

Life After A Legend

The legendary Missouri Saddlebred nursery known as Callaway Hills begins a new era under Tony Weldon's leadership.

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

To any historian of the breed or veteran trainer the name Callaway Hills elicits memories of great show horses beginning with 1949 and 1950 Fine Harness World's Grand Champion Kate Shriver. Those memories would include many, many show stars over the next five decades but as time went on, it was the breeding program that has had and continues to leave the biggest impact on the industry. Leading that program through every twist and turn was the late Betty Goshorn Weldon, a strong, determined and influential woman who, like her horses, was full of grit with a can do attitude.

She had begun to dabble in the breeding industry when she sent her champion walk-trot mare Fourth Estate to the court of six-times Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion CH Wing Commander. That resulting foal was Callaway's Johnny Gillen who became a top gaited stallion in his day. Crossing the homebred Johnny Gillen with her Fine Harness World's Grand Champion Kate Shriver, Betty Weldon first produced Rob Shriver, a gutsy gaited horse who was the Juvenile Five-Gaited World's Champion Of Champions for Jamie Davis and the next night in his third class of the week was the Five-Gaited Reserve World's Grand Champion with Tom Moore riding. That staying power became one of several enduring qualities of the Callaway bred horses and continues to be a staple today.

The Johnny Gillen/Kate Shriver cross also produced Will Shriver, a stud colt who wasn't blessed with a lot of stretch, especially compared to the Valley View Supreme/Supreme Sultan horses of that era. However, when Will Shriver was introduced to leather, he more than made up for his conformation shortcomings with a huge heart and great athletic ability. He was started by Dale Pugh but proved to be a handful. Upon the advice of Garland Bradshaw, Mrs. Weldon sent Will Shriver to a young trainer named Redd Crabtree. With her determination and Crabtree's skill, over his career Will defeated every horse he ever showed against at least once and that career culminated with the 1976 World's Grand Champion Five-Gaited title.

The story was far from over though. As determined as Betty Weldon was that Will would win the Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship one day, she was equally as insistent that he would be one of



the all-time great breeding horses. No one, other than the strong-willed lady from Missouri, could have predicted the type of breeding horse he would become.

She built her breeding program by not standing Will to the public, choosing to stand him only to Callaway Hills's mares. It has been well noted that most of the mares Mrs. Weldon purchased were not the top show mares or even mares of popular bloodlines. Her mares were selected for their old time blood and

substance.

"The Callaway Hills breeding program is as great as anyone in the history of our business," said Redd Crabtree who has trained horses for the Weldon family for 30 years and currently has an outstanding four-year-old and three-year-old for Tony Weldon. "I didn't have any idea Will Shriver would have the impact he had as a breeding horse, but I should have listened to two great old horsemen. Charlton Jones and Billy Mountjoy both wanted to breed mares to him before he ever won the big stake.

"Thank goodness Will sired some good breeding horses himself and I think that will continue for some time. Will had Edna May's King on both sides of his pedigree and that's what made them horses of great substance."

Also having a longtime relationship with Callaway Hills having purchased such stars as Callaway's Copyright, Callaway's Forecaster, Adelita and Callaway's Weatherman, among others, Larry Hodge echoed some of Crabtree's thoughts.

"Callaway Hills has had the biggest impact of any breeding farm ever," stated Hodge. "Mrs. Weldon stuck with it, had a love for the horses and made it work. A lot of people had no idea Will would make it as a breeding horse the way he did. And he didn't make it by Mrs. Weldon buying expensive mares. She bought some nice mares, but not necessarily the top show mares."

Surpassing even his grandsire, the legendary Wing Commander, as the greatest sire of five-gaited horses ever, some of Will Shriver's world's champion sons and daughters included CH Callaway's Criterion, CH Will Bulletin, Callaway's Caper, Callaway's Mr. Republican, Lady Luck, Lady Eve Toncray, Callaway's Cheltenham, Callaway's Hot Copy, Callaway's News Flash, Callaway's Gold Rush, Callaway's Will's Countess and Callaway's Huckleberry Finn to name a few.

Will died in 1991 right before Louisville started. During the Saturday night opening ceremonies a moment of silence was held for the great Will Shriver. The Ladies Five-Gaited World's Championship was the first class that evening and the first three ribbon winners were all sired by Will. In the last class of the evening, another son, CH Callaway's New Look, was crowned the Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion.

"Callaway Hills saved the five-gaited horse," said Fred Sarver who was the breeding manager there for several years. "When I first went there in the late '80s I think the breed was working to establish a type and they [Callaway Hills] bred the rack back into the Saddlebred again."

