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Inacacho Ranch: A powerhouse in the 1900s;

a major influence today

BY: ANN BULLARD

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Tiny towns. Many have played a role in Saddlebred history, but it's unlikely any have been tinier or have had an influence that has lasted longer than Spofford, Texas. headquarters of the famed Anacacho Ranch. Original owner R. (Ralph) W. Morrison built the ranch, located 135 miles west of San Antonio and approximately 45 miles from the Mexican border, in the 1920s. Here he housed cattle, sheep, buffalo and other exotic game as well as exceptional Saddlebreds.

Morrison certainly could be called a visionary. The successful businessman and rancher, who made his primary home in San Antonio, might shake his head in wonderment at the Saddle Horse today. He would be more than pleased to find the names Edna May's King, Anacacho Shamrock, Anacacho Denmark and others with his ranch name in the pedigrees of so many show ring and breeding stars today. In fact, each of the 20 top stallions on Saddle Horse Report's World's Champion Sire rating has at least one cross back to the Texas ranch; most have several.

All of the top five deceased sires featured the Anacacho bloodlines. In the year 2000, the American Saddlebred Breeders Association estimated that 80-percent of the horses then showing traced back to Edna May's King.

And what a ranch it was! At one time, its 'some 54,000 acres' (Texas terminology) included the Anacacho Mountains for which the ranch was named. The 16 miles of six-foot high fencing with a three-foot overhang that fronts the property took more than five years to complete. The drive from the main gate to the stone, metal, concrete and asphalt constructed training barn takes three miles. Stall floors featured cedar spikes driven into the ground to prevent wet spots. The barn was completely fly-proofed.

Inside these fences, or walls, if you prefer, roamed mares such as Jane Black (BHF), Nancy Highland and Sally

Cameron (BHF), and such offspring as Anacacho Shamrock, Anacacho Denmark, Cameo Kirby and the mare Anacacho Princess BHF, dam of Beau Fortune, the sire of CH Mv-Mv. and his full brother, Beau Gallant, sire of Gallant Guy

Youngsters foaled at the ranch carried its name. However. Morrison built his program around one stallion, Edna May's King, a Kentucky horse who moved to California and on to Texas. He was sired by Bourbon King and out of the very successful five-gaited mare, Edna May, by Rex Peavine, The King, as he was known, had a successful show career in the Blue Grass State. Californian Revel English saw him show at Louisville in 1923 and began his campaign to bring the stallion to California. History says English knew 'the King' was the horse for him, and, when he was unable to meet with owner Allie Jones or his son, Joe, spent much of his train ride back to California negotiating by telegraph. It took the ride to Sacramento and a week's negotiations, but finally Jones agreed to a \$12,000 offer.

After enjoying a good season on the West coast, English decided to give The King another shot at the world's grand championship. Joe Jones, his trainer until the sale, stepped up and won the 1924 title.

English elected not to show his stallion in '25: criticism from his peers induced him to bring him back to the show ring the following year. After winning the stallion class and stake at Stockton, Calif., history tells us English realized his horse was better than ever. He wired the Kentucky State Fair his entry, put his horse and groom aboard a train, and headed back to the world's championships. On Monday night, English rode him to win the Five-Gaited Stallion Stake. On Saturday, he became the first amateur to win the 'big stake;' the next would be Michele Macfarlane riding CH Sky Watch, who followed in his famous ancestor's hoofprints in 1988.

Enter R.W. Morrison. A native

According to the New Encyclopedia of Texas, in 1916, he and a partner, the late Warner S. McCall, formed the Central Power and Light Company with headquarters in San Antonio. In 1925, they sold their organization "for a consideration in excess of \$20,000,000." He was a philanthropist, who supported numerous area charities, helped found the South Texas Chamber of Commerce and, at his death, bequeathed a considerable sum of money to the Baylor University School of Law.

As a Missourian, it is quite likely Morrison was acquainted



The main gate at Anacacho Ranch looks much the same as it did 60 years ago.

with Saddle Horses before moving to Texas. Certainly, he

must have had Saddlebreds before seeing Edna May's King

in the ring. Morrison knew what he wanted for his Anacacho

Ranch program. Morrison certainly had Saddlebreds before

he purchased Edna May's King from Revel L. English in

1930 for the then unheard-of price of \$40,000, more than

\$646,000 in 2011 dollars. Morrison turned the stallion over

to Roy L. Davis for training, with an eye on Louisville the following year. At age 12, the King returned to the Kentucky State Fair, returning home with a reserve world's champion-

ship after a very-hard-fought stallion stake won by Chief Of

of Missouri, Morrison traveled all over the world other than the Orient in his export business. After this, he became active in the public utility business. He eventually settled in San Antonio, Texas.

