

# A Career Show Horse

## The Great Gaspar

BY BOB  
FUNKHOUSER

**W**hile undersized and not the stretchiest of individuals, CH The Great Gaspar was the epitome of an American Saddlebred: extremely expressive, athletic and correct on both ends, bright-eyed, hook eared, able to perform at a high level over many years. Of course, none of this happened by accident.

Born April 13, 2000 to World's Champion Merchant Prince and Broodmare Hall of Fame matron World's Champion Denmark's Radiant Society, who was by World's Grand Champion Ronald Reagan, The Great Gaspar was the next to last born into one of the most famous families in the history of the American Saddlebred.

Maybe not as much a celebrity as his sisters, World's Grand Champion CH A Sweet Treat and World's Champion/Reserve World's Grand Champion CH Rejoice or his half brother World's Grand Champion CH Be Happy, The Great Gaspar did more than his fair share to secure the family's status in the record books and breed lore. Bred by Simon Fredricks, Simbara Farm, Gaspar was also a brother to other world's titleholders CH The Radiant Prince, CH Simbara's Samba Jamba, Simbara's Cara Mia, Simbara's Exclamation, Simbara's Special Someone and Simbara's Living Legend.

The great gelding died in April of an uncommon neurological disorder similar to a stroke according to Lisa Strickland who became his final trainer just a few months ago. Faith Sturm of Milton, Wisconsin was his final owner/exhibitor.

"We loved him," said Strickland. "For a horse his age, he came out like a spring chicken every day, bright and sharp."

Gaspar enjoyed a long and prosperous career that began as a two-year-old with master horseman Carter Cox as the teacher as he was for most of Radiant Society's offspring. Cox won Rock Creek's Two-Year-Old Fine Harness title and later that fall, the ASHA Two-Year-Old Three-Gaited Sweepstakes. That was a prophetic look at what would become Gaspar's career, the first half as a harness horse and the second part as a three-gaited/park horse.

Gaspar was undefeated as a three-year-old with Cox winning at Midwest, Lexington Junior League, the ASHA National Futurity at Louisville and the ASHA Sweepstakes at the All-American Classic. That fall, Stonecroft Farm purchased Gaspar with Nelson Green as the new trainer. Green debuted at the American Royal, winning the UPHA Fine Harness Classic Grand Championship and giving Gaspar a Three-Year-Old Triple Crown.



*Carter Cox started and developed The Great Gaspar. They are pictured here winning the ASHA National Three-Year-Old Fine Harness Futurity.*



*Nelson Green piloted the great performer to the Junior Fine Harness World's Champion of Champions title. They also won the junior stallion/gelding qualifier.*

*John Scheidt enjoyed victory passes at such shows at Rock Creek (pictured), Lexington, Asheville Lions Club and Kentucky Fall Classic.*



“He was a really nice colt,” remembered Cox. “He had all that expression that family was known for. You wished he was a hand taller, but when he hit that ring he grew a hand. I didn’t know how that was going to turn out when they trimmed him as I always thought he was a harness horse, but that turned out alright also.”

“He was very typical of that family,” said Nelson Green who had his sire, his dam and his second dam, winning world’s championships with all of them, including Gaspar. “He didn’t show at the same level as Sweet Treat but he was a fun, honest horse.”

As a junior horse Gaspar was undefeated with Green, winning at Asheville, Lexington and two classes at Louisville. Owner John Scheidt took over from there and enjoyed two seasons with wins from Lexington, Rock Creek, Asheville, and the Kentucky Fall Classic.

Phillipa Sledge, Pidgeon Roost Farm was the next owner of The Great Gaspar with Rob and Sarah Byers as trainers. In two seasons together they triumphed with wins and reserves from Rock Creek, Lexington and Germantown in addition to top three finishes at Louisville.

Todd Miles and DeLovely Farm selected Gaspar for pert Eleanor Rainbolt-Forbes and they also had many wins and reserves in their three seasons together. Kansas City, Lexington, Midwest, Indy, SASHA, Pro-Am and Mane Event were among their wins and reserves.

“He was a cocky horse who thought a lot of himself,” remembered Todd Miles. “He didn’t know he was small. He was extremely bright, very consistent and a real trooper.”

The final chapter in Gaspar’s career came with Faith Sturm for whom he was an amazing trooper. Under the direction of Ryan Rongers and Pat McConnell at Clean Sweep Farm, Faith and Gaspar began in the 10 & Under Walk and Trot Equitation division with several wins and a fourth at Louisville in her first time on the green shavings. The following year they made their presence known in the junior exhibitor park division winning several classes. Then at the end of 2013 they tried their hand at pleasure driving and remained in that division throughout 2014, again with many prizes. They began this year at Strickland Stables with a return to the junior exhibitor park division.

“We bought him as a walk and trot horse and then did two more divisions,” said Ryan Rongers. “He won in all three of them. Not bad for a first horse. He was a show horse but super dependable. You never doubted him.”

“He was an awesome horse in harness or under saddle. A great horse for adults and kids,” added Clean Sweep Farm trainer Pat McConnell. “He was a champion when he was born and a champion when he died. I loved him. Always a show horse, every day of his life.”

Few stars are born that love life every day the way The Great Gaspar did. His personality and enthusiasm carried over to every single owner, every single trainer. Many miles and many classes did not dim his zest for the show ring. It took a terrible, unexpected medical condition to put that light out, yet for everyone that ever had the privilege of throwing a leg over him or sitting behind him, his huge heart and love of the show ring will remain with them forever.



*Phillipa Sledge fit Gaspar perfectly and showed him successfully for two seasons under saddle.*



*A young Eleanor Rainbolt-Forbes spent a few seasons winning junior exhibitor three-gaited titles before moving to the park division.*



*Faith Sturm enjoyed many great experiences with Gaspar both under saddle and driving in three different divisions. His death was a great loss to her.*