



A New Home in Texas for Twisted Rose Farm

BY JENNY GREY

Twisted Rose Farm in Kerrville, Texas is the fulfilment of Dianne Lents' lifetime dream to own her own horse farm. Dianne and her husband, Murphy, both Texas natives, loved living in California for most of the last decade, but with Murphy's retirement getting nearer, the Lone Star State again beckoned and they acquired a beautiful property in the hill country of Texas, one hour west of San Antonio and one and a half hours southwest of Austin.

First introduced to the Morgan breed by Nicole Johnson of Premier West Stables in Rancho Santa Fe, California, Dianne and her daughter, Emily, who took to Morgans like the proverbial duck to water, rode with Nicole for four years. Dianne bought her first Morgan, HDD Wild Thing (Raven) in 2008. While Raven is still with her, many new horses followed. Their show string grew to 20 horses (Dianne claims to suffer from CHBD (Compulsive Horse Buying Disorder!)) and finding a home for them started to make sense. Fortunately, Murphy's work returned him to Texas late last year, so they were able to move sooner than expected.

Their farm name, 'Twisted Rose', originated with Emily Lents. When Emily was little, she loved to cook, planning 'restaurant evenings' with her parents, complete with menus and table decorations. She called her restaurant 'Twisted Rose'. "The food was pretty good so we stole the name!" said Dianne. Emily, now riding as an amateur, attends Denver University, keeping her Morgan, MEM Bad Boy at The River's Edge in Colorado. She recently joined Dianne at Carousel Charity, showing Bad Boy and her mom's EV Santa Fe Special. Murphy Lents also rides but has never shown, but Dianne and Garn Walker are on a mission to get him into the ring.

Prior to the Texas move, Dianne and Murphy kept most of their horses in training at River Run Farm in San Diego with Darcey Albino-Attig and Tom Tornatore. At the same time, they had three with Garn Walker Stables in Auburn, California and one with Mike Goebig and Dwayne Knowles at Broadmoor in Pennsylvania. All three barns did an outstanding job with the Twisted Rose show string, earning well-deserved world championships (MLB Capo di Capo won the 2013 Open Western Pleasure World Championship with Garn Walker on board; Ledyard's Liberator won the Futurity Hunter Pleasure Three-Year Old World Championship with Darcey Attig in the irons and



The new home of Twisted Rose Farm in Kerrville, Texas, was once known as Thistlewood Farm, with a celebrity studded client base that included Patrick Swayze and the mayor of New York City. The stained glass windows over the front door depict Thistlewood's foundation stallions.



Garn Walker and Dianne Lents share the same values and vision for Twisted Rose Farm.

Whitemud Fine And Dandy won the Classic Pleasure Driving Junior Horse World Championship with C.A. (Tony) Lee at whip under the direction of Mike Goebig and Dwayne Knowles). The horses are now housed at the Texas farm except for Whitemud Fine And Dandy, still in training at Broadmoor and MEM Bad Boy, who went to school with Emily in Colorado.

The new home of Twisted Rose Farm has a fascinating equine history going back many years. Once known as Thistlewood, the farm bred and trained Arabian horses, with a celebrity-studded client base that included Patrick Swayze and a former mayor of New York City. "The facility was essentially idle for over five years when we stumbled across it and fell in love", Dianne told us. "It took a full year and a half to get the place back in shape. We have kept many of the old Thistlewood's romantic touches like the stained glass windows over the front door depicting their foundation stallions and the mirrors etched with the Thistlewood name in the ballroom (yes, a ballroom!) on the barn's second floor. You can find some fun videos on the Internet of Patrick Swayze and his friends riding the horses and rocking out in the ballroom after the San Antonio opening of the Hard Rock Cafe." While maintaining the original charm of the existing buildings, Twisted Rose offers pretty guest rooms upstairs in the barn and an 1850's vintage farm house for out of town clients to use when coming to ride horses in training or



Twisted Rose has a large ballroom with doors leading out to a balcony where one can see demonstrations in both the warm-up pen and the covered arena.

when visiting old equine friends enjoying retirement at the farm.

Creating a new stable at the old Thistlewood Farm was challenging, albeit satisfying work, but perhaps the biggest challenge was persuading Garn and Melissa Walker to move from their well-established location in Auburn, California to the state of Texas. Winning regional, national and world championships during a long and distinguished career, Garn brought home a picture-perfect Open Western Pleasure World Championship in 2013 for Twisted Rose, riding Dianne and Murphy's stallion, MLB Capo di Capo. Demonstrating a wonderful rapport between horse and rider, this pair gave the spectators a view of everything a great Morgan western horse should be. Garn's wife, Melissa, a talented amateur rider, won multiple world titles with her outstanding and much loved hunter, GPM Genesis B and more recently the 2013 Ladies Amateur Hunter Pleasure World Championship with Hylee's Gilt Edge.

"It was a hard decision for Garn to move", Dianne observed. "The Walker's farm in Auburn is a beautiful property that looks like Melissa personally pruned every blade of grass (which she did!). And Garn Walker has a storied history in the Morgan world... but Melissa was even harder to pry loose. She was fully vested and nested in Auburn, but a trip to the beautiful Texas hill country, lots of wine and some arm twisting won her over."

