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**Gun Runner Begins Preparation for \$16 Million Pegasus World Cup**  
*Has First Timed Work Since Breeders' Cup Classic Victory*

**NEW ORLEANS, LA** - Gun Runner had his first timed workout Sunday since winning the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) on Nov. 4 at Del Mar as Winchell Thoroughbreds and Three Chimneys Farm's colt took another step toward making his final career start in Gulfstream Park's \$16 million Pegasus World Cup Invitational (G1) on Jan. 27.

Trainer Steve Asmussen is well-known for his horses engaging in "easy half" workouts, and this one was an even easier half-mile exercise, with Gun Runner striding home in 51 2/5 seconds under exercise rider Angel Garcia amid patchy fog at New Orleans' Fair Grounds Race Course.

First breeze back after the Classic, quite a bit of travel, a lot of things obviously have transpired since then with the announcement that he's going to run in the Pegasus and that being his last race," Asmussen said. "With the holiday season coming up, we got back on the work tab a touch sooner than planned. But the weather is great right now, the surface at the Fair Grounds is excellent and he's wanting to do something.

"I wanted him to not overdo it off of how hard and how fast he was working in California. I just wanted him to be patient," he added. "I had considered just skipping an easy half-mile coming back with him. But I thought he was pretty aggressive in his gallops for more than we'd done and just wanted him to settle in and relax and get back into the routine he's had so much success with."

Asmussen said current plans call for Gun Runner to ship to Gulfstream in time to have a work over the track the Monday before the 1 1/8-mile Pegasus. The race falls two days after he is expected to be crowned North American racing's 2017 Horse of the Year after a campaign that saw him go five-for-five in the United States, his only defeat a second behind 2016 Classic winner Arrogate in the Dubai World Cup (G1) in the United Arab Emirates. Gun Runner and jockey Florent Geroux avenged that defeat in the Breeders' Cup, doing so while setting a swift pace and being challenged throughout by Pacific Classic (G1) winner Collected on a day where front-runners struggled.

"He is everything you want one to be in the fact that he was extremely talented always," Asmussen said. "But he's incrementally gotten better and more professional and accepted a tremendous amount of pressure from the circumstances and the races and what was expected of him. [With] the culmination of winning the Breeders' Cup Classic in California under those circumstances, that's a Horse of the Year campaign."

Gun Runner, a son of the Lane's End stallion Candy Ride, has won five Grade 1 races in his career: last fall's Clark Handicap at Churchill Downs when he beat older horses, Churchill's Stephen Foster by seven lengths in his first start after Dubai, a sweep of Saratoga's prestigious Whitney (5 1/4 lengths) and Woodward (10 1/4) and the Breeders' Cup (2 1/4 over Collected). Last year's Louisiana Derby (G2) winner was second in the 2016 Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1) and third in the Kentucky Derby (G1), his 11 victories out of 18 career starts pushing him toward \$9 million in earnings.

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