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# BREEDERS' UPDATE



THE BREEDERS' AND WOODLANDS  
STUD PRESENT  
THE BREEDERS' UPDATE.

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# BREEDERS' UPDATE

November 27 2020

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## ALL ROUNDER WILLIS ON THE BOARD AT ASCOT PARK

Brad Reid

Southland horsewoman Brittany Willis is a star on the rise in the Harness Racing community.

The Branhholme lass had gone close to tasting victory recently when her pacer Honey Money produced top-five finishes in five of her previous six starts.

On Wednesday afternoon in the glorious Southland sunshine, Willis was able to record her first win as a trainer at her home track at Ascot Park.

The road to her first training success started back in June when she decided she was looking for a project horse to put in work, and went public with her quest to secure a suitable horse.

"I put a post on the Harness Racing Enthusiasts Facebook page saying that I was looking for a horse, perhaps one that had lost form or had some issues, as I was basically looking for a project type horse.

"A girl called Chantelle Kentish who worked for Robbie Holmes got in touch a few days later asking if I was still looking and said she had a horse for me," said Willis.

Money Honey was bred by John and Katrina Price of Winton from an In The Pocket mare called Annabelle Me.

The Price's had tried her as a young horse but she needed time and with plenty of young stock and yearlings for the sales decided to lease her out, which is how she ended up at Leithfield Beach.

Money Honey was well-schooled at the trials and workouts making 10 appearances before appearing at the races in June this year.

"They got her qualified in October last year and were pretty happy with how she was going, but when she came back in to work, she didn't really want to be a racehorse and the connections decided to move her on," said Willis.

"She's a really really nice wee horse and lovely to have around, you can't fault her in that respect. She was just very lazy and very quiet. When you took her out to jog her you had to slap her up to get her interested, but now she's really come into herself and realised she's a racehorse.

Money Honey's road to the winner's circle has been a slow burner with the mare running several honest races over the last two months, with those appearances including two thirds and a pair of fourth placings at her most recent race day starts.



*Brittany Willis greets Money Honey and Samantha Ottley after taking out the first race at Ascot park on Wednesday*

She was sent out as the punters elect in the opener on the card at Ascot Park yesterday and duly obliged in the hands of Sam Ottley.

She didn't get things her own way either, being forced to go back to last from a wide draw only to have to loop the field and sit outside the leader a lap from home. From there she was too good with the commentator rightly stating what was a well-deserved win for both Honey Money and her trainer owner.

"It's huge, absolutely amazing," said Willis.

"This is my first season training racehorses properly, prior to this year I have only really done young ones and broken them and taken them through to the trials. A lot of blood, sweat and tears have gone into getting that win and it means the world to me," she said.

"I'm pretty meticulous with how I do things and there is no expense spared on any of my horses, and it's been very rewarding.

Willis isn't from a racing family or background but has grown up around different horse breeds. She fell in love with standardbreds when she was given a retired mare as a hack.

"I got my first standardbred when I was eighteen and fell in love with the breed.

"I moved to West Australia when I was 21 to work in the mines. On my week off I used to go and hang out with Graeme Bond who was private training for Allwood Stud at the time. He also introduced me to horse ownership with a few shares and had a bit of success," she said.

The bug had well and truly bitten with Willis soon after purchasing her first broodmare, Kamwood Girl (Courage Under Fire – Kamwood Lass).

The daughter of Courage Under Fire had wound up over in Perth after six fruitless starts in New Zealand in Tony Herlihy's care. She finished her career having won 11 races with 22 placings and over \$100,000 in stake earnings.

"We bought her when she had retired from racing and took her home with us to breed from when we went back to New Zealand," she said.

"My friends' mother is actually Dianne Wood from Pukekohe who bred all the Kamwood horses and they also gave me my other mare, Kamwood Beauty after Dianne passed away.

The 'Kamwood' moniker started back in the early 1970's when Wood started breeding from Bonny Roto (1958 U Scott – Bonny Brigade) and experienced some early success.

Wood's third foal from Bonny Roto by Estes Minbar, a son of Adios, produced Kamwood Belle, a filly who features as the second and third dam of both Kamwood mares in Willis' care.

Kamwood Belle won the Group Two C F McCarthy Ladyship Stakes in 1980 among her eight race day victories.

The breed has produced plenty of nice horses without featuring any superstars to be fair, but the sales page includes the likes of Group One winner Kamwood Cully and Kamwood Laughter, the winner of 47 races in the United States and well over \$350,000 in stakes.

Willis has bred four foals from Kamwood Girl thus far with mixed success.

The first foal by Art Major was qualified here for Willis in 2017 before being sent to Perth to be tried as a racehorse under the name Foveaux Major, the moniker stemming from Willis' Southland roots with the Foveaux Strait not far away.

"We actually retained him. I qualified him and sent him to race in West Australia with a good friend of mine, Robbie Williams.

"He wasn't much chop over there unfortunately," she said.

"The second foal was by Washington VC (Foveaux VC) who we sold as a weanling to West Australia."



He doesn't appear in any official records unfortunately so not much to report at this stage, but fingers crossed he's a Mighty Quinn waiting to happen.

"I've retained the two fillies I have out of the mare. I haven't done anything with them to be honest, they've only really been broken in.

The two fillies are an unregistered three-year-old by Sweet Lou and a two-year-old by American Ideal called Foveaux Lexington.

The Sweet Lou filly will have to overcome some mild deformities in her legs to make a racehorse which were bad enough to see Willis consider having her put down as a foal.

The big-hearted horse lover couldn't bring herself to do it and will give her a chance to see if she can make it to the track in due course.

The American Ideal filly from the mare couldn't be any more different. A striking filly on type but unfortunately for Willis, she found out first-hand what a brutal market the yearling sales are with her first foray into the ring earlier this year.

"She is absolutely lovely. We took her to the sales and she never even got a bid which shocked me at the time because there was absolutely nothing wrong with her," she said.

14 lots earlier Willis had practically given away a lovely Betting Line colt from Kamwood Beauty for \$11,000 to Greg Payne.

What would have felt like a kick in the guts at the time has actually turned out to have a silver lining with Willis soon to join forces with Jeremy Douglas in a training partnership.

The pair will have a few of the 'Foveaux' stock to put into work alongside Money Honey and a few others which will provide a good platform for the young trainers to launch from.

They include a three-year-old cold called Foveaux Manchego (Betterthancheddar) whom Willis bred from Kamwood Beauty who has also had limited preparations or work done with him.

"We are going in together and we are going to start a team," Willis said.

"We have got six in work and we are just getting the paperwork lined up."

"We just opened a joint bank account yesterday because we had to have that first before we do the partnership papers," she said.

"Debbie and Mark Smith are a great support to me. I met them because they weaned the first foal out of Kamwood Girl for me and that's how I got to know them.

They are like my second parents and have been a massive help and always encouraging me to go further with my passion," she said.

"I do a lot of work with them come yearling sales time and if they have any horses that have any problems or need rehabilitation then they send them to me. They show me massive support and I really appreciate having them."

Debbie Smith from Shard Farm Standardbreds is overflowing with praise when discussing the many equine talents that Willis has in her arsenal.

"She just has a natural way with a horse and never gets in any trouble with them," said Smith.

"She understands how to feed a horse and has a real gift about how to handle a horse as well. She leads all of my horses in the yearling sales videos and on parade day and she is just a natural organiser who does the job and knows what I expect and what to expect.

