



Howard
Schaffers
2016
World's
Championship
JASON

^{CH}WILD CARRISSIMA

2016 Fine Harness World's Grand Champion

By Karen Jones

In any given sport or competition the ability to see the extra special, the athlete with the inner will to win that shines above the others, is not limited to the eye of trained professional. In Freedom Hall when the gate opens for the championships on Saturday night it is often apparent within that first pass down the rail, and that brilliance energizes the spectators whether they be professional horsemen, amateurs, breeders or someone who has never laid eyes on an American Saddlebred. That quality is difficult to put words to but clearly felt. When ^{CH}Wild Carrissima hit the green shavings on Saturday night there was no doubt that he was fully prepared to win the Fine Harness Grand Championship – once again.

Wild Carissima is sired by Rare Perception whose genetic history is a line of gaited champions all the way back to Wing's Fleet Admiral, but to find the fine harness excellence in Carissima's breeding you have to look at his bottom line. He is out of Mia Carrissima, who is sired by Fine Harness World's Grand Champion ^{CH}Foxfire's Prophet. Prophet's dam is the Fine Harness World's Grand Champion and Broodmare Hall Of Fame mare, ^{CH}Supreme Airs. This mare had a remarkable show career, winning eight World's Championships beginning in 1963 in her two-year-old year and continuing through 1972 (she did not show in 1967 or 1971). She was Fine Harness Reserve World's Grand Champion in 1966 with Charlie Crabtree after qualifying in

the Amateur division with her owner, Mrs. J.W. Gallagher. She returned to win World's Grand Champion in 1972, qualifying in the Mare Stake also with Crabtree. She showed at Louisville ten times and won nine out of ten classes. She then went on to a great career as a broodmare. She was the dam of many champions, most notable were Wild Carissima's sire, WGC ^{CH}Foxfire's Prophet, the incomparable breeding stallion, Supreme Heir, and another Broodmare Hall Of Fame Mare, Putting On Airs, who was the dam of WGC Harlem Globetrotter, WC Manhattan Airs, and another wonderful broodmare, Yorkshire Pudding (BHF).

The beginnings of this horse's career lay in familiar territory. As with past

champions, WC The Da Vincci Code, WGC Nutcracker's Nirvana, and WGC Lady Mandolin, Carrissima's life and training started with Jim and Shawn Stachowski. This husband and wife team has a proven eye for a great harness prospect and the ability to put a winning harness horse in the ring. Shawn happened into a situation where the breeder really wanted to sell some horses. "The first time I saw him in the stall he was a two-year-old stallion and I didn't think too much of him. The owner insisted that he was the nicest horse on the property, but I was skeptical. The next time I went back she took him out of the stall and I saw him trot barefoot. I bought him, put him right on my trailer and took him home." She didn't get an overwhelming reception when she took the wild bay colt off of the trailer. "My husband took one look at him and said

"We only deal in high dollar horses here. What are we going to do with this one?" He was a little upset with me for buying him, but once he started working him things changed. He was really wild, which is why I named him Wild Carrissima, but he had the right attitude. He was always a lot of horse but he trained really well. He was a strong horse but never a bad horse – he was just a good boy." Jim Stachowski worked Carrissima under saddle and Shawn said that he was pretty spectacular. "There isn't a day that goes by that we don't talk about him," Shawn said. "He's a legend on our farm."

In mid August of 2011 Bret Day purchased Carrissima for his client Robert L. Pugh and a couple of weeks later he went to Louisville and won his first two Fine Harness Championships, the Stallion Gelding qualifier and he came back to win the Fine Harness World's Grand Championship. Bret Day remembers all of it clearly. "We bought this horse from Melissa Moore for Dr. Pugh not long after Junior League so I only had a few weeks to prepare for Louisville. I was just flying by the seat of my pants and really didn't know what to expect when we went through the gate for the Stallion/Gelding class. Griffin started school on Thursday of that week so Susi went home on Wednesday to help him get to school the next day. The horse was strong but I was prepared for it." The beautiful bay horse's ring presence and his self-motivated harness trot made it an easy choice. He went on to the UPHA/American Royal in November and won both the qualifying class and championship. The following spring Bret took him to River Ridge and Roanoke Valley winning three classes and then repeated his wins at Louisville for a second year, just as brilliantly as he had before. He finished his show season in Kansas City winning the qualifying and championship classes there for the second time. That was a banner year, but 2013 was to be even better. Wild Carrissima and Bret were undefeated at River Ridge, Midwest Charity, won a third World's Championship and World's Grand Championship, and went on to win both of his classes at the North Carolina State Championship and at the UPHA/American Royal. "From the first class at Louisville we created a bond. From then on, there were things I never made him do, and I let him be what he was. I do think there is a mutual bond of trust between us, and that's what has made it work."