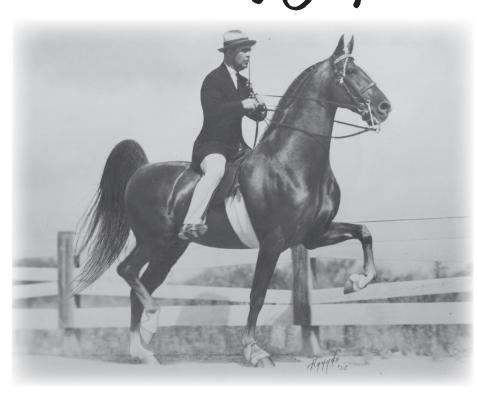
> Longview and a top ribbon in the grand championship. It was time to concentrate on passing on his power, brilliance, speed and beauty to a new generation of Saddlebreds. From 1931 through the end of his career, the King sired approximately 237 Saddlebreds, leaving an indelible impression on the Saddlebred world. And this was before the days of embryo transfers, where a mare could 'foal' up to four babies a year. Morrison was a businessman and successful rancher as

well as a Saddlebred lover. He believed in selling, and often sent large consignments to public sales. An ad for a Chicago spring sale published in the March 1941 Saddle and Bridle states (grammar and punctuation taken from the ad:) "R.



The main barn of Mexican architecture, was constructed of stone, concrete and steel and

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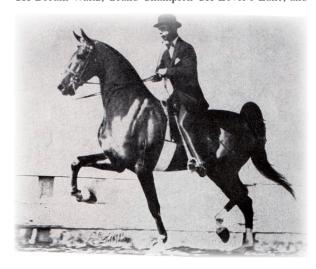


Edna May's King won two Five-Gaited World's Grand Championships, the last with Revel English (pictured) aboard.

W. Morrison, owner of Anacacho Ranch, Spofford, Texas, consigning approximately fifty head. He no doubt has spent more money for American saddle-bred stallions and broodmares than any other man in the United States and I doubt if there ever has been such an outstanding consignment of saddle-bred horses and mares sold by one breeder at public auction. This includes his entire stable of show horses that has been shown so successfully on the Pacific Coast and in the Middle West. Mr. Morrison advises he is sending from fifteen to twenty of what he considers his top broodmares and about the same number of his very best two-year-olds. This will be a very rare opportunity to buy the best."

Edna May's King died in July 1943. On March 21, 1944, the last Saddlebred left Anacacho Ranch. As Emily Ellen Scharf, writing as Suzanne, penned in her final volume of Famous Saddlebreds, "The argosy is ended."

To get an idea of Edna May's King's offsprings' successes, one only has to look at the year 1937. B. B. Tucker, manager of the ranch, exhibited his offspring 92 times that year, winning 42 grand championships, 25 reserves and 25 other times in the ribbons. Anacacho Shamrock (out of Sally Cameron) won many of these. In 1940, he was undefeated. In 1941, the late Wallace Bailey, representing Dodge Stables and Castleton Farm, purchased Anacacho Shamrock. Here he sired such notables as WGC CH Wing Commander, his full sisters, CH Primrose Path, World's Grand Champion CH Dream Waltz, Grand Champion CH Lover's Lane, and



Anacacho Shamrock with Dodge Stables'trainer Wallace Bailey.

Fluffy McDuffy BHF. Anacacho Denmark (out of Jane Black) was bred by English, but registered as a foal by R.W. Morrison. W.G. 'Billy' Shropshire of Nashville, Tenn., purchased him as a green two-year-old for \$7,500, changing his name to Ivan The Terrible. The young stallion had a good show career with Shropshire; he foundered not long after being sold again. In time, Morrison again purchased the horse, standing him until January 1942, when he was sold to Reverie Knoll Farms. According to Suzanne, "at one time it was estimated that 35 percent of his foals had winners at major shows."

In 1945, a filly by Anacacho Denmark and out of Reverie's Desdemona BHF hit the ground. The late George Gwinn pur-

chased Reverie's Countess Mara, later selling her to the late Betty Weldon, who renamed her Kate Shriver. Not only was she an outstanding fine harness champion, but Kate Shriver is the dam of World's Champion Rob Shriver and World's Grand Champion Will Shriver, both by Callaway's Johnny Gillen, by Wing Commander. She is the foundation mare on which the Callaway Hills breeding program still rests.

