



Blushing Bull

People's Choice Country Western Pleasure Champion

BY JENNY GREY

Suzanne Bradshaw had a year to remember in 2014. With picture-perfect performances, her western horse, Blushing Bull, won every championship he entered and placed first in all but one qualifying class. He has earned your recognition as the People's Choice Country Western Pleasure Champion for 2014 in addition to earning top honors as both the UPHA Open Western Champion and the ASHA Western Country Pleasure Champion. Suzanne has owned many wonderful horses during her 68 year career in the show ring. She now has the extraordinary pleasure of adding one more exceptional western horse to her collection of show ring stars that includes The American Flag and CH America's Lass.

Suzanne first became interested in horses when her sister acquired an American Saddlebred. Beginning with Academy classes in 1946, she has been a highly successful and dedicated owner/competitor. During the earlier stages of her career she showed three and five-gaited horses, but in more recent years, western has been her discipline of choice. She is an accomplished and versatile horsewoman who will try anything. She has even ridden on a competitive drill team as has her granddaughter, Alexandra.

For Suzanne, showing Saddlebreds is a family affair. Her daughters, Lindsay Sowell and Malissa Welke, who both started showing at eight years old, are still active participants, sharing their mother's passion for all things equine. There is no question that Suzanne cherishes every aspect of her life with horses. She is very busy back in her home state of Arkansas where she runs an oil company, but she happily takes time to go to the shows to join Malissa and Lindsay. They have taken turns riding Blushing Bull, determining who shows him by who has the time to break away from job and family commitments.

Lindsay and Malissa both rode equitation with Helen Crabtree. Suzanne remembers the thrill of watching them ride in the Good Hands final at Madison Square Garden when the National Horse Show was still held in New York City. "It was very exciting", she remembered. "People were cheering and clapping...there was so much noise!" The extended Bradshaw family is still making wonderful memories together. Suzanne has always made sure that her daughters have good horses to show and she derives the greatest pleasure in watching them ride.



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Malissa Welke had the thrill of a lifetime when Blushing Bull won the 2013 Shatner Western Pleasure Finals Grand Championship. Her sister, Lindsay Sowell earned this same title with Bull again in 2014. After an undefeated world's championship show, it was the proverbial 'icing on the cake'.

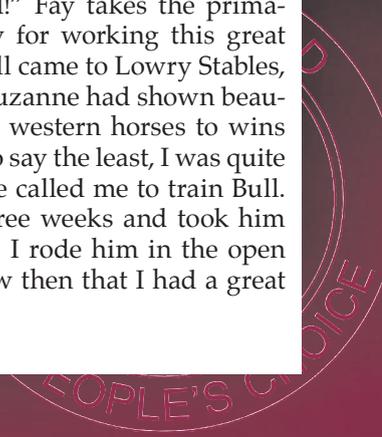
Suzanne also has two grandchildren who love horses – nine year old Henry Welke who is in the walk-trot division and Alexandra Sowell who is on the ASB riding team at the University of Louisville.

In addition to the major awards earned for Blushing Bull's outstanding show season, the Bradshaw family was honored this year with the Paul and Dorothy Gillenwater Award, presented in recognition of the American Saddlebred as the ideal family breed. The criteria include recognition of the recipients' sportsmanship and dedication as an entire family to the advancement of Saddlebreds. It is hard to imagine a family that fits the description better.

Suzanne first saw Blushing Bull at the Louisville Equestrian Center where she had America's Lass in training with Jenn Holdren. One day she was walking down the aisle and stopped short when she saw a horse in cross ties. She asked, "Who is that? He's the most beautiful-headed horse I ever saw!" She arranged to have an option to buy, should the occasion arise. Unknown to Suzanne, Jenn had already noted his potential as a western horse and had begun working him in that discipline. In the spring of

2012, the owner asked Lindsay to show him in a western class. In spite of not having been fully trained to do the job, Bull won the blue ribbon, was offered for sale and Suzanne bought him without hesitation. The original intent was that Suzanne would show him but illness and a bad accident have unfortunately kept her out of the show ring for the last two years. She is keeping her options open for 2015, however.

Suzanne Bradshaw has worked with many outstanding trainers over the years including Randy Cates, to whom she sent Bull for training while Malissa was living in Tulsa. For the past two years, however, he has been in training with Fay and Jim Lowry who Suzanne describes as "the greatest, lovely people...they are unbelievably talented!" Fay takes the primary responsibility for working this great horse. Before Bull came to Lowry Stables, Fay knew that Suzanne had shown beautiful Saddlebred western horses to wins at Louisville. "To say the least, I was quite flattered that she called me to train Bull. We only had three weeks and took him to a horse show. I rode him in the open classes and knew then that I had a great western horse."