"She never leaves any stone unturned and is very thorough. I would highly recommend her as a person who will do the job properly. I won't hesitate to give her some of my team to break-in when the opportunity arises," she said.

Willis is proficient in what the old school would term 'radical therapies' having a background an equine body worker doing red light therapy as well as equine massage practices such as 'bowen therapy'.

"I gave her Yankee Shard for a period of time just to remodel his thinking because he was frightened after his bit breaking in a race, and he wouldn't settle. She just took her time and took a month or so taking him down to the track and gave him Bowen therapy and massaging and the like. The first time we lined him up after leaving him with Brittany he ran second," she exclaimed.

Willis doesn't see herself having time for any yearling sales forays this year given how busy she is with her own dealings of horse therapy treatments and her new training partnership but intends to help out the Shard team where possible.

Having helped prepare yearlings for the sales and this year taken two of her own to the ring, Willis has loved being a part of the Southern Bred Southern Reared fabric that has dominated the sales in Christchurch over the last few years. The reasons for their success are evident to Willis when pressed as to what makes the group work so well!

"Everybody has to come together, work together, collaborate and be proactive and always moving forward. You can't accept the status quo; you have to keep looking for new ideas and always striving to improve.

"It's such a supportive group and Southlanders are such great people who are always building each other up. There is so much encouragement, it's a fantastic group to be a part of," she said.





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*Spankem and Natalie Rassmussen run away from their rivals in the New Zealand Free For All on Show Day*

## **WAH WOWED BY SPANKEM**

Jonny Turner

Spankem's brilliant front-running win in the Mediaworks 'Make Some Noise' New Zealand Free-For-All on Show Day at Addington has set up what is set to be a superb final month in the stellar breeding career of his dam, Crushem.

Crushem has entered the final stages of her life as a super-producer for breeders Robin and Gwenda Wah, just days after the twenty-year-old added Group 1 title number six to her resume earlier.

The Holmes Hanover broodmare gem is in the late stages of carrying a full-brother to her superstar son Spankem, due to be foaled any day.

The safe delivery of a healthy Bettor's Delight foal will end one chapter of the incredible story Crushem has written for the Wahs.

Their journey started with a phone call in 1998 and Robin Wah could not have imagined he was about to plant a seed that twenty years later would produce one of the fastest, if not the fastest, pacer in Australasia.

"Vic and Liz Smith owned Crushem's dam Elizabeth Denver, they were clients of mine," Robin Wah said. "And they offered me a couple of turns breeding from her.

"I remember I was out fishing one day at Tekapo and they rang up and said 'how would you like to do that?' and I said 'oh yeah, right oh' and I was up for it."

"And that was how I got Crushem."

Wah admitted at the time, he hoped he could breed a group race winner.

Though the thought of breeding a New Zealand Free-

For-All, Miracle Mile, Taylor Mile and Messenger champion was not quite on his radar.

Crushem started off by showing moderate ability on the track, winning a Timaru maiden before going to the broodmare barn.

At that stage, breeding a seventh foal from the mare was hardly in the picture.

But thankfully the Wahs pressed on or Spankem would not have come along.

"We finished racing her and I thought I might as well breed from her" Wah said. "It was only going to be one or two foals."

"But then I loved the game so much I kept going."

Crushem started off by producing In The Pocket colt Thumpem, who got his dam's breeding career off to a brilliant start by winning the Sales Series Final as a two-year-old.

"I had it in my mind it would be great to breed a group race winner. It didn't have to be a Group 1."

"Then we had a bit of luck with our first foal, Thumpem, he won a listed race – the Sales Series Final."

Crushem continued her good start by producing Mach Three filly Sunday Girl, who won once in New Zealand before contesting heats of the New South Wales and Victoria Oaks after she was sold to Australia.

A McArdle colt, Smokem, came next and he also won in Australia.

Sluggem, by Christian Cullen, then showed promise, placing in a Sales Series Final before also contesting good races in Australia.

Crushem's next Christian Cullen foal, Stompem, did a good job in New Zealand and is still racking up wins in across the Tasman.



But it would be in 2013 when the Wahs turned to siring phenomenon Bettor's Delight that Crushem would take his dam's career to a new level.

Fast forward to today, with six Group 1 titles and a Pac-ing Breeders Of The Year trophy to their name, the thrills from breeding Spankem have not diminished.

And that was again the case on Show Day at Addington. "It was amazing, he was just super, really."

"His speed seems to lay hidden there for a while and then they call on it when he needs it."

"That was the winning of the race, of course. It was a great effort."

The Wahs have been in the rare position of having the horse they've bred and sold leading around the turn and looking a massive winning chance in the last two New Zealand Cups.

Though Spankem was run down late by Cruz Bromac in 2019 and again by Self Assured this year the thrill of running second has still been immense for his breeders.

"The first year we were out there and when he slipped two lengths on them on the corner I thought he is going to get this. But it was still a great run and still a great thrill."

"You can't ask for more. He has been run down by two horses that have had good runs. You can't take it away from the winners."

"I was sitting there and I think I might have bred a Miracle Mile winner and a New Zealand Cup winner in the same year, that would be amazing. But it wasn't quite to be."

"We are more than happy with how things have turned out and really proud. And we have met some great people on this journey as well. It has been really fun."

Crushem, who was officially due to foal on November 18, may almost be finished as a broodmare, but her legacy as a producer is far from being finalised.

The Wahs are breeding from her five-year-old Bettor's Delight daughter, Ima Single Girl.

The full sister to Spankem has left a Vincent filly and has recently had a foal by Sweet Lou and been served by Art Major.

The Wahs also have an Art Major yearling filly from Crushem. Her two-year-old full-brother was purchased by Cran Dalgety at this year's national yearling sales.

# MISSALYSSA REWARDS 25 YEARS OF TOIL

GARRICK KNIGHT

To fully comprehend just how much Missalyssa's Show Day win meant to her owner and breeder Warren Pitches, you first have to understand his historical involvement in the industry.

He has had skin in the game for thirty-odd years and raced at least a dozen horses before Missalyssa came along.

But it wasn't until she cleared maidens on a cold mid-winter night at Forbury Park in June 2018 that he even made it to the winners' circle.

Fast-forward to 2020 and, while it's been a hellish year for most, Pitches will remember it for being one of the best of his life.

Since resuming racing in May, Missalyssa has improved out of sight, recording four wins and putting over \$31,000 in her connections' pockets.

This of course was capped off by her New Zealand-record win in the \$26,000 Lanson Champagne Mobile Trot at Addington on Show Day.

"We were so thrilled.

"For years we'd wanted to go to the Cup Week meetings so it was wonderful just to have a horse starting there.

"We went up on the Tuesday with no exceptions, just a promise we would enjoy ourselves and we did.

"And she was brilliant on Cup Day too. She led all the way over two miles and only got run down very late."

Trainer Andrew Faulks had no hesitation backing her up three days later and any doubts Pitches was allayed pre-race.

"In the stables before the race, I went and spoke to Blair Orange and said what do you reckon about her backing up?

"He said the track is fast, they're going good times, she'll love it.

"And, of course, he was right."

It was a brilliant performance and one which saw her shave 0.4 secs off Splash Cola's mares' record for the Addington-exclusive 1980-metre distance.





*Missalyssa and Blair Orange brain them on Show Day after adopting similar tactics that saw the mare do so well Cup Day*

"You wouldn't believe the thrill we got winning that race. "And I didn't know she'd set the record until the Chairman gave his speech after the race."

The win was the result of at least 25 years' worth of racing and breeding by Oamaru-based Pitches, who two years ago set up his own horse-centric property to start a breeding programme.