In 1952, Oman Farms in Nashville bred Reverie's Desdemona to Anacacho Denmark. The resulting foal: Oman's Desdemona Denmark, sire of (among others) World's Champion CH Sensational Princess (five-gaited;) World's Grand Champion Glenview Radiance (fine harness;) World's Grand Champion Reata's Virginia Wolf (fine harness;) World's Grand Champion CH Belle Elegant (five-gaited) and the stallions All Hail Columbia and Blackberry Winter. The Denmark – Reverie's Desdemona cross also produced Golden Thunderbolt, grandsire of Sultan's Santana.

Fast forward to today. The American Saddlebred Registry lists 25 pages of horses with Anacacho in their name; the most recent paying tribute to the ranch from which they hail was foaled in 2009. But that statistic is insignificant when you consider the ongoing impact of the ranch's descendants on the breed today.

"Edna May's King is the most important horse in saddle horse history," said Redd Crabtree. "You can make that argument because of Shamrock and Oman's Desdemona Denmark. He is the dominating horse in there. I've made the statement before that Denmark was the best horse we ever touched. Everyone by him we made money on.

"I admired Anacacho Denmark so much; his first gaited horse was Twilight Walk. Mother [the late Helen K. Crabtree] bought him from Jean McClean [Davis.] When I first started, these horses were dominant; it was before the Wing Commander horses started hitting so big. I think one thing that made the Edna May's King line: Anacacho Denmark horses were so good racking, Wing Commander's were better trotting."

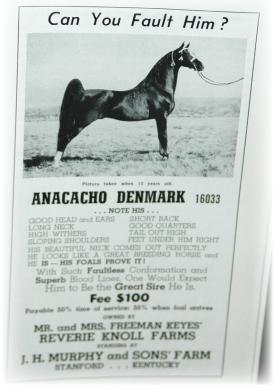
Crabtree spoke of line-breeding the Anacacho Ranchbred horses. "Callaway Hills made a fortune out of line-breeding their sons and daughters. An outcross of the dams of those mares is what made it work. And Mrs. Weldon would not buy one unless one of the mares she knew about or had seen earlier in her career was in its pedigree."

Desdemona Denmark's outstanding daughter, World's Grand Champion Glenview Radiance continued as an outstanding broodmare for Mrs. F.D. Sinclair's Glenview Farms, producing CH Manhattan Man, Radiant Sultan and Sultan's Radiance (BHF,) the dam of Mr. Snuffleupagus, and CH Stonecroft I'm Radiant. Another Oman's Desdemona Denmark daughter, CH Belle Elegant produced some nice offspring, but through her daughter, Belle's Bewitched, she is on the pedigree of CH Belleavanti, CH Mercer Runabout, and the stallions Charmed and Bewitched, Bobese and Oceanfront.

Fred Sarver echoed Crabtree's assessment of Edna May's King contribution, calling his the "most prominent stallion influence today. He [and Bourbon King] have had the most profound effect of any horses since early, early in the day. You had two different things going at the same



An early ad for Edna May's King and Anacacho Ranch. Horse World readers voted him the Sire Of The 20th Century. Many knowledgeable breeders today still consider his contributions to the industry one of if not the most important today.



Anacacho Denmark stood at Reverie Knoll Farm with a stud fee of \$100.

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World's Grand Champion Wing Commander and the late Earl Teater won the Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship from 1948 through 1953. Defeated only twice in his career, he was voted Horse World's Five-Gaited Horse Of The 20th Century.

time, Edna May's King horses and the Sultan line. I think Shamrock produced more show horses than Denmark, but more Denmark fillies were in production. Charlie [the late Charles Crabtree] really, really was in that camp."

Sarver called Denmark's Bourbon Genius (Anacacho Denmark x Reverie's Bourbon Princess (BHF) by the King's Genius son Bourbon Genius) Anacacho Denmarks "greatest breeding son." Early in his career, he sired CH Monti Scott and Lib Sharp; later champions: CH Oak Hill's Dear One (BHF,) CH Chantilly Rose (BHF,) dam of Talent Town and CH Man On The Town, and Hide-A-Way's Wild Country, a foundation of Jim Aikman's program.

