



technology on the fast track

BY JANE GLEESON

New horse training technique adds a touch of technology

A horse is a horse ... or so the song goes. But what happens when the horse is a racehorse in the 21st century? Not surprisingly, at some point along the way, technology enters the equine equation.

Today's horseracing enthusiasts might be wise to put their money on an innovative training technique that's bringing technology to the track. The Kurtsystems Horse-Training Car may look like a high-tech horse-drawn carriage to the casual observer, but in reality

it's a state-of-the-art method that automates the precise process of training racehorses.

Created by Kurtsystems, of Istanbul, Turkey, the 4.5-ton, \$427,000 vehicle surrounds the horse in a U-shape, with front silicone doors controlled by the driver. The animal is secured with special safety belts designed to support, contain and correct its strength. Just as the vehicle starts to move, the doors open and the horse begins its workout.

The Kurtsystems Horse-Training Car is



equipped with high-tech training tools designed to track the animal's vital signs and pace. An electrocardiogram machine, for example, monitors heart function, while an oxygen mask measures oxygen intake, and articular sensors provide computerized feedback on the horse's gait. All together, the system and tools are designed to maximize animal safety.

In fact, safety was the impetus for the company's founder, Mehmet Kurt, to design the Kurtsystems Horse-Training Car. Having

lost his own horse as a result of overtraining and human error, Kurt created a machine that would train horses to their full potential and eliminate such afflictions as lactic acidosis — a condition that can cause irreparable lung and muscle damage, even death — by alerting trainers to muscular, circulatory and respiratory problems.

The system enables individual testing for a horse's level of preparation, potential and critical point of fatigue — an early analysis

of the animal's limits, behavior and weak points, which may be correctable with traditional training methods.

The Kurtsystems Car can be used to train a horse on any type of racetrack and at various speeds, including a fast gallop at speeds of up to 37 mph (60 kmh). However, according to the company's Web site, it is particularly useful for training a horse at gallop speeds of 24-32 mph (40-52 kmh) without the extra weight of a jockey. 🐾