

# People's Choice

## CH Crystal Creek's Commander, Heartland Infinity and Beautiful Lady

By Jenny Grey



*Maureen Campbell and Sandra Surber celebrated Heartland Infinity's triumph as the Junior Hackney Pony World's Champion of Champions at Louisville last year. This talented pony, who began showing as a three-year-old, remains undefeated, always with a unanimous vote of the judges. She was the People's Choice Four-Year-Old Hackney Pony Champion.*

Sandra Surber, who lives on 120 beautiful acres in the Napa Valley with her husband, Ted, has the distinction of owning three great ponies with People's Choice awards this year. Two of these outstanding ponies joined Sandra's show string for the 2015 season – Heartland Infinity, the People's Choice Four-Year-Old Hackney Pony Champion and Beautiful Lady, the People's Choice Amateur Hackney Pleasure Driving Pony Champion. Sandra's long-time, much-loved partner, CH Crystal Creek's Commander, also earned your well-deserved vote as the 2015 People's Choice Amateur Harness Pony of the Year.

Sandra first kept her ponies in training with the late Bruce Dixon in California until he became too ill to continue in the early 2000's. Her ponies had been traveling to Kentucky to show so it made sense to relocate them to Rich and Maureen Campbell's Majestic Oaks Farm in Shelbyville, KY. She has been in training with them ever since. Intensely loyal with a belief in 'the long haul', in twenty-five years Sandra has had only two trainers, never regretting the move to Rich and Maureen who are like family to her. A first class horsewoman with multiple titles and awards to her credit, Sandra is an enthusiastic breeder, often looking at her show ring stars for their potential to breed a new generation of great ponies.

Heartland Infinity, who began showing as a three-year-old, has never been defeated in the ring, always receiving a unanimous choice of the judges. "I missed having a cob-tail," Sandra told us. "My first love is the Hackney division." When Infinity, already at Majestic Oaks, became available last year, Sandra couldn't resist. It was agreed Maureen would continue showing her until Sandra was fully recovered from heart surgery. "This mare has a wonderful attitude," said Maureen Campbell. "She's safe and she's game. She will be perfect for Sandra this year when she's up and about again." This lovely mare was the 2015 Junior Hackney Pony World's Champion of Champions with Maureen at whip after winning the Four-Year-Old Hackney Pony World's Championship earlier in the week. "I think she's a wonderful example of a ladies pony," Sandra told us, eagerly anticipating showing her in 2016. "Infinity is one of the coolest ponies ever!" Rich Campbell agreed. "She's full of energy and all show when she shifts into gear."

Sandra's other new acquisition is the aptly named Beautiful Lady, acquired in January of 2015. "Lady had been a harness pony but Rich thought she could be a pleasure pony," Sandra explained. "I was looking for a new pony for that division; Ted and I were both quite taken with her. Her beauty and lovely eye immediately attracted me." Maureen and Rich Campbell loved her charisma, star quality and big trot. "She's so pretty," said Rich, who had watched her for years. "She has a lot of quality. It took a while to figure her out but by Louisville it was starting to click." Rich may be too modest in what he and his team were able to achieve in just one season. At Louisville last year with Linda Fischer at whip, she won the Adult Hackney Pleasure

The aptly named *Beautiful Lady*, purchased for Sandra in January last year made her mark in the Hackney pleasure driving division as the Adult Hackney Pleasure Driving Division I World's Champion and the Adult Hackney Pleasure Driving Pony Reserve World's Champion of Champions with Linda Fischer at whip.



Sandra Surber's long-time partner, the wonderful Crystal Creek's Commander, won the Amateur Harness Pony Reserve World's Champion of Champions title with Linda Fischer (above) last year. Sidelined after surgery, Sandra was finally able to take a victory pass with Commander in Amateur Harness Pony at the 2015 American Royal telling us "It meant so much to me to sit in the viceroy again and drive my beloved 'stud muffin'."

Driving Division I World's Championship and the Adult Hackney Pleasure Driving Pony Reserve World Champion of Champions title. Beautiful Lady finished her season undefeated at the American Royal as the Hackney Pleasure Driving Pony National Champion.

Sandra has struggled with her health for a while now, stoically striving to be able to drive her beloved ponies. In the meantime, Linda Fischer has taken the reins with great results, including winning the Amateur Harness Pony Reserve World's Champion of Champions title with Sandra's super pony, CH Crystal Creek's Commander, who Rich Campbell refers to as the 'Energizer Bunny'. "When I became ill in 2010, I needed a backup driver when I couldn't make it. Linda is first and foremost a good friend and, of course, a talented driver. She has the same love that I do for the ponies and always does a great job with them," Sandra told us appreciatively. "My goal after heart surgery in April was to show Commander at the Royal. The lengthy hospital stay and long recovery was daunting but Commander's wonderful disposition, manners and demeanor helped it seem possible. It meant so much to me to sit in the viceroy again and drive my beloved

'stud muffin'." While not able to show until the very end of the season, this world caliber team won Amateur Harness Pony at the American Royal last year.

Very grateful to her trainers, Rich and Maureen Campbell, her ponies enjoyed another highly successful show season. "I was so proud of all of them," Sandra reflected. "Blue Ridge was the first show I was able to attend, then Louisville and lastly, the Royal. I had many proud moments but the ponies winning the People's Choice awards tops everything."

Sandra's short-term goal is to drive all three of these gifted ponies this year. Thinking of the future she said, "Naturally, having two, new beautiful mares and two handsome stallions gets my breeder's brain cooking." Referred to as an indomitable spirit, Sandra Surber is sustained by her well-loved ponies. There is nothing we would like more than to see this wonderful lady back in the ring in 2016, enjoying Heartland Infinity, Beautiful Lady and CH Crystal Creek's Commander, all of them shining examples of the Hackney Pony breed and worthy recipients of your vote as 2015 People's Choice Ponies of the Year.