While Sarver pays attention to bloodlines, he is concerned that people may pay too much attention to those and not enough to individuals. "Many make their breeding decisions based on just that," he said. "They don't take into account a horse's physical ability, athleticism, conformation, show record, etc. If it were up to me, I would promote that over bloodlines. Not that I would ever put bloodlines on a back seat, you need to know bloodlines so you don't breed too close in. But find the very best athletes and mate them. Jean McClean Davis' [Oak Hill Farms] whole program was based on her show mares and all her stallions had show records. For me, the best broodmares are show mares.

Anne Neil, whose now deceased CF First Night Out, led the Saddle Horse Report Sire Ratings for five consecutive years, says, "She has a huge amount of Anacacho Denmark in all three of my [current] stallions. First Night Out's sire, World's Grand Champion CH Night Prowler, had Anacacho Denmark and Private Contract on the top of his four-generation pedigree and Wing Commander on the dam's side. Today, the Neils' Blythewood Farms stands three of his sons.

"First Watch (CF First Night



CH Kate Shriver had a successful show ring career, but, most importantly, the Oman's Desdemona Denmark daughter is the foundation upon which the Callaway Hills breeding program has been built.

Out x World's Champion Mayme Phelps by Blackberry Winter) has six or seven direct crosses to Anacacho Denmark on his four-generation pedigree," Neil said.

As for mares, she says, "I have to like everything in a mare's pedigree, or I don't want to try her," Neil said. "It's not a perfect science; if you breed the very best you can breed, you still may not get a nice horse. With First Night Out, we had a lot of harness and walk-trot horses early on; we changed mares, breeding to Talk Of The Town and New Yorker mares and came on strong with gaited."

Ruxer Farms built much of their program around Wing Commander mares. He told Horse World in an earlier interview that his uncle, the late Alvin Ruxer, saw what Earl Teater was doing, and followed in those footsteps, crossing them with Valley View Supreme.

"They were a hardy, strong, game line which we needed," he said. "They were the right line trace at the right time. Those horses started putting bottom in Saddlebreds more than any other line; the ones I knew were good thinking. Our whole thing was predicated on the Leatherwood King [CH King's Genius x Kate Haines (BHF),] Judy O'Lee [Leatherwood King x Ace's Orchid by American Ace] line. We found something that worked and never varied too far off that course."

Crossed with Anacacho Denmark, Judy O'Lee produced Melody O'Lee [BHF] dam of CH Lillie O'Lee and Supreme Sultan. With Wing Commander, she foaled three Hall of Fame mares, Jasper Sweetheart, Ann O'Lee and Jasper Lady Evelyn.

Joan Hamilton, whose Harlem's Globetrotter ranked 11th on this year's sire rating, has Wing Commander, Anacacho Denmark, Wing Commander and Anacacho Kirby on his dam's pedigree.

"These are very tricky bloodlines," she said. "I've had to use outcrosses; I like Stonewall Supreme, Society Rex, Kalarama Rex ... the Chief blood. I've done a lot of experimentation intensifying bloodlines I like. I can breed Wing Commander on Wing Commander and be successful, but with Globetrotter, breeding more Denmark on Denmark doesn't work.

In looking at the top-ranked stallions today, one can't help but notice the Anacacho Ranch influence. Undulata's Nutcracker has three of his four first-generation lines going back to the Texas stallions. His sire, Caramac, by Will Shriver, is out of a Vanity's Sensation of Crebilly daughter. His dam, Christmas In New York, has Wing Commander and Oman's Desdemona Denmark in her pedigree. Sir William Robert gets his influence through Supreme Sultan and Golden Thunderbolt on his sire's side, with Sultan and Oman's Anacacho Denmark on his dam's line

Attache appears on Attache's Royal Assets, Farn Attache's Thunderbolt and Trust Fund's pedigrees; however, Royal Assets and Trust Fund are by Attache's Liquid Asset who is out of a Oman's Desdemona Denmark daughter. Both Thunderbolt and Royal Assets have Anacacho breeding on their dam's side.

Of Saddle Horse Report's Top 20 Stallions, only Merchant Prince (#10 @ 29 yrs. of age in 2012) has but one cross to Edna May's King on his four-generation pedigree. His sire, Genius Bourbon King-bred Mountain Highland Memories, is out of Contract's Dusty, by Private Contract, a full brother to Wing Commander. His dam, CH Buck Creek Precious Princess (BHF) was Bit Hutcheson's World Champion three-gaited mare with strong King's Genius breeding on her dam's side.

