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**REVIEWS**

Jan. 10, 2005

### American Dream Derby

By Barry Garron

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Bottom line: Well cast.  
9 p.m., Monday, Jan. 10  
GSN

"American Dream Derby" makes a horse race out of the reality game show elimination genre in every sense of the term. Set at the historic Santa Anita racetrack, "Derby" pits 12 contestants -- some horse aficionados and some with absolutely no horse sense -- against each other. After the usual eliminations, alliances, accusations and bizarre challenges -- along with call-in votes that allow players to be reinstated -- eight contestants will select a horse that runs during a live telecast Feb. 21. To the winner goes \$250,000 and a stable of thoroughbreds.

The show, from Stone & Company Entertainment, is well cast. The players are a diverse lot and provide the necessary ingredients of snappy comments and superheated emotion. What's more, as in the better reality shows, there's some worthwhile information to be gleaned from viewing, some of which could come in handy later at track windows. Best of all, obnoxious product placement is practically nonexistent, save for a few mentions of Daily Racing Form and Santa Anita and a tie-in with LeAnn Rimes, who sings the show's theme song.

Former model Steve Santagati is a likable enough host, and production values are strong. Good thing, too, because trying to remember all the contestants and the horses requires more than the usual level of attention typically demanded of reality contests.



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