



THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Ready to Jet

Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Horse of the Year

By Jenny Grey

A bright chestnut gelding so charismatic that his face was featured on the signage for the World's Championship show, Ready to Jet (Buck's Co-Star x Callaway's Blue Jet) has made Whitney Shore's dream come true. At only nine years old, she set a goal to win a tri-color ribbon at the American Royal in Kansas City. Now fifteen, she has achieved that goal and much more. Read on to find out how Ready to Jet, paired with Whitney, rose to the top in spectacular fashion to earn your votes as the 2017 People's Choice Junior Exhibitor Pleasure Driving Horse of the Year.

Whitney has trained with Nicole Foster at Foster Farm just outside of Dallas, in Wylie, Texas from the time she began showing. Both talented and disciplined, she is considering a career with horses after college, aspiring to be Nicole's assistant trainer one day. "I would like nothing better", said Nicole. "When I first met Whitney she was only 8 years old and determined to ride and show Saddlebreds. Within 5 or 6 weeks she was at her first horse show. I knew from day one she had what it takes. She gives her best effort every time." Now in the ninth grade, Whitney plans to attend college wherever they will allow her to take a horse. An advocate of goal setting, Nicole maps out a plan for each student at the beginning of the season. When she was nine, Whitney set a written goal to win a championship at the American Royal. She would achieve that goal in 2017 in an outstanding performance with Ready to Jet.

Rochelle Shore, Whitney's mom, appreciates the tone that Nicole and her assistant, Stephanie McKinsey, set at the barn. "Nicole has an incredible ability to make young people have fun but she also trains them to be serious athletes. She has high expectations they will excel as human beings too." Stephanie McKinsey, Nicole's assistant trainer, has the same philosophy. They take equal responsibility for training both the horses and the clients. "I love them both," said Rochelle. "They are the most influential women in Whitney's life."

The Shore family leased a horse for a short time, but knowing Whitney was completely serious about making horses an avocation, they purchased CH Harlem's Miss Abigail (Abby), perfect to start in the walk-trot division but competitive enough to excel in the country and show pleasure divisions as Whitney grew older. In 2015



Ready to Jet and Whitney Shore distinguished themselves as the 2017 Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Reserve World's Champions last year as well as fulfilling Whitney's dream to win a tricolor ribbon at the American Royal as the unanimous winner of the ASHA Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving finals.



Also outstanding under saddle, Ready to Jet excelled in three-gaited show pleasure last year before switching exclusively to pleasure driving for the World's Championship show and the American Royal.

Whitney and Abby would earn the Junior Exhibitor Country Pleasure 13 Reserve Championship at the American Royal. For the 2016 season, they were motivated to go in a new direction by the ASHA Junior Exhibitor Pleasure Driving Challenge, a program sponsored by Elisabeth Goth to promote the sport of driving among young Saddlebred enthusiasts. Excited by this new opportunity, Whitney learned to drive Abby, qualified for the Pleasure Driving Challenge and competed at the American Royal that year. This experience would be invaluable for her future with 'Jet' who, coincidentally, was owned and shown by Elisabeth Goth in 2011 and 2012.

Whitney loves Abby, her 'forever' horse, but she was also interested in pursuing the five-gaited division. When Nicole, Whitney and Rochelle took a buying trip to Kentucky in 2016, they found and purchased a wonderful performer, CH Agent Cool Blue, at Kalarama Farm. It was never in the plan to buy a second horse on that trip. However, when trying out a different five-gaited prospect at Clark Clouse's stable, Clark told them, "I have another one you might be interested in." The 'other one'



When Ready to Jet's number was called as the winner of the ASHA Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Challenge finals at the American Royal in Kansas City last year, the expression on Whitney Shore's face was absolutely priceless.



Ready to Jet's beautiful face with its distinctive white blaze was chosen to be on the World's Championship signage.

was Ready to Jet, owned by Elaine Gregory. Always happy to ride a new horse, Whitney tried him out. She had such an incredible ride that Rochelle could not stop thinking about him. That's when she told Nicole, "Let's buy them both!"

Nicole had admired Jet for some time. Handled by first class trainers and driven or ridden by great owners for his whole career, he began showing with Mike Roberts as a three-year old in fine harness, later winning the Junior Fine Harness Stallion/Gelding Reserve World's Championship with Eric Antman in 2010 followed by the 2012 Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 and Under Division 1 World's Championship with Catherine Wheeler in the saddle. A fancy chestnut with three white socks, a distinctive white blaze and ears that never drop, Jet was already at the top of the ribbons under saddle and destined to be a standout in show pleasure driving. "He's just such a bright horse!" said Nicole, remembering the perfect picture he and Whitney made when she first rode him. "He's sparkly and happy - he matches Whitney who's like a bright light when she walks in a room."