Garn and Melissa moved last year during Thanksgiving weekend, eating Thanksgiving dinner at Denny's along the way. While it was hard for them to leave their California home, they are settling in nicely at Twisted Rose Farm. Reflecting on the factors that caused the couple to make such a big lifetime change Garn noted, "The Lents's and Melissa and I share the same vision for the farm...We all work really well together and have the same values. And it's an adventure starting out new...change will keep you fresh and young! Dianne is into cowboy dressage which is big for me...It just all came together."

Garn admitted the new venture has its share of challenges which range from finding enough barn help to acquiring an adequate supply of good hay. He is not only training horses, but is responsible for farm management with buildings and pastures that need work. Fortunately, he has the very competent Rebecca Miller as his assistant trainer. In spite of the workload, Garn

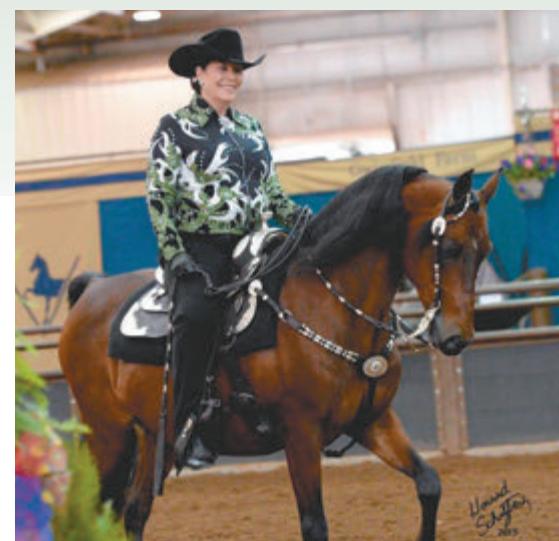
and Melissa have found time to explore the beautiful Texas countryside. They might jump on the Harley, or go fishing in the farm's lake where it is not unusual to catch 15 to 20 fish a day. They also enjoy Dianne and Murphy's company away from the barn. "We are like a family here", Garn stated. "We have barbecues and get together on the patio...we share in just about everything."

While Dianne and Murphy's horses occupy the majority of the stalls, they have a few outside horses in training and plan to have more. They will be open to some retirees looking for a comfortable home but will not do general boarding. "Twisted Rose is first and foremost a training and teaching facility", Dianne explained. "We believe that being kind to our equine partners is not only the right thing to do but that it also produces the closest partnerships and the finest competitors. We have fun with our horses...our horses have fun with us. Garn and I want to share that philosophical approach and show that it produces winners at the highest levels." They will offer full service training packages for a limited number of like-minded clients.

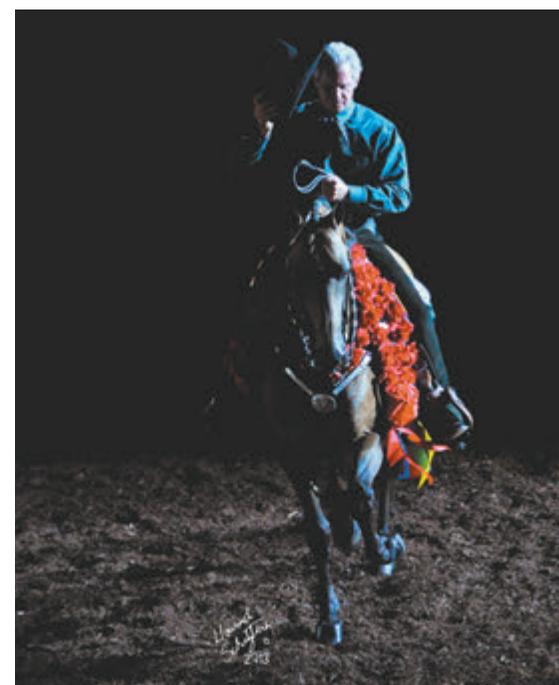
Committed to a small breeding program, with two more foals expected this spring, their first baby, Kit-Kat, is a Mizrahi/Kim's Bellegante pairing that resulted from a breeding purchased at the 2013 convention. In addition to showing and breeding, the Twisted Rose team will share its love of horses through various riding and horse care clinics as well as camps for adults and children.

Dianne summed up her excitement over Twisted Rose Farm in a way that shows her deep love of all things equine. "It is hard to describe how I feel every morning when I wake up and see horses in the pasture outside my window. And it is such a lovely property and facility for our Morgans! I can't wait to share it with others and watch them fall in love with the Morgan Horse like I did."

When one has a beautiful location with a storied past, along with first-class owners and trainers with a shared vision for the future, there is a powerful recipe for success. Dianne and Murphy Lents, along with Garn Walker and his team, are well on their way to making Twisted Rose Farm a big hit in the Lone Star State. We take this opportunity to wish them good luck as they move forward with their exciting, new venture.



In their first show in their new Region 6, Dianne Lents won all of her qualifying classes at the Oklahoma Centennial show in addition to the Amateur Western Pleasure Reserve Championship and the Ladies Western Pleasure Championship with Tracemark Top Shelf.



Garn Walker, now the head trainer at Twisted Rose Farm, rode MLB Capo di Capo to a thrilling victory as the 2013 Open Western Pleasure World Champion.