



HIGH ON MARYLAND

Kevin Plank brings Sagamore Farm back to life

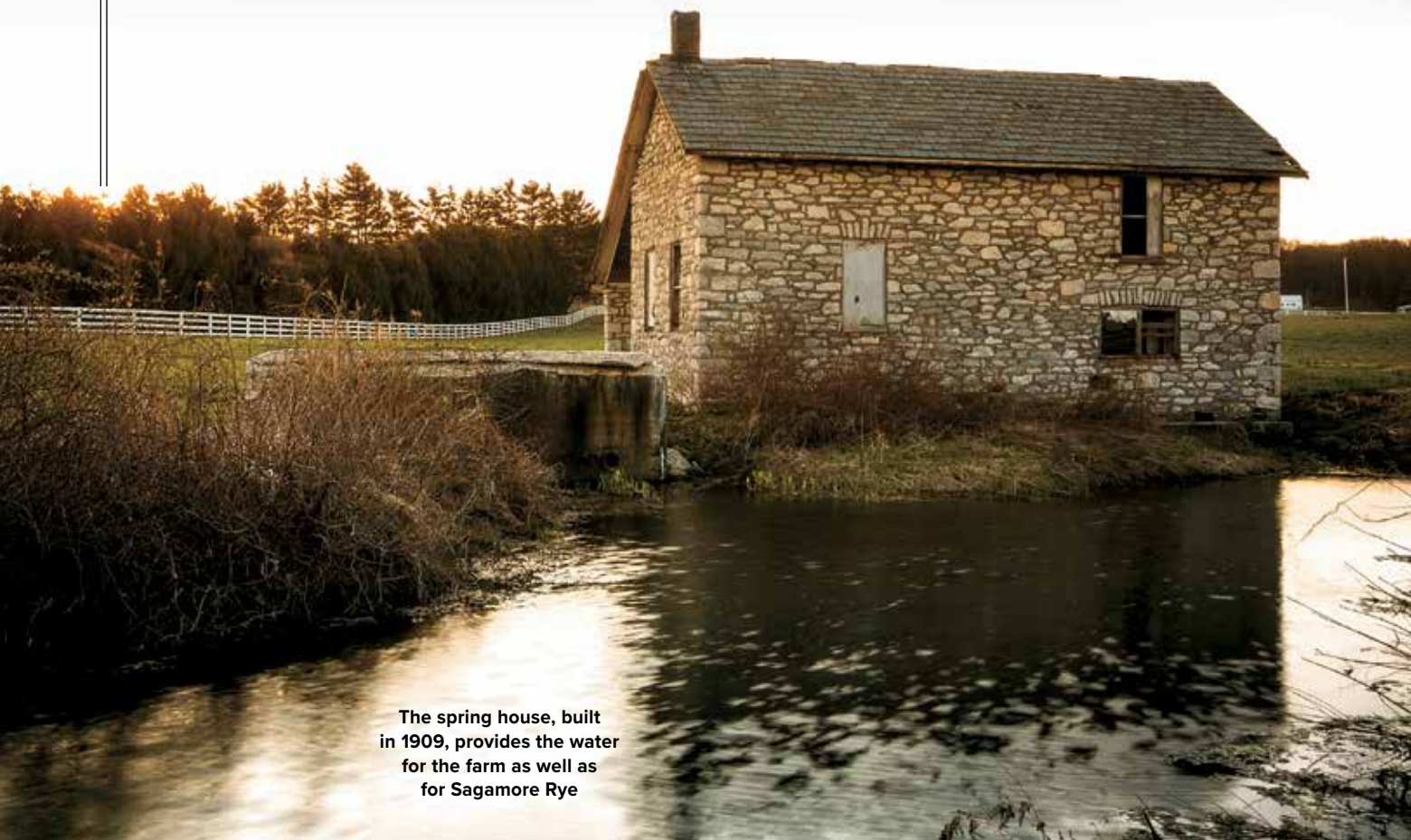
BY LENNY SHULMAN | PHOTOS BY MATT RYBCZYNSKI



NEARING ITS 100TH BIRTHDAY as a Thoroughbred operation, Sagamore Farm near Glyndon, Md., has a youthful sheen, courtesy of a restoration in the past decade since being purchased by Kevin Plank, founder of the apparel company Under Armour.

The farm was founded in 1925 by Isaac Emerson, the developer of Bromo-Seltzer, and passed through the hands of his daughter Margaret Emerson Vanderbilt, who bestowed it to her son Alfred G. Vanderbilt II on the occasion of his 21st birthday. Under Vanderbilt's reign, Sagamore imported Bahram in 1941 to stand at stud. He also stood 1966 Kentucky Derby winner Kauai King. But Vanderbilt will forever be known for campaigning Native Dancer, perfect except for a second in the 1953 Derby. Champions Bed o' Roses and Discovery were other outstanding runners from the stable.

Vanderbilt sold the property in the 1980s, and the farm fell into disrepair until Maryland native Plank purchased it. The 530 acres underwent a face-lift that included fixing and painting the fences, treating the pastures, and installing a six-furlong train-



The spring house, built in 1909, provides the water for the farm as well as for Sagamore Rye



Sagamore boasts a six-furlong Tapeta training track; below, right, grave of the great Native Dancer



“ *It’s a dream being here and being part of such a great brand; it’s pretty remarkable.*”

— HUNTER RANKIN



Some 100 horses call Sagamore home

ing track. Barns were also updated. Plank was rewarded when his Shared Account won the 2010 Emirates Airline Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf (G1T).

Today, Sagamore is home to 15 broodmares and around 100 horses. Farm manager Hunter Rankin calls the stable "A controlled program. We believe in taking it back to what Mr. Vanderbilt had, with a private trainer and successfully running them off the farm. Horacio DePaz is a young star who will be a very good trainer for a long time."

Sagamore had enjoyed success recently as co-owner of three-time 2016 grade 1 winner Miss Temple City, co-owner of 2017 Miami Mile Stakes (G3T) winner War Correspondent, and owner of 2017 Tremont Stakes winner He Hate Me and 2017 Bachelor Stakes and Chick Lang Stakes winner Recruiting Ready. Sagamore took the 2010 Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf (G1T) with Shared Account.

In addition to raising and racing Thoroughbreds, the Sagamore brand is represented by Sagamore Spirit, whose first product is Sagamore Rye whiskey. The water for the whiskey originates in Sagamore Farm's Spring House, a 108-year-old stone building that sits atop natural springs. Water from the Spring House is used throughout the farm and is trucked to the local distillery that makes Sagamore Rye.

Rankin, who grew up in the Thoroughbred business in



Historic indoor track inside the training barn once used for the Vanderbilt horses



The farm office is also used as a hospitality house



Sagamore's racing stable has been on the upswing



Louisville at his family’s Upson Down Farm, said, “Being here at Sagamore is a dream. It’s so special to be part of such a great brand and work for a guy like Kevin, who cares about his people and the history of the game and the history of the farm. He wants to do things the right way and build something special.”

Thanks to an agreement on slots revenue, Maryland racing is on the upswing, with improved purses and a renovated Laurel Park driving an upward trend in the state’s breeding industry. Plank and Sagamore, then, appear to be in the right place at the right time. A self-described contrarian, Plank has certainly played a big part in Maryland’s comeback. He told the *New York Times* several years back, “I love broken things, I love big ideas, and I love longshots. So when everybody said that racing’s terrible and it’s going to go away, to me that’s the best time to get involved.” **BH**



The farm office includes historic photos and a nod to the Sagamore Spirit brand