



Sinfully Delicious

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE THREE-GAITED PONY

Arizona Poppy

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE JUNIOR EXHIBITOR COUNTRY PLEASURE 13 & UNDER

BY ERICA FAULKNER

The McDonald Family (Sara, John, Jay and Sterling) have been proud owners of many quality Saddlebred show horses over the years. Sara has made victory pass after victory pass during her show ring career, but during the last couple years she has taken the most joy in watching her daughter, Sterling, perform in the ring. Sterling stepped up to the challenge of two new horses, Arizona Poppy ("Poppy") and Sinfully Delicious ("Sindy"), during the 2020 show season, winning many blue ribbons, as well as your nod for The People's Choice Junior Exhibitor Country Pleasure 13 & Under and Three-Gaited Pony divisions, respectively.

Under the instruction of the Visser Stables team (Jaqueline and Neil Visser, and Chantell Bosman), Sterling found her way to victory with each of her new horses. Poppy, who is trained by Bosman, was the first one of the two horses to hit the show ring at the Mid-South Spring Premier Horse Show in Priceville, Alabama in their first appearance together. They emerged victorious as they won both the Junior Exhibitor Country Pleasure 13 and Under Championship and qualifier that weekend. It was a match made in heaven and the McDonald family sealed the deal and purchased Poppy after the show.

From there it was on to the Kentucky Spring Premier and Mercer County Fair, where this new team put in two memorable rides to win their classes. The stage was set for the World's Championship Horse Show, where Sterling and Poppy were named the Junior Exhibitor Country Pleasure 13 and Under World's Champions and World's Champions of Champions, earning Bosman her first roses for a horse she trained.

"Our rides were really good," Sterling said cheerfully. "He was great."

Bosman agreed and said, "Her rides were perfect. He is the perfect horse. He is great in the show ring, but also great at home. He

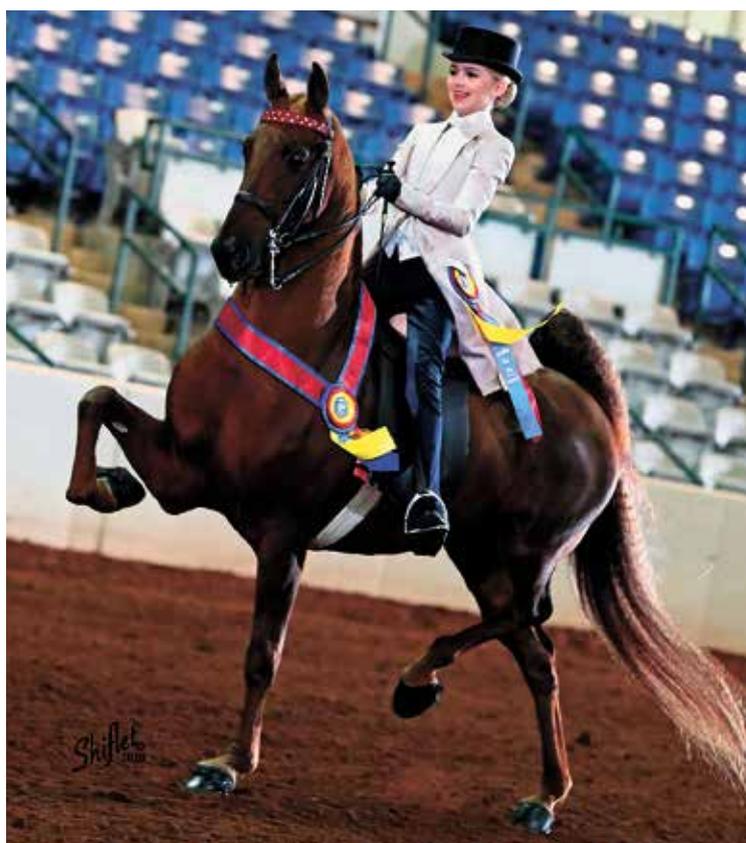
never really has a bad day. He is a horse that Larry Hodge would say 'Makes a horse trainer look smart'."

But even a good thinking, solid horse like Poppy, requires talented training and quality care. Bosman clearly delivered in both of these areas. At home, she works the game gelding, commenting that he is "a little bit of a scaredy cat, but doesn't have a bad bone in his body".

"I think he was just what Sterling needed to help give her confidence in herself as a rider. Every show, Sterling got more confident and they just got better and better each time they went through the gate." Said Bosman, who also commented that Sterling is a true horse lover, and often can be found spending time with her horses in the stall, loving on them and learning them on a deeper level.

"It's more than just about the blue ribbon for Sterling," said Bosman.