As Crabtree stated, thank goodness Will had some pretty good breeding sons himself, namely the homebred CH Caramac and Callaway's Blue Norther, both world's champion performers. CH Caramac was the 1982 Junior Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion and Callaway's Blue Norther was the 1984 Three-Year-Old Five-Gaited Stallion/Gelding World's Champion and 1985 Junior Five-Gaited Reserve World's Grand Champion. Tom Moore directed both stallions to their world's championships. Like their sire, these stallions out bred themselves siring world's champions in all divisions, not just five-gaited. Caramac was Saddle Horse Report's Number One Sire Of World's Champions in 1999 and stablemate Blue Norther was the top sire in 2004. Both have been

among the top 10 for many years.

With the illness and eventual death of Mrs. Weldon, many in the industry wondered what the future would hold. Following her heart and her mother's wishes, Tony Weldon has picked up the reins and plans on Callaway Hills remaining a force in the breeding world for years to come. Her plight to retain and direct Callaway Hills was a costly one in many ways. Her brother and sister wanted the farm sold and fought Tony every step of the way until she bought them out.

"Mom was such an intelligent woman that she covered up her Alzheimer's from us for a long time," said Tony Weldon. "Then, those close to her covered up for her as well. She hadn't set everything for the continuation of the farm although everyone around her knew what she wanted. I never thought it would fall in my lap. Mom was invincible, I never thought about running this place on my own. I never imagined she wouldn't be around for the transition.

"She was very old fashioned and a bit intimidating. I think she liked it that way. She wasn't cruel or anything, it was just her way or the highway. It never occurred to her that she could fail. She was a very positive person. I need more toughness like her."

Being the only child around for some time and taking care of ageing parents was draining enough, but the emotional and financial toll of fighting with her siblings has made Tony a stronger person.

"I was determined that if I was going to go through that hell, I was going to do it my way. I bought them out so I can do what Mom wanted."

"The family did not pay attention to Betty Weldon's wishes or things would have been done differently," stated Redd Crabtree. "I can't say enough good things about Tony. She bit off a lot and will make it work."

"I'm glad to see Tony keep it going," added Larry Hodge. "There's already a shortage of nice horses and if you took those out, where would we be on gaited horses? I think the world of Tony. She needs some good things to happen to her. She will continue to raise nice



A driving force for Callaway Hills for many years, Tony Weldon had great success in the show ring with Callaway's Barney Gillen.

horses; it takes time, patience and money."

A Callaway Hills employee for 17 years, breeding manager Rick Berry helps Tony with the direction of the breeding program. The 498-acre farm has approximately 300 horses at this time after just having sold 56 at the TSE Tattersalls Fall Sale where they had the sale topper, Callaway's Pundit (Callaway's Blue Norther x Callaway's Powerful Lady) at



Tony's parents, William and Betty Weldon, put Callaway Hills on the map, moving the farm from Virginia to Jefferson City, Mo. Betty Weldon's drive and belief in CH Will Shriver turned Callaway Hills into the greatest producer of show and breeding stock in the history of the Saddlebred.

\$110,000.

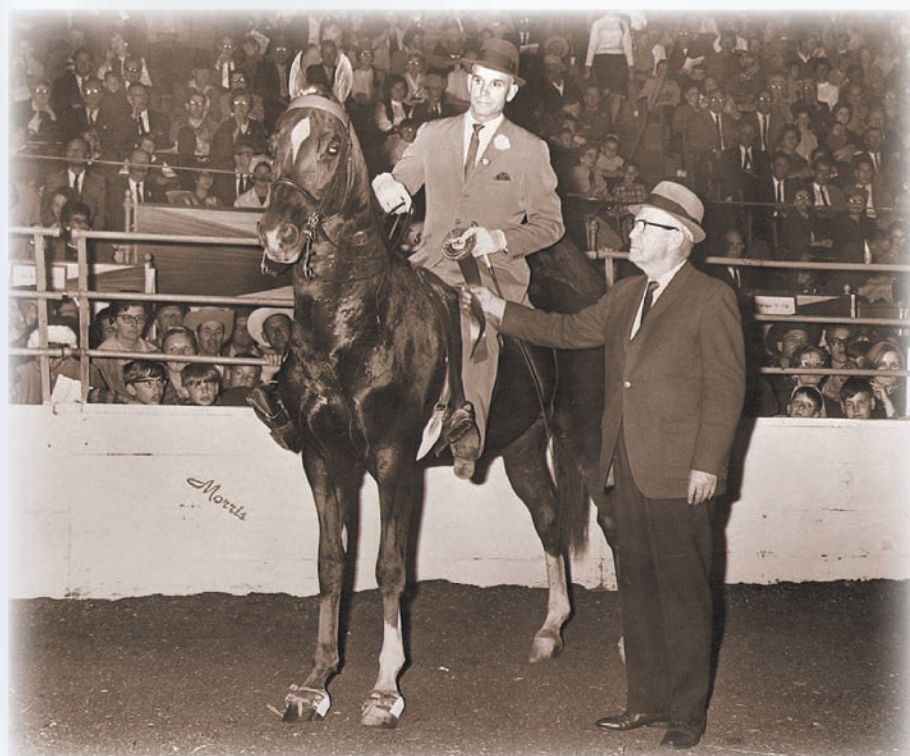
"We like what we're seeing," said Berry. "We had 73 mares in foal this year and sold 19 in foal. We're trying to get it to a more manageable size. Tony is like her mom in that she has a good instinct when it comes to mares and whom they should cross with. It's harder now we have to do this like a business."