"I've had a lot of seconds and thirds, and a few bad luck stories along the way.

"Then two years ago, when Missalyssa was still a maiden, we bought a property that borders the Williamsons in Oamaru.

"I've got my mare Uramao based there, though she's up at Phoebe Stud at present, and Missalyssa will eventually join her and become part of our breeding programme."

Uramao, which is Oamaru backwards, is Missalyssa's dam and Pitches came across the Sundon mare when part of a four-man racing syndicate associated with the North Otago Rugby Union more than a decade ago.

"She showed potential and was quite speedy, but mad in the head and one placing was her lot.

"I bought her off the other guys and took her home to breed from."

He settled on Monarchy and Missalyssa was the result, the name derived from a family link across the Pacific.

"My daughter has lived in 'the States' for 22 years, in northern California, where she owns a dude ranch.

"We go over there quite regularly actually, though not this year for obvious reasons.

"Anyway, Alyssa is my granddaughter and around the ranch they call her Miss Alyssa.

"I've always said to her that I wanted to fly her over to watch the horse race, and this year would have been perfect for it but with the world as it is, it just couldn't

happen."

Pitches has been breeding Uramao every two years and after she failed to deliver a foal to Pegasus Spur, he returned to Monarchy's son, Royal Aspirations, two years ago.

"The result was a three-quarter sister to Missalyssa named after another granddaughter and called Miss Gracie.

"She's only a yearling but has already been educated and Andy speaks very highly of her.

"With Monarchy no longer available and Royal Aspirations his only son at stud, it made sense to go to him."

Pitches says the association with Faulks was just by chance. He's never regretted staying loyal and is happy both are now getting a pay-off.

"I had a horse that wasn't going too well and someone suggested sending it out to Noel Creighton on the beach at Waikouaiti.

"It was about then that Andy was taking over and I've stuck with him ever since.

"I like him – he's a good bugger – and I'm thrilled the horse is performing well for him and he's getting some recognition for his efforts."

In a not-unfamiliar story for Pitches, things were not looking so rosy for Missalyssa, even after she had a win in the bank.

In May last year, with one win from 20-odd starts and no form to speak of, she went fairly average race at Rangiora.

"Blair Orange came in and said she needs to go to the paddock for six months.

"She had always showed potential but didn't have the manners or the enthusiasm."



When she resumed two days before the nationwide lockdown in March of this year, it had been 10 months since her last race.

Another let-up followed but she hasn't looked back since. Naturally, a few offers have come rolling in, but Pitches isn't interested in selling.

He's done well in life out of a "rather large" painting and decorating company in the South Island and his history in racing clearly shows he isn't motivated by profit.

"She's not for sale.

"I'll listen to what Andy says and race her until she's had enough, then she'll become a broodmare."

## **GUPTILL PROVES HE ISN'T CRAZY AFTER ALL!**

**Brad Reid**

When most people reach retirement, they do so with a view to winding down and taking things a bit easier.

Auckland breeder and owner Trevor Guptill is the exception to that rule.

At 75 years young, the Glen Eden man is a competitive sprinter with a few New Zealand records to boot.

"I'm a master's athlete and have travelled the world competing in my discipline of sprinting," he said.

"I played a lot of rugby when I was younger. I had to give it away because I suffered from Asthma quite badly. They didn't have products like Ventolin back then!

"When I was about 65, we were looking after the grandchildren and one of them went for a bit of a wander. I chased after him and afterwards realised I can actually run a bit.

"So, to give me something to do in my old age I took up athletics. My focus is primarily on the 60-metre sprints where I hold a couple of New Zealand records and have some medals from meets around the world," he said.

Guptill's love for running stems from an overwhelming desire to do things on his own.

This was a mitigating factor 40 years ago when his love for the horses led him to take out a training license despite having no family involvement or background in racing.

Guptill embodies the 'can-do' attitude that puts many a young person to shame.

"I started with the horses because I wanted to do it myself as that is what I like to do. I always followed the horses when I was younger: I went for trotting because I could sit in the cart and work them where I wasn't capable of doing that with a galloper," laughed Guptill.

"Being up at Dairy Flat, I would have to wait a week if I wanted to see a farrier, so I learnt to shoe horses myself," he said.

Guptill purchased his first standardbred from a sale run by Charlie Hunter (ONZM) with the mare destined to become his first broodmare.

Frosty Jawa (1973 Gentry-Frosty Morn) had won two races when Guptill acquired her in 1980 - he managed to pick up two more wins and five placings whilst in his care.

He started breeding from her in 1981 and despite 10 years at stud and eight live foals, none of the progeny from Frosty Jawa would make it to the races.

It was around this time that Guptill decided to change tact and try the other gait.

"I bought a trotting mare called Speed Queen (1977 Game Pride - Jeepers Creepers) at a sale from Charlie Hunter," he said.

"I went into the trotting gait because I had the time to do it myself and because the stallion services were a lot more affordable. It seems to have gone the other way now where with frozen semen and European blood becoming available, but you're not racing for European stake money," he said.

Speed Queen was a half-sister to eight race winner Kenwood Song (Crockett) who ran second in the 1981 Rowe Cup behind No Response, was second in the 1982 Rowe Cup behind Stormy Morn and second to the same horse in the 1981 Interisland Stakes.

Speed Queen was no slouch either winning six races, with the sole group race she contested being the 1984 Rowe Cup in which she finished eighth.

By the time Guptill purchased Speed Queen in 1979, she had already had four foals which included a Count Bay filly by the name of Elizabeth Bay.

She had one start for a 10th placing prior to Speed Queen being served by her new owner.

By the time she had foaled a Pernod Eden filly for Guptill by the name of Skeekie Weeke, Elizabeth Bay was a three-race winner which included a 2700m New Zealand record for three-year-old fillies from a stand.

She would later that season win the now defunct Group Three Cambridge Trotting Stakes and eventually emulate the deeds of her mother by running in the 1994 Rowe Cup won by Diamond Field. She would also win 4YO New Zealand Trotting Mare of the Year.





*Crazy and Fergus Schumacher come the widest and bomb them in the eighth race at Alexandra Park last Friday night*

While no superstar, Guptill was able to take the half-sister he bred to the races under his own tutelage and the pair of them headed to the birdcage twice in 9 days, almost 15 years since his last training win with Frosty Jawa.

“Skeekie Weekie had two wins in a row at four and then she bowed a tendon. She wasn’t going to make the top grade. It looked like she would pick up another four or five wins comfortably. She had no speed at all, but she would fight to the death,” chuckled Guptill.

Guptill took three further foals from Speed Queen without much luck and is still ruing what might have been with the second filly he bred by the name of Speed Princess (1991 Gee Whizz II).

“She was the best-looking horse I ever bred, and I can remember thinking if she is half as good as she looks, she will be a superstar. She had trouble breathing though and the surgeries stopped her from showing her best.

“I’ve had a couple from the breed that have looked absolutely amazing and then they have had an accident or gotten ill and died. The ones that look the best seem to always have something go wrong with them,” he quipped.

Guptill persevered with Skeekie Weekie at stud and like his previous endeavours with Frosty Jawa, was left scratching his head.

Five live foals with none of the progeny ever making it to the races.

“The second foal, Coffee Queen (Earl), broke in like she was going to be alright and could trot a bit, but she hitched at the back and I was running out of time and gave her away as a hack.

“I had no luck with the two foals by Malabar Maple at all. They had a mind of their own and you just couldn’t control them,” recalled Guptill.