"Bull is a special horse to me. He is absolutely beautiful, bay and huge! I think he is the tallest horse in the barn. He is older and has been shown a lot in the past so it isn't like I am teaching him to do new things. I mainly have to think about how to work him to keep him happy. At the beginning of the week, I do a lot of bit-rigging in which I turn him loose in the bull pen. This way he burns energy, isn't bored, and it helps soften his mouth. Once the edge is off I ride him. Bull has a smooth jog and an absolutely beautiful lope. When you ride him, you feel like you are riding a champion. He is so eye-catching and has that 'royal' look. At horse shows, he and I go trail riding every day. It helps him to walk and relax. I love it too because it gives me about 45 minutes a day to just 'chill'. I am looking forward to another year with Bull! He has helped me achieve so many personal goals and I will be forever grateful to Bull and Mrs. Bradshaw, Malissa and Lindsay."

In 2012, Bull began his amazing journey with the Bradshaw family, winning the Country Western Pleasure Championships at Rock Creek, the Longview Charity show, Lexington Junior League and the Saint Louis National Charity show. 2013 brought even more accolades. He won the Indianapolis Country Western Pleasure Championship with Fay Lowry in the saddle; he was the undefeated Country Western Pleasure Champion at the Lexington Junior League show, then ended the year in spectacular fashion, winning the coveted William Shatner Western Pleasure Finals Grand Championship with Malissa on board. It is worth noting that Fay Lowry is the only trainer ever to have won both the championship and reserve in the Shatner Finals in the same year. CH Monsignor, ridden and owned by Laine Peterson, took the reserve championship honors.

Blushing Bull, always a formidable presence in the show ring, was about to have a year that most of us only dream of. He began the first part of the 2014 show season with Malissa in the saddle. They were undefeated at both the Bridlespur and the Kansas City Chapter 5 shows. He romped through the rest of the show season with Lindsay on board, winning the Indianapolis Charity Country Western Pleasure Championship and the Lexington Junior League Country Western Pleasure Championship. The best was yet to come. "Bull and I are lucky to have two such talented riders as Malissa and Lindsay," Fay Lowry observed.

Tour de force performances for Blushing Bull and Lindsay led to an undefeated World's Championship show in Louisville. Taking two major victory passes



Suzanne Bradshaw's daughter, Lindsay Sowell, had undefeated rides on Blushing Bull in all but one class in an outstanding 2014 show season. After their undefeated show at Lexington Junior League show, Bull and Lindsay went on to become the Country Western Pleasure World's Champion of Champions.

on the green shavings, Blushing Bull had accomplished a major feat. He earned both the Country Western Pleasure World's Championship and the Country Western Pleasure World's Champion of Champions title. Moving on to St. Louis, Suzanne's favorite show, he was undefeated once more in a spectacular end to their 2014 show season as the Shatner Western Pleasure Finals Grand Champion. It was an especially sweet victory for Suzanne now that both of her daughters had taken a victory pass in this important event in back-to-back years. It was also a special venue because western riders come together from all over the USA to compete.

"You never know with western", said Suzanne, who had no idea that Bull would have both an undefeated Louisville and St. Louis National Charity show. Different judges have different preferences so it was a huge thrill to watch Lindsay take those victory passes. When asked about how Bull compares with the other great western horses she has owned she replied, "He is certainly the prettiest. He has such a gorgeous head and neck and he keeps his ears up. He's just exquisite!"

Lindsay, who first won at Louisville when she was 17 years old, was both thrilled and surprised. She knew she had a good world's championship class but felt she could do even better in the final. When she took her victory pass with Bull as the World's Champion of Champions, going around the arena with a blanket of flowers draped over Bull, was a memory

she will hold in her heart forever. "Bull has taken to western as if he has been doing it all his life. He is so pretty and has a really positive attitude...Winning the Shatner Final was the icing on the cake. I had been riding in that class for 15 years but never won it."

We asked Suzanne Bradshaw if the thrill ever goes out of winning. The answer was unequivocal. "It's even more important now! I know how difficult it was to get there." 2014 was an outstanding year filled with accolades and awards for Blushing Bull with an expectation of a very bright future in the capable hands of the Bradshaw family and Fay and Jim Lowry. Suzanne is hoping to show Bull herself this year in addition to sharing him with Lindsay and Malissa. She is also excited about showing her new horse, Parading Lights, in the parade horse division. She loves the idea of entertaining the crowd with one of these high-stepping performers.

When reflecting on her career in general after receiving the Paul and Dorothy Gillenwater Award Suzanne said, "How lucky we all feel to be fortunate enough to be a part of this magical American Saddlebred world!" We could not have expressed in more eloquent terms these words spoken from the heart. The joy Suzanne Bradshaw has gained from her life with horses speaks out in every word she says. The addition of Blushing Bull to the lineup of wonderful horses she has owned over the years has been an experience to treasure.