductory purse of \$ 150 @,@ 000 for three @-@ year @-@ olds at Los Alamitos . The track created the race in recognition of the horse being stabled there as a home base since the beginning

of 2014 .

= = Fans and publicity = =

= = = " Chromies " = = =

An enthusiastic fan base supporting California Chrome became visible at the Santa Anita Derby , when someone invited the horse 's supporters to join the owners in the winner 's circle and over 100 people crammed into the area , including one woman dressed entirely in metallic foil . Coburn told CNN of a supporter who had a jackass tattooed on his shoulder . An unofficial Twitter account for the horse , @ CalChrome , was started by a 37 @-@ year @-@ old fan from Florida , Shawn LaFata , had over 12 @,@ 000 followers by Belmont week . The New York Times noted the enthusiasm of the fans , who used the hashtag # Chromies on Twitter . LaFata believes the word " Chromies " first appeared on @ CalChrome eight nights before the Kentucky Derby . The humble origins of the horse and the people around him played a role in his popularity , as did the horse 's people @-@ focused attitude . Supporters appeared to be further motivated by the continuing doubts raised by industry experts about California Chrome 's ability .

The horse had nationwide appeal , but California Chrome 's core fan base was centered in the Central Valley of California ; the Sacramento television market ranked sixth in the nation for television viewership on Preakness day , and third in the nation on Belmont day . Prior to the Belmont , singer ? songwriter team Templeton Thompson and Sam Gay wrote and recorded a song titled " Bring it on Home , Chrome " and a rap video featuring an elementary school children was released on YouTube . Even after his Belmont loss , Harris Farms fielded many calls daily from fans wanting to visit the horse while he had a break from racing in June and July 2014 . In contrast to his admirers , California Chrome 's image was somewhat diminished by the criticism that followed Coburn 's post @-@ Belmont comments . Additional negative press occurred when Martin turned down an offer to bring California Chrome to parade in the paddock at Del Mar on the day of the Pacific Classic . NPR 's Frank Deford had little patience with the horse 's story exemplifying the American dream ; DeFord felt that the horse 's victories would have little impact on the popularity of horse racing , which he viewed as " a sport that is struggling against time and culture " due to the prevalence of other types of gambling and the reduced impact of horses in the daily lives of most people .

Overall , the press the horse received was viewed as giving a needed boost to the sport . Jockey and sports analyst Gary Stevens noted prior to the Belmont , " I haven 't heard Thoroughbred horse racing mentioned on CNN for a long time , and it was right at the top of the hour ... He 's brought us mainstream again for the first time in a lot of years . " Post @-@ Belmont press analysis contended that California Chrome was the most popular Thoroughbred in America since Zenyatta . In December , when the horse was selected as the winner of the Secretariat Vox Populi Award , Coburn said , " We have always said Chrome is the ' People 's Horse ' and we are thrilled that the public feels the same way we do about him . " In announcing the Moment of the Year , Keith Chamblin of NTRA stated , " the fans reminded us that nothing trumps an awesome performance by a legendary horse . "

= = = Marketing = = =

Prior to the 2014 Belmont Stakes , California Chrome 's owners filed a patent application to trademark his name for use on athletic apparel , and hired two talent agencies to help with marketing and sponsorships . Following the " nasalgate " story , fans began to appear wearing human nasal strips or purple band @-@ aids across their noses . Working with the intellectual property attorney who had brokered deals for Smarty Jones , California Chrome 's owners gained an endorsement deal with GlaxoSmithKline , manufacturer of the human Breathe Right nasal strips . On Belmont day , GlaxoSmithKline gave away 50 @,@ 000 of the strips at Belmont Park . Santa

Anita , which simulcast the race , ran its own promotion , giving fans at that track purple nasal strips with the word " Chrome " on the front . On June 2 , the Skechers shoe company announced a sponsorship deal where the company 's logo appeared on assorted items worn by the horse and his handlers , the company used California Chrome 's image in its marketing , and ran a half page ad featuring the horse in the Wall Street Journal at the end of June 2014 .

= = Statistics = =

* Odds not available

= = Pedigree = =

California Chrome has been described as a throwback to horses with toughness and soundness . His sire , Lucky Pulpit , and his dam , Love the Chase , each had relatively undistinguished racing careers , but their ancestors were successful on the track , and some were well known for stamina over distance . Lucky Pulpit was sired by Pulpit , who is credited with 63 stakes winners and particularly known for his son Tapit . 1992 Belmont Stakes and Breeders ' Cup Classic winner A. P. Indy is the sire of Pulpit , and in 2015 , California Chrome became the all @-@ time leading earner from the A. P. Indy sire line . The sire line of these stallions traces to Bold Ruler , considered one of the greatest North American sires of the 20th century , and ultimately to the Darley Arabian through Eclipse . A. P. Indy was by 1977 Triple Crown winner Seattle Slew , and is a grandson of Secretariat on his dam 's side , bringing a second cross to Bold Ruler into the pedigree . Pulpit is a grandson of Mr. Prospector on his dam 's side , a line believed to cross well with Seattle Slew 's breeding . Pulpit 's maternal granddam , Narrate , carries lines to Bold Ruler and to 1964 Kentucky Derby winner Northern Dancer . Lucky Pulpit 's dam , Lucky Soph , is a half @-@ sister to the dam of Unbridled 's Song and also a granddaughter of Caro , who sired 1988 Kentucky Derby winner Winning Colors . Princequillo , who was noted for his stamina , appears several times in Lucky Pulpit 's pedigree .

Love the Chase comes from old and respected stock , and California Chrome was the fifth Kentucky Derby winner produced from this mare line . Her sire , Not for Love , was by Mr. Prospector and out of a daughter of Northern Dancer . Northern Dancer appears again on the distaff side of Love the Chase 's pedigree . Her granddam , Chase the Dream , was sired by the 1968 Epsom Derby winner Sir Ivor . Vaguely Noble , winner of the 1968 Prix de l 'Arc de Triomphe , is one of Chase the Dream 's grandsires . She traces to Princequillo and to the UK @-@ bred Ribot , viewed by some as the greatest racehorse of his generation . Love the Chase has two crosses to the mare Numbered Account , who produced several Grade I stakes winners and was the American Champion Two @-@ Year @-@ Old Filly in 1971 . Numbered Account was a daughter of Buckpasser , who earned five Eclipse Awards between 1965 and 1967 , and was inducted to the Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 1970 . The Buckpasser line has been considered another good bloodline to crossbreed with descendants of Seattle Slew . Numbered Account was also a granddaughter of Swaps , and traces to La Troienne and War Admiral on both sides of her pedigree . Love the Chase 's tail @-@ female line is one of the oldest in North America . Through a mare named Selima , foaled in 1745 , who was by the Godolphin Arabian and imported to the Province of Maryland between 1750 and 1752 . The line probably traces to Thoroughbred family 21 , which began with the Moonah Barb Mare , who was imported from Barbary to England in utero about 1700 .

California Chrome has relatively little inbreeding ; he is 4 × 3 to Mr Prospector , meaning that this ancestor appears once in the third and once in the fourth generations of his pedigree . He is also 4 × 4 to Numbered Account and 4 × 5 to Northern Dancer .

indicates inbreeding