Nearing retirement and with the impending sale of his farm, Guptill thought about giving it all away.

“When I got to retirement age my shoulders started playing up. I sort of gave it away a bit and sold my property. I was a bit reluctant to continue with the horses as I was no longer be able to be hands on. I wasn’t so much interested in just watching the horses I own because if I wanted to do that, I can turn on Trakside and watch somebody else’s.

“I kept the Sundon mare Skee Queen because I thought well if I’m going to breed from one, it was her being by Sundon. The other reason she was still there was because I couldn’t bloody catch her!

“I had the crazy idea of giving her one last crack as a race mare.

“I had planned to send her to Derek Balle but he couldn’t take her the day I needed her off the property, so Ken Sefonte recommended that Tim Hall might do it for me.

“I’d been told he was very good at taking horses from other people that had caused some headaches and managed to get them going.

“So Tim broke her in for me. She had got away with everything for so long, she was too smart for her own good!

“Tim reckoned she could trot a quarter in 27 no trouble. But in a workout where she wouldn’t have to go as quick, she would pull up at the 600 or run off the track when she had had enough.

“Being a six-year-old she was quite a big animal. Just when you sorted out something with her, she would think of something else to beat you. I think if we had of got her when she was younger, she might have been quite a nice trotter. As a result I’ve made sure to teach them quietly when they are young.”

With Guptill slowly realising this breeding caper was much more of a marathon than his preferred discipline of a sprint, it is a miracle he persevered with the breed. And although the year 2020 has been for many a year to forget, for Guptill it represents a turnaround in fortunes for his breed and the decision to keep the Sundon mare has paid dividends.



Skee Queen's first foal by Lucky Chucky produced a Jurassic sized colt by the name of Skee King.

"He was broken in by Tate Hopkins before he went to Ken Sefonte who worked him along. Ken reckoned as a late yearling he was bigger than the stallion Angus Hall," laughed Guptill.

"We had him grazing for 12 months down in a paddock at Cambridge while he filled into his frame. I thought maybe I will give Tim Hall a call as he was only round the corner.

"Despite his size, Tim said he was doing everything right from day one, so we continued on and qualified him. We brought him back at four where he won at Rotorua, but his recent efforts show that he still needs to learn to race in the field. He's a massive horse and maybe he needs another year in the paddock," said Guptill.

Skee King has just the sole win from 14 race day starts and as alluded to above is the type of horse who may still be growing into his frame.

His younger brother and second foal Crazy has wasted no time in repaying the Guptill's for his patience winning at just his second race day start last Friday night at Alexandra Park.

The son of Crazy came from last and was the widest on the turn where he ran down the more fancied runners in the eight on the card to win by a nose.

"He's a completely different horse to Skee King. Much more athletic and almost trots like you see pacers go.

"We qualified him in race time more or less, but he has taken a while to come back too it because of his manners. He plays up a lot and Ken Sefonte wouldn't take him from the breakers because you couldn't lift his feet up without losing your head," he laughed.

"After he was gelded he got over that and has turned the corner a bit.

"He is the only male by Crazy that has won in New Zealand.

The son of Credit Winner was available to New Zealand breeders via frozen semen from Woodlands Stud and has produced a handful of nice performers on these shores from just 25 live foals. As pointed out by Guptill, Crazy is his only male winner with the other five all being fillies (and mares).

She's All The Craze, Sex On Fire and Geena's Gril to name a few.

Guptill's change of fortunes on the track has also filtered through to the breeding barn where despite the best efforts of Woodlands Stud, Skee Queen had failed to get in foal for the past three years.

"Woodlands Stud recommended that she go to Blue

Blood Equine as they didn't think she was doing very well in a herd. It's a lot more expensive but they do fuss over them a lot more and they get treated like pets.

"It was recommended we try fresh semen as she had been struggling to get in foal with frozen, so we served her by Pegasus Spur.

"She got in foal first pop which left us with a lovely Pegasus Spur filly born in late August this year. We tried frozen this year and got her in foal to Orlando Vici first crack also.

You can hear the passion in Guptill's voice when he discusses the progeny he has bred and the pride that emanates from seeing them do well on the track.

He might be a little biased when it comes to the recent achievements of his two trotters, but after 40 years in the game, few would begrudge him of the successes of Skee King and Crazy.

"When you watch other peoples' horses race it doesn't really resonate the same. You see them and think that horse has only won a maiden, but when your own horse wins a similar race it feels like you've won an Auckland Cup!

"The trotters are able to run such unbelievable times these days and who knows, maybe the best is yet to come," he said.

## **BOLD EAGLE NOT TIL NEXT SEASON**

Jonny Turner

We at Haras des Trotteurs, thank you for your patience and understanding in your wait for the frozen Bold Eagle semen for the 20/21 season.

Unfortunately we received news last night ( just a couple of days before shipment was due to commence), that as per the quote from France;

"The lab at the farm found a pathogenic genes on Bold Eagle frozen semen , so they have to destroy it"

"I just know that since yesterday ,it took time for them to tell me because they did 2 tests and were waiting for the second results .

Nothing wrong with Bold semen but we want to do a good and fair business with you and we felt than it will not be this way .

Im really sorry again about it , Pierre (Bold owner ) want to appologize to you also . We both know the work and the marketing you (Louise) have done and we were so excited to Think about having offsprings of Bold in Oceania ....



Pierre and myself promise you to provide you Bold Eagle semen for 100 mares instead for next season."

As per the above there will be no frozen Bold Eagle for the 20/21 season and we at Haras Des Trotteurs sincerely apologize for that.

When the Bold Eagle frozen semen arrives for the 21/22 season we will undertake to contact you first with an option to breeding to Bold Eagle in 21/22.

Again we sincerely apologize for the non arrival of the Bold Eagle frozen semen for the 20/21 season and any inconvenience this may have caused you.

Jamie or Justin will follow this email up with a phone call later today to discuss the rest of our stallion roster (at a discounted price)

Regards

Pat Driscoll

## **VALE / HEATHER WILLIAMS**

David DiSomma

Well known and highly successful breeder Heather Williams' life will be celebrated at a special service next week, following her death after a short illness.

Heather and Lex Williams, who married in 1970, bred nearly 80 horses and will forever be associated with their millionaire trotting mare One Over Kenny.

Heather was once quoted: "We love racing and follow our horses whenever they are racing but equally we love breeding. Horses here become like part of the family, well loved and cared for."

In another interview Lex talked about her gift with animals. "She's a good stock lady. She was a good trainer of dogs and became very very good at handling the foals. In the last few years we never had to break them because they were so quiet. She said there's got to be an easier way than tying them up and having flank ropes on them so she read the Horse Whispers books. You have to start on them (the foals) when they're very young. It became a trust thing between her and the foals. We got a lot of accolades from the trainers who said our horses were so easy to break in."

The Sloans race the mare with son Brad and his wife Jess, and daughter Halie Gibb and her husband, Alan. Lex and Heather initially farmed at Lawrence in Otago before moving north to Waimate where they spent nearly 40 years running an award-winning sheep and beef farm. They also ran a movie theatre in Waimate and leased the opera house in Oamaru for 10 years

before building a three-cinema complex there. It was Heather's urgings that ultimately helped snare One Over Kenny at auction.

Lex takes up the story : "(Trainer)Phil Williamson sorted One Over Kenny out – \$20,000 was our budget. We got to twenty and the auctioneer said he'd take a half (\$500) but he took a \$1,000 from the next bidder. When the sales staff went to get the buyer's signature he said oh no it was only twenty and a half."