Nicole hires many different caretakers to help during the shows and almost without exception, Jet is their favorite. Even though strong and powerful in the ring, he is kind and gentle in his stall. "He's easy and fun but goofy enough to be interesting," she observed. With Stephanie pregnant for most of last year, manners were of utmost importance. She and Nicole both worked hard with their show string to reinforce the basics of good manners and patience, espe-

cially with respect to the driving horses. Fortunately, Jet was not a problem.

Winning the Three-Gaited Show Pleasure Championship at the 2016 NTASHA UPHA Fall Show in Jet and Whitney's first time out, then a third place out of twelve in the 13 and Under Three-Gaited Show Pleasure Championship at the American Royal that year after owning



Graesen Claunch, Ready to Jet's lucky new owner, gave Whitney a celebratory hug after their big win at the American Royal.

him for only three months, it was clear they would have a bright future. As time went on, Nicole began to realize Jet was an even better driving horse than he was under saddle. Beautiful, fluid motion, a perfect, up-headed driving frame, excellent manners and the charisma that led him to be chosen for the world's championship banners quickly resulted in outstanding performances. Making their driving debut at the Big D Charity Show in 2017, Whitney and Jet won the Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Championship and placed reserve in the ASHA Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Challenge. "He was spectacular!" Nicole recalled. "He's a star in pleasure driving -- very strong and he shows much bigger than he is."

Rochelle, who Nicole describes as an incredibly supportive parent who does everything she can to support her daughter's dreams, still gets emotional when she thinks back to the goal Whitney had set for herself at such a young age but there was a long way to go before competing in Kansas City last year. First came the excitement and challenge of the Kentucky State Fair where Whitney only showed Jet in harness. Third in the fiercely competitive Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving world's qualifier, Jet and Whitney were even better in the final. While everyone at Foster Farm hoped for a victory pass, with so many great horses in the ring, there were no guarantees. When Whitney and Jet were finally named as the Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Reserve World's Champions, everyone from Foster Farm was screaming, clapping and hugging each other. Rochelle made so



Nicole Foster and her assistant trainer, Stephanie McKinsey, are the two most influential women in Whitney Shore's life.



Whitney Shore has been in training with Nicole Foster since she was eight years old. She set a written goal when she was nine to win a tricolor ribbon at the American Royal. She realized the dream with Ready to Jet last year.

much noise she admits to losing her voice! "We feel incredibly blessed," she told us. "There's nothing like it!" Not only was this a great achievement, it assured Whitney that she would be very competitive in Kansas City. Also a triumph for Nicole, this significant win verified that her instincts about Jet were 100% correct. Rochelle told Nicole after Louisville that Jet was her 'gift with purchase'. They went to Kentucky to purchase one horse, CH Agent Cool Blue, but came home with an extra gift.

One more winning drive in Fort Worth qualified Jet and Whitney for the ASHA final and the best was yet to come. With high hopes for the American Royal, Whitney still had her mind fixed on the goal she set as a nine-year old. After a flawless performance, they made their way to the lineup but Whitney was not convinced she had won. On hearing the results, her expression was absolutely priceless and she took a well-earned, joyous victory pass as the unanimous winner of the ASHA Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Challenge finals. Rochelle, of course, was just thrilled for her daughter saying "She did an amazing job! It was surreal to hear her number called – such a great feeling! It was so important to Whitney. She set a goal years ago and it happened!" One of the best memories for both the Shore family and the whole extended Foster Farm team was the amount of cheering and support received from Jet's fan club outside the barn. As a result of being the World's Championship 'mascot' on the signage, he had developed quite a following.

Ready to Jet, a superb performer, will begin a new chapter in his life this year. While he is much loved by the Shore family, they are choosing to focus on just two

horses for now. It was out of the question to sell Miss Abigail so when the opportunity arose to sell Jet in the barn, they were thrilled they would still be able to see him and cheer him on. Whitney will now focus on the five-gaited pleasure division with CH Agent Cool Blue and return to showing her beloved Abby. Beginning her show career in 2017, Jet's lucky new owner, Graeson Claunch, will be competing in the driving and under saddle 14-17 division.

Whitney Shore has achieved her long-time goal of winning a championship at the

American Royal and Ready to Jet is poised to launch another young person to success. A brilliant performer who is also kind and gentle, he could not be a better choice. We offer our congratulations once again to Whitney, Nicole Foster, Stephanie McKinsey and the Foster Farm team for Ready to Jet's recognition as the People's Choice Junior Exhibitor Show Pleasure Driving Horse of the Year and we wish Graeson the best of luck as she partners with this wonderful gelding for the 2018 show season.



More hugs for Whitney Shore at the American Royal from Ready to Jet's proud trainer, Nicole Foster, who knew he would be an outstanding show pleasure driving horse.