"That's always made him a good cross for popular bloodlines," Hutcheson said. "He crosses very well with a multitude of bloodlines. As a breeding horse, the uniqueness that comes from his dam is his most dominant breeding characteristic: a strong hock with lots of impulsion and go forward. Fortunately, that's passing through mares by him as well. His foals have a unique expression, recognizable in the ring, with a large intelligent soft eye and a fine head. Although they do like to play and can be a little slow to mature, they are very curious and quick learners ... real

people pleasers.

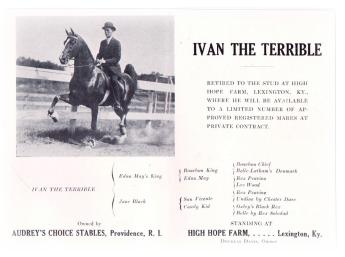
What crosses best with Merchant Prince? "Stonewall King, Anacacho Denmark, Valley View Supreme, Wing Commander... or forward a generation to Shriver, Sultan, New Yorker, Fleet Admiral," she replied. "You have to go to individuals as well, not just breed on bloodlines alone. You have to know what you are breeding for and what you have: strong hocks and impulsion, go forward from the rear. Merchant Prince breeds mostly harness horses or walk-trot horses like his dam. They are so hocky sometimes it is difficult for them to rack. They will imitate it and try to do it but their hock action gets in the way. He breeds more compact horses.

When someone sends me papers to look at, I ask what the mare looks like, her strong and weak points and what she has produced before. I prefer to breed to strengths rather than weaknesses."

Like many breeders, Hutcheson thinks "the mare has much more influence of the two in the breeding equation. My advice is to get the best mare you can because they have a tendency to breed themselves."

ASHA President Judy Werner and her husband, Roy, have operated the successful Redwing Farm in Southern Illinois since the 1980s. Their initial purchases, the now-deceased Radiant Sultan (Supreme Sultan x CH Glenview Radiance BHF) and Sultan's Dianna brought a strong Anacacho Denmark influence to their program. Today, they stand Designed, by Caramac (CH Will Shriver x Stonehedge Vanity) and out of Sultan's Dianna.

"I think we need more bone and substance in our gaited horses," she said, speaking of what the Edna May's King line has brought to the breed. "The biggest thing I see that people don't pay attention to is where a leg is set on a horse. If it's



Oman's Desdemona Denmark had an abbreviated show ring career under the name of Ivan The Terrible. After he foundered, he stood at Oman Farm near Nashville, Tenn.

set back, a horse won't have the motion we want. We've tried to team Designed with mares of my own in that way. Sometimes the mares will dominate.

"We can't determine a colt's trainability but we can look at a colt and tell if it has the mechanics to be a show horse. My trainers tell me which of my mares they like. I can see it in the babies right away."

Don Brookshire worked for the late Frank Bradshaw, who was "a huge fan of Denmark. He had a lot of that breeding, especially in his broodmares. He bred to Wing Commander a lot, and used his stud, Wing Master, to some mares that had a lot of Denmark in them.

"I think the [Anacacho] Denmark horses had more quality; Shamrock's was known by everyone to have the do and stamina, but perhaps they weren't as pretty horses as those by Denmark and that we have today. The Shamrocks could do so much and go all day long. And, in general, I think the Denmarks were stronger racking than the Shamrock horses."

Scott Bennett not only operates one of the industry's top breeding operations, but as a veterinarian with a large Saddle Horse practice knows more than many about conformation faults and things to look for in evaluating a horse, whether

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Cameo Kirby sired one of the greatest fine harness horses of all time, World's Grand Champion The Lemon Drop Kid. Through his son, Ensign Kirby, he has influenced many generations of Saddlebreds

for breeding or show. He shared some of his thoughts with Saddle Horse Report.

"I like the Anacacho line, particularly in broodmares," he said. "They're very substantial in bone structure and good foundation stock. We're breeding the bone and the air, the breath, out of our horses. I study what the throat looks like on certain stallions and don't breed them to mares with throat problems. The longer a horse's neck, the greater the predisposition there is for breathing problems and adult neck arthritis. I'm not saying don't breed for a long neck as long as you know how to breed conformationally to reduce these problems.

"So many people breed just by pedigree and don't look at conformation. You can have a great show mare and a great show stallion but if both are long in the back, more than likely the foal will be as well. It's the same with neck length, throat size, forearm length and slope of shoulder," he said.

"I think we are breeding away from hybrid vigor. We have to keep the gene pool fresh, not go down paths that can take multiple generations to turn back and perhaps two generations before you recognize it. Bad genes are more likely to breed efficiently than good genes. We are trying to line breed a little bit back and hopefully will multiply the good genes," Bennett added.