The auctioneer then decided to bring the yearling back into the ring three lots later.

"Heather said 'why you don't put in another bid.' The other guy went to twenty and half and I went to twenty one. He said bugger you and pulled out and they knocked her down to me."

One Over Kenny went to win 32 races and over a million dollars, including seventeen Group or listed races!

One Over Kenny and In the Pocket pacing mare Fleet's Pocket have been the mainstays of their breeding operation, with most of their horses having "One" or "Flying" in their names.

One Over Da Moon (Majestic Son – One Over Kenny) was another stand-out with 22 wins.

Finalists for Breeder of the Year at this year's Harness Racing New Zealand awards, they bred both Cracker Hill (7 wins – 16 starts – \$133,230) and Ultimate Stride (9 wins – 16 starts, \$180,268) who were the joint winners of last season's 3-year-old trotting colt or gelding of the year.

They also bred and have a share in Group and listed 8-win trotter One Apollo. Both the sire One Over Da Moon and dam Anna Castleton were also bred by the Williams. They were also the breeders of the first stakes winner of Muscle Hill in New Zealand, One Muscle Hill.

Among their horses have been Flying Heathers One, Heather Castleton and Flying Mrs Williams.

Brad Reid, New Zealand Standardbred Breeders' Association Executive Manager : "I was lucky enough to visit their farm a few years ago and their attention to detail was evident, and no doubt Heather was instrumental in a lot of that. I'm sure Lex won't mind me saying that Heather was a hard task master, but she had a heart of gold and loved her horses.

"Lex and Heather have an unbelievable knack for whatever they touch turning to gold and have achieved remarkable success as owners and breeders of horses in both gaits.

*A service to celebrate Heather's life will be held in Campbell and Sons Chapel, 95 Gordon Road, Mosgiel, at 2.00pm, on Monday, November 30, followed by private cremation. Messages to 807 Brighton Road, Ocean View, Dunedin 9035.*





Pastor Stephen

## Breeders - A Pastor in Europe

### HARNESSLINK

There is a lot to admire and maybe expect from a harness racing horse named after a man of religion - in this case Reverend Stephen Heinzl - Nelson.

Pastor Stephen the horse was admired when racing by his Trainer, the legendary Jimmy Takter ..... and why wouldn't he be after being voted the 2010 USTA Two Year Old Trotting Colt of the Year.

It was because of his admiration of Pastor Stephen that Jimmy had the red carpet laid out for the arrival of his full brother Father Patrick some three years later.

After a career of 22 starts for 10 victories, 8 placings and a bankroll of \$1,048,607 Pastor Stephen was sold to European interests and so a new chapter in his story book began as a Stallion in Scandinavia.

He has now sired 321 foals of racing age in Europe and 76.3% of these foals have made it to the racetrack. In fact his ratio of starters to foals in Europe is on par with his more illustrious brother Father Patrick.

He has now sired 321 foals of racing age in Europe and 76.3% of these foals have made it to the racetrack. In fact his ratio of starters to foals in Europe is on par with his more illustrious brother Father Patrick.

**Pastor Stephen - 321 foals of racing age - 76.3% starters to foals.**

**Father Patrick - 371 foals of racing age - 77.9% starters to foals.**

During the 2019 season Pastor Stephen sired 225 starters throughout Europe [ Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Holland ] with 28 of those be-

ing Stakes winners. In fact he finished in fourth position that season on the European Sires List ahead of his own champion Sire Cantab Hall and the French star Love You.

This season, 2020, he again appears in the Top Ten on the Sires List ahead of Muscle Hill, Dream Vacation and Love You. Recently, 24th October, a European Breeders Crown for Aged male horses was conducted in Germany for a Stake of 51,000 Euros and the progeny of Pastor Stephen finished first and third - Officer Stephen, the victor and Inspector Bros in third.

Pastor Stephen has now sired eight millionaires throughout Europe including Son Of God, Holy Water [from a S J's Photo mare], Pastor Power, Reverend Wine, Religious and Global Takeover [from an Andover Hall mare].

After a lengthy courtroom battle Pastor Stephen is now owned by Taylor Made Stallions of Kentucky and has been returned to USA.

He will commence his initial Breeding season in North America in February next year and will be based at Premier Acres in Indiana.

Pastor Stephen is a glorious 16 hands individual and has a pedigree laden with Two Year Old speed. He himself was the 2010 USTA Two Year Old Trotting Colt of the Year - as well as;

His sire Cantab Hall was the 2003 USTA Two Year Old Trotter of the Year

His full brother Father Patrick was the 2013 USTA Two Year Trotting Colt of the Year.

His Dam is a half sister to Chocolatier , the 2005 USTA Two Year Old Trotting Colt of the Year.

The Service Fee for Pastor Stephen in New Zealand is \$5,000 plus GST - Pay On Live Foal.

**Bookings are still available with Frozen semen from Woodlands Stud, Stacey White - 021 595 492 or [stacey@woodlandsstud.co.nz](mailto:stacey@woodlandsstud.co.nz)**





2020 Waikato Trotting Breeders' Stakes winner Pretty Majestic and connections. Photo: Chanelle Lawson

## Group Three status for Waikato Trotting Breeders' Stakes

### CAMBRIDGE RACEWAY

A group of Waikato trotting enthusiasts have been rewarded for their innovation, with the race they established this year, the Waikato Trotting Breeders' Stakes (2700m), given Group Three status.

The race was the brainchild of Cambridge Raceway board member Ken McGrath and his partner Melanie Barker, who were supported in the new venture by a group of local trotting enthusiasts.

"Melanie, my partner, and I breed mainly trotters. We love the trotting gait," McGrath said.

"The trotting horse has been treated like the second cousin to the pacer and there has been a lack of good races for them, particularly the mares.

"We have put a lot of money into sponsorship over the years and we thought let's take some of that sponsorship money and create a new race.

"We approached a few of the local trotting enthusiasts that we know and they all jumped onboard and we have a new Group Three race now.

"We are absolutely rapt. It is something that was indicated to us when we got it off the ground that Harness Racing New Zealand would look at making it a Group race.

"It is very rewarding and we are thankful to Harness Racing New Zealand for giving us the Group Three status."

While given Group Three status, McGrath said the funding for the \$30,000 race remained the responsibility of the Waikato group.

"With all the changes and funding issues happening they (HRNZ) decided that it wasn't in the budget," he said.

"We decided that we wanted it to still go ahead and we have funded it again.

"It will be hugely beneficial to the industry and especially the breeders."

McGrath said he was pleased with the support the inaugural race received earlier this year when it was won by the Robert Dunn-trained Pretty Majestic.

"The inaugural race wasn't a Group race but it was great to see trainers support it and we had some good horses turn up and we are hoping that will happen again next year," McGrath said.

McGrath contested the race as the breeder-owner of the fourth-placed Molly Bones and he is hoping she can go three better on Waitangi Day next year where Cambridge Raceway will host the flagship event of the Cambridge Horse Festival.

"Molly Bones is back in work now and will be targeted towards the race," McGrath said.

"She is lightly raced and has got a huge amount of ability. She ran a good second in a Group race at Auckland last season and I am looking forward to the future with her."



# Heartland Reduction featured in 20 Lot on-line auction

GavelHouse Standardbred

The latest fortnightly gavelhouse.com Standardbred auction features a bumper catalogue of 25 Lots including a quality draft as part of a Heartland Farm Reduction Sale.

gavelhouse.com Standardbred representative Cam Bray is thrilled with the performance of the site and the momentum built over recent months "Judging by the site's traffic people are now accustomed to tuning in fortnightly to see what our latest offering is like and we have been consistently clearing in excess of 80% of entries," he said.

