

Sunrise Stables

SUPPORTING THE BREED 16 BABIES AT A TIME IN 2021

BY LEEANN MIONE

VERSAILLES, Kentucky - Melissa Moore has her hands full. It's early spring and foaling season and the babies are arriving. Moore's 60 acre property in the heart of the bluegrass is full of horses and full of promise. There were 18 mares bred for the 2021 season and at the time of my visit, there were 14 more mares waiting outside to come in for foaling. "We lost two this year to Placentitis, an inflammation of the placenta," said Melissa. The loss of two foals is one that everyone on the farm felt deeply and even though it is often part of the life of a horse breeder, it is never something to get used to.

The "Field Of Dreams" at Sunrise Stables offers plenty of room for the 14 yearlings to run and play and in a nearby pasture 14-year-old stallion Gomez (CH Call Me Ringo x Arrowhead's Mortisha by Periapator) spends his days side by side with his 30-year-old "girlfriend" Love In Blue. "We have three generations of love here on the farm," said Melissa. "I bred her daughter One Great Love (sired by Sultan's Great Day) and her granddaughter Love Reflected (sired by (SA) Dellview Dare Time)."

Gomez was bred by Melissa and he is a favorite of hers. "We bought CH Lulu Frost and she has such good old time breeding (I'm A New Yorker x Salem Jewel by Salemtown). We'll turn her out with him since he does pasture breeding only. I'm looking forward to seeing those babies."

Riverdreams Black Pearl (Sultan's Great Day x Harlem's Lady Louise) was also bred by Melissa and is owned by Joe O'Brien. The four-year-old black stallion is part of the Sunrise Stables all-star lineup and put his first crop on the ground last year.

The closer we get to show season and the upcoming Kentucky Spring Premier which will kick off the Sunrise Stables show season, the more stress Moore feels but there is also tremendous excitement and anticipation about the beautiful youngsters who will begin their show careers in the next several months.

"We try to be done foaling out before show season if possible." We start the babies here," said Melissa. "Nowadays, breeders are required to start the colts they breed and make them something by the time they are two. The days of being able to just breed them and sell them are long gone. Often if a two-year-old is really good, they won't be really good later on. It really does help if young stock is given the time to mature a little before going into serious training."

One of the first horses she bred was Gothic Revival, the popular chestnut gelding with four white stockings and white stripe down his face who had such a wonderful career with Joan Adler. Melissa purchased his dam, a CH Foxfire's Prophet daughter named Allusion, and bred her to Revival.



Three-Year-Old Sunrise's Ladies Man, sired by Gomez and owned by Michelle Groomes, is the last foal out of Harlem's Lady Louise, a half-sister to CH The Daily Lottery.

While Melissa, assistant trainer Emma Caruso and trainer Bobby Moore work the horses in training, including several promising two- and three-year-olds, it is clear that Melissa and Emma both have a lot of patience and a lot of love for the youngsters. Caruso loves the breeding aspect of her job. "It's addicting," she said. "I didn't know anything about breeding horses but I love it." Trainer Desiree Devries feels the same; she comes to Sunrise each morning to work at the 13-stall broodmare barn before going back home to work her own stock.

One of the colts Moore works is Sunrise's Ladies Man, a three-year-old sired by Gomez and out of Harlem's Lady Louise, who is herself a half-sister to CH The Daily Lottery and is also the dam Riverdreams Black Pearl. "This colt is the last one out of that mare," said Melissa. "He'll be bred next year for owner Michelle Groomes."

Being a successful breeder means being able to evaluate your foal crop objectively and even though you have to accept that it is a "crap shoot" and nothing is for certain, you still have to make an educated guess about which ones are headed for the show ring and which need to go back out in the field or join the breeding program.



Two Of A Kind was bred by Sheri Frankel and is sired by her beloved stallion It's Double O' Deuce and out of her winning mare Callaway's Aperitif. He is gearing up to hit the show ring this year for SGF Winning Ways Farm, Ltd.

Well known Sunrise Stables client and Saddlebred breeder Sheri Frankel has several up-and-coming prospects sired by her beloved CH It's Double O' Deuce. Three-Year-Old Two Of A Kind will show in harness this year and looks almost exactly like his sire.

Two-year-old Saints Marching In, owned by New Orleans residents and longtime Sunrise customers Helen Moreno and Christopher Meeks, is another one of the babies that Melissa is excited about. "He has such a good head set and he is going to be something," she said. Sired by Arrowhead's Bateleur and out of RF Bella Notte, "Drew" was bred by Moreno and Meeks who, like Sheri Frankel, take on the challenges posed by being a small-time breeder.

"We really don't have any of those big breeding farms anymore," said Moore. "It's very expensive for the small farms to breed horses or ponies. The commitment is the same as the large farms but often there are fewer resources to fund the breeding program and because it is so hard to get a return on investment, fewer and fewer people can make the commitment, no matter how much they want to."



Divine Decadence (It's Double O' Deuce x Fox It To Me by Fox Creek) is eligible for the All American Cup Three-Year-Old Under Saddle class this year and just came to Melissa a short time ago for owners and breeders James and Gaynor Shane.

"I try to video everything I start because it is very interesting to go back and look at the videos. So often they didn't look that great as a baby but went on to be superstars. I really do want a job for all of them and I try very hard to make that happen. The hunter division has been a godsend. Moore has trained young stock to win in virtually every division offered for American Saddlebreds including the hunter division. Coachella is one of her hunter success stories. With Jenny McGowan up, he won the very first ASR Four-Year-Old Hunter Sweepstakes at Saint Louis National in 2019.

