



THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

The People's Choice Champion Open Roadster
Under Saddle: *Street Legal*

The People's Choice Amateur Roadster
Under Saddle: *Stanley Steamer*

By Erica Faulkner

Kim Cowart recalls the first time that Susan Swope asked her if she could move her road horses to West Wind Stables. "I told her no at first," Cowart said. "I had an appreciation for road horses, but it just was not our primary focus at West Wind." Swope, however, just knew that once the Cowart's added road horses to their farm, they would enjoy them just as much as she did. It was not long before the Cowart's agreed and said yes. "And now, I am really glad they are here," said Cowart. Stanley Steamer and Street Legal GRS settled in at West Wind over the 2017 show season, bringing blue ribbons and a whole lot of fun, to the farm.

"Susan was happy with how her road horses were trained and cared for," said Cowart. "It was just a matter of wanting to have all her horses in one place that prompted the move." Swope has a good show string of Saddlebreds that are trained at West Wind, so it only made sense for ease of travel and practice rides to have all her horses in one place.

Swope, a long time Saddlebred owner and exhibitor, purchased her first road horse in January of 2015. "I had my first road horse experience when I was a student at Stephens College when a roadster-to-bike horse was donated." MR. Jr. was his name, and he introduced Swope to a world of speed. And she loved it. She always admired the road horses at the shows over the year, but it was not until 2015 that she stepped up to the plate and purchased her one for herself.

"Over the years I watched the road classes with envy," said Swope. "In 2014 I finally decided to take the leap and get myself one." She began the search with the help of Mike Felty and together they found Stanley Steamer at Steve Crabtree's. Swope purchased Stanley in January of 2015, and it was not long before Felty had them teamed up and ready to go to their first show. Their debut year was stellar to say the least, as they were either first or second in almost all their show ring appearances. Swope made her first year showing a road horse under saddle, look easy, as if she had been doing it all her life.

It did not take long for Stanley and Swope to become a formidable pair. In 2016,

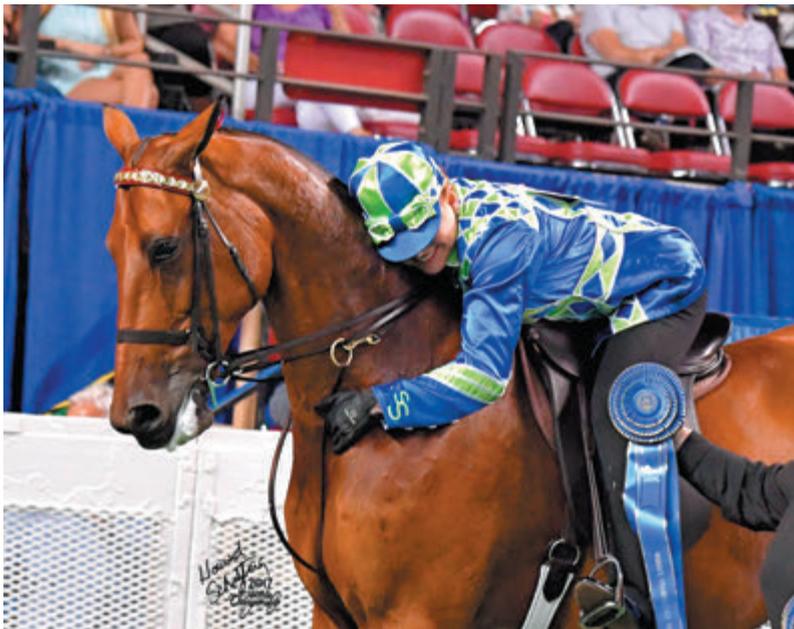


Susan and her newly acquired Street Legal GRS leave the ring with the roses in the Roadster Under Saddle Championship at Louisville. They then went on to win their respective classes at the American Royal.

their second show season together, they were at the top of their class, earning their first World's Champion title in the Amateur Roadster Under Saddle class. In 2017 they returned to defend their title, and with a

flawless performance, they were able to do just that. This time under the West Wind Stables name.