"As we approach the end of the year, this latest catalogue is going to be exciting to follow over the coming week with Heartland Farm entrusting us with some quality stock as they look to cut back on numbers,"

"There's a good cross-section of stock and I believe something for everyone in the market looking to add to their operations."

Some highlights from the Heartland Farm Reduction include:

- **Lot 1** – A colt foal by Betting Line from the black-print Art Major mare Spirit of Art. Her three to race all have black-print to their credit including Gr.3 Leonard Mem Stakes and Gr.3 WA Gold Bracelet winner Dracarys.
- **Lot 4** – Divine Light. A yearling Skyvalley filly from a sibling to black-print winners Mr Chin, (I'm) Light Hearted and Vibhuti.
- **Lot 7** – Perun. A yearling colt by Betting Line from the winning Dream Away mare Bianca.
- **Lot 23** – Cathar. An incredibly well-related mare who is the dam of two black-print winners and is a sibling to seven to have achieved the same.

Other highlights include:

- **Lot 8** – Lawyer Girl. A Always B Miki yearling filly who is the last foal from the outstanding producer Van Seraa.
- **Lot 10** – Carrera Sunshine. A two-year-old filly by Sunshine Beach, she is the first foal from the winning Bettor's Delight mare All That Glitters.
- **Lot 20** – Waingaro Ideal. In work until last week, Waingaro Ideal is a lightly raced, winning four-year-old son of American Ideal from the black-print mare Waingaro Lassie.

The auction also features more broodmares, yearlings, unraced horses and racehorses. Bidding ends starting with Lot 1 from 7pm on Wednesday 2 December.

## NZSBA BROODMARE LISTINGS

The NZSBA has developed a section of its website to make available free listings of mares that breeders do not intend to breed for the upcoming season.

While we would love to see you breed as many as possible, we understand that personal circumstances are unique and the costs associated with breeding will see some tough decisions being made.

Whether you are prepared to give the mare away, make a lease arrangement or see her sold, we would like to see every MARE get a chance at stud this season and there will be breeders out there looking to put mares in foal.

If you would like to have a BROODMARE added to the website, please come back to me with the following information and we will list her for free;

- Mare Name
- Age
- Description of breeding history and current condition ie empty, in foal
- Location
- Terms: Free/Lease/Sale

If possible, please include a photo and as much information about your mare as possible.

To view the current listings we have on our website, copy paste this link into your browser;

<https://thebreeders.co.nz/for-sale-lease/>

## ROYAL & IMPERIAL WINNERS

Royal Del brought up the second Royal Aspirations winner from his first crop of four when winning at Motukarara last weekend. The Fred Fletcher trained runner had been knocking on the door and proved too strong.

Imperial Count got another Group winner at Melton when his daughter Keayang Livana won the Group Two feature for 4YO Trotting Mares.

Runs on the board at the right time of year for the team at Pheobe Standardbreds whom stand both stallions.



# ZEUSS BRINGS THE THUNDER EARLY AND LATE

Harnesslink Media

It was all about the book ends for Kerryn Manning and Zeuss Bromac and they answered every challenge for trainer Paul Fitzpatrick to win the IRT Australia three-year-old colts and gelding title on Breeders Crown finals night.

Starting from gate one, Manning had to hustle Zeuss Bromac out of the gate to hold off an early charge, including from Jilliby Nitro at Jason Lee.

The latter would then tuck into leader's back for the middle distance Group 1 and prove Zeuss Bromac's because danger in the run to the line, but the New South Wales trained Bettors Delight colt had all the answers to win by five metres.

"He was very on the ball tonight," Manning told Trots Vision. "He held on good the first bit and when Jilliby Nitro got a bit of momentum up he was coming quite quickly, so I had to go pretty quick to hold him. I wasn't sure I was going to for a stride but he kicked through underneath them.

"He did get pretty keen, but I managed to get not too bad a second quarter and then he ran home really strong. He was strong on the line."

After the 43.8-second lead time, clearly the quickest of the night, Zeuss Bromac got something of a breather with a 30.4-second second quarter and got home in 26.7 seconds to take the Crown for Fitzpatrick and Noel Shinn, who's been caring for the horse in Victoria.

"He's just a little cute, nuggety little thing," Manning said. "Noel's been really happy with him, he said he's been better than he was last week and he had a better barrier draw, so obviously everything pointed in the right direction. It's always got to come off when you are out there and everything went well."

Zeuss Bromac was the only NZ Bred winner on Saturday Night at Melton's Breeders Crown Final's. He was bred by bromac Lodge and is still raced under the ownership of Lisa Fabri, Bob's daughter.

# BETTER THAN THE BEST IS BETTOR

David McCarthy C/O All Stars Website

Every now and again we experience a real game changer in the breeding industry (as opposed to the shooting stars who are claimed to be) and we are fortunate to live in the time of Bettor's Delight, arguably the best stallion to stand in this country in 140 years.

But how does he compare with past breed shapers- and how do we know? That is the arguable part.

It is not easy because apples are not always able to be matched with apples. That is largely because some of the greatest stallions in our history existed in a world where records were not as important as they are in the computer age.

Sometimes, how many mares were served and how many foals were delivered amounts to a good guess, large scale speculation and sometimes a bit of fibbing.

The connections of at least one legendary stallion ultimately admitted charges that not all of his registered foals had in fact been by him. The stallion concerned was allegedly serving well over 100 mares a year which was a huge number in his era. In these days of advanced science, not so much.

In earliest days too a horse might produce more outstanding road horses than track ones, gaining some nice side money for their owners but nobody was counting and there was no fair way to assess what was happening.

But Bettor's Delight has one area where he is clearly superior to any of the great stallions of the past. Jack Potts, Rey de Oro, U Scott and Light Brigade were the stars of the years just before and well after WW2. Rey De Oro, our first sire of genuine juvenile speed set a record in the 1935-36 season for being the first to leave 100 winners in a season.

Jack Potts broke many records as a stallion winning the premiership nine times in a row and then running second following the ninth win. That record stood until Vance Hanover surpassed it in 1997 some 50 years later.

Jack Potts also appears to be the first one to sire more than 100 foals in a season. He never left a trotter of note and Bettor's Delight and Vance Hanover followed in that tradition as did other leading sires.

U Scott left 885 winners but full statistics from some of his greatest years are hard to track down. 8 out of 10 of his starters were pacers and he left the winners of four NZ Cups one more than Jack Potts. But he also left outstanding trotters like Highland Kilt, Barrier Reef, Fantom and Jimmy Scott.



His "partner" Light Brigade was more versatile. In the years of available statistics more than 50 per cent of his winners were trotters, some of the best of their time. But in none of his recorded seasons did his strike rate of winners to starters top 50 per cent.

The modern statistical model was really set up by Smooth Fella because of the extensive racing his stock did in Australia and also because he was just such a success in both countries.

He left 1734 foals and 808 winners, just short of 50 per cent. Only 6 were trotters. Most individual seasons saw Smooth Fella with a winning strike rate of more than or close to 50 per cent.

These were sensational figures in that era when a 30 per cent strike rate was considered outstanding. Even champion sires like Lordship battled to get much above that rating.