The confidence Poppy gives Sterling transfers over when she hops aboard her young mare, Sinfully Delicious. By Northern Asset and out of Emerald's Tickled Pink, this five-year-old was bred by Debbie Tolliver has been a crowd favor-

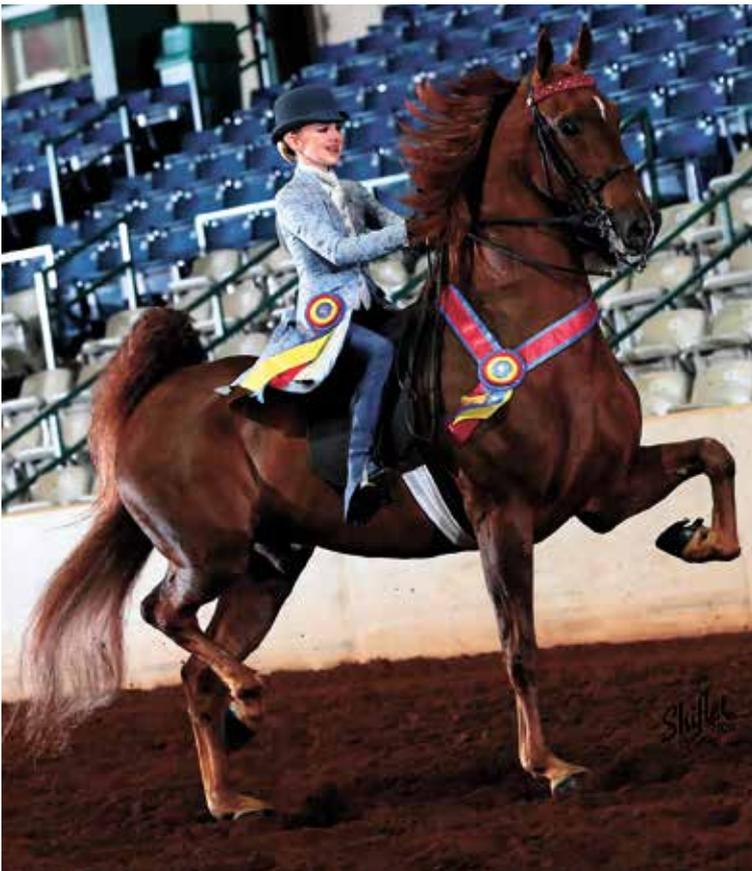


Sinfully Delicious and Sterling McDonald followed their World's Champion Of Champions victory with the Three-Gaited Pony Grand Championship at the Southern Saddlebred Fall Finale.

ite ever since her first show ring appearance (which was in 2018 when she was named the World's Champion Three-Year-Old Fine Harness Mare with Emily Abbott West driving).

Now trained by Neil Visser, this team made their debut at Mercer County Fair.

"I was nervous," Sterling said. "We were the only ones in the class at that show. I was unsure of how she was going to act."



Arizona Poppy earned trainer Chantell Bosman her first World's Champion of Champions honors for a horse she trained. Arizona Poppy and Sterling McDonald are pictured making their victory pass at the Southern Saddlebred Fall Finale in the Junior Exhibitor Country Pleasure Championship.

Since they were the only ones, the show didn't provide much of a chance for practice prior to Louisville, but that didn't stop the dedicated trainer and the talented young rider from giving it all they had.

"Our first class at Louisville, we got run up on and had some areas to improve on," said Sterling.

They came away with a very respectable third place.

"Before we went back into the championship, I spent a lot of time with her in the stall," Sterling said. "I find that you have a better bond with your horse if you spend time in the stall with them."

And that bond, is what led the new team to their first World's Champion of Champions honors, winning the Three-Gaited Pony Championship on the green shavings.

Purchased by the McDonald family in 2019, Sara said, "We really were not in the market to buy a horse. We had just moved to Visser Stables, and Neil sent me a video. It was Sinfully Delicious."

She acknowledged how stunning the mare was, but they just were not looking for anything at the moment. However, once they saw the mare in person, things changed.

"We went to the barn about a week later, and that's when we saw her in person. My husband stepped up and said, 'That's it, that's the one.'" Sara said. "We just couldn't pass her up."

Neil commented on the new team. "I knew 'Sindy' was going to be the perfect pony for someone, and when Sterling came along it was evident they were a match made in heaven. My wife and I

have enjoyed teaming them together and watching them achieve their goal of winning roses was very rewarding for us. I am looking forward to seeing what the future holds for them."

It was a similar scenario with Poppy.

"We were leasing him at the start of the year, but it was undeniable there was a connection between my daughter and this horse. The match was just perfect," Sara added.

Sara credits the entire Visser Stables family for helping her daughter grow as a rider and as a young lady.

"Not only do they do a great job with the two horses, but Neil and Jaqueline really have welcomed Sterling into their lives. Typically, a shy young girl, Sterling has gained confidence under their guidance, and watching her mature both in and outside of the show ring has been the most rewarding part of all of this. It's not just the victory pass-

es that have made this a winning journey."

While Neil and Chantell are the primary ones who work the horses at home, Jaqueline also is an integral part of the team, stepping in as Sterling's instructor.

"Sterling is a dedicated rider whose love for her horses shows every time she rides," Jaqueline commented. "You can see it on her face, she completely lights up! Every time she hits the show ring she gives it all she has, she gets into a completely different mode. She knows exactly when to bring it. I have enjoyed every minute of instructing her and being a part of her journey. I am her biggest fan!"

Both horses will continue their journey in and out of the show ring with Sterling for the 2021 season. Two matches made in heaven and your choice for two People's Choice awards, the future is looking bright for all involved with these two special horses.



Both Sinfully Delicious and Arizona Poppy won World's Champion of Champions titles at the 2020 World's Championship Horse Show. Pictured here, Chantell Bosman, Neil and Jaqueline Visser, and Sterling McDonald, teamed up to make these wins happen.