

# THE 2014 YEAR IN REVIEW IS DEDICATED TO

## *Bada Bing*

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

East Coast. West Coast. Open. Amateur. Junior Exhibitor. Riding. Driving. Is there anything Bada Bing hasn't done at the highest level?

From 2002 to 2014 the son of AFF Leroy Brown and Trade Secrets (by DBA Street Talk) did what he was born to do and that was entertain horse lovers of all breeds. He was his sire's second foal and his dam's first.

"Leroy [Brown] was a promising colt we had and Trade Secrets was a double [Serenity] Masterpiece granddaughter that was never shown," recalled Bada Bing's owner, breeder and longtime trainer Peggy Alderman. "They complimented each other very well. He [Leroy Brown] had that little extra hinge that she needed. It was a shot in the dark.

"He [Bada Bing] was a very cool baby. There were a half dozen colts out there and every time you came up the driveway he was the one who stood out."

As he grew, everything about Bada Bing was beautiful, especially the way he moved. Both his attitude and ability propelled him to levels that awed the only two owners and trainers he has ever known.

"He's the prettiest barefooted trotting horse I've ever seen," said Alderman. "He would hang his knee up there with that beautiful hesitation. You don't see many do that barefooted. He was a wonderful horse to work."

