

GOOD LUCK CHUCK

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Amateur Gentlemen's Three-Gaited Horse Of The Year

BY SARA PIZZUTO

Dr. Joe Kinnarney, an accomplished exhibitor in the Arabian industry, brought his talents to the Saddlebred community under the direction of Evan and Mary Orr. He has excelled in the amateur gentlemen's three-gaited division aboard Good Luck Chuck.



Some equestrians are forced to take lengthy drives or even flights in order to travel to their respective barns. For Dr. Joe Kinnarney, his commute to High Caliber Stables is a mere minute in the car. The North Carolina based farm is located conveniently at the end of his driveway, creating for a smooth trip whenever he travels for a lesson. His training efforts have paid off aboard his equine partner, Good Luck Chuck, who has blazed a trail of success in the three-gaited ranks. This Evan and Mary Orr trained competitor has surged to the top of his division and now to the top of your list as the People's Choice Amateur Gentlemen's Three-Gaited Horse Of The Year.

Dr. Joe Kinnarney's involvement with horses began with his extended family, who had horses as Kinnarney was growing up. He began his equestrian endeavors showing ponies and competing in equitation, before eventually becoming emersed in the world of Arabian show horses. Kinnarney amassed a remarkable resume of Arabian success, showing for over two decades under the direction of Joel Kiesner. He eventually found his way into the Saddlebred industry at the suggestion of his husband, Bradley Marlow, an equally successful equestrian.

"Brad asked me to go to the barn with him," Kinnarney said. "Mary Orr walked up to me and told me I had good natural ability. She told me to come back to the barn and ride some 'real horses.'"

Kinnarney did just that and took the advice of Mary Orr. He purchased his first Saddlebred, Softly Spoken to compete in the three-gaited and fine harness ranks. Kinnarney began his foray in the gentlemen's competition aboard this mare, earning the title of the 2017 Amateur Gentlemen's Three-Gaited Reserve World's Champion. After the pair had reached their potential, Kinnarney informed Mary Orr that he was ready to purchase a new horse to take the next step in his Saddlebred career. They turned to Visser Stables to find Kinnarney's next equine teammate, paying particular attention to a horse by the name of Good Luck Chuck.

The son of Undulata's Nutcracker and CH Sultry Heiress had initial success with Darrell Case in the saddle, being crowned the 2019 Junior Three-Gaited Over 15.2 Reserve World's Champion. Kinnarney was immediately smitten with his potential new partner.

"I fell in love with Good Luck Chuck from the moment he walked out the stall," Kinnarney said. "He was everything I wanted. We clicked right away. I had a good gut feeling right out the gate."

Trainer Evan Orr agreed that Good Luck Chuck would be the perfect partner for Kinnarney to continue his journey in the Saddlebred industry.

"More than anything, I loved 'Chuck's' temperament," Orr said. "Joe had done Arabians for 25 years and had been successful and had wanted something that he had a shot at winning the gentlemen's class with so he definitely wanted a really nice horse. When we found the combination of 'Chuck' being talented as well as having a good temperament, it was kind of a no brainer at that point. Usually you have one or the other but to find one like that, we had to strike while the iron was hot."

Dr. Joe Kinnarney and Bradley Marlow purchased Good Luck Chuck in the summer of 2020. Orr explained that their initial goal was simply to ensure that Kinnarney and Good Luck Chuck would get to know each other and become a team. Orr explained that Kinnarney's lengthy career and involvement in the Arabian industry proved valuable when preparing to show his newest acquisition.

“The horse that you have at home is different from what you get in the horse show,” Orr said. “It’s just been some trial and error. But Joe had been doing show horses for a while even if he hadn’t done Saddlebreds. Because of this, Joe understands that there is a process and it’s not always instant gratification. Although he’s been successful, he also understands that there are no guarantees.”

Evan Orr also acknowledged Dr. Joe Kinnarney’s career as a veterinarian. Kinnarney, a veterinarian at Reidsville Veterinary Hospital, now exclusively practices small animal medicine with a focus in small animal surgery. Orr explained that his job outside of the horse industry has aided in his ability to successfully team up with a new horse.

“He’s a veterinarian too so he understands animals and that’s always helpful,” Orr said. “Joe never once in any horse that we have had or in any colt that we have raised with him has blamed anybody for anything even when they all haven’t worked out. What I love about Joe is that Joe always comes out win or lose with an attitude of ‘What did I learn? What did I do well and what can we do better next time?’ He’s just a great guy as far as working with him with the horses.”

Kinnarney and Good Luck Chuck had a remarkable show ring debut in their first ever appearance together. Kinnarney achieved his dream as he and Good Luck Chuck were crowned the 2020 Amateur Gentlemen’s Three-Gaited World’s Champions. They followed this achievement by being named the 2020 Amateur Three-Gaited Reserve National Champions.

Kinnarney and Good Luck Chuck’s success continued into 2021. They scored multiple top prizes and once again excelled in the amateur gentlemen’s offering in Louisville, this time earning the reserve world’s title.

“Chuck’ has tons of quality,” Orr said. “He’s got ridiculous motion. He’s a good boy. He’s kind of the whole package. I wouldn’t call him completely straight forward. He’s definitely a show horse. With an amateur of any sort, the horse has to be game enough. We don’t want a horse that you have to push around the ring.”

Kinnarney agreed.

“Good Luck Chuck is calm and sweet in the stall but a true show horse,” he said. “He goes through gate and wants to show.”

Dr. Joe Kinnarney and Bradley Marlow have since added yet another multi-titled show horse to their string. Just like with Good Luck Chuck, they found their newest addition at Visser Stables, purchasing Sylvanhall Highly Classified, the reigning Junior Three-Gaited Park World’s Champion of Champions. Evan Orr will likely take the reins of this full sibling to CH Macadamia and Sylvanhall’s Pistachio for the 2022 show season with the hope of Kinnarney eventually taking over.

“They wanted a very nice horse and it wasn’t necessarily one for them to show,” Orr said. “If it works out that one of them will show him, then that’s great. But they are open to what that journey brings. If it’s me showing him, if it’s Mary showing him, he doesn’t have to fit into any mold at this point. They just want a nice horse to show.”

While Evan Orr works with Highly Classified, Dr. Joe Kinnarney will once again return to the show ring in 2022 with Good Luck Chuck. The popular performer and his savvy jockey will continue to thrill audiences and remain dominant forces in the amateur gentlemen’s ranks with an emphasis on enjoying each moment in the show ring.

“My goal with this horse is to continue to get better and to have fun,” Kinnarney said. “At the end of the day you need to have a good time. Good Luck Chuck makes that happen.”



Good Luck Chuck and Dr. Joe Kinnarney debuted together in Louisville in 2020. They were crowned the Amateur Gentlemen’s Three-Gaited World’s Champions as well as the 2021 reserve world’s champions.