



ALEXIS BARBA

Alexis Barba is not one of your household names in racing, but she just might be after this Triple Crown season. From her six-horse stable, she has two bona fide prospects for the 2010 Kentucky Derby in *Alphie's Bet* and *Make Music for Me*.

Also part of her stable is *Victory Pete*, who was on the 2008 Triple Crown trail before suffering a bruised foot the day before he was to run in the Arkansas Derby. Barba is hopeful he could become a force in this year's handicap division in Southern California.



Barba, born July 27, 1952 in Oakland, Calif., describes herself as “a horse nut” as a child, someone who ventured off to riding stables as a youngster and worked there to earn chances to ride. That led to being involved with show horses in her teen-age years.

She made her way to the racetrack life in her 20s, working first with trainer Jack Utley at Golden Gate Fields. After learning how to groom and gallop Thoroughbreds for Utley, whom she described as “a great horseman,” she worked for trainers Jerry Dutton, Tommy Doyle and Bill Spawr before becoming an assistant trainer for 20 years with Eddie Gregson, who trained *Gato del Sol* to win the 1982 Kentucky Derby.

Following Gregson's death in 2000, Barba took over the stable's operation and has continued ever since.

During her early learning days on the racetrack, she bred her broodmare, *French Dish*, to the stallion *Poker* and the mare delivered a filly that Barba named *Lepta*, which means money in Greek, which is the trainer's ethnic heritage. She got the filly to the races, learning the training craft along the way. Barba describes *French Dish* as a “decent producer,” foaling 17 babies, by Barba's recollection.

Among her loyal owners over her 10 years at the helm, Barba lists Mrs. Arturo Peralta-Ramos of New York and Ellen and Peter Johnson Jr., owners and co-owners of *Make Music for Me* and *Alphie's Bet*, respectively. The Johnsons bought *Make Music for Me* as a 2-year-old at the 2009 Barretts sale in Southern California and own *Alphie's Bet* with breeder Teresa McWilliams.

Barba, who is divorced, has a home in South Pasadena, Calif., and has a 21-year-old son, George, who works in marketing in Beverly Hills, Calif.