However Smooth Fella's figures included Australian winners and they found their way to many places much less competitive than in New Zealand's centralised racing system. Also the Smooth Fella's were extremely popular there, in some ways as popular as here. Same with his successors but this era saw a more commercial edge to stallion promotion.

But considering his stock raced over 18 seasons it was still an impressive strike rate. And it became the standard with the updated technology which saw much improved record collecting.

Then along came Vance Hanover winner of 10 sire's premierships. He was a sensational success but is often remembered for the huge books he served in several early seasons rather than what he should have been noted for- a terrific strike rate.

The writer used to keep his own records in that era of the still relevant statistic called average earnings index (AEI) which judged a stallion not by gross results but by what owners were getting from his overall winners rather than a few major stars. It was very popular around the world especially in thoroughbred racing for that reason.

It made no difference. In the years I kept these records Vance Hanover was No 1 every time. He left 754 winners (just 4 trotters) and only had 12 seasons at stud. His stock won 2106 races and left 1923 foals.

Vance Hanover was always close to 50 per cent wins to races.

For example in 1990 when his huge earlier crops meant he had 233 starters he left 118 winners. By comparison Smooth Fella's biggest year consisted of 138 races (68 wins).

**Holmes Hanover** was a prolific stallion his stock winning over 3000 races and he served mares, dead and alive from 1987 to 2015. He left very few trotters. His biggest

season resulted in 140 winners from over 300 starts. He was very successful without matching Vance Hanover.

**Christian Cullen** did however. Even when at his peak foal numbers with starters between 250 and 320 he was running at just below or just above 50 per cent and when his numbers faded late in his stud career he was rarely below 45 per cent. He left 1718 foals and held a fertility mark of 70 per cent his books being reduced late in the piece.

**Bettor's Delight** though tops them all. In nearly every season his stock have raced he has topped 50 per cent wins to starters, sometimes by a margin.

In 2014 it was 163 from 286; 2014 163 of 286| 2015 174 of 313; 2016 204 of 342. His 200 wins in 2018 were from 324 starts, over 60 per cent. At those numbers that is a huge improvement on any rivals especially when his domination of Group races is added in.

He has left over 2584 foals and among them they have changed the landscape of New Zealand racing.

Winners to races won is one fair way to describe the impact any sire makes and his looks indelible.

Yes, things have changed. Notably age group racing that undoubtedly does help the figures because of the ability of fewer horses winning multiple races. Back in the days of U Scott and Light Brigade and even later handicap racing with the "10 wins means Cup class" made a harder row for stallions to hoe.

All the horses mentioned here were remarkably successful. But Bettor's Delight is clearly the most successful of all. By any measure.

## **A CONVERSATION WITH TRAINER AND ASTUTE YEARLING PICKER JACK DARLING**

Murray Brown | Harness Racing Update

Jack Darling was familiar with horses as a kid, but the riding and jumping kind. He really had no connection with harness horses until a friend who was involved with Western Fair Raceway took him to the races there and he liked it. Darling was 19.

His ambition soon evolved from wagering on them to deciding that he would like to own and train them.

His first venture was when he claimed Yankee BB at Western Fair for \$1,500 and raced it back the following week at Woodstock for \$1,750. He won and was claimed. He not only made some purse money, but he also wagered on it. It turned out to be a very good payday.





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In the early years, he not only trained, but he drove as well. His circuit consisted of Western Fair, then to Buffalo and Batavia and on to Windsor and across the river to Hazel Park. In winter he'd head south and race at Pompano Park.

He gave up driving at the age of 35. There were so many exceptional drivers at Windsor before and at the time that he realized he was at a disadvantage driving against them. He was better off utilizing them for his own benefit rather than going against them. Included in the drivers colony were: Lew Williams, Greg Wright, Ray Remmen, Bill Gale and a couple of young kids named John Campbell and Trevor Richie.

After 20 years of racing overnight horses he decided to take a crack at the yearling game.

His first yearling purchase was a colt that he bought for \$4,000 named Steady Star Time. He did pretty well with him and sold him for a profit.

From that point on, that became his business model.

"One never goes broke taking a profit," he said. "If someone will pay me what I think is a fair price for a horse that I own I will sell. I look forward to the next owner having as much, if not more success with the horse than I had. That way, everybody is happy and maybe that person will come back and buy more from me."

Through the years, he had significant and successful partnerships with Dan Smith and Trevor Richie.

He recalls his first real good horse as being Terry Herbert.

He also became quite successful in improving good racehorses. To some degree, he credits his success to never having a really large stable, although the opportunities were always there to have that. He almost always owned the horses in his stable wholly or in partnership.

He never had more than 20 head in training. That size allowed him to give more individual attention to each horse under his care and owning them allowed him the freedom to make all decisions relating to them.

He considers himself to be an assiduous shopper. This author can certainly attest to that. He studies his catalog closely and is usually down to a relatively small number of horses to look at by the time he arrives at a sale. Before going, he has studied the videos of the ones that first interested him.

On a domestic note, Jack's wife Ann helps with the book-keeping and has also helped with the horses when needed. Their son, Justin, works with Jack with the horses and daughter Jaclyn is a business woman in Windsor. She is married to John and they have a son Julian. Those three are their biggest fans.

*Jack, you are one of the most astute yearling buyers that I've known. I can almost visualize the prototype of the type of yearling you look for. What is it you want to see in a yearling?*



"I suppose the first thing I want to see is the absence of faults. I like for a horse to have what I consider a classy look. Ideally, I'd like a little extra of everything. I want them to be a little bigger, to have a bigger ass end and shoulder. I go back to the Billy Haughton four finger test in the original edition of Care and Training of the Trotter and Pacer. I want a horse to have a wide jaw, wide enough to easily fit four fingers. Of course I'm talking about my fingers which are average in size. I want a wide nostril. Both of these items indicate to me that the horse will be able to get its air properly. I watch the videos closely. A horse that paddles is a definite no-no. I like a nice head and a good sharp eye. I'm usually not very interested in a horse who appears to be dull or disinterested."

*In the past you'd buy horses from all over. In recent years, you seem to have concentrated almost entirely on Ontario-sired ones.*

"There are several reasons. Ontario-sired horses have shown that they can compete anywhere. Of course, having a world renowned sire like Bettors Delight here certainly helps a great deal. But he isn't the only one. Trotters like Kadabra, Balanced Image and Muscle Mass have shown that they can sire horses that are competitive everywhere. Trixton arriving here will be a big plus. Shadow Plays and Sportswriters and others are quite competitive. As I get older, shipping horses all over the place is not only taxing on me and the horses, but can also be quite expensive. The Ontario program is one of, if not the best Sires Stakes program in the world. Having an Ontario-bred also cuts down significantly on the stakes payments."

*You've just had one of your best seasons ever with 3-year-old Beaumont Hanover and 2-year-old Bulldog Hanover, quite arguably both being the best of the class in the province. Tell me a little about them.*

**Beaumont Hanover**— "I remember him as being one of the early sellers in the catalog, maybe number five or thereabouts. I thought he was a gorgeous colt who impressed me in every way. I was fairly certain that he would bring \$100,000 or even more. I was pretty sure that I wouldn't be able to afford to buy him. I decided to just hang around when he was selling, on the off chance that he would bring a price in my range. I was pretty surprised and very pleased to be able to corral him for \$45,000.

"As a 2-year-old, he trained very well. I thought that he had a chance to be a really good one. He was and still is a really good feeling colt. He got to kicking in the stall and sustained a real bad bone bruise. That kept him from starting until late in the season where he showed some talent and won a couple of races. He came back great this year and has earned over \$400,000. One of his best races was in the North America Cup when he had a tough trip coming first up on Tall Dark Stranger and still only got beat a length and a half."

