

# JUS' SAYIN'

## THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE Morgan Horse Of The Year

Peggy and Phil Alderman's homebred Jus' Sayin' captivated the Morgan industry in 2021, being named the People's Choice Horse Of The Year.

BY SARA PIZZUTO

Peggy Alderman received the ultimate birthday present in the spring of 2019. Her newest homebred foal arrived on April 20th - a fitting gift on Alderman's 65th birthday. She knew immediately that the bay colt was superior in all aspects.

"I posted a picture on Facebook right after he foaled," Alderman said. "He was like three days old. I called him 'Mr. Goodbody.' It was a shot of him looking out the door. His hip was perfect. Everything was fabulous. All I could say was 'wow.' Babies don't look like that."

The foal, later tagged Jus' Sayin', would soon rise to the top of the Morgan industry-creating a buzz amongst the community during his show ring debut in 2021. The highly touted youngster earned the unanimous vote of the judging panel in Oklahoma City as the World Champion Stallion and has now earned your vote as the People's Choice Horse Of The Year.

Jus' Sayin' is a product of Peggy Alderman and her husband Phil's breeding program at their Vermont based Salem Farm. His sire, Dragonsmeade Axios, is a world champion performer in his own right and is equally successful in the breeding shed. His dam, Brenda Starr was yet another Salem Farm homebred. Peggy Alderman purchased Brenda Starr's dam, AFF Savannah, as a two-year-old in 1999. Savannah celebrated a victorious career both under saddle and in-hand before producing Brenda Starr.

"Brenda was one of the early on breedings by Liberation First Star that I bred when Amy Scott owned him down in North Carolina," Alderman said. "I was very attracted to his double Wham Bam through his sire and dam. Brenda was pretty much everything you could ever want. Joan Lurie and Darrell Case showed her for me in Oklahoma and she won the Grand National Four-Year-Old Mare class."

Brenda Starr's performance career was unfortunately cut short after an injury in her stall ended her time in the show ring. Alderman then moved her to the broodmare band, where the mare produced such notables as the multi world champion Bazinga.

Brenda Starr next passed her talents on to Jus' Sayin' who made his debut in 2021 at the New England Morgan Horse Show. Northampton's famed grandstand ring has long been

the location where the breed's greats are introduced to the show ring, leading to legendary careers. The two-year-old caused a stir amongst those at New England after his remarkable performances that ultimately earned him the title of Grand Champion Stallion. It was the beginning of a sensational season for Alderman's colt.

"He is kind of the total package," Alderman said. "Every day we go to work him, he goes right to work. He has a ton of talent and he is physically simply beautiful. He is pretty hard to pick apart. His personality is off the charts. I spend a lot of time with him personally and I am kind of his personal groom as well. He is a lot of colt. You need to handle him smartly but he is an extremely kind horse."

A buzz was forming and swirling across the internet following Jus' Sayin's performances at New England, with many horse enthusiasts excited about the emerging superstar. Peggy and Phil Alderman next turned their attention to the Morgan Grand National, with plans to present their two-year-old in Oklahoma's in-hand stallion competition. However, while Jus' Sayin' was primed to contend against the world's best, Alderman felt that it would be beneficial for another trainer to lead her homebred through the Gateway Of Champions. She contacted Phil Fountain and asked him to present Jus' Sayin' in Oklahoma City.

Fountain agreed and flew out to Vermont to meet the stallion and work with him prior to showing him. Their partnership proved victorious as Fountain, and Alderman, along with Tom Tornatore represented the winning connections behind Jus' Sayin's remarkable 2021 Morgan Grand National. In his Oklahoma City debut, Jus' Sayin' was named the Two-Year-Old Stallion Grand National Champion and World Champion Junior Stallion before besting an impressive group of seasoned competitors to be crowned the unanimous World Champion Stallion-an impressive feat at just two-years-old.

"Phil obviously did a phenomenal job with Jus' Sayin' in Oklahoma," Alderman said. "Tom Tornatore helped me show him at New England and helped us out in Oklahoma. We kind of played tag team. They were both certainly a big part of the success in Oklahoma."

With the title of reigning world champion added to his resume, Jus' Sayin' returned home to focus on his breeding career. Peggy and Phil Alderman made the decision that the stallion's breeding career was going to take precedence over his show ring career in 2022. With a total of 34 mares booked to Jus'

Sayin', the youngster made the trip to Select Breeders in the fall and will return there once again this spring. Peggy Alderman is hopeful that the colt will pass on his exemplarily traits to his offspring.

"He is absolutely superior in the way his shoulder and neck attach up through the throatlatch," she said. "He is even finer through the throat this year than he was last year as a two-year-old. Usually studs tend to get a little more beefy but he is leaning out through the neck. I worked his great-grandsire Bell Flaire and I see that throatlatch in him and that is coming through his sire's dam HVK Obsidian. He had that kind of fineness through the throat and this colt is leaning right out."

Though the focus of Jus' Sayin's 2022 year will be on his breeding, Alderman isn't ruling out a return to the show ring. She explained that the colt returned from Select Breeders in good order and returned to work like he had never left.

"He is broke to jog and we jog him all over the farm and he will at some point come out in harness," she said. "We also just broke him to saddle. We just started sitting on him. He is a great athlete. People haven't seen that yet but I am working him and this horse is gangbusters. It means a lot that he came back after two months at Select Breeders and acts like he did when we sent him so that tells me a lot about this colt."

In just his first year in the show ring, Jus' Sayin' has captivated the Morgan industry with his exquisite conformation, athletic ability, and impeccable pedigree. He lived up to the hype set early in the season and excelled on the breed's biggest stage as just a two-year-old-a true testament to the Alderman's dedication to the Morgan breed.

"Well, the response to him has been phenomenal," Peggy Alderman said. "Look at this award. How flattering could that be to a young two-year-old colt to have the general public feel like he's that good. It means a lot as a breeder, of course it does. I am just excited about him because he is not only a phenomenal individual himself, but he is bred to be that way. I am excited about both aspects of his career- his breeding career and his show career."

As his breeding career unfolds, the young colt will represent a new generation of sires looking to leave their mark on the industry. The future for this young People's Choice Horse Of The Year looks to be filled with continued success...jus' sayin'.



Jus' Sayin' (right) followed in the footsteps of his sire and dam trotting into the winner's circle. His sire, Dragonsmeade Axios (left), is both a world champion performer and breeding sire. Brenda Starr (center), the dam of Jus' Sayin', was yet another successful entry bred by the Alderman's. Phil Fountain along with Peggy Alderman and Tom Tornatore represented the winning connections behind Jus' Sayin's performances at the Morgan Grand National. The young colt will now make his breeding career his primary focus.