Berry and Weldon are excited about the young

stallions that have been patiently waiting in the wings. With Caramac at age 30 and Blue Norther 27, it is time to pass the torch. Caramac has had 10 foals in each of the last three years, following a brief retirement from the breeding shed. They are expecting 25 Blue Norther foals next year.

Among the junior sires are Callaway's Home For The Holidays (CH Caramac x Christmas In New York ERB by The New York Times), a four-year-old

full brother to Undulata's Nutcracker; Callaway's Cranston (Callaway's Blue Norther x Sweet Sachet (BHF) by Genius Bourbon Prince), a full brother to Callaway's Guy Park and Callaway's Winning Ways; Callaway's The Gipper (CH Caramac x Patty's Dream (BHF) by Supreme Sultan), a half brother to CH New Estate, CH Starstruck EH and CH Callaway's A Dream Come True; and a four-year-old still in the training barn, Callaway's Revision (CH Car-



CASTLETON FARM ROUTE 3 LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY	
IN ACCOUNT WITH	FARM OFFICE TELEPHONES 4-2352 & 4-2353
JUN 1 - 1959	
Mrs. W. H. Weldon 1915 Hayselton Drive Jefferson City, Mo.	
1958 Service fee - Fourth Estate to Wing Commander	\$ 500.00

PA 6-8-59

CASTLETON FARM LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY	
ROUTE 3	PHONE 4-2359
June 11, 1959	
Mrs. W. H. Weldon 1915 Hayselton Drive Jefferson City, Mo.	
Dear Mrs. Weldon:	
This is to acknowledge receipt of your check in payment of the 1958 service fee of Fourth Estate to Wing Commander, for which please accept our thanks.	
We are enclosing herewith Certificate of Mating for your use in registering the foal.	
Thanking you for your patronage, and hoping to be of service to you again, we are,	
Sincerely yours,	
CASTLETON FARM Earl Teater Earl Teater, Manager	
ET:G Enc.	

Betty Weldon had a great relationship with George Gwinn over the years and it started with her first personal purchase, a mare named Kalarama Khaki Capers whom she bought for \$2,500 and renamed Fourth Estate (top left). When bred to Wing Commander she produced Callaway's Johnny Gillen (top right) who in turned sired the legendary CH Will Shriver. Pictured is the breeding receipt and letter from Earl Teater who showed and managed the great Wing Commander.

Callaway Hills and 1976 Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion CH Will Shriver put the rack back in the American Saddlebred according to many trainers and breeders.



Breeding manager at Callaway Hills for 17 years, Rick Berry is pictured with the great world's champion and world's champion sire Callaway's Blue Norther, age 27.

amac x That's My Story by The New York Times), a full brother to First Chapter and half brother to A Whole Different Story. The veteran Callaway's Gold Rush (CH Will Shriver x CH Gold Treat by Oman's Anacacho Rhythm) is also still in the mix.

"We've got 60 some coming two-year-olds and 20 some coming three-year-olds. I'd like to get down to 30 or 40 horses a year to work. Maybe we will keep 30 broodmares at most. The question is how many is too many for the expense of it and how many is too few to have inventory to pay for it? My goal is to break even."

Across the road on the training barn side of the farm the young horsemen James Bushard and Kyle Peel have been busy getting a large consignment of two-year-olds ready for the sale and now have a few new crops behind them. Everywhere you look there are fields of horses grouped in a specific manner.

"If you love horses this is a great place to be," said Wisconsin native Bushard. "In addition to the great history and tradition there are horses everywhere you look. I wake up in the morning and look out my window and I see horses in the fields."