"These two back to back World's Champion wins are without a doubt my



Susan hugs Stanley Steamer after an exciting win at Louisville in the Amateur Roadster Under Saddle class.



Susan and Stanley Steamer, the first road horse she ever purchased, earned top honors in the Amateur Roadster Under Saddle class at the World's Championship Horse Show last year.

proudest moments with Stanley," said Swope.

Stanley puts on quite a show when he comes through the gate, displaying great power and speed. He is always ready to work and gets down to business when the time is right. However, outside the ring, he is gentle and affectionate, earning the love of all those who have the privilege to work with him. As Swope says, "he has a puppy-dog personality."

"All of the caretakers love him because he's so loving, easy to care for, and is gentle and mannerly," said Swope. "I love this horse. He's a keeper." Swope envisions what life will be like when she retires him. Trail riding the road horse sounds like a perfect plan to Swope. "I look forward to taking him on the trails and leaving any of our companions in his dust, of course."

Adding to her roster of road horses, My Casey joined the string in the early part of 2016, and then in July of 2017, Street Legal GRS made his way into Swope's show string. Affectionately known as Larry, he is no stranger to the show ring, or the winner's circle. Carrying many different exhibitors to many different wins, including everything from roadster to bike classes to under saddle classes, Street Legal has done it all.

It was at the Lexington Junior League Horse Show that Swope and Cowart both noticed how handy the big horse was. Trainer Gerhardt Roos was aboard for the ride that night, piloting the horse to a win in the Open Roadster Under Saddle class for owner Dr. Robert Pugh.

"He looked solid on the track the night we watched him show," said Cowart. "Susan

has a real need for speed, and this horse had plenty of it." Cowart, being good friends with Roos, approached him to inquire if the horse was for sale. Fortunately for them he was.

It was done. Swope had another roadster to show. Cowart, a consummate professional, made a smart decision; they left the horse right where he was until after Louisville.

"There was no need to bring him home for just a couple weeks," said Cowart. "Gerhardt had been working him for a long time, and he knew the horse well. I just did not see the point in making a major change right before Louisville."

Swope continued to prepare for Louisville with her new horse under the watchful eye of Roos. In 2016, Roos put Street Legal GRS in the ring at the World's Championship Horse Show with Cyndi Simmons riding, and he successfully coached them to two winning performances in the open roadster under saddle division. This, however, was not the first time that Street Legal had taken a victory pass on the green shavings. And it wouldn't be his last either. After only owning the horse for a couple of weeks, Swope stepped up to the challenge of showing him in Freedom Hall, winning both the Open Roadster Under Saddle qualifier and the Roadster Under Saddle Championship this past year.

After Louisville, Larry went to West Wind Stables and Kim Cowart took a liking to him right away. "He is very kind," she said. "He likes to work." Cowart comments that he already knows his job and he is eager

to give all he can every time he comes out of the stall. "We just try to keep him slow and relaxed. He doesn't need to be trained. He knows what to do."

Swope agrees with Cowart, that Larry loves what he does and knows when it's time to turn on. "Near the in-gate, as he awaits the class to be called, he's at the ready," said Swope. "He stares at the entrance, ears alert, on the muscle." Swope knows that this is when to hang on and get ready for the fun. "If you are riding him, you have to hang on because when he hears the bugle, he's off." That is of course what makes him such a blast to ride, according to Swope.

"He is a really big boy," said Cowart. "He is a lot bigger than people think. But he can get around the ring at an amazing speed. He is incredibly fast. When he hits his stride, it's on."

Cowart points out that Swope is a fantastic rider, and that it has not taken much work to get her in the ring with her two new horses. "She knows how to ride," said Cowart.

So, what does the future hold for the blonde beauty and her handsome speedsters. "I would like to take Stanley back to Louisville for 2018 in the amateur under saddle class. He just loves that ring." And Larry, well, in his older age, Swope is doing right by him, and won't be pushing him to much this coming year. "Larry has an incredible show record and has earned a bit of down time in his senior years. I anticipate that we'll campaign him more lightly in anticipation of another shot at Louisville in 2018."