It's a rare individual whose name shows up in Louisville's history winning the Fine Harness World's Grand Championship more

^{CH} Superior Odds (WC, RWC) Rare Treasure (RWC)	Wing's Fleet Admiral (RWC) Lovely Ina (BHF)
^{CH} Penny's Stonewall (WC, RWCC, RWC) Rare Perception, 1993 ch.	Stonewall Supreme Penny Co-Ed (BHF)
Court Manor's Wildfire! (RWC) Tiny Dancer	Hide-A-Way's Firefly Supreme Hide-A-Way's Laura Belle (BHF)
Milady's Crown Jewell	Society's Crown Jewell Tambarina
Radiant Sultan	Supreme Sultan
^{CH} Foxfire's Prophet (WGC, WC, RWGC)	^{CH} Glenview Radiance (WC, RWC)
^{CH} Supreme Airs (BHF, WGC, WC, RWGC) Mia Carrissima, 1993	Stonewall Supreme Crebilly's Plumb Beautiful (BHF)
Valley's Desdemona Denmark	Oman's Desdemona Denmark
^{CH} Carrigan's Gift (RWCC, RWC)	Dixie Duchess (BHF)
Raven Wing	^{CH} Wing Commander (WGC, WC, RWGC) ^{CH} Lady Carrigan (WGC, WC)

than three times, but this year Wild Carrissima joined the best of the best in that endeavor. Lady Beautiful won it five times between 1916 and 1921, ^{CH}Meadow Vanity (BHF) won five times between 1938 and 1944, ^{CH}The Lemon Drop Kid won four times in a row between 1956 and 1959 and was followed directly by ^{CH}Colonel Boyle, winning it five times in a row between 1960 and 1964. ^{CH}Tashi Ling came along next with four wins between 1968 and 1971. It wasn't until 2001 that there was another winning streak when ^{CH}Callaway's Copyright broke the record for successive World's Grand Championship wins with six in a row from 2001 to 2006. That is fine company to keep for any horse. Wild Carrissima was third in a very deep World's Grand Championship in 2014 and came back in 2015 to Reserve World's Champion Stallion/Gelding and Reserve World's Grand Champion. "Dr. Pugh drove Carrissima at the Fall Classic last year and showed him at Louisville in the Amateur Gentleman's class and made great shows. He did a wonderful job of showing him. Showing amateur we knew that the huge hurdle was would always be for him to stand in the lineup. At Louisville this year when he didn't stand we made the decision to show him back in the Championship. Dr. Pugh was very supportive of that, and Susi was too. Susi has the most critical eye of everything we do, and I rely on that. I think it is our secret weapon – her honest opinions that I can really rely on. She said that she thought that Carrissima had a fair and legitimate chance to win it again, so we went ahead and showed him."

“The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.”

~Confucius

Wild Carrissima came into the ring in 2016 as an 11-year-old, with a seeming determination to take back his title and move into position in history with the top harness horses of all time. Bret Day had him in perfect form and managed all of that show horse energy while making it look easy. He had some serious challengers - the Mare World's Champion Futurette with Larry Hodge made a grand show for reserve, but the night and the white roses belonged to Wild Carrissima for his owner Robert L. Pugh.

What does the future hold for Wild Carrissima? "I really don't know," Bret said. "Right now he's home and done for this year, getting a well deserved rest. He's given my so much for my career. I want to do the best for him, and a little bit of me would like to quit while he's on top. We'll wait and see what time tells us."