



WC, WGC

Lady Mandolin

2015 Fine Harness World's Grand Champion
By Karen Jones

The American Saddlebred has been bred for generations to be a show horse and that quality is never more apparent in a truly gifted horse than when they set foot on the green shavings. Our breed is blessed with so many attributes, such as an ability to rise to the occasion when asked, give all that they are asked for and often times more, and not lose the good sense that makes them easy to manage both at home and at the horse show. Those enduring winners in the harness division, horses like ^{CH}Colonel Boyle, ^{CH}Tashi Ling, and ^{CH}Callaway's Copyright have a different kind of impetus than horses that can be motivated by a rider. It isn't just athleticism that makes a harness horse great, it takes an inner inspiration, something that comes from the heart and from the DNA. One look at the great harness winners of the past tells us that with the right combination of breeding and training, along with the wisdom to encourage a horse to rise to the occasion without taking away that special harness horse ingredient is what makes them unique from a three-gaited or five-gaited horse.

"Truly a lady," was what Shawn Stachowski said about this year's Fine Harness World's Grand Champion. Appropriately named and extremely gifted, Lady Mandolin graced Freedom Hall with her presence on two occasions in 2015. The first time was in the junior mare class where she captured the crowd's attention upon entering the ring with her square, lofty park trot and the kind of non-stop presence that is required of a top fine harness horse. Lady Mandolin proved she was worthy of the attention that she garnered that night. The next question on the minds of trainers and exhibitors was, would she return in the junior championship or will Jim Stachowski bring her back for the big stake?

Lady Mandolin or "Layla," is just four years old and has been shown lightly but her show record is impeccable. Under the direction of Allison Walker and Randy Stoess, she won in the three-year-old three-gaited division at the Shelbyville horse show with Walker aboard, and went on to effortlessly top a 15 horse field in the three-year-old division at Louisville. Jim Stachowski saw the mare and bought her for his client, Helen Lacy Reed. He then showed her under saddle winning the 2014 Three-Year-Old Three-Gaited Sweepstakes class and went on to a reserve in the UPHA Three Gaited Classics Championship in Kansas City. It was Shawn Stachowski's discerning eye that saw Lady Mandolin's potential as a harness horse. "She is a very powerful and charismatic mare," Shawn said. "She always looks up, uses her ears and is very curious."

"Elegance is not a dispensable luxury but a factor that decides between success and failure."
~Edsger Dijkstra

Sired by the outstanding breeding stallion, Undulata's Nutcracker, who had proven himself to be a multi-division sire, and out of Suddenly Summer, a Merchant Prince daughter out of a Harlem Globetrotter mare you could say that Layla is truly a reflection of her outstanding pedigree. She was bred by Linda Shelor of Shelbyville, Kentucky, a latecomer to the breeding business.

"Suddenly Summer was my first show horse and my only broodmare. I didn't start breeding horses until I was 50 years old. I feel like I've won the lottery!" Shelor said with the excitement that only breeders understand when their equine babies go on to such success in the show ring. "When she got a little older I thought Summer would be a good pasture companion but then I decided to breed her. Layla was Summer's second foal. She was a show horse from day one. She was no trouble ever and she just loved herself! I raised her with Icelandic horses and I think because she was so much bigger than the Icelandics she always thought she was top dog." If that is the case she carried that confidence into her training and show ring career. Of course once lighting strikes it is nearly impossible not to try again. Linda felt that way about Layla so she bred Suddenly Summer back to Nutcracker and has a two-year-old colt in training with Stoess. "I told Randy to feel free to go slow with Layla and to keep her happy. He did that and the results were perfect so he's doing it again." As a bonus to Linda's lottery winnings she has an embryo coming from Lady Mandolin.

Jim Stachowski has been able to wow the judges and the crowd in Freedom Hall on several occasions, and has taken the fine harness division by storm with four different horses. First it was the beautiful and gifted WC The Davinci Code with which he won the 2009 Fine Harness Mare stake and returned to garner the Reserve World's Grand Championship. In 2010 he put WGC Wild Carrissima in the top ribbons in the harness division taking reserve in the stallion/gelding stake. In 2014 he topped both the Fine Harness Stallion/Gelding class and the Fine Harness World's Grand Championship with the stunning black, Nutcracker's Nirvana. And in 2015 it was Lady Mandolin who stole the show with her elegance in the harness division. Stachowski is well known in the Arabian world running a highly successful 100-stall business in Mantua, Ohio and two more in San Marcos, California and Scottsdale, Arizona respectively. His wife, Shawn, has a particular interest in the Saddlebreds so they have very successfully added them to their program, breeding, training and selling top quality show horses.

When the gate opened on Saturday night for the Fine Harness Championship the question was answered – Lady Mandolin would compete with the older and more experienced harness horses. The depth of the competition was extraordinary. After the first work the judges wanted to see three outstanding individuals back on the rail; Grace Arnold's, We Must Be Nuts, who won the ASR Kentucky Futurity in harness as a two-year-old, has blossomed into a

Lady Mandolin (WGC, WC) | 06/05/2011
Undulata's Nutcracker X Suddenly Summer by Merchant Prince (WC)

^{CH} Caramac*	^{CH} Will Shriver*	Callaway's Johnny Gillen*
		^{CH} Kate Shriver* (BHF)
Undulata's Nutcracker, 2001 ch.	Stonehedge Vanity*	Vanity's Sensation Of Crebilly*
		Lofty Elaine*
Christmas In New York ERB	The New York Times*	New Yorker*
		Canterbury Lane*
	Nativity	Native Promise*
		Nancy O'Lee*
Merchant Prince*	Mountain Highland Memories*	Genius Mountain Bourbon*
		Contract's Dusty*
Suddenly Summer, 1997 ch.	^{CH} Buck Creek Precious Princess* (BHF)	Glen Grove's Lord Vanity*
		Precious Miss* (BHF)
Lady Lucinda Lee*	Harlem Globetrotter*	New Yorker*
		Putting On Airs (BHF)
	Sultan's Serenade	Supreme Sultan*
		Shady Oaks Serenade*

grand horse and was very capably driven by trainer Smith Lilly; Robert L. Pugh's multiple World's Grand Champion, Wild Carrissima, who won the top honors three years in a row in Freedom Hall in both the stallion/gelding stake and in the Fine Harness Championship and who was very much on his game with trainer Bret Day on the lines; and the young newcomer, Lady Mandolin. All three horses only got better in the work off but it was the Lady who stole the show. Stachowski expertly guided her to the victory in which she seemed to be more engaged, more curious and loftier with every lovely step she took.

Since then Lady Mandolin has made another transition, to the ownership of Elisabeth Goth. She traveled to the UPHA/American Royal and made a beautiful show to win the fine harness mare class with Elisabeth Goth on the lines. It was her only appearance before heading home for a well-deserved winter rest. Linda Shelor is very excited to see what the future holds for her beloved Lady Mandolin. "I'm just ecstatic that Elisabeth bought Layla!"

