



Staff photo by Ben Baugh

Twin Hopes Farm's Helen Andrews the owner of Marialua, who won the fifth race on the Aiken Trials card with Anne Mitchell who trains the horse.

# Ohio natives choose Aiken to train horses in winter

By BEN BAUGH  
Staff writer

A lifetime love of horses has enabled thoroughbred trainer Anne Mitchell to succeed in a game that's full of adversity and pitfalls.

The Cincinnati native cut her teeth at River Downs and has plied her trade at a number of racetracks in the Midwest.

Mitchell's husband, Bill Pezzano, was conditioning a string of horses at Thistle-down in North Randall, Ohio, when they met. Anne was shipping a horse to race at Thistledown, and a mutual friend introduced the two thoroughbred trainers.

"It's important that a busy trainer has a good spouse," said Mitchell. "My husband is my Rock of Gibraltar."

The couple live a demanding lifestyle that's endemic to the racetrack and the thoroughbred industry.

"When you're a thoroughbred trainer, it isn't like run-

ning a law office or having a 9-5 job," said Mitchell. "Bill and I consider ourselves full-time, stay-at-home parents; we have nine horses, four cats and a dog."

In addition to their success at River Downs and Thistledown, Mitchell and Pezzano's Handasyde Stable, Inc., has seen its charges succeed at Mountaineer Park, Arlington Park and Prairie Meadows.

"I'm fortunate to have good owners," said Mitchell, who won the fifth trial Saturday with Marialua for owner Helen Andrews Twin Hopes Farm. "She (Helen Andrews) has a large breeding operation, and consigns her horses with Viking Stud, Pam Littrell, agent. I recognize the time and effort she puts into her business. She lives and dies with these horses. None of this would be possible without the help of owners like Helen Andrews."

Mitchell and Andrews have had success previously, with

a filly that had spent time in Aiken, a daughter of the 1995 Canadian Horse of the Year, multiple grade 1 winning millionaire Peaks and Valleys, Panorama Valley captured the Silver Maiden Stakes and the Prairie Gold Lassie Stakes.

"Our first stakes winner was a homebred for Helen Andrews, and it was our hope that it would be a homebred," said Mitchell. "She won stakes at Arlington Park and Prairie Meadows."

Panorama Valley has been retired from racing and dropped her first foal, a filly, on March 1, who is by Honour and Glory. She has been bred back to Forest Camp.

The couple will soon make their return to Altoona, Iowa, the home of Prairie Meadows Racetrack.

"Prairie Meadows is a great facility," said Mitchell. "It's very clean and there's no pollution in Iowa. Every time we scope a horse, it comes up clean."