



Macadamia

Three-Gaited Horse Of The Year

BY ANN BULLARD

In a show season that featured many exciting competitions and many heart-pounding performances, it's often hard to pick out 'the one' to be named Horse Of The Year. Our Horse World readers concurred with the United States Equestrian Federation and United Professional Horsemen's Association in recognizing Macadamia's outstanding season. You voted the five-year-old the Overall Horse of the Year and Three-Gaited Horse for the 2014 season.

Looking at the individual, his breeding and group of trainers, one shouldn't be surprised.

When Ed Rhoads and his son, William, purchased Sass With Class in 2008, they selected the country's Number One stallion to sire her first foal. They had high hopes for the youngster by Undulata's Nutcracker. However, few could predict just how special her first foal would be. Nutcracker needs no introduction to the Saddle Horse world. Sass With Class is not nearly as well known.

The mare is the daughter of World's Champion Sire, Santana's Charm. Her dam, Buck's Aria's, traces back to CH Wing Commander through the Scripps-Miramar champions, CH Chubasco and CH Astra Music [BHF.] The mare had a nice show record with Dena Lopez and, most recently, with Heather Greenbaum. In the fall of 2008, Rhoads purchased the mare and added her to his small, select breeding program. Thus far, she has produced two full siblings, Macadamia and Avellane Stargazer, a yearling gelding also belonging to the Glasscocks.

On April 15, 2010, she gave birth to a white-trimmed chestnut; they named him Macadamia. Rhoads says they knew from the first he was something special ... and a people horse. He and his son handled the youngster carefully, teaching him his 'people' basics - to trust and respect people. They selected John Biggins to prepare Macadamia for what would be his star-studded future.

Macadamia and Biggins made their debut in the ASR National Three-Gaited Park Three-Year-Old Futurity, earning the reserve world's championship. As he was ill, Biggins asked his good friend, Chuck Herbert, to show the colt at the UPHA Class at the Kentucky Fall Classic. By then, the mane was gone. That was the beginning of a seven-class win streak.

Knowing the youngster was for sale, Herbert got his client, Deyne Munavalli, to buy Macadamia sight unseen. A few weeks later, it was off to Kansas City and The UPHA American Royal, where Macadamia scored a unanimous win in the UPHA Three-Year-Old Three-Gaited UPHA Championship. The ink hadn't dried on the transfer papers when the Glasscock family



Talent. Conformation. Beauty. Macadamia exhibited all three and more as he won a unanimous 2014 Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship with trainer Steve Wheeler in the irons.

purchased Macadamia to be Mary Jane's amateur mount. He moved to the Wheeler's Autumn Hills Farm in Simpsonville, Ken.

"We had been looking for just the right walk-trot horse for these people," Steve said, adding they wanted something he and Mary Jane (Glasscock Kirkpatrick) could show. "He made a remarkable show at Kansas City, but we never dreamed he would do what he did this year."

They began at Bonnie Blue, where they won the Junior Three-Gaited title. Rock Creek proved to be a repeat performance, although he had six other nice horses to contend with at the popular outdoor show. Blue Ridge: another blue.

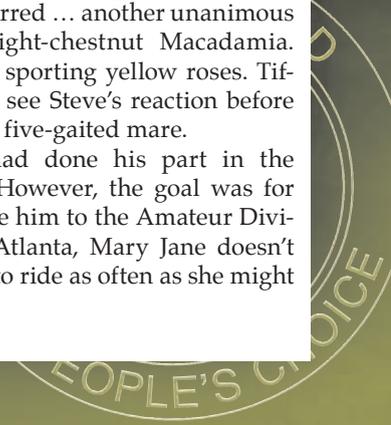
And suddenly it was the end of August. Macadamia joined more than 1,000 contenders in search of world's championship honors. People barely had settled in their seats when the first class of the evening came under the lights into Freedom Hall.

On Monday night, the never-backed-ear gelding won the hearts of the crowd and all three judges. Jack Noble, Jim Taylor and Barbe Smith had him first on each of their cards.

