

Macadamia

2014 Three-Gaited World's Grand Champion

By Karen Jones



Macadamia winning the 2014 Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship

"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence." ~ Vince Lombardi

It isn't often that a junior horse can steal the thunder of the seasoned contenders in any of the final three big stakes at Louisville. It takes a special individual, such as the legendary ^{CH}Forest Song who in 1966 won the Three-Year-Old Three-Gaited World's Championship and returned to win the Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship with Garland Bradshaw. Or three-year-old sensation, ^{CH}An Heir About Her who won the ASHA National Three-Year-Old Three-Gaited Futurity and came back to take home the World's Grand Championship roses with Chris Reiser aboard. Horses like these bring forth a combination of breeding, talent, physical and mental maturity and expert training combined with that special freshness that accompanies a young show horse. In 2014, just such an individual graced Freedom Hall.

Macadamia fits the very definition of a three-gaited horse. He is beautiful, brilliant in his expression, light and correct in his headset, and executes a textbook park trot - square, balanced, high and animated. He is sired by the number one producer of World's Champions for five years running, Undulata's Nutcracker, and out of the show mare, Sass With Class. Macadamia possesses a royal lineage of World's Champions and World's Grand Champions. His sire's pedigree speaks for itself, as does his offspring. Undulata's Nutcracker has impacted the breed in the most dynamic way,



Macadamia's Dam, Sass With Class changing the look of today's show horses to a larger, earlier maturing and highly gifted animal. But let's not overlook the dam's side of the equation.

Macadamia's dam, Sass With Class is sired by World's Champion Of Champions Santana's Charm and out of ^{CH}Buck's Aria. Sass With Class was Reserve World's Champion Three-Year-Old Five-Gaited in 2000 with breeder and owner Dena Tanner Lopez. Dena drove her to wins in the Kentucky County Fair Fine Harness Championship at Louisville in 2002 and 2003 and in '03 also won the mare stake.

"Sass With Class was a wonderful mare and she was beautiful," said Lopez. "The dam's side is very strong, producing one good horse after another. ^{CH}Astra Music is a full sister to ^{CH}Caravelle and both are broodmare hall of fame mares. I showed Sass With Class in the gaited division for two years and then put her in harness as a junior horse. That was her strongest division. She is an extremely game mare – just loved her work."

Dena remembers with amusement just how much the mare loved her work. "I never could let her down in the winter like I do the rest of my horses. I tried one time and she got out of the field and came back to the barn! I kept her in and kept her busy through the winter."

Macadamia's second dam, ^{CH}Astra Music (BHF) produced two World's Champions, Mr. Mega Bucks and ^{CH}Bonnie Buck, who was a three-time World's Champion. One of those World's Championships was in the Three Gaited Park division with Steve Wheeler aboard. Add to the bottom line of Sass With Class, World's Grand Champion Sultan's Santana and World's Grand Champion ^{CH}Buck Rogers and it becomes clear that breeding is an integral ingredient in the success of this young horse.

Macadamia was bred by Ed Rhodes of Waverly, Ohio. When asked if he knew what he had in the colt he didn't hesitate to answer, "Yes I did. His dam is a phenomenal mare, full of life and as game as they come. She is 17 now and I think you could take her back to the show ring today and do well."

Macadamia is Rhodes first colt in the Saddlebred breeding business. His wife, Debra Waterman had show horses and his son Will rode with Chris Reiser. "Will is the brains behind the breeding that we are doing. He has an unusually high IQ and he studies the pedigrees and information on all of the horses. He can tell you which horses have won what classes at Louisville and knows what bloodlines cross well with other bloodlines. He's like a walking computer. I'd like to say that breeding Macadamia was beginners luck but I had help."