**Bulldog Hanover**— "He was a beautiful colt that I bought on Day Three at Harrisburg for \$27,000. His dam BJ's Squall was a terrific race filly, but to that time really hadn't come close to replicating herself. All last winter, everyone including myself thought he was only our

second best colt. He was always nice but he trained together with a Sportswriter colt who we all thought was a lot better. As time went on, he gradually came close to catching up. I remember one day thinking to myself, by the time this is over, he just might be our best 2-year-old. As the season progressed, he just got better and better. I think his performance in winning the OSS Super Finals just might have been one of the greatest performances I've ever seen by a 2-year-old — not only an Ontario 2-year-old, but by any anywhere."

*I'm guessing that it's likely not a coincidence that Beaumont and Bulldog are Hanovers. Do you have any special places where you like to shop?*

"Not necessarily so. I look at most places. But I feel that I've built up a pretty good relationship with the folks there. I'm a big believer in videos. I really love the way they do theirs. Also, I feel that they are loyal to their customers. I remember buying Winbak Maya as a yearling for \$100,000. After she was done racing, I asked her breeder at the Lexington Sale if they were willing to give me a yearling credit for \$50,000 for her. I could have been over reacting to it, but I felt that I got a brushoff. If I had got the credit, I would have spent all of that and probably significantly more with them. I went to see you the next morning and you said that you'd speak to Dr. J and Jim Simpson and get back to me. The next time I saw you, you said we had a deal. She's been a good producer for Hanover. \*Her yearling this year sold for \$135,000. I couldn't be happier for them. If I've got a worthwhile filly or mare to sell, I now generally go to Hanover first. I learned that from Bill Herbert (see below)."

\* Author's note. Of some interest with this yearling is the fact that he is line bred to Yankee Blondie. On top as the dam of Muscle Hill and below as the great grandam of the colt named Whiskey Hanover. He will be trained by Julie and Andy Miller.

*You started out mostly with overnights and claimers and gradually made the transition to youngsters.*

"The first really good horse I had was Terry Herbert. I bought him privately from Bill Herbert for \$11,000. He was racing in a series where he was considered to be one of the also rans. He wasn't even going to make the final. Bill said that if by some miracle he did and did well in it, he would hope that I reconsider the price. As luck would have it, another one scratched out of the final and he drew in from the outside. I drove him myself, went to the top and won easily. When I got the purse check, I gave Bill a few thousand more. I remember him saying to me that I would never regret doing the right thing. From that point on, if Bill had a horse to sell, I would have first dibs on it. Terry Herbert went on to be a consistent open and free-for-all winner. In the interim, though, we nearly lost him. He had a bout of severe colic resulting in his being operated on and having surgery to remove about 20 feet of intestines."

*You've had a lot of very good horses, some bordering on greatness. Among them were Northern Luck, Twin B Champ, Apprentice Hanover, Northern Sky, Decor, Big McDeal, Gothic Dream, Ticket To Rock, Diehard Fan,*

*Faded Glory, Diamond Dawn, JR Mint, Silent Swing, St Lads Popcorn, Pearl River Matt and Low Places. Which one was your favorite?*

"I suppose that prior to this year it would be Twin B Champ. He was very special. He was the favorite in the North America Cup and broke down. But in the past year, it would be hard to duplicate the success we had with Bulldog Hanover and Beaumont Hanover. All three of them occupy a special place in my heart."

*Who would be the person you've learned the most from in training horses?*

"There have been several. I suppose number one would be Bob McIntosh. Look at his record — two Halls of Fame, year after year being successful on the racetrack and as a breeder as well. Also, I learned a lot from the first edition of Care and Training of the Trotter and Pacer. It was my bible for the longest time."

*How about drivers? Who is the best that you've ever seen?*

"Undoubtedly, that would have to be John Campbell. He was a true professional. He always came prepared. He came early and was free to discuss any horse with you. There are more good drivers, maybe even great drivers today than there ever have been. With many, in many instances, I'd differentiate between those who are overnight drivers, Grand Circuit type drivers and those I'd like to use in helping a green 2-year-old starting out. Among the best two in the latter category, Bill Gale and Trevor Richie were excellent."

*What has been your greatest thrill in all your years in harness racing?*

"Before this year, it was winning the Metro with Gothic Dream. This year, it was equalled with Bulldog and Beaumont in the Ontario Super Finals. I'm really excited and looking forward to racing the two next year. I suppose some of Beaumont's races will take us out of Ontario; also some of Bulldog's. I sure hope that darn virus is gone by then."

*What has been your greatest disappointment?*

"I've never won a Breeders Crown. I thought I had a great chance with Northern Sky. She was just super warming up for the race. She was always at her best racing off a helmet. As the race turned out, she was forced to cut it. She just got nipped at the wire."

*In recent years, you and your wife have taken the winters off traveling, usually in the southwestern United States leaving your horses in good hands until you returned. In this COVID-19 year, what are your plans?*

"To be truthful, I have no idea. This whole COVID situation is such a mess. For one thing, we wouldn't be allowed to cross the border by automobile. For another, especially based on the recent reports, things are getting worse rather than better. The reports from Pfizer on their vaccine are encouraging, though. Things can change. But for the moment, I think we will probably just stay put."



# BULL'S BIGGEST MOMENT

Adam Hamilton

It was Chicago Bull's defining moment.

Yes he'd already won 59 races, a stack of them features, and more than \$2 million in stakemoney, but last night's dominant \$300,000 Group 1 Fremantle Cup win was the pinnacle, so far at least.

It was just over two years ago in Auckland he had that freakish accident which left him with a broken back and his career in tatters, just when it seemed he was on the verge of greatness.

Trainer Gary Hall Sr nursed him back to the races, but at his comeback campaign he wasn't quite the same horse.

But connections were patient and tried again and now – somehow – Chicago Bull is arguably better than ever as he nears eight years of age.

The pint-sized former Kiwi did all the work in a dramatic and action-packed Fremantle Cup and still left his rivals standing in the run home to score by 5.7m in a 1min56.9sec mile rate for 2536m.

The Gary Hall Jr drive was as sublime as it was confident, surging his way around to sit parked in the middle stages and giving his younger arch-rival Shockwave the one-one trail.

But Chicago Bull was simply better than them.

The usually unflappable Hall Jr was choked with emotion after the win, probably because he was caretaker trainer of Chicago Bull in Auckland when he had that accident a couple of years back.

"That was devastating for 'Junior'. It wasn't his fault or anything, but he took it hard. I think this makes up for it in his mind now," Hall Sr said.

"He's an unbelievable horse, yes that's the word for it, unbelievable. He won so easily tonight.

"He's going at least as good as ever. If anything he's finishing off his races better, he's getting to the line stronger. Look at tonight, despite the work he did, he still kicked away from them."

Hall Jr marvelled at Chicago Bull's win.

"What can you say about that. He was incredible," he said. "All the credit goes to 'Senior' (Gary Hall Sr). We all doubted if he'd make it back, including Senior, but he kept at it and look at the results."

Evergreen Galactic Star ran a mighty race for second, while emerging star Shockwave was perhaps slightly disappointing in third spot, albeit only beaten seven metres.

When Shockwave got the breeze and then took the one-one on Chicago Bull, most would've had him favourite to win from there with a lap to go.

The most exciting part is the same horses lock horns again with a new set of barrier draws in the \$450,000

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