



# Carol Dawson GCH

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE HORSE OF THE YEAR

BY SARA PIZZUTO

In a year crippled by a global pandemic and filled with such uncertainty and change, one thing remained consistent in the Morgan industry—the domination of Carol Dawson GCH. The electric mare once again achieved the breed's highest honor by being crowned the Park Saddle World Champion for the second consecutive year under the direction of Mike Goebig and Dwayne Knowles. She carved her name into the history books yet again in Oklahoma City in 2020 and has now earned your vote once again as the People's Choice Horse Of The Year.

Carol Dawson GCH settled into the winter months at Broadmoor in 2019 as the reigning Park Saddle World Champion. Holly Johnson's mare was set to attempt to defend her title in 2020 until the coronavirus pandemic decisively swept through the nation. These unprecedented times meant the cancellation of early spring shows, leaving establishments like Goebig and Knowles' Broadmoor unsure of their summer and fall plans. Trainer Mike Goebig explained that this temporary pause on their horse show schedule proved difficult when preparing Carol Dawson GCH for 2020.

"I found in general that it was a little hard to get everybody put together because I think at one point we didn't think we were going to be going to any shows," he said. "I backed off a lot not knowing if we were going to show until maybe the middle of the summer or not at all and that's not a program that Carol Dawson thrives in. So it was chal-



Carol Dawson GCH returned to the spotlight in 2020 as she captured the Park Saddle World Championship for the second consecutive year on her way to again earning the votes of her fan club as People's Choice Horse Of The Year.

lenging to get her back in the order that I wanted her in last year."

Despite the challenges that the season presented, Carol Dawson GCH was soon in peak shape to attend her first show of the year in July of 2020. She marched into the ring in North Carolina at the Blue Ridge Classic with the same charisma and presence that has trademarked her career.

"What happens is she's an over-

achiever always and you have to kind of reset your brain to remember that," Goebig said. "Less is more until you show her."

Goebig and Carol Dawson GCH swept the open park saddle division at Blue Ridge as they set their sights on Oklahoma City. They arrived at the Morgan Grand National, prepped to defend their title as the prestigious winners of the last class on Saturday night—the Park Saddle World

Championship. However, Goebig explained that he felt the pressure trotting into the ring on the defending world champion much like he felt when defending this title for the second time on his former park saddle mounts.

"I have found that with my previous experience of defending my second world championship, it is really hard," he said. "I don't know why. With The Master's Touch the

third and fourth attempts weren't nearly as hard as the second one and the same with Stand And Deliver. That second one for some reason for me, really, I feel a lot of pressure."

Regardless of the added tension, Goebig and Carol Dawson GCH triumphed once again, being crowned the unanimous Park Saddle World Champions.

"She's remarkably balanced," Goebig said. "She's so good off her hocks and she takes that gigantic step up in front. That really sets her apart from any horse. She's bottomless so if there's a workout, she's the same horse coming in the ring that she is when she exits the ring."

Announcer Peter Fenton had Mike Goebig and Carol Dawson GCH stand in the spotlight of center ring before making their victory pass. Fenton recognized Goebig as having just completed his 50th year of showing Morgan horses—marking 50 years of excellence in this breed. In addition, Saturday evening's win was Goebig's eighth time to win the prestigious Park Saddle World Championship, having done so now twice with Carol Dawson GCH.

"I got pretty emotional which is unlike me," Goebig said. "It was a little overwhelming. The whole experience was pretty overwhelming. I am more than grateful that at my age I had another horse that could accomplish that. I didn't think that that would ever happen again."

Carol Dawson GCH returned home to Broadmoor after her feat in Oklahoma City. It was later in the winter when Mike Goebig suggested that longtime Broadmoor client Allyson Nord Wandtke purchase the mare.

"Mike knew that I loved Carol Dawson and that I have admired her for many years and there's nothing I like better than watching Mike ride her," Wandtke said. "It's magic. Mike and I have been doing this long enough and I trust him. He has picked a lot of great horses for me and I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to try and get together with her. It will be fun."

Wandtke is currently in the process of preparing to debut aboard Carol Dawson GCH this season. The accomplished rider is a familiar face in Oklahoma's winner's circle and though an amateur rider, has the talents and abilities of a professional. Goebig is confident in this new pair's partnership.

"So far it has been really pretty easy," Goebig said. "Allyson has ridden a lot of horses for us over the years so she knows how Dwayne and I work them and make them so some of the process is pretty easy because of that. She really understands what we require of them and how those horses respond and so we are just starting the process but at this point it has been pretty seamless."

As Wandtke works to become a team with her new mare, she is quick to appreciate the talents of Carol Dawson that have made her a popular entry amongst the Morgan community.

"Right now it is fantastic," she said. "It exceeded my expectations. 'Kiki' is my type of horse. She is a lot of fun to ride. Even just riding her at the barn is a blast. She is so light and powerful and you just stay out of her way. She is very game and lights up the ring every time she enters. She puts it all out there and she does it every time she comes out of her stall."

In a short span of time, Carol Dawson GCH has positively impacted the Morgan industry as she has risen to the top of her breed, not once but twice. She has set the standard for park excellence and is poised to continue to thrive under the Broadmoor banner and now the new ownership of the capable Allyson Nord Wandtke.



Earning the roses in 2020 for owner Holly Johnson, Carol Dawson GCH will make her debut in 2021 with new owner Allyson Nord Wandtke. It will be a new challenge that Wandtke as well as Mike Goebig are looking forward to.



Carol Dawson GCH's victory added to Mike Goebig's record number of Park Saddle World Championships (8) as the athletic mare became the third horse that Goebig has won the coveted title with multiple times.