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Kentucky Derby pedigree profiles: Firing Line

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Benoit & Associates

Firing Line (center) finished a close second in the Grade 1 Los Alamitos Futurity in December.

Firing Line

Line of David – Sister Girl Blues, by Hold for Gold

(Bred in Kentucky by Clearsky Farms; \$240,000 purchase by Ben McElroy, agent, at 2014 Keeneland April 2-year-olds in training sale)

[Firing Line](#) acquitted himself well in his stakes debut and first attempt around two turns, finishing second by a head to unbeaten Dortmund in the Grade 1 Los Alamitos Futurity on Dec. 20. Now targeting another showdown with Dortmund in the Grade 3 Robert B. Lewis Stakes this Saturday, the colt's pedigree suggests his best days are still ahead of him. Both sire Line of David and dam Sister Girl Blues blossomed at age 3 or later.

Firing Line is from the first crop of Line of David, who got good at the right time, winning his maiden in February of his 3-year-old season and rattling off three straight wins at a mile or longer, culminating with the Grade 1 Arkansas Derby, before running unplaced in the Kentucky Derby, his final career start. The son of Lion Heart – a brilliant individual who carried his speed well enough to finish second in the Kentucky Derby – had only 30 starters from his first crop and finished 11th by earnings in a deep group of freshman sires for 2014. However, his runners have encouragingly begun to blossom in recent months. Firing Line's Los Alamitos Futurity placing came in his third career start, in December. Meanwhile, Cross the Line won his maiden in December in his first try at

a mile, and then won the California Derby at 1 1/16 miles in January. A pair of other runners by Line of David were stakes-placed in December and January.

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Sister Girl Blues debuted at age 3 and scored both of her wins over three racing seasons at a mile or longer. She was multiple graded stakes-placed, highlighted by a runner-up effort behind champion Azeri in the Grade 1 Vanity Handicap at 1 1/8 miles. Her only other runner to date is the sprinter Jalouzi, similarly late-blooming.

Out of the Conquistador Cielo mare Sister Girl, a winner at six furlongs, Sister Girl Blues is a half-sister to Mint Lane, winner of a pair of route stakes, including the Grade 2 Dwyer Stakes.

There's an extreme amount of class deep in Firing Line's family. His fourth dam, the unraced Forli mare Forlis Key, is a half-sister to Kentucky Oaks winner and blue hen Seaside Attraction, Canadian classic winner and champion Key to the Moon, and multiple Grade 1 winner Gorgeous. Another two generations back, the sixth dam is champion Square Angel, whose foals include Grade 1 winner Love Smitten, dam of European champion Swain. Recent standouts on the track with roots in this family include multiple Grade 1 winners Alpha, Turbulent Descent, and Flashing.