

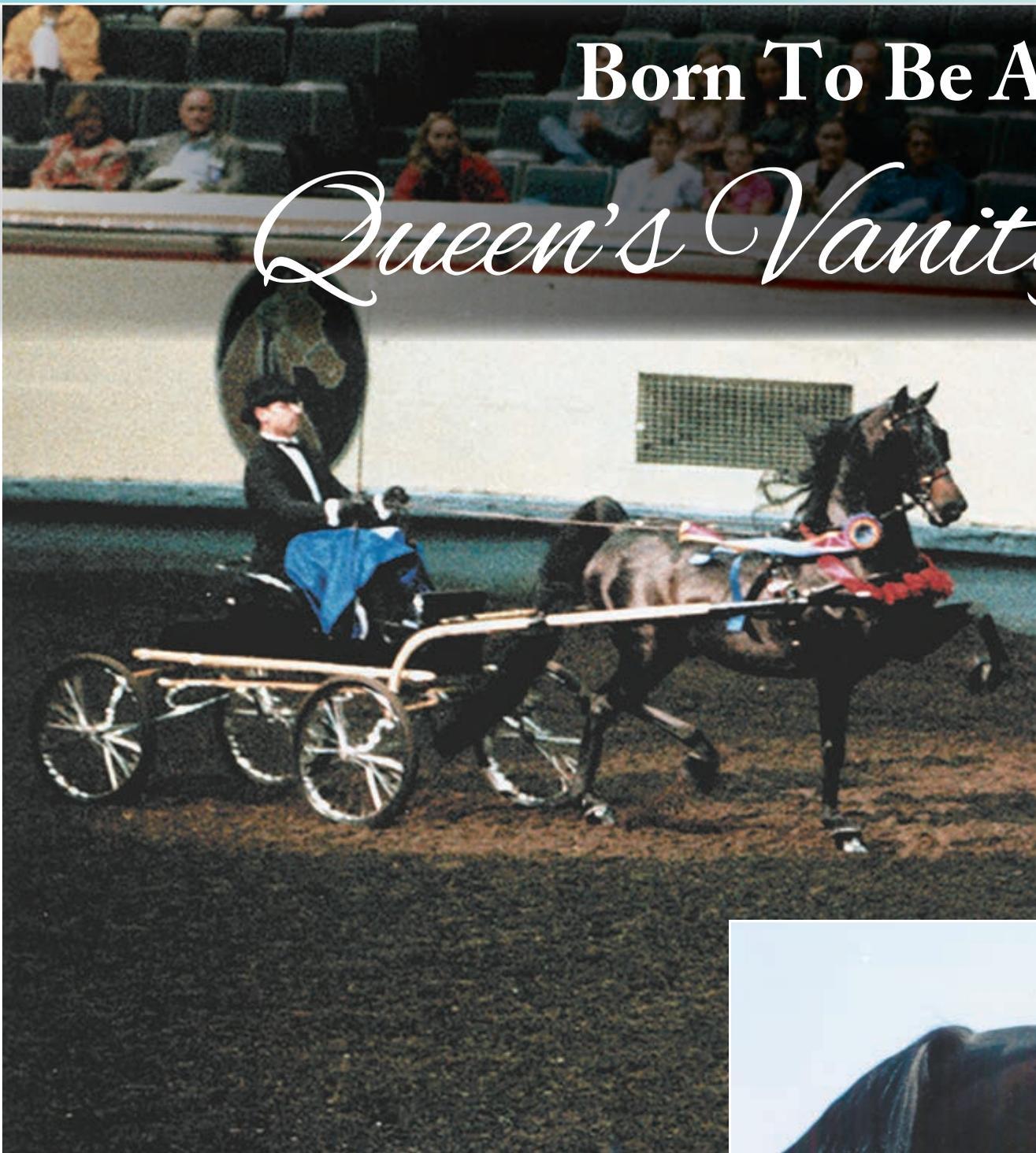
Born To Be A Park Horse

Queen's Vanity Flair

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

Show horses are held in the highest esteem for what they're able to do with their athletic ability and personalities in the ring, but for those who can do it over and over again and be an incredible individual in the barn, there is a special place in the hearts and minds of those owners and trainers fortunate enough to have such horses. In December, the Morgan community and the Lee/Broadmoor families lost a horse that aptly fits that description, the prolific Queen's Vanity Flair.

Bred by Pete and Sandy Hendrick's Queen's River Farm, Queen's Vanity Flair was foaled April 7, 1990, a bay son of the legendary World Champion Noble Flaire and the Gallant Lee daughter, Leighton's Saralee. You could say Vanity Flair was born to be a great park horse as his sire revitalized the division and Gallant Lee



was the 1975 World Champion Park Saddle titleholder, a product of two great park horses, Bay State Gallant and Windcrest Donna Lee. A beautiful mare, Saralee was actually the Hendrick family's first Morgan and she had great success with Bob Brooks. When it came time for her breeding career she had a stud colt named Queen's First Impression who is the sire of one of the Hendrick's best producing broodmares. Queen's Vanity Flair was Saralee's fourth foal.

"He was always a nice horse to be around and you could tell right away he was going to have motion," said Pete Hendrick. "I started him here at home and then Rick Stevens got him and showed him as a three-year-old. The more he worked the better he got. He was so natural. Rick then had a private job and we moved to Broadmoor.

"The thing I personally remember most about him was showing him at Mid-A. I've never been much for showing, I like to start them. However, I did get to show him at Mid-A and it was raining like hell. We hit the ring and he was just stroking. He hit his stride and I've never felt anything like that before. He was barely touching his bridle and he was cranking. We came out covered in mud."

Hendrick greatly enjoyed his 15 minutes of fame behind the grand stallion that Mike Goebig had prepared since his four-year-old season and done so well with. For three consecutive years – 1994, '95 and '96 – Goebig and Vanity made

A typey son of Noble Flaire and Leighton's Saralee, Queen's Vanity Flair was known for his kind disposition and fiery performances.



Sired by Vanity Flair out of NBA At Your Command, Stand And Deliver was a beautiful baby who grew into a World Champion Park Saddle star with Mike Goebig and Reserve World Champion Amateur Park Saddle titleholder with Tara Good (pictured).

World Champion victory passes at the Morgan Grand National. The first year was the Junior Park Harness World Championship, followed by two years as the Park Harness World Champion. Those two years in the open division he defeated such stars as Gotta Lotta Charisma, KEW Glory To Glory, Nostradamus, Flaire Well, BMW Top Gun, Arboria Perfection, HVK Take The Roses, and MLF Cimmerian, among others.

In 1996, Tony Lee was a part of the Broadmoor family but had Liberation Starbrite with Joan Lurie. That same year Vanity Flair won this third world championship Starbrite was the World Champion Amateur Park Harness horse with Lee driving. Following the show he had an offer he couldn't refuse and sold his beloved mare. Now without a horse, Lee was looking for just the right individual to team in harness. That horse just happened to already be in the Broadmoor barn.

"I loved him. I was in the same barn so I already knew him," said Tony Lee in reference to acquiring Vanity Flair in July of 1997. "He was such a kind horse. He had the disposition and heart of a gelding but when you hooked him he knew the difference. He was like a Ferrari to drive. He had such cool power that when he hit his gear you could feel the whole buggy shake.

"Vanity was always awesome but he really loved Northampton. He had an extra spark there, especially in the championship, which was always at sunset and the lights were just coming on in the ring. Driving out on that track the closer to the ring we got, the bigger he got. He loved it!"

From 1997 through 2001 the team of Queen's Vanity Flair and Tony Lee took on and defeated the very best in the amateur park harness division. They repeatedly triumphed at Mid-A, they won three New England Championships, one reserve championship and five qualifiers and they paraded down victory lane in Oklahoma City in two out of three Amateur Park Harness World Championships (1998, 2000) and was reserve in '99 behind And The Beat Goes On. Stars they had to beat to earn those Oklahoma titles included Liberation First Star, Dancity Bell Heir, MLF Cimmerian, AFF Beulah, Salem Command and Com-O-Shun's Avante.

"Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good and we were very lucky that Tony [Lee] got along great with Vanity from the first time he ever sat behind him," said Mike Goebig. "His first drive was as good as his last. The last time Tony won the



Mike Goebig drove Vanity Flair to two Park Harness World Championships for Pete and Sandy Hendrick.

amateur championship at Oklahoma with him was the best I ever saw Vanity. He was incredible.

"My history with him is funny. The year he was three and Rick Stevens showed him I had Born To Boogie. We were at New England in a three-horse UPHA Classic and it was Born To Boogie, [Queen's] Vanity Flair and [HVK] Bell Flaire. Just think of the titles those three horses have won. Born To Boogie won that class.

"When I got Vanity he had a great mouth; Rick [Stevens] had done a really good job of starting him, he just needed to mature physically and I was fortunate



Northampton proved to be Vanity Flair's favorite track. "He had an extra spark there," said Tony Lee.

to get him when that was happening. He was a very kind horse and he had a funny thing about him where he wouldn't come out of the stall unless you put a lead shank on him. It was great for when we had visitors. We could open his stall door and he would greet people but would never cross the threshold. He would let kids pat him, but he would never come out.

"As far as working he was absolutely bottomless. I never found the bottom. He brought it every day. He never did learn how to just jog. I would take him out and get one round in and think, 'maybe today he'll just jog?' But then by the time you were half way on your second round he was at full steam. He had such extreme hocks and energy. I worried about it for the longest time that he would use it up, but I never found the bottom."

When it came time for retirement Vanity went out like the champion he was sweeping the amateur division at the 2001 Mid-A show. Unfortunately, his success as a breeding horse would not match his success in the show ring. Success here being defined by quantity, not quality.

"His semen was tricky," said Lee. "It was touchy to get mares in foal, therefore he had a low number of get. Stand And Deliver is one and he will carry on dad's disposition."

Stand And Deliver will indeed carry on the legacy. He was the 2005 and 2006 World Champion and 2007 Reserve World Champion Park Saddle titleholder with Mike Goebig. Owner Tara Good would go on to win an Amateur Park Saddle Reserve World Championship and Grand National Champion Amateur Park Saddle Stallion title. True to his genes,

Stand And Deliver has gone on to sire a host of World and Grand National Champions.

So Vain is a notable daughter of Vanity Flair. A full sister to Stand And Deliver, she is the dam of the crowd-pleasing World Champion Get Busy whose sire is Astronomicallee, making him a Tony Lee product through and through.

It's always hard to lose a horse that has done so much for their owners, trainers and fans. There is some comfort when those animals are also breeding stock so a part of them does live on, generation after generation.

Vanity gave great delight to all those around him throughout his life. There was just something about his loving and kind disposition that pulled in the entire Shingle Branch family long after his show ring stardom and light breeding career were over. Among them, Tony's niece Anna Redmill devoted many hours of care during his final years. He leaves a huge void in her heart, yet many great memories.

So what kind of impression did he leave with the man who drove him to so many titles and took care of him throughout his retirement years? "Charisma. He had incredible charisma," remembered Tony.



The charisma and power of Queen's Vanity Flair are what will stay with Tony Lee forever. Whether it was at home or on the biggest stages in the industry, he always possessed charisma.