



Undulata's Just Perfect

Three-Gaited Amateur 15.2 and Under

BY ANN BULLARD

"What's in a name," queried William Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*. "That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet."

That may have been a logical question for the bard. Where Undulata's Just Perfect is concerned, it's an ideal description for Nancy Chauvin's lovely three-gaited mare. She is just what one would expect from the daughter of Undulata's Nutcracker and CH Undulata's Perfect Gift ERB. Neither her sire nor dam needs much introduction. Nutcracker consistently ranks at the top of World's Champion Sire lists; Undulata's Perfect Gift was a three-gaited star from the time she hit the ring as a two-year-old, through the amateur, ladies and junior exhibitor divisions. With only six offspring having shown, the mare has achieved Broodmare Hall of Fame status.

Bred by Edward R. Bennett at Undulata Farm, Just Perfect began life as Undulata's Perfect Nut. The Beck family purchased her at the end of her two-year-old season, entrusting her further training to Neil Visser. Jacqueline Beck introduced the mare to the show ring, winning the American Royal's Three-Year-Old Three-Gaited Park title in 2013. Elisabeth Goth briefly owned the mare last year ... until Jeff and Nancy Chauvin and Team DeLovely entered the picture.

"We had been looking for a new horse for a while," Nancy said, explaining they had sold Zensation in February 2014. "Mark [Turner] and Todd [Miles] had heard about this horse from Neil and said 'let's take a look.' Todd met Raymond and Lil at Neil's and took a video of Macey [Miles] riding her. They sent us the video and Jeff and I decided we wanted her. We bought her sight unseen."

The first time the Chauvins saw their new horse was at Indy Charity. They flew up and Nancy rode the mare one evening after the show. Turner took over her training with DeLovely, getting her ready for a new amateur rider. The next time Nancy rode her mare was at Midwest Charity in June. They were reserve in the Ladies Amateur Three-Gaited qualifier and Ladies Three-Gaited Grand Championship. It was a great start in one of the most competitive divisions in the Saddlebred world.

"That said a lot about the preparation Neil did with this mare," Nancy said. "Everyone asked 'are you scared' since I'd only ridden her once and then showed her. Mark told me I could do it - and I believed what he told me."

Turner can't say enough good things about this mare and her owners. "I was fortunate enough to work the mare's Mama and her half brother, New Yorker's Special Gift. We lost her brother; after going through all that, buying this mare and her being so nice was a nice, weird coincidence. It made us feel a little better.

"At Midwest, Nancy showed her in Ladies; I could see that she was nice, but didn't really know what was going on. They took her to Blue Ridge and that's where she came into her own. Once we got to Louisville, it was cool. It's like someone flips a switch. She knows when she shows and is 100-percent show horse. She is a little bit of a diva. She knows what she's



Nancy and Undulata's Just Perfect were undefeated at St. Louis winning their qualifier and the Amateur Three-Gaited Championship.

there to do; the light comes on when she goes through the gate."

Nancy and her mare showed but six times during the 2014 season. After a reserve finish in Blue Ridge's Adult Ladies Three-Gaited Championship, they headed to Louisville, where they earned a pair of reserve championships. At St. Louis, they won both the Amateur Ladies and Amateur Three-Gaited Championship. In their first trip to the UPHA American Royal, Nancy and her mare won the Ladies 15.2 and Under title and a reserve in the Ladies Three-Gaited Stake

Nancy began her riding career with Paul and Betsy Boone in North Carolina. When her daughter, Michelle, was ready to embark upon an equitation career at DeLovely, she took a step back. She reappeared in the show ring in 2008. In 2010, DeLovely teamed her with Ro and Me's Lady Godiva for Ladies Three-Gaited; the following year, she showed Zensation in the same division.

She's worked hard to get where she is today. She and her husband, Jeff, both are dentists in North Carolina. She had taken lessons but having a horse of her own was her dream.



Mark Turner joined Nancy and Jeff Chauvin at the DeLovely stalls after Saturday night at Louisville.

"The first thing I did after I finished college was to buy my first horse. We moved to North Carolina to open a practice here before we married, and I went to Paul Boone. I still take lessons from Betsy."

In the early 1990s, she rode with Rob and Sarah Byers and was getting ready for her Louisville debut with her first 'big-time horse.' The Saturday before the show "Rob called me and said Mary [Gaylord] wanted to buy my horse. We were young and couldn't turn that offer down."

CH Trust Worthy won Louisville's amateur qualifier and Amateur Championship.

"I cried," Nancy said. "Mary was so nice; she gave us his trophies and ribbons from that week."

The Chauvin's daughter, Michelle, followed in her mother's footsteps. She showed CH Sarah Katherine with the Byers in the Three-Gaited Pony 13 and Under division, winning several world's titles. However, when they decided to go the equitation route, Michelle made the move to DeLovely.

During her daughter's DeLovely years, Nancy took lessons, something she's done since she was 15 years old. In fact, Nancy describes herself as "a professional lesson taker." That work, the hours of no-stirrup rides and other lesson horse work both gave her confidence and prepared her for the step up to a big-time walk-trot horse. Nowhere did those lessons pay off more than at the 2014 American Royal. "It was so cold the first night, I couldn't feel my feet," Nancy recalled. "I lost my stirrup twice during that class. The fact that I had all those lunge lessons enabled me to pick them up and go on."

Undulata's Just Perfect is a team effort. Nancy in the saddle, Mark doing the home training and caretaker Chris Hill are the hands-on workers. Nancy says she couldn't do what she does without her husband, Jeff.

"He's so supportive. I fly to DeLovely once or twice a month to practice. I'm gone for shows," she said. "He holds down the fort at home. At shows, he's either videoing her classes or helping lead the cheering section."

Turner spoke about the Chauvins and their equestrian journey. "They are fantastic people, very down to earth. They're knowledgeable. Nancy knows she's working with something alive. There are days when you feel it and days when you don't.

"They're in this for all the right reasons. They love going to shows together and have a great attitude about it all. Nancy is a good rider with a great set of hands. Still, there never is a time when she doesn't want to know how to do better the next time. For her, it's all about the perfect ride, not the ribbons."

What's in a name? For this team, it's most appropriate. It's perfect.

