

# In A Different Class

## The Influence Of A Daydream Believer (BHF)

by Bob Funkhouser

They're extremely rare. Many a breeder of American Saddlebreds has spent sleepless nights dreaming of what would make the best broodmare? What combination of pedigree, conformation, ability, heart and that unknown "it" factor come into play to be the mare that produces world's titleholder after world's titleholder and even rarer, world's champion producer after world's champion producer?

At the end of 2015 this breed lost one of those gems with the passing of world's champion A Daydream Believer (BHF). She had five owners throughout her 22 years, starting with George Knight who sold her to Green Haven Farm as a two-year-old, winning the ASHA Futurity of Kentucky Two-Year-Old Fine Harness World's Championship with Knight driving. They sold her Kenneth and Sallie Wheeler following A Daydream Believer's Three-Year-Old Fine Harness at Lexington Junior League the next year, again with Knight at the whip. The mare stayed with him through Louisville where they were reserve in the Three-Year-Old Fine Harness National Futurity. She would go to win two more Louisville blues in the park division with Steve Wheeler riding under the direction of Nelson Green before she began her second career as one of the greatest producers of all time.

"She was as game as the come," remembered George Knight. "There was a funny story about her. As a yearling she and He's Real Bad were turned out together and it was a cold day in February and those two had gotten out of the pasture. Our neighbor called to say they saw some loose horses. Kim [Skipton] and I got in the car and went looking for them. We found him and then found her down the road caught in some brush. She was in a mess. I caught her and started leading her back and the roads were so icy. I was freezing and we had to stop the car and I changed places with Kim.

"I later sold the colt to Jerry Greenberg and later that year he saw A Daydream Believer and asked me, 'Why didn't you show her to me?' I told him I didn't want to confuse him. He bought her as well and we went to Louisville and both won their two-year-old classes. They were both out of [Sultan's] Spartan mares."

So, she had the ability as a performer and if you look at her pedigree you can see why. You can also see why she was the dam of two world's grand champions and several other world's titleholders. A Daydream Believer was sired by George Knight's go to stallion at the time, Attache's Born Believer, a horse with a lot of substance. A son of world's champion Attaché, Born Believer was also noted for being the sire of multi-titled World's Grand Champion Three-Gaited Hollywood Excellence (BHF).



*Scott Hagan knew he had to have A Daydream Believer the first time he saw her in the show ring. With his vision she had a most remarkable produce record as a broodmare, one of the very best ever.*



The second foal of A Daydream Believer, Castledream was a Fine Harness World's Grand Champion with Larry Hodge and a world's champion of champions with owner Misdee Miller.



Another son of A Daydream Believer to wear the roses, HS Dignitary was the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited World's Champion of Champions with Courtney McGinnis.

Then you turn your attention to the bottom portion of her papers and you find three out of the four dams are Broodmare Hall of Fame matrons and the other mare is a daughter of World Grand Champion Three-Gaited CH Valley View Supreme and World's Grand Champion Five-Gaited CH Dream Waltz, a full sister to six-time World's Grand Champion Five-Gaited CH Wing Commander. Out of Dream A Dream (BHF), A Daydream Believer is a full sister to world's champion CH Vegas Dream and reserve world's champions I Am The Dream and Keep Dreaming.

Her first foal came in 2003 and was the park pleasure champion My Seraphim (by Supreme Heir). She was then sent to the court of world's champion Castle Bravo, the result being Fine Harness World's Grand Champion CH Castledream. His full sister was reserve world's champion Dream Castle. When crossed with Sir William Robert she produced world's champion HS Daydream's Believe In Me, the first for new owner Scott Hagan. A full brother to Believe In Me, world's champion CH HS Dignitary was an embryo baby foaled the same year as Believe In Me. Back to Sir William Robert, HS Decorum was the next world's champion attributed to A Daydream Believer.

Her 2008 crop consisted of show ring champions HS A Faithful Lady, HS First Day and HS Daydream's Dream Girl only to be followed up the next year with world's champion HS Daydream's Celebrity (by Sir William Robert) and for her owner, her greatest gift yet, World's Grand Champion Three-Gaited HS Daydream's Heads Up (by Undulata's Nutcracker). She wasn't done yet as HS Daydream's Fashionista, a full sister to Heads Up, joined the list of A Daydream Believer's world's champions.

Who knows what's still to come? There is a "crop" of two and three-year-olds for this year sired by such noted stallions as Undulata's Nutcracker, Deep Blue, Callaway's Bluesman, My Royale Charm, and He's Born To Royalty.

"She was one of the most remarkable American Saddlebreds to ever walk the earth," said Fred Sarver who managed her for Scott Hagan. "She produced as efficiently as any mare ever and I don't think it will ever be equaled.

