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ARK Glatt was a young trainer with a small barn and big dreams during his first Del Mar meet in 2000.

On July 28 of that year, he sent out a three-year-old Washington-bred filly named Salish Slew to a 24-to-1 upset under Hall of Fame jockey Eddie Delahoussaye in a claiming race on the turf.

“That was my first full-time Southern California meet and either my first or second starter there,” said Glatt recently between races at Betfair Hollywood Park, recalling details of the race as though it were yesterday.

“I had always wanted to try that filly on grass, and to get my first Del Mar win with that big a price and Eddie D. riding, that was quite a thrill,” said Glatt, brightening at the memory.

Twelve years later to the day – on July 28, 2012 – Glatt carved out another personal milestone at Del Mar by winning the richest race of his career, the \$200,000 Fleet Treat Stakes for California-breds, with another three-year-old filly, Starlight Magic. The victory was the second in a stakes for Starlight Magic, who was recently retired with earnings of \$334,900.

The two victories gave Glatt encouragement for more achievements to highlight his portfolio at Del Mar this year. They also served as an accurate barometer of Glatt’s gradual progress in the Southern California training colony from a meager string of claimers to a 40-horse stable with an emphasis on allowances and an occasional stakes hopeful.

Glatt, 40, recognized his calling in life from an early age. “I grew up on a five-acre ranch in Auburn, Washington, and we always had horses,” said Glatt, son of trainer Ron Glatt.

“I remember being at the track when I was five years old in the stable area at Longacres,” said Glatt, who credits his father with imparting the knowledge for him to follow in his footsteps. “I remember feeding horses carrots and a little later on holding horses on the wash rack or in ice.”

Glatt was willing to make social sacrifices unusual for a teenager. “By the time I started high school, I knew I was going to be a trainer – or try to be a trainer,” said Glatt. “On



Glatt earns his spurs with Magic success

weekends while going to school, there was no sleeping in or watching cartoons.

“I wanted to get up and go to the track as far back as I could remember. In high school, I didn’t do a lot of going out with friends on Friday and Saturday nights because I wanted to be up Saturday and Sunday mornings.”

Glatt agreed to attend college, studying business at Western Washington University, but the primary business on his mind was the horseracing business after he finished.

Glatt began training in 1995, handling his father’s second string at Yakima Meadows during a year his father tested the waters in Southern California. Washington racing was in a transition period following the close of Longacres in 1992 before the opening of Emerald Downs in 1996.

Glatt grew up quickly. “I had about 20 to 25 horses and had a good background,” said Glatt. “But I didn’t have Dad there to lean on, had to make decisions on my own



Starlight Magic, with Rafael Bejarano up, wins the Fleet Treat Stakes at Del Mar last year

and put in a few new things in a hurry.”

Glatt migrated south to Northern California the following year. “Dad returned in 1996, and in the fall of that year I went to Golden Gate Fields with five horses,” said Glatt. “I don’t think one of them was worth \$5,000.

“I lived in a tack room; I couldn’t afford rent,” said Glatt of his San Francisco start. “Slowly but surely, business picked up. After three years, I started getting horses from people in Southern California with stock not quite suited to Southern California racing.”

One couple in that new group was Bill and Linear Bannasch, who raced under the nom de course Plan B Stable. “Their horses did well, and in the summer of 2000, they gave me a great opportunity to relocate in Southern California,” said Glatt. “Another client who helped support the move was Mike Moran.”

Glatt never looked back, but admitted the adjustment was demanding. “It was quite different here,” said Glatt. “It was a lot harder to win. The races were deeper. I primarily had claiming horses and had to accumulate the kind of stock you need to win bigger races.”

Glatt’s breakthrough horse arrived in the fall of 2003. The answer to his elusive quest for a graded stakes winner was aptly named Elusive Diva.

“I got her as an unraced two-year-old turning three,” said Glatt of the manna from heaven sent him by co-owners Allen and Susan Branch and John and Doris Konecny.

Glatt recognized the filly’s potential early on.

Elusive Diva broke her maiden at second asking at Santa Anita in February, 2004, won the Grade 3 Railbird Stakes at Hollywood Park in her fifth start, and went on to a career with six victories in 17 starts and earnings of \$484,510. She became a terror on the hillside turf course at Santa Anita in 2005, scoring three wins on it including the Las Cienegas and Senator Ken Maddy Handicaps, both Grade 3.

“I had a lot of respect for Elusive Diva because she gave it her all in every start,” said Glatt of the female star who elevated his stature and laid the groundwork for future success.

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“She was sold in foal for \$1.6 million at a Keeneland sale,” said Glatt, who inspired confidence in her owners with his work. “That afforded me the opportunity to reinvest in some yearlings and two-year-olds in training. I was also able to acquire other clientele, Cory Wagner (owner of Starlight Magic and other Glatt trainees) being one.”

The foundation was built for Glatt’s ascent that followed with a series of notable winners headed by La Tee, Czechers, Reba Is Tops, It Tiz, and Big Tiz, all females.

La Tee gave Glatt his first Breeders’ Cup starter in the 2008 Filly & Mare Sprint, in which she finished tenth at Santa Anita. Placed three times in graded stakes, she earned \$191,581.

“Czechers was a filly that always gave you 110 percent,” said Glatt. “She had some bleeding issues throughout her career, but she never let that stop her.” Czechers won a pair of stakes at Turf Paradise and was placed three times in graded stakes company en route to earnings of \$298,349.

