

CAPE CANAVERAL

THE MUNRO FAMILY WENT LOOKING for a stallion to upgrade Alberta, Canada's regional breeding program a couple of years after converting an exotic cattle ranch near Okotoks into a full-service Thoroughbred breeding and training operation named Highfield Stock Farm.

"We were looking for very specific qualities," said Adrian Munro, whose father, David, bought the nearly 1,000 acres that make up Highfield. "We wanted someone who was precocious and more speed-biased because we do race on the bullrings up here."

They pursued Cape Canaveral, a son of Mr. Prospector out of 1990 Kentucky Oaks (G1) winner Seaside Attraction, who won at first asking at 2 and went on to win the six-furlong San Miguel Stakes (G3) as a homebred for the late W.T. Young's Overbrook Farm.

Cape Canaveral is the fourth graded stakes performer produced by Seaside Attraction, also the dam of grade 1 winners Golden Attraction (by Mr. Prospector) and Cape Town (by Seeking the Gold) and grade 3 winner Red Carnival (by Mr. Prospector). The colt had a short but brilliant career, winning three of four starts.

"We actually tried on two different occasions to get 'Cape,' but they wouldn't let him go because he and Storm Cat were functionally joined at the hip. He was his buddy," Munro recalled. "When Storm Cat passed on, then we took another shot at it. They were gracious enough to move him on, and he has been a great regional fit for us."

Highfield has been the leading breeder of Alberta-bred runners by earnings in 2010, 2013, 2015, and 2016 and was among the top five in 2017. Among Highfield's 16 leading Alberta-bred runners by 'A' track earnings, seven are by Cape Canaveral.

Now 22, the stallion is still reasonably

well supported by regional breeders though the farm has started to reduce his book because of his age, Munro said.

"He is still one of the top stallions in this market, and he looks great. If you didn't know he was 22, you wouldn't be able to tell," Munro said.

Jennifer Buck, Highfield's general manager, described Cape Canaveral as quirky and the undisputed king of the farm.

"There are little things, like he needs to be the first one out in the morning and the first one back in," Buck said. "Also, he is very social. When he is in his paddock, he wants to see horses and wants horses next to him. He is very observant, too. When you walk him out, he scans to make sure everyone is in their right place. He is very aware of everything, looks and watches everything."

Cape Canaveral has been siring exactly the type of runners hoped for.

"They are really compact, muscular body types," said Buck, who not only raises many



Cape Canaveral, 22, at Highfield in Alberta, Canada

of these runners as foals but also sees them broken and trained.

"He isn't big, about 15.2, so he doesn't add a lot of height, but he really stamps his babies with his body," she said. "They are wonderful foals. Last year's crop was one of my favorite years foal-wise; they were all beautiful and correct. They are nice to handle and nice to break."

Cape Canaveral's top Canadian-bred performer to date is multiple black-type winner Canaveral Leader, a daughter out of the Forest Wildcat mare Crystal Forest. Canaveral Leader raced from 2 to 5 and won three black-type stakes—Duchess of York Handicap, Northlands Oaks, and the Three and Four Year Old Fillies Stakes—and was runner-up in five other stakes. She retired with CAN\$230,831 (US\$221,139) in earnings. What Canaveral Leader will do as a producer is yet to be seen because she only has a yearling colt by Flat Out named Flat Out Leader and a weanling colt by Gayego.

Munro said he has high hopes for Cape Canaveral's future as a broodmare sire. The sire was represented in this year's Breeders' Cup World Championships by Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1) starter Seven Trumpets, a grade 1-placed son of Morning Line.

Regardless of how the sire's legacy unfolds, Buck said he'll always be the center of attention at Highfield.

"When he is done covering a mare, he likes to just stand there in the sun and look around the farm and take it all in. He is quite the character and the farm mascot, for sure," Buck said.

SHANNON LAWLOR