

# Winner's Circle

## FINANCIAL GURU GRANDICH A NEW HARNESS OWNER

Peter Grandich has been a harness racing fan for more than 40 years, but he didn't win his first race as an owner until Nov. 8, when his horse Dinner Guest scored at Harrah's Chester.

Grandich, who is known internationally for his financial acumen, especially in relation to making accurate market predictions, started going to the track as a youngster when he accompanied his father to Yonkers and Roosevelt—and had to sneak in because laws at the time prohibited children at the track.

Ironically, it was a chance encounter with a child at Freehold Raceway, a track not far from Grandich's New Jersey home, which put the wheels in motion for him to buy his first harness horse.

"One day I was in the dining room at Freehold and I hear this little voice say that they are going to take this horse's number down. There's this little kid with glasses telling me this," recalled Grandich. "I told the kid I had a ticket on this horse and the horse needed to stay up, and then they kept the horse up. I cashed my ticket, and I felt bad about giving the kid a little bit of a hard time, so I gave him a few bucks."

***"To eventually end up coming up with a horse and having Cat drive it, to me that was like winning the Hambletonian!" – Peter Grandich***

Grandich said he went back to Freehold and on his third or fourth visit he struck up another conversation with the youngster and learned that the 11-year-old's father was trainer Carl Cito Jr.

It took another intervention of sorts before Grandich became a harness horse owner. "I was out at an event and Anthony Abbatiello was there, and I asked him about Carl. And Anthony told me Carl was like a son to him, that he dated his daughter."

Grandich was ready to buy a horse after Abbatiello gave his blessing to Cito, but it

took the trainer about six months to find a horse. That horse was Dinner Guest, a 6-year-old gelding by No Pan Intended, who Grandich claimed for \$60,000 at the Meadowlands in June.

When Grandich went to Cito's farm to see Dinner Guest for the first time, he ran into another familiar—but unexpected—face. "I'm at the barn, and I see a car drive up, and Cat Manzi gets out!" says Grandich. "My father passed away in 1988. Until he died, we went to the track together and Cat Manzi was my father's favorite driver. My father used to put a \$2 ticket in my pocket each time Catman drove in a race. To eventually end up coming up with a horse and having Cat drive it, to me that was like winning the Hambletonian!"

Manzi drove Grandich's horse Dinner Guest to the Nov. 8 victory at Chester and then scored again with the horse on Nov. 29 at Chester.

"His horses got off to a little bit of a slow start, but he's very patient and he seems to really enjoy the people and the business," said Manzi of Grandich.

Since Dinner Guest, Grandich, who has previously owned Thoroughbreds, has purchased two other horses: the 3-year-old filly trotter Orange Bigi, who competed in the Duenna at the Meadowlands the night before the Hambo, and an interest in a yearling pacing-bred filly by Bettor's Delight out of Poodle Party. He has named the yearling Rose Troy, after his mother-in-law, who lives in Ireland.

Cito said his new client comes by his barn a couple of times a week to see his horses and soak up the atmosphere. "He's very enthusiastic," said Cito. "And he goes to the track, and when Chester closes both of his racehorses will be able to race at either the Meadowlands or Yonkers."



Owner Peter Grandich stands next to driver Cat Manzi after Dinner Guest's Nov. 8 victory.

WorldWide Racing Photo

Grandich, who has been married to his wife Mary for 30 years and has a daughter, Tara, attending St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, sees that he has gone full-circle with his bond with harness racing.

"I've been back to Yonkers, and despite all the improvements they have made there, the fence that I used to go through as a kid is still there," he claims. "And ironically, the only track my father never went to within 300 miles of New York City was Freehold, and now he's buried in the cemetery overlooking that track."

To pay for his horses, Grandich keeps his financial blog ([www.grandich.com](http://www.grandich.com)) current for its large following of more than 200,000 investors. He is also a founder of Trinity Financial Sports & Entertainment Management Co, a firm with a Christian perspective which he started in 2001 with former New York Giant and two-time Super Bowl champion Lee Rouson. "I do most of my work with the New York Giants, so as I diehard Jets fan, I've found that God really does have a sense of humor!" he joked.

Grandich has also written an autobiography, "Confessions of a Wall Street Whiz Kid," which is available on Amazon.com. In the book he shares his story of growing up in the Bronx, his career in the financial world, and his battle with depression and journey embracing his Christian faith.—

By Kathy Parker

