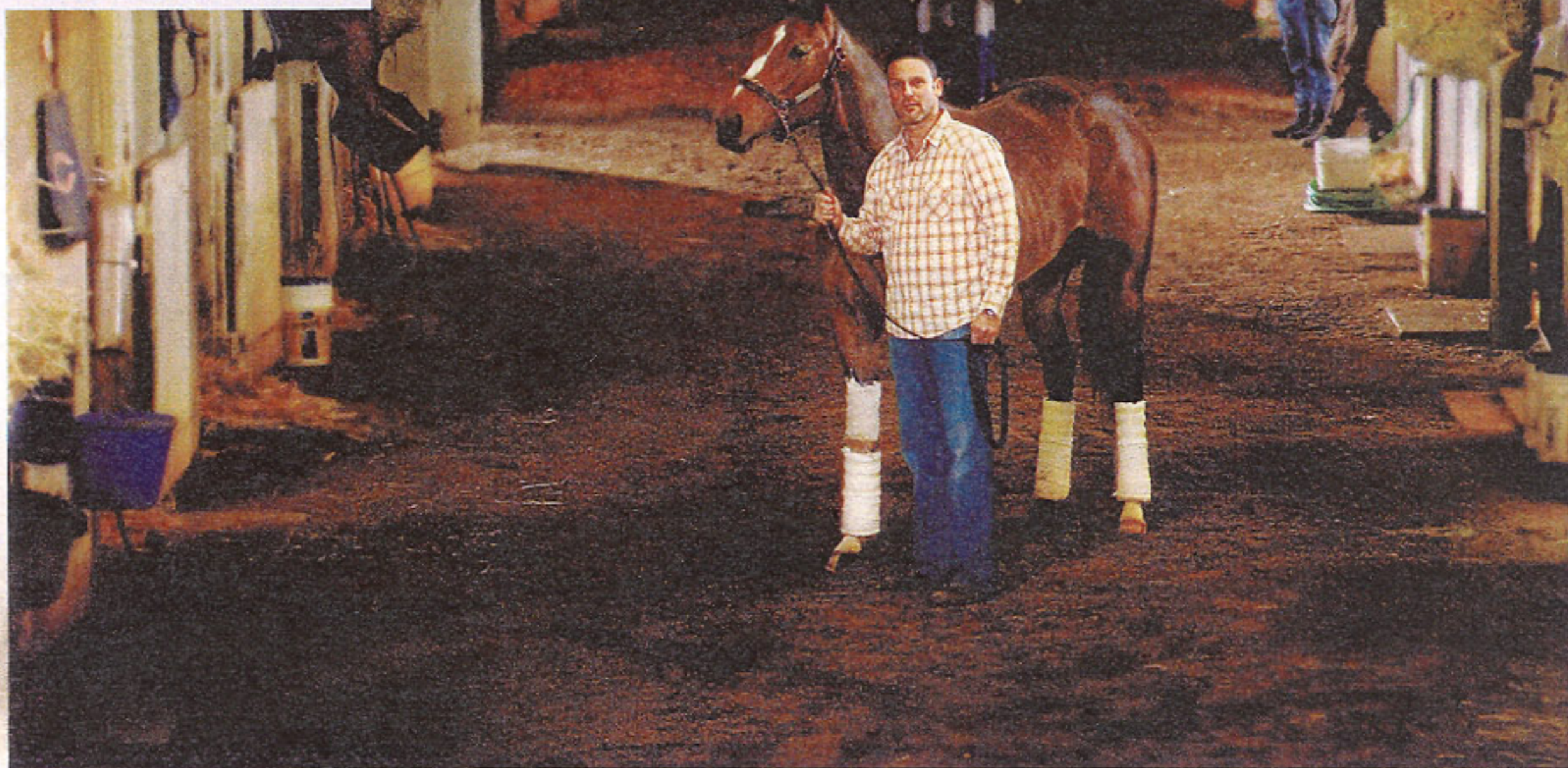


LOOK WHO'S TALKING

BY GARY BAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN SCHUDE



STUD: Billy Koch with Polyhymnia at Hollywood Park.

TRACK STAR *Billy Koch is riding high by supplying the biggest boys with their newest must-have toy: an award-winning, scene-stealing thoroughbred*

Billy Koch is off to the races. He runs a horse-racing partnership called Little Red Feather, which organizes the collective purchasing of yearlings by the likes of Jay-Z, *Ray* director Taylor Hackford and Tom Brady. With the ponies priced at as much as \$150,000 a pop, these über-macho men have been chomping at the bit to get in on the ego-boosting satisfaction of associating with a prize-winning thoroughbred. (LRF's second horse, Singletary, took home the prestigious Breeder's Cup in 2004.) "We don't even call it an investment," says the 37-year-old Koch. "What we're selling is 'the dream.' It's the ultimate conversation piece: 'Hey, I'm going to the races on Sunday. I've got this filly running..." The Beverly Hills native grew up around the local equine scene, with his

grandfather—producer Howard W. Koch (*The Manchurian Candidate*, *Airplane!*)—often picking him up after school and driving him straight to Hollywood Park. After a post-collegiate decade spent bouncing around the entertainment industry as a "creative executive," Koch returned to his childhood love by forming LRF. But he hasn't completely left showbiz behind: The name of one recent acquisition, Tsetse Fly, is an insidious reference to an *Entourage* episode, and, for the upcoming season, series creator Doug Ellin returned the favor by asking Koch to consult on and appear in an episode set at the Del Mar races north of San Diego. "In my will," says Koch, "I've got it written down that my ashes are to be spread on the following opening day at that track." **A**

HOTS: The original *CSI*; the Apple Pan; '80s hair band Skid Row; reading the *Daily Racing Form* online; the visceral thrill of watching your horse cross the finish line first; coaching Little League; cottages in Canada right on Lake Huron **NOTS:** Losing by a nose; tardiness; insecurity; close-talkers; know-it-alls; cats; cold weather; horror films without brains