Rhodes and his family bred and still own a full brother to Macadamia, a yearling named Avellane Stargazer as well as having two full siblings to "Mac" due in the spring and one out of Sass With

	^{CH} Will Shriver (WC, WGC)	Callaway's Johnny Gillen
	^{CH} Caramac (WC, WCC)	^{CH} Kate Shriver (WGC, BHF)
	Stonehedge Vanity	Vanity's Sensation Of Crebilly
Undulata's Nutcracker, 2001 ch.		Lofty Elaine
	The New York Times	New Yorker
	Christmas In New York Erb	Canterbury Lane
	Nativity	Native Promise
		Nancy O'Lee
	Sultan's Santana (WC, WGC)	Supreme Sultan
	Santana's Charm (WC, WCC)	Grand View's Majorette (BHF)
	Vanity's Belle	Vanity's Sensation Of Crebilly
Sass With Class (WC), 1997 ch.		Ky. Cardinal Belle (BHF)
	^{CH} Buck Rogers (WC, WCC, WGC)	Storm's Fury
	Buck's Aria	Rhythm's Jewel (WC)
	^{CH} Astra Music (BHF)	Chubasco
		^{CH} Magic Note

Class by CF First Night Out. "Mac never cantered or galloped. Everywhere he went he trotted and he would follow me around like a big dog. If something startled him he would try to jump in my pocket. His brother is a little less flighty than Mac was. He's big and has a beautiful neck, really intelligent and has a great desire to please. It'll be interesting to see what he does."

Macadamia began his show career with John Biggins in 2013 placing second in the ASHA National Three-Year-Old Park Futurity. His next horse show was in October of that year at the Kentucky Fall Classic horse show where Chuck Herbert catch rode for Biggins. The colt had recently been trimmed and they wanted to qualify him for the UPHA Classics championship at the Royal. "I rode him one time at home before I showed him. He was so much different at home than he was at the show. He was a little tentative when we first went through the gate at the Horse Park but then he started gaining confidence and made a great show," said Herbert. "I knew this was a special horse and I had a client who was looking for a prospect, so we managed to move quickly enough to buy him."

In November, Herbert lit up Kemper Arena with Macadamia to win the UPHA Three-Gaited Classic Championship. "I just had him a short time and John had done most of the good solid work on him. All he really needed was to step up and be confident. When I rode him down the chute at the Royal I tapped him a couple of times with my whip. He dropped his back and gave me the ride of a lifetime. I love that horse to death – he is the real deal and will be a great horse for many years to come."

Macadamia was purchased at the Royal by Glasscock Financial Services, LLC and Steve and Tiffany Wheeler took over his training. He debuted with Steve Wheeler in May of 2014 at the Bonnie Blue Classic. He won the junior three-gaited class

there and then headed to Rock Creek in June to top that division again. His last show before Louisville was the Blue Ridge Classic where Wheeler won his third Junior Three-Gaited class. His performance in the Junior Over-Two Stake in Freedom Hall was flawless and breathtaking and left everyone wondering if he would come back in the Junior Championship or would they opt to try for the World's Grand Championship.

When the gate opened on the Three-Gaited Championship on Saturday night the Saddlebred world was treated to yet another brilliant performance by Macadamia. He was in against the best of the best, Don O'Neil, HS Baby Steps, HS Daydream's Heads Up, Nutter Butter – all accomplished and seasoned horses. It didn't take the judging panel long to make their decision and when it was over Macadamia and Steve Wheeler made their final pass out of the ring draped with the yellow roses, both having won their first World's Grand Championship. It was also the second World's Grand Championship of the night and of his breeding career for Undulata's Nutcracker.

"John Biggins did a great job starting this horse and then Chuck Herbert got him and did a great job. We got him and he matured really well over the winter," said Wheeler in a Saddle Horse Report interview. "We have other four-year-olds that aren't near as mature or bodied out as this horse. After the last qualifier was over on Wednesday night we sat down and talked about our options. We thought we might as well go for it [the open championship]. We felt comfortable that we could show at a high level and would have a shot."

The future is as bright for this young horse as the beautiful yellow roses that he won for Autumn Hills Stables. In most cases it takes a village to make a success and in this case the village was populated with fine horsemen, great decisions and one very special horse. Well done indeed!



Steve and Tiffany Wheeler join the Glasscock-Kirkpatrick family after Macadamia's big win. (Funkhouser photo)