He pointed out some things people need to understand. "The length from a horse's poll of the head to the withers and the withers to the croup is important. A Saddlebred is cramped in the bridle. It all has to do with how efficiently a horse can distribute concussion, or efficient movement. Sky Watch, Imperator, The Phoenix, Santana Lass, Callaway's Criterion: horses like that didn't tire as much because they

were efficient with their movement and efficient with distribution of concussion, even though some might not be the highest-headed.'

Bennett said you look for different conformation in selecting or planning to breed a three-gaited horse. Where a gaited horse has an 'apple croup,' the walk-trot horse's is

"We're finding that a lot of lameness behind actually is coming from a horse's neck," he explained, "and we've probably already injected everything behind. The neck comes down and does a 180-degree turn to the withers at the 6th to 7th cervical vertebrae. That puts pressure on the spinal cord and a horse can become arthritic. Arthritis can displace the vertebrae causing a spinal instability.

"A major problem in Saddlebreds is a sore lower back. That comes from conformation, the length of back as compared with the neck, and from training techniques, Imagine four posts with something in between. Then put somebody in the middle jumping down on it. The longer your saw horse or balance beam, the more it bends. The balance in a horse between its neck and back length makes it more efficient with movement."

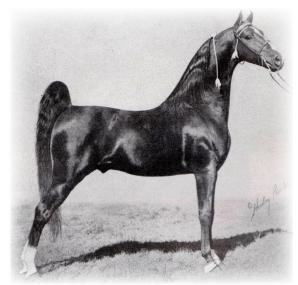
Bennett says he likes to see a horse "with a long forearm and natural head carriage and headset. That's where embryo transfer has saved our breed. It used to be if a horse couldn't set her head or rack, just breed her. Now we can get two or three embryos out of mares still in the ring and doing it right. We can breed the best to the best. That's why stallions are doing so well; with top mares and multiple embryos, a

horse can be at the top of the sire rating. The one that figures out how to breed these stallions and mares is the one who has a successful breeding program."

Brookshire spoke of Jack Boyd, a South Carolinian who, at one time, had Society Rex. He was one of the early exporters of Saddlebreds to South Africa. The Edna May's King line followed in 1966, when R. P. Sieberhagen imported Majestic Ensign, a grandson of Anacacho Denmark's and Shamrock's full brother, Cameo Kirby.

"The South African horses in general seem to be hardier, tougher than those from the States," Brookshire said, adding "though they may not be as refined."

African horses are a good way to bring in different blood



Majestic Ensign, by Ensign Kirby (Edna May's King x Girl Of My Dreams) sired the outstanding Fine Harness horse, CH Duke Of Davlight, R. P. Sieberhagen purchased him in 1966, shipping him to South Africa. His pedigree is prominent in many of the South African-bred horses today.

lines, and be official about them," Bennett added.

(SA) Dorian Wild Temper, the 1997 World's Grand Champion and Five-Gaited Stallion Champion (SA) Zovoorbij

> Commander In Chief, (SA) Tomcat, (SA) CH (SA) Casey's Final Countdown, the 1998 Five-Gaited World's Champion Stallion (SA) Calif First Night Out, 2011 Five-Gaited Stallion Kalarama's Ultimate Choice, (SA) Arborlane Tangos Wee Pee, (SA) Molligny Don't Worry Be Happy and (SA) War Image are among the more recent stallions, each carrying the Anacacho bloodlines and having good show records, imported into the United States.

> Yes, the fences, the buildings of Anacacho Ranch still stand outside the tiny Texas town of Spofford, Texas. Edna May's King rests beneath the wild grasses found there. The barn where he lived, the pen where the late Will Rogers rode him is empty. Yet on a foggy morning, or when the wind whips across the Texas land, you might hear the sound of hoof beats or the whinnies of the horses that roamed there. The visionary who built the ranch, who established its breeding program, probably would be amazed at the places his dream has taken the horses he loved.



(SA) Tornaado features the Anacacho bloodlines twice through Cameo Kirby, a full brother to "I think the South Anacacho Denmark. Raised in South Africa, he was imported to the US in 1997 and stood at Kalarama Farm and Cornerstone until his death in 2011. He is the sire of World's Champion of Champions CH A Travelin' Man.







All three current World's Grand Champions, CH Courageous Lord, CH Real Action and CH Wild Carrissima trace their bloodlines back to Anacacho Ranch.