

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Tomeri Symphony The People's Choice Horse of the Year

By Jenny Grey

Celebrating 53 years with Morgan horses in 2016, Tom and Teri Brisco of Tomeri Morgans in Riverside, California made history with their homebred, Tomeri Symphony (SLB Da Vinci x Med-E-Oka French Riviera), the first mare in 30 years to have won an Open Park Harness World Championship title. An undefeated season culminating in a stunning victory with Bob Hughes at whip earned Tomeri Symphony your votes as the People's Choice Horse of the Year. This is the second time in four years that Tomeri Morgans has earned this honor. The first was in 2013 with The Noblest, driven by Paul Brisco, who earned both the 2012 Amateur and Open Pleasure Driving World Championships.

Wynne Command was the first mare to win the Open Park Harness World Championship in 1978 followed by Van Lu Jolie in 1986. Coincidentally, Bob Hughes headed up Jolie and Judy Whitney and has since won multiple world titles in almost every division. Bob, who owned and managed Blackridge Farm with the late Rock Walker for 26 years before eventually moving his operation to Versailles, Kentucky, has trained many great horses for Tomeri Morgans. His history with Tomeri Symphony's bloodlines goes four generations back, winning world championships with her sire and dam, SLB Da Vinci and Med-E-Oka French Riviera as well as Da Vinci's dam, Dancity Gracious Remark, French Riviera's sire, Futurity French Command and French's dam, Nobelle. Bob has the advantage of knowing the unique characteristics of these bloodlines.

Tomeri Symphony and Teri teamed up for their first 2016 performance together in Oklahoma. While Teri had only driven her twice at Bob's Blackridge Farm in Kentucky, she was confident the mare would go out and do her job. With a near faultless performance, they won the Park Harness Ladies Mare Grand National Championship. "When we went through the gate it was like putting the pedal to the metal with a Porsche!" Teri exclaimed. "She's delightful; every day is a good day and she's happy to go to work." Teri's expression as she was announced the winner of this competitive Grand National class was priceless and her huge smile reflected the brilliance of the win.

"I don't feel worthy of the mare", Teri said modestly. "She's the quarterback...the one who carries the ball." Tomeri Symphony is phenomenally gifted, but we also recognize Teri's expertise as a talented horsewoman who has most



Earning your vote as the People's Choice Horse Of The Year, Tomeri Symphony, bred and owned by Tom and Teri Brisco, made history as the first mare in 30 years to win the Open Park Harness World Championship.

recently won personal world championships in the classic pleasure driving division with her home bred Tomeri Tiamo (Futurity French Command x Tomeri Country Love) and Tomeri Swingtime (Med-E-Oka French Morocco x HP Midsummer Nightsdream). Tomeri Morgans may be a small operation but they have consistently produced outstanding driving horses.

Teri knew Bob Hughes was the right trainer for Symphony. Not only is he intimately familiar with her bloodlines, their personalities mesh. Ready for any challenge, they were the perfect pair to defy the odds in the open world championship. Looking perfect as a ladies horse with Teri at whip, she sensed when the reins were handed over to Bob and responded accordingly. "She knew who was driving", Bob remembered. "She's definitely a horse that steps up to the occasion. Those Da Vinci babies are so smart!"

Teri has the utmost confidence in Bob's ability to produce champions, acknowledging his special gifts as a 'harness man' and his uncanny ability to work the ring to his advantage. "He can take a good horse and make it a great horse!" she said appreciatively. Not only is Bob a great harness man, he has won multiple world

titles over the last three decades and in just the last five years has claimed world championship victory passes seven times with Leonardo's Cry CH, SLB Valedictorian CH, SLB Chiara CH, Tomeri the Regalest and Dressed Up. However, with eight reserve world titles in Open Park Harness over a lifetime of showing, including the reserve world title with Tomeri Symphony last year, the ultimate victory remained elusive.

Paul Brisco, who earned his fifth consecutive Amateur Pleasure Driving World Championship with the Noblest last year, is an excellent judge of a driving horse. He knows exactly where Tomeri Symphony fits within the spectrum of great horses. "One of the best things about the mare is that she keeps coming at you. She's an amazing athlete...she's so flexible and you look at where she puts her knee. She doesn't take a bad step." After the first way of the ring in the open world championship class Paul told a friend sitting next to him, "You watch!" Knowing Symphony would step to the plate he recalled "The mare kept getting better and better. She just kept coming, she was game and it wasn't just one pass; it was consistent. The last couple of passes she kept getting stronger and stronger. The second way sealed the deal!" Her grace, elegance, power and the desire to challenge every other horse in the ring resulted in a superb, history-making victory with a unanimous vote of the judges.



Teri Brisco and Bob Hughes shared their time in the winner's circle with Tomeri Symphony at the Grand National. Teri started off the week with the unanimous win in the Grand National Ladies Park Harness Mares.

After winning eight hotly contested Open Park Harness Reserve World Championship titles, Bob Hughes came into the lineup knowing he had a great drive but not necessarily expecting to be called to the presentation area first. "I've been there so many times, there was no pressure", he reflected. When the results were announced and he marched into the presentation area with Tomeri Symphony as the Open Park Harness World Champion, he was absolutely thrilled. "I'm not a jumping up and down kind of guy", Bob told us, when some of his fans wondered why he remained so calm. The wonderful surprise of winning unanimously probably caused him to be in something of a daze when he claimed his awards but he was elated to have finally achieved this long awaited professional milestone.

While Bob stayed calm during the presentation, Teri made up for it with an excitement reminiscent of Paul winning the Open Pleasure Driving World Championship with The Noblest. While anxiously awaiting the results she had one arm around her daughter-in-law, Danica, and the other around Shirley O'Gorman until the winner was called. Teri was so stunned, she

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could hardly move. Paul had to guide her down to the winner's circle so she could share the excitement of her homebred baby taking world championship honors. "I still get goosebumps thinking about it!", Teri reflected, remembering Friday night at the World Championship Morgan Horse Show as if it were yesterday.

It is a rare horse that can excel in both the ladies and open divisions but Tomeri Symphony is an exception. In addition to a return to the show ring this year, the Brisco family and Bob are very excited to have pulled eggs from Symphony and will breed her to Dressed Up. "If that cross doesn't produce a beautiful baby then I don't know what will", Bob declared. With definite plans to show Symphony this year, Teri is bubbling over with excitement. Will Bob Hughes go for another open world title? As the first mare to win the Open Park Harness World Championship in 30 years, she could very well come back with a repeat performance.

Teri knew this was a history making occasion but she did not really grasp the significance of what they had achieved until she returned



With world championships in almost every major division and eight reserve world championships in open park harness, Bob Hughes was thrilled to achieve a long-awaited professional milestone with Tomeri Symphony as the unanimous 2016 Open Park Harness World Champion.

home. "I think she looks at that video every day", said Bob, laughing. He is very appreciative of Tom and Teri's unwavering support and friendship through the years and is delighted that he played a part in this history-making occasion. He is also very grateful for all who voted for

Tomeri Symphony as the People's Choice Horse of the Year. As for Teri, she is thrilled for Bob who has waited so long for this victory and overwhelmed that her beautiful mare has taken her rightful place in Morgan history.



History did repeat itself as Teri Brisco drove Tomeri Symphony to the winner's circle in 2016 as she won the same title, Grand National Champion Ladies Park Harness Mare, in 2001 with Symphony's dam Med-E-Oka French Riviera (pictured).