Nirvana Queen, just a four-year-old, made her debut in the hunter division last year at Kentucky Fall Classic. Moore has taken full advantage of the popularity of the division and has successfully marketed top young horses to excel in that arena.

Plenty of three- and five-gaited stars are going to emerge from the Sunrise Stables breeding program again this year just as they have since she started breeding Saddlebreds. Moore's ability to match horses with jobs and horses with owners is legendary. It is quite literally in her blood as the daughter of Tom and Donna Moore.

"I handled all the breeding for my mom at Belle Reve. She did the matching and I handled the insemination and mixing the semen for shipping. She taught me everything I know about breeding horses."

With a barn full of horses in training and a pasture full of prospects as well as a breeding program to maintain and take care of, there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day to get it all done."

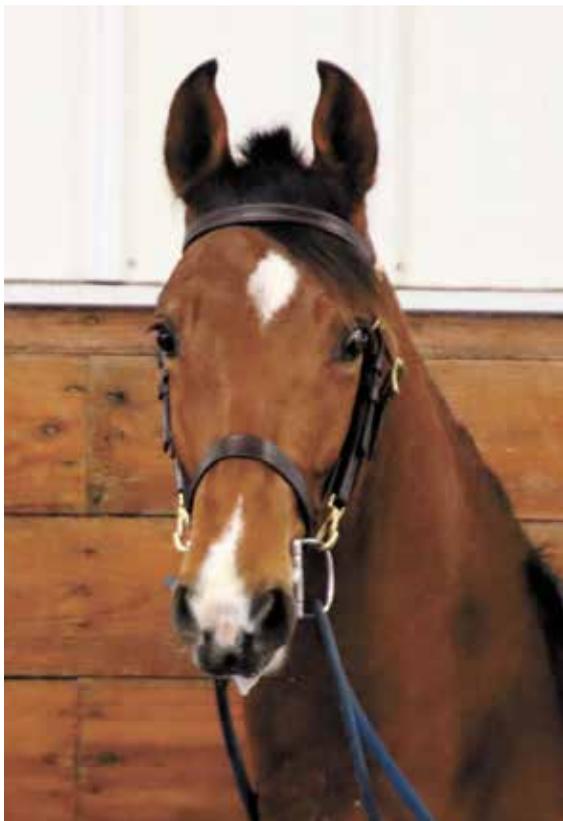
"The first year I judged Louisville, I was working 40 head," said Melissa. "I lost customers because I was so busy. I swore that I would never do that again so I built this place 15 years ago and it has 32 stalls and 60 acres. It's busy but more manageable."

"I love that there is one tack room and I can see everyone in the barn. We can pull the trailer in the arena and load everyone up." She also has plans to build a new house on the property this year.

The show string, which includes stars like Polly Parton and Uncle Beav, and the youngsters that are headed for their first horse show will load up the week of April 8-10 to debut for the season at Kentucky Spring Premier.

Miguel, Michelle Groomes' three-year-old sired by Gomez and out of the Northern Vegas daughter Memories of Vegas, was bred by Melissa and may make his debut at the Horse Park.

Double Swantini, a four-year-old by CH It's Double O' Deuce and out of CH Callaway's Aperitif also has a bright future in front of her and is soon to make her show ring debut.



Saints Marching In is only two years old and was bred by New Orleans residents Helena Moreno and Christopher Meeks. Known as "Drew" in the barn, he is sired by Arrowhead's Bateleur and out of the Nocturnal daughter RF Bella Notte.

"Some horses turn out to be great from the very beginning, she added. "Revival for example won as a weanling and a yearling and had a great show career before becoming a very successful stud but so many babies really don't show what they are capable of until they are three or four years old or even older than that. It is so difficult to be able to wait that long to know whether the cross you chose is a good one."



The impressive wall of champions on display in the barn Melissa designed and built 15 years ago in Versailles, Kentucky, offers only a partial glimpse of the many champions she has bred and/or trained to successful show careers.

“I needed to take my time with her,” said Melissa. “Sheri Frankel owns her and bred her and she was very willing to give her the time she needed. Deuce babies are slow to develop like he was and she is very game, but she’s beautiful and looks like her dam. I’m excited to see her in the ring this year.”

Those who sign up to breed horses deserve every accolade they are given. It’s not a completely thankless task but it certainly comes with its share of heartache and sleepless nights and more than its share of hard work, dedication and money spent. It’s one of the few endeavors that can mean waiting years to see if the choices you made were successful.

For Melissa, breeding Saddlebreds is one very important and meaningful way to give back to the industry she loves. “I feel an obligation to continue what my mother did and to do anything I can to help this industry succeed.”

As show season gets underway and young horses all over the country make their debuts, take a minute and think about what it took to get that youngster to the show ring and maybe clap a little louder for their success. Our future depends on it.



Influencer, another two-year-old sired by Arrowhead’s Bateleur, is owned by Joe O’Brien’s Covered Bridge Farm. The chestnut colt’s dam is the Gomez daughter Call Me Miranda.



Gomez spends his time outside with his 30-year-old girlfriend Love In Blue. Her daughter and granddaughter were bred by Melissa and live at the farm.



Part of the reward of being a breeder of Saddlebreds (or any breed for that matter) is to be able to see the promise in their eyes and know the anticipation of seeing them fulfill whatever their destinies might be. These yearlings represent a lot of time, love and hard work.



Sitting underneath a picture of her dad Tom Moore riding CH The Contender, Melissa Moore and assistant trainer Emma Caruso maintain the 32 stall show barn, 13 stall broodmare barn, 60 acres of pasture and in 2021 a foal crop of 16 all with the help of trainer Bobby Moore and head caretaker Angel Pantoja.