When Macadamia didn't return for the Junior Three-Gaited Championship, fans knew they had something extra to look forward to on Saturday night. Macadamia was going for all the roses! They knew it wouldn't be easy: competing at that level never is. But the Glasscock/Kirkpatrick/Wheeler team was ready. Mary Jane, her mother and Autumn Hills clients settled into their places. Tiffany had to remain at the stalls as she was showing Fox Grape's Sierra Madre two classes later.

They worked ... lined up ... stripped and riders remounted. Eight pairs awaited the judges' decision. Cameras focused on the Glasscock family as videographers waited to catch their expressions. Judges Smith, Noble and Taylor concurred ... another unanimous win for the bright-chestnut Macadamia. They trotted out sporting yellow roses. Tiffany was able to see Steve's reaction before she mounted the five-gaited mare.

Macadamia had done his part in the Open Division. However, the goal was for Mary Jane to take him to the Amateur Division. Living in Atlanta, Mary Jane doesn't get to Kentucky to ride as often as she might



Mary Jane joined Steve Wheeler and Macadamia for a celebratory photo following their World's Grand Championship win.



like. However, with four or five practice horses at home, she stays legged up. By the time the American Royal rolled around, they were ready.

The Wheelers elected for Mary Jane and Macadamia to show in the Open Division. Their outstanding performance earned them a unanimous reserve in their only appearance.

Steve Wheeler spoke of one of his latest champions. "Mac is an incredible horse. Biggins started him; Chuck [Herbert] bought and showed him at Kansas City where he made a remarkable show. And he's kept getting better and better."

Steve concedes, "We never thought he would do what he did last year. He had all the parts we were looking for. He's a great-thinking horse and nice to be around and work. Still, when you get one home, sometimes something might be different. Macadamia is everything Chuck told us he was.

"He's kind of a gentleman, nice to walk up to. He likes to be rubbed on but is very professional – all business."

Mary Jane concurred – and then some. "He has brought so much joy to our family. He's so consistent, so happy, a real pleasure to be around. He has a great heart and is a blast to ride. As powerful as he is, it is good that he is so kind."

As winter slammed down hard on Kentucky and much of the rest of the country, Macadamia has enjoyed time to refresh. There's little regrouping to be done either by his trainers or owners. Rather, they have time to appreciate their accomplishments thus far – and anxiously await starting over again next year.



Steve and Tiffany Wheeler Trainers Of The Year

Saturday, January 8, 2011. Boston, Mass. The UPHA National Convention is winding down with the annual banquet and 'Of The Year' awards. John Conatser moves to the podium to present the Young Trainers' award to Steve and Tiffany Wheeler. The popular couple had just celebrated their sixth year in business together.

They took different routes to world's championship honors. Growing up in Idaho didn't offer Tiffany many opportunities to be around Saddlebreds. Her grandmother's \$10 Easter gift paid for a riding lesson; fortunately that stable had a few saddle horses. Knowing she wanted to work with horses, Tiffany enrolled in and graduated from William Woods University. While there, she interned with Helen and Jimmy Robertson's Infinity Stables. She spent some time with Melissa Moore at Sunrise Stables, finally landing with Tammie and John Conatser at Carriage Lane Farm. While working with the Conatsers, Tiffany won her first world's title, the Two-Year-Old Three-Gaited title aboard CH A Magic Spell.

Show horses and ponies and the show ring were part of Steve's life from childhood. On his way to Kentucky, he worked for Royal Scot and DeLovely. While with Nelson Green, he won his first world's championship, the Three-Gaited Park Mare Stake, aboard A Daydream Believer (BHF). Among his other early champions: CH Ninety-Eight Degrees, on which he won Louisville's Park qualifier and championship in 2001, CH Brookhill's King Of Kool, Reserve World's Champion Two-Year-Old World's Champion in 2004, and James Lewis, winner of the Two-Year-Old Five-Gaited Stake in 1998.

Although the two had met when Tiffany was at Infinity and Steve with Royal Scot, he says "She didn't want to have anything to do with me until I was at Nelson's and she had moved to Kentucky."

First they became good friends. The couple married in 2002, with John Conatser giving the bride away.

While they knew they wanted their own business, both remained at their respective jobs. Steve's breaking a leg led to their postponing their plans for a year. In 2004, Autumn Hills opened its doors at Jack Noble's barn. The first few



Steve and Tiffany left the UPHA banquet with arm loads of national awards earned by their clients.