Reba Is Tops joined the Glatt stable midway through her career after establishing a reputation as a hard-trying sprinter in Washington and Northern California good enough to win a pair of stakes at Bay Meadows.

“She was all racehorse,” said Glatt of the distaffer, who continued to be as honest as they come sprinting on the turf in Southern California from 2009 to 2011. With Glatt, Reba Is Tops won three minor stakes, while recording six firsts, five seconds, and two thirds in 17 outings.

It Tiz won a pair of minor stakes en route to earnings of \$260,183, while Big Tiz finished second to Turbulent Descent in the 2010 Grade 1 Hollywood Starlet during an injury-shortened career in which she earned \$239,650.

Glatt considered the most talented horse he ever trained another whose career was abbreviated because of injury. “Salish Shaman was maybe not the most accomplished, but, off

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pure ability, he was the best I ever trained," said Glatt.

The gelding speedster began his career with Glatt in the Bay Area during 1998 and 1999, reeled off four straight victories and was shipped to Hollywood Park, where he won the Harry Henson Stakes for three-year-olds by five lengths under Laffit Pincay, Jr. in 1:14²/₅ seconds for 6½ furlongs to earn a 111 Beyer speed figure.

"He injured a tendon in the Henson and never had a chance to get on the national stage," said Glatt of the gelding's brief career. "I do believe he was headed to the Breeders' Cup Sprint."

Glatt also reserved a special place in his heart for a pair of geldings, Handyman Bill and Daunting, who enjoyed banner campaigns in 2003 for Plan B Stable.

"Handyman Bill was named for Bill Bannasch," explained Glatt of the Plan B co-owner so instrumental in his career. "Bill was an attorney and later owned a chain of hotels, but he could fix and do anything. He could build a house and be an electrician and plumber."

Handyman Bill was unraced at two and went to the sidelines with a chipped ankle as a maiden after his third start in June, 2002. "Bill passed away the following winter, just a few days before Handyman Bill's scheduled return

in a maiden \$25,000 claiming race at Santa Anita (in February, 2003)," said Glatt.

"Linear (Bannasch's widow) planned to come up from San Diego with the family for the race, the last on the card," continued the trainer. "It had been raining on race day, and I called her and said if it rained any more I might have to scratch.

"It threatened all day, but it held off until the race, Handyman Bill won easily with Julie Krone, and then it started to pour," said Glatt, recalling the wet and emotional scene in the winner's circle.

Handyman Bill won three of his next five starts, capped by a victory in the Foster City Handicap at Bay Meadows. "It was sad that Bill was not there to see him," said Glatt. "We had high hopes for him, and he turned into the horse we thought he was going to be."

Glatt sees Handyman Bill every morning. "I turned him into my stable pony after retirement," said Glatt. "He's the smartest horse I've ever been around. He'll have a life with me."

One month after Handyman Bill's maiden score, Glatt claimed Daunting for Plan B for \$16,000 after a victory at Santa Anita. "I remember picking up my slip, and Daunting's previous owner came out of the winner's circle and went into a spiel about all the problems the horse had," said Glatt.

"I was on pins and needles after hearing that, but the horse's problems turned into manageable issues," continued the trainer. "He came back to win at \$32,000, and \$50,000, and then the \$150,000 Claiming Crown Jewel at Canterbury in Minnesota."

Daunting won six-of-13 starts for Glatt after the claim. "That was a lot of fun after being told he was messed up," said Glatt. He was happiest that both horses were able to honor the memory of Bannasch.

Glatt this year proved he held the keys to the winner's circle for a mare named Royal Tiger. She broke her maiden at first asking for Glatt in 2010, but was later transferred to another barn.

After going winless in six starts for three other trainers during the past two years, owner-breeder Nick Cafarchia returned the now six-year-old mare to Glatt at the beginning of the year. She responded with victories at Santa Anita and Hollywood Park and finished fourth in the Grade 1 Vanity Handicap in June.

"She's a big filly and hard to ride and her career has been interrupted by breaks," explained Glatt of her improved form this year. "This time I've been able to keep her around and go two turns with her."

Glatt's horsemanship has not gone unnoticed by insiders. "Cliff Sise, a good friend who managed Rancho Paseana (near Del Mar), believed in my ability and sent me some horses before it closed," said Glatt, who now numbers Ted Aroney's Halo Farms among his clients.

Like all Southern California trainers, Glatt has been shaken by the reality that Hollywood Park is in its final year and the ramifications of its closing.

"It's disheartening because racing as we know it will be very challenging with limited stabling," said Glatt, worried about a stall crunch at Santa Anita.

"It puts trainers in a tough situation," he said, pointing to the economic strains of split stables and the fears that some owners would relocate horses out of state rather than settle for an undesired stabling site.

"It all spells less horses for entries," said Glatt of a shrinking circuit that has already been forced to cut racing weeks by one day. "If we have to go to three days a week from four, to me that's the beginning of the end."

Whatever the decisions and outcome, Glatt hopes for the best for his growing stable. He credits long-time assistant Eleuterio "Teo" Gutierrez for much of his success and enjoys the luxury of conversing regularly with his father, currently the assistant to trainer Ed Moger.

Glatt can be seen at the track flanked by his father, 61, and son Ryan, 11. "Ryan definitely likes the horses," said Glatt of his oldest son, a chip off the block and candidate to become a third-generation horseman.

Glatt lives near Santa Anita in Monrovia with his wife Dena, Ryan, and two younger children, Luke, 9; and Madison, 8. ■

Elusive Diva gave Glatt his breakthrough stakes victory, winning six races and \$484,510 in earnings

