

TURNING 20 ... IN ... 2020

Many of our industry greats have spent a large portion of their lives in the show ring. Some boast show careers that span well over a decade, traversing multiple divisions with a myriad of different riders. These horses happily enter the ring at the start of each season, oblivious to their increasing age.

This new series will highlight these legendary equines that turn 20 years old in the year 2020. A few have become teachers, safely carrying the tiniest of riders as they make their foray into the world of showing. Some are excelling in entirely new divisions. Others are continuing to blaze a trail of success with their record-setting achievements. We honor those horses in this series—equine royalty that continue to leave their mark as they enter their golden years.



CARTIER

BY SARA PIZZUTO

In the world of high-class jewelry, the name Cartier represents a brand that holds a reputation as a trusted maker of quality, beautiful pieces.

The company is one that has been counted on for decades for their exquisite work and reliability. A Morgan horse by the same name has also established a similar reputation—proving equally as precious as his designer namesake. For the past two decades, Cartier the Morgan has demonstrated his superior quality and stunning presence, as a winning mount for Taylor River Farm's Gove family.

Cartier became a member of the Gove family, for the first time, in late 2004. The family made the choice to further involve themselves in the Morgan breed by adding a prospect and breeding horse to their string, which at the time only consisted of junior exhibitor horses for Brooke Gove. Their search for a new horse led them to John and Belle Hufferd, who sold them Cartier on behalf of Margaret Van Meter.

"My mother-in-law Gay was immediately smitten with Cartier," Sarah Gove said. "He was exquisite, pretty headed, had a great shoulder, and a look-at-me attitude. He was also royally bred. She simply loved him. Needless to say he came home a short time later."

Under the ownership of the Gove family, Cartier was placed in training with David Rand who drove the stallion to be crowned the 2004 Pleasure Driving Four-Year-Old World Champion. Cartier left Oklahoma City that year and arrived at the Gove's newly established Taylor River Farm in New Hampshire to be trained by Richard Boule along with Sarah Gove.

Many of Sarah Gove's earliest successes as a young horse trainer came on the back of her family's bay stallion. Aboard Cartier, she won her first-ever set of roses at the 2008 Morgan Grand National in the English Pleasure World Championship at the age of 27.

"I was just a kid when given the opportunity to ride such a wonderful horse," she said. "In hindsight I didn't deserve him. I was green and I didn't know how to campaign a great horse like the pros. With that said, my best memory with Cartier was our English Pleasure World Championship class together. There was a work-off and we got to be in it. I was scared and elated all at the same time. Bada Bing won the class and we were the reserve world champions. I was giddy. When we have kids that are disappointed leaving OKC with a 3rd or 4th place ribbon, I remind them that it is a really big deal, and not everyone can win a world title as a junior exhibitor."

Gove honed her skills as a horse trainer aboard Cartier. Together they earned two reserve world titles and three grand national champion

honors from the open English pleasure division, among a myriad of additional victory passes on the east coast in their many years together.

The Gove's had planned to give Cartier a forever home. However, trainer Nikki Rae Woodworth approached Sarah Gove, searching for the perfect new mount for amateur rider Daisy Beisler. The Gove family was presented with the option of selling Cartier. Beisler had won a world championship aboard Graywood's Arthur, a horse Sarah Gove had previously owned, and Gove explained that the situation just felt right. She bid farewell to her beloved stallion in early 2013.

"Cartier was the perfect age, the perfect amount of broke, and the perfect horse," she said. "It seemed fitting that Daisy should ride Cartier too. The day I loaded him on the trailer I ran to the rest room and cried for 15 minutes. After that day, I was very careful about letting myself get attached to a horse. It was one more important horse trainer lesson that Cartier was able to teach me."

Beisler enjoyed her own share of successes aboard Cartier before selling him to Keeley Guenther and trainer Scott Travers. Travers then transformed Cartier into a winning hunter pleasure mount. His Driftway Meadows was where Cartier resided until the end of 2018, when Sarah Gove was given the opportunity to reunite with her old teammate.

"In passing at a horse show I had told Scott Travers that if he ever needed a retirement home for Cartier, we would be willing to give him one," Gove said. "Years later he finally called. It was Christmastime and I felt like it was the best Christmas present anyone could have ever offered. My adoring husband had loved Cartier as much as I did, and against better financial judgement we brought him home."

Gove was quick to share Cartier with her two young sons Gavin and Riley, who were both equally excited about the arrival of one of their mother's favorite horses.

"They had seen the photos, the statues of him that are displayed in the house, and heard all the stories," Gove said. "They know this horse is special to me and the idea of sharing him with them in his retirement made me ridiculously happy."

Part of Cartier's retirement included being the new mount for both Gavin and Riley to continue their riding lessons on. Cartier carried both boys into the winner's circle during their leadline classes at last year's UPHA Chapter 14 Spring Premiere Horse Show—achieving the same winning success that had trademarked his career with Sarah Gove in the saddle.

"Cartier was proud as punch to be back in the show ring, even if it was a leadline class," Gove said. "Our hearts were full to see our boys learning to love the horse show world with a horse that meant so much to our whole family."

And now, at the age of 20, Cartier continues to leave a lasting impact on the Gove family, now as a teacher for both Gavin and Riley. Gavin Gove has assumed the training responsibilities of Cartier. He decides whether to ride, drive, or longline the horse each day, and has even learned about riding Cartier in a full bridle.

"Gavin beams with pride when he talks about how Cartier is 'collected,'" Sarah Gove said. "I would love to see Cartier begin Gavin's walk/trot hunt seat career. We will just have to wait and see!"

Cartier will stay a permanent resident of Taylor River Farm for the remainder of his life. The 20-year-old holds a special place in the hearts of the Gove family, both in his achievements with Sarah Gove and now in his ability to teach her two sons. Just like his designer namesake, Cartier is indeed truly worth his weight in gold.

1 Cartier came into the lives of the Gove family in 2004 as both a prospect and a breeding horse. He carried Sarah Gove to many top honors including the 2008 English Pleasure Reserve World Champion title—a feat they repeated again in 2011.

2 Both Sarah Gove as well as Richard Boule successfully campaigned Cartier under the Taylor River Farm banner, until the stallion was sold in 2013.

3 Just like he did with Sarah Gove, Cartier carried Gavin Gove down victory lane, this time during their leadline debut together at the 2019 UPHA Chapter 14 Spring Premiere.

4 Cartier returned home to retire at Taylor River Farm at the conclusion of 2018 much to the delight of the entire Gove family. He is now the primary teammate for Sarah Gove's young sons Gavin and Riley.

5 Riley Gove has experienced his own share of success aboard Cartier in the academy division with proud parents Sarah and Jared Gove by his side.