

THE THOROUGHBRED DAILY NEWS REVIEWS BARRY IRWIN'S NEWEST BOOK "A KNIGHT ERRANT" IS TEAM VALOR INTERNATIONAL CEO'S FIRST NOVEL CHRISTINA BOSSINAKIS OFFERS CANDID THOUGHTS ON IRWIN'S FICTION

The following book review appeared recently in *The Thoroughbred Daily News*.



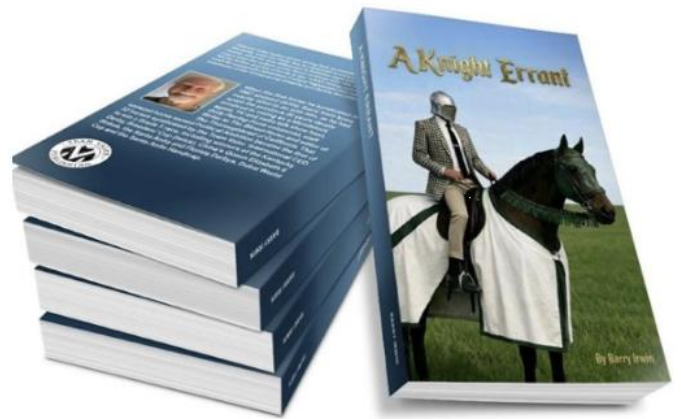
Barry Irwin's 'A Knight Errant' Straight to the Point

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By *Christina Bossinakis*

For anyone who has had the opportunity to meet Barry Irwin, it's doubtful any one of them would describe him as subtle or understated. A former journalist and handicapper who delved into the world of bloodstock and ownership syndicates before they really became commonplace, Irwin has worn a great many hats in horse racing over the past six decades and to say that he has experienced the sport through a *very wide* lens wouldn't be an understatement.



A Knight Errant | Team Valor Publishing

Irwin is probably best known for co-founding Team Valor in 1987 before buying out partner Jeff Siegel and rebranding as Team Valor International in 2007. Under the Team Valor banner, Irwin syndicated 32 Grade I winners, most notably his own homebred Animal Kingdom, winner of the 2011 Kentucky Derby.

Sixty years in the making, Irwin presents his third book—and his very first novel—*A Knight Errant*, a strikingly candid look at the Thoroughbred racing industry and many of the personalities that frequent sport's landscape.

Often introducing historical characters recognizable to the present-racing buff, Irwin provides a tangible understanding of the game to the neophyte, while simultaneously exploring the dramas and politics that frequently unfold behind the scenes on the racetrack, whether from the perspective of the media, the horsemen, the clockers, the bettors or the officials.

The novel unfolds through the eyes of William, a young up-and-coming journalist who breaks into the world of racehorse ownership with the purchase, and ensuing roller coaster racing career, of Knight Errant. Supported by a quick pace, the story provides the reader a glimpse of the Sport of Kings during a particularly fruitful time in racing history, the 1970s.

"I chose 1977 as the era in which to set the stage of the book because that is right about the time a new class of performance enhancing drugs made their way into our game," explained Irwin. "It was also one of the absolute golden ages of our sport. In conceptualizing the effort, I wanted

to do for racing what Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* did for baseball. I hope readers will find it entertaining, hilarious, meaningful and important.”

Not surprisingly, *A Knight Errant* doesn't pull its punches when addressing the issue of illegal drugs and other performance enhancing devices, both of which Irwin has proven very vocal about since his foray into the game.

The novel also explores the universal themes of integrity versus dishonesty and corruption, highlighting the stalwarts of the sport and the bottom feeders in equal measure.

Intelligently written and an entertaining read, *A Knight Errant* is straightforward enough for the general reader who may not be well versed in racing jargon, while providing enough technical and historical nuance for the more racing aficionado. And while it is based in the U.S. in the 1970s, the narrative also seems to lend itself to a more contemporary setting.

Admittedly, at times *A Knight Errant* seems to cast a particularly strong glare on some of the more unsavory aspects of horse racing, however, it became increasingly clear, to this reader at least, that at the root of the novel are the love of the game, and more importantly, the horse.