"You also don't mind selling a good one here,"

added Peel. "When one good one goes you know you've got two or three waiting in the wings that will be just as nice or better."

On the day of my visit, Bushard and Peel worked one nice youngster after another. Another group sporting catch ropes, wild eyes and tangled manes and tails were occupying half the stalls, just starting their introduction to the world of leather. Wearing leather has been what Callaway Hills bred horses do best and is the reason so many of the nation's top trainers do their shopping there.

"Larry Hodge, Redd Crabtree, Nelson Green and Debbie Foley have been great customers and we also send some out to them for training," said Weldon. "They come out to visit and keep an eye on us. Fred Sarver has also been invaluable. He is out this way a lot and his advice

and friendship was mean a lot to us. The one thing I would like people to know is that we do have horses in all price ranges. Sometimes I think people think if they don't have \$100,000 they can't shop here."

From the breeding manager to the trainer to



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The four horses and their creator share a sameness in that all are a part of American history —

Roy Andersen's fascination and interest in history and his ability to translate what he learns to the canvas, makes him one of the most unique artists in recent history. He prefers pictures and scenes featuring the American Indian in his Pinto and of the American West in general. He often refers to his own experience library, or goes to museums to sketch actual artifacts for future use. In a recent interview with *Southwest Art* magazine regarding his approach to historical research, Roy explained: "You take what information you can. Then you put your picture on the basis of what I think might have happened. All my scenes are historically reconstructed and

accurate. People have not changed: human beings today react similarly to the same situations which confronted early man. To reach the emotional reality of a painting, I ask myself, 'How would I have reacted to those situations?' And that's what I paint."

Andersen is careful about not letting the chore of research overwhelm what he puts into a painting as he feels, "The mood of a work is more important than painting interminable details."

Roy has been interested in art since his later childhood, where he grew up in New Hampshire, the son of a Dutch immigrant. At the early age of six, though, Roy's abilities were so sharp his father

heritage. "I was about six years old at the time," he remembers, "and I had decided what I wanted to be when I grew up — an Indian brave. To realize my ambition, I planned to get into some kind of an apprenticeship and work my way up."

This goal soon changed though as Roy recalls his father saying to him one day, "Come on over here, Roy, and I'll draw you another picture of a horse." Roy declined because "I could draw a horse better than he could." Later Roy moved to Chicago to continue his education, where he studied art in high school and on weekends at the Chicago Art Institute. He has since returned to his



Office manager/executive assistant to Tony Weldon, Tina Brandow is pictured with Will's other great son, CH Caramac, who is now 30 years old.

Tony Weldon is not only in awe of what her mother accomplished in the horse industry, but also of her presence in other walks of life. With her political influence Mrs. Weldon got the American Saddlebred pictured on a U.S. stamp.

In addition to riding CH Will Shriver to this Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship for Callaway Hills, Redd Crabtree trained many top horses for the Weldon family over the years. Crabtree is aboard Callaway's Claudette who went on to be the dam of the great Fine Harness World's Grand Champion CH Callaway's Copyright.



Some of the breed's greats have traveled this lane from the stud barn to the broodmare barn.



Callaway's Headliner was another star Tony Weldon showed.

Weldon herself, they all feel the pressure of having to live in the shadows of Betty Weldon, Will Shriver and the trainers that came before them and developed many of the industry's greatest stars.

"My best memories of this place are growing up looking for kittens in the hay loft. I just hung around it; I had no idea the magnitude the farm played. I feel like a lightweight compared to Mom. I'm in awe of all the things she did, not just raise nice horses. Before there was a sport horse association, she sent a Saddlebred (Freelance Agent) to England where it was a champion dressage horse. She was always thinking of alternatives. She got the American Saddlebred on a U.S. stamp, which was no small feat. She also got a load of horses for the New Orleans Mounted Police Patrol.

"I was in New Orleans and walked up to a Mounted Policeman and started talking to him about his horse. He told me it was an American Saddlebred and that they loved Saddlebreds but didn't get many. I told Mom about this and next thing you know she has Creech Brothers donating a van ride for a load of horses headed to New Orleans for the Mounted Police Department. I'm overwhelmed by her accomplishments and understand her more now. She was also not shy about patting herself on the back. She would always say,



CH Callaway's New Look captured the Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship two years in a row, 1991 and 1992. Bobby Gatlin and Dave Becker (pictured) rode the bold moving stallion to his wins, respectively, while representing the Callaway Hills breeding program.



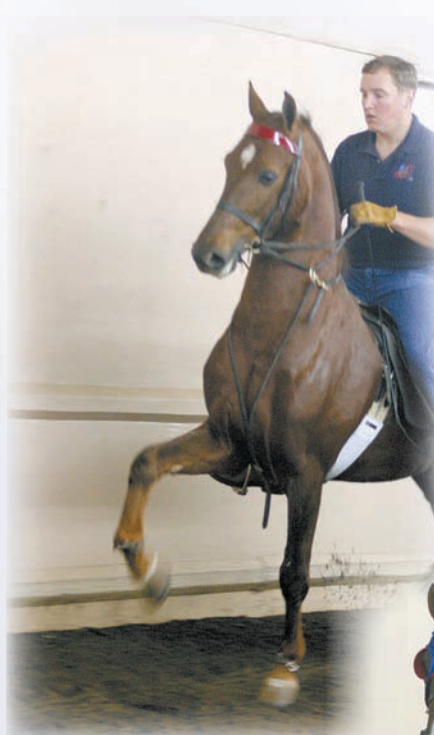
Callaway's Home For The Holidays (CH Caramac x Christmas In New York ERB) is a four-year-old full brother to Undulata's Nutcracker. Out of a Santana's Charm mare, Home For The Holiday's first foal was born at Callaway Hills this summer.



Out of the Supreme Sultan daughter Patty's Dream (BHF), Callaway's The Gipper (by CH Caramac) is one of the stallions waiting in the wings to take over for his sire.



A full sister to Broodmare Hall Of Fame member Callaway's Carousel (CH Caramac x Callaway's Sweet Clover), this filly was born a few months ago. Carousel is the dam of such greats as Callaway's Merry-Go-Round, Callaway's Buttons And Bows, Callaway's County Fair and Callaway's Bluesman. She also has a sharp two-year-old in the training barn named Callaway's Baa Baa Black Sheep.



Trainer Jimmy Bushard worked a promising four-year-old stallion son of CH Caramac and That's My Story.

‘Someone has to do it.’”

Callaway County, Mo., has been noted for its champion Saddlebreds since the late 1800s and with the determination of Tony Weldon and her support staff, the icon of icons for the American Saddlebred will remain a nursery like no other, just on a slightly smaller scale.

“There wouldn’t be a Callaway Hills today if it weren’t for Tony’s involvement,” said Fred Sarver. “It’s going to take a valiant effort to maintain the farm’s prominence at quite a cost to her [Tony]. However, with change there is always opportunity and Tony has the focus and toughness to retain Callaway Hills’s place in the horse world. She has the best qualities of both her parents and I wish her the best of luck.”

Horse trainers who have had a longstanding relationship with Callaway Hills all agree the industry would be suffering greatly if it were not for their commitment to the breed. Longtime friend and business associate Debbie Foley agrees.

“Callaway Hills has made the most significant impact on the Saddlebred industry that we’ve seen in my lifetime,” said Foley. “Without those horses I’m afraid we would be in big trouble. We would have a gaping hole in our industry.

“I’ve had horses for them since the ‘70s when I won the Ladies Fine Harness Stake at Louisville with Sultan’s Commander. I had a great time with Tony and got her in the ring. We had the most fun showing Will’s Edition. I think she won something like 17 or 18 consecutive classes with him.

“The Callaway Hills horses have had a huge impact on my career. Trainers find different horses they get along with and that breed just works for me. My hat’s off to Tony for what she’s done. The days of the big breeding farms – Ruxer, Oak Hill and places like that are over. She has stuck her neck out to keep this alive when she didn’t have to. The entire industry owes her thanks.”

Long live the Kingdom Of Will!



Co-trainer Kyle Peel jogged a leg-waving stallion son of CH Caramac and Callaway's Razzberries, the dam of Callaway's Sugarplum.



The Callaway Hills staff (caretakers Brittanny Marshall, Misty Dawson, and Lisa Spradlin, Callaway's Twenty-Four Karat, caretaker Brandi Bushard, trainer James Bushard, owner Tony Weldon, executive assistant/office manager Tina Brandow and trainer Kyle Peel) just returned from a successful production sale at TSE Tattersalls and now has another group of young stars to develop and market. Tony's personal pleasure horse, Callaway's Twenty-Four Karat joined the group's picture.

A full sister to Callaway's Winning Ways, Callaway's Guy Park, Callaway's Rhapsody In Blue (Callaway's Blue Norther x Sweet Sachet) and several others, Callaway's Wind In The Willow is already showing the same talent as her famous family.



Sired by Callaway's The Gipper and out of a Show Me Too daughter, this huge two-year-old was as talented as he was handsome.