"I'm thankful I had the opportunity to work with her and while she was already a good producer before Scott purchased her, the



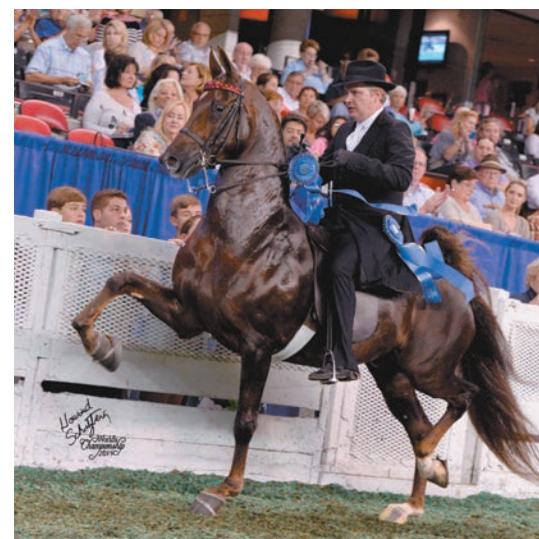
What a thrill for owner/breeder Scott Hagan to ride HS Daydream's Heads Up to the Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship. This gave A Daydream Believer world's grand champions in two different divisions.



In 2012, Lionel Ferreira rode HS Daydream's Decorum to the World's Champion of Champions Junior Three-Gaited title as well as the ASHA Four-Year-Old Sweepstakes World's Championship.



A full sister to Heads Up, HS Daydream's Fashionista was the Three-Year-Old Fine Harness Mare World's Champion with Nelson Green in 2014.



Just this past season Kenny Smith rode HS Daydream's Celebrity, a Sir William Robert son of A Daydream Believer, to the Three-Gaited 15.2 & Under World's Championship.

credit for her remarkable success goes to him. His foresight, vision and drive led to her producing so many great horses. He put more planning and thought into that than anyone I've ever seen. It's kind of like Betty Weldon and Will Shriver, she had the belief in him and then made sure it happened. Scott believed in this mare. Besides the show horses she has already produced, her daughters will be producers for years to come and we have two young stallions, HS Castle Vision (by Castle Bravo) and HS Daydream's Dignity (by Sir William Robert) who look like they will be top producers."

Scott Hagan has been the mare's owner since 2005. She became a vital part of life and his breeding program.

"I bought A Daydream Believer from Kenny and Ceil Wheeler after she had already had three foals (one of the being Castledream) so I wasn't around her at all as a show horse other than seeing her show," stated Hagan. "As a broodmare she was a wonderful personality and very kind horse to be around. Fred Sarver and Dr. Rob Foss said she tolerated all of the gyrations of embryo transfer and oocyte production without a problem. She lived at Dr. Foss's for at least the last five years of her life except for a brief period we brought her back to Fred's [Sarver] during the winter during which I got many pictures of her.

"Clearly A Daydream Believer was the centerpiece of Hagan Saddlebreds' breeding program. Her full sister, I Am The Dream, is coming on strong too, having produced HS Baby Steps and HS I'm Hot Wired. In my opinion, she will go down in Saddlebred history as, if not the best producer of all time (the only mare to produce World's Grand Champions in different divisions), then at least in the Top 5 along with Reverie's Desdemona, Kate Shriver, Flirtation Walk and Putting On Airs. I believe that broodmares are more important than stallions as A Daydream Believer produced world's champions by three different stallions: Castle

Bravo, Sir William Robert and Undulata's Nutcracker, so I look forward to breeding her daughters.

"Just look at the female lines in the Broodmare Hall of Fame mares.

Great mares produce great mares (see Dream A Dream, Callaway's Agatha Christie, Carol Trigg, Lady Trigg, Spelling Bee, Carol Lynn, Flirtation Walk, and Reverie's Desdemona). A Daydream Believer was exceptional in so many ways: she was run-off game, she had the fire in her eyes, she moved off her back end perfectly, she did what old timers call 'rolled her shoulders' or had an 'oily way of going' with her front end. She made you look at her and you could tell she was a challenge to ride or drive. She had a beautiful neck and set her head well (when she wanted to) and overall was just a stunning individual.

"There have been three things in my life that 'I just had to have,' my wife Wendy, a shopping center I own which is my company's flagship asset and A Daydream Believer. The first time I saw her was when George Knight showed her in junior harness at Junior League. I was completely captivated and said to myself that one day I would own her. I felt deep in my bones that she would be a great broodmare and was so grateful to Kenny and Ceil [Wheeler] when they sold her to me. I am so very thankful that I owned her and had the resources to help her become the producer she was."

Everyone who was ever around her fell in love with her attitude and ability. "She was so unique, concluded Fred Sarver. "The way she carried herself in the ring, the hook she had in her neck and the gameness she possessed were all exceptional traits. Who knew she would be this kind of producer though? Dr. Alan Raun once told me, 'In breeding horses, it pays to be both lucky and smart. If you have to choose one, choose luck!' However, in Scott's selection of A Daydream Believer, he was very smart!"



A daughter of Attache's Born Believer and Dream A Dream (BHF), A Daydream Believer delivered a slew of world's champion performers and left Scott Hagan with two young stallion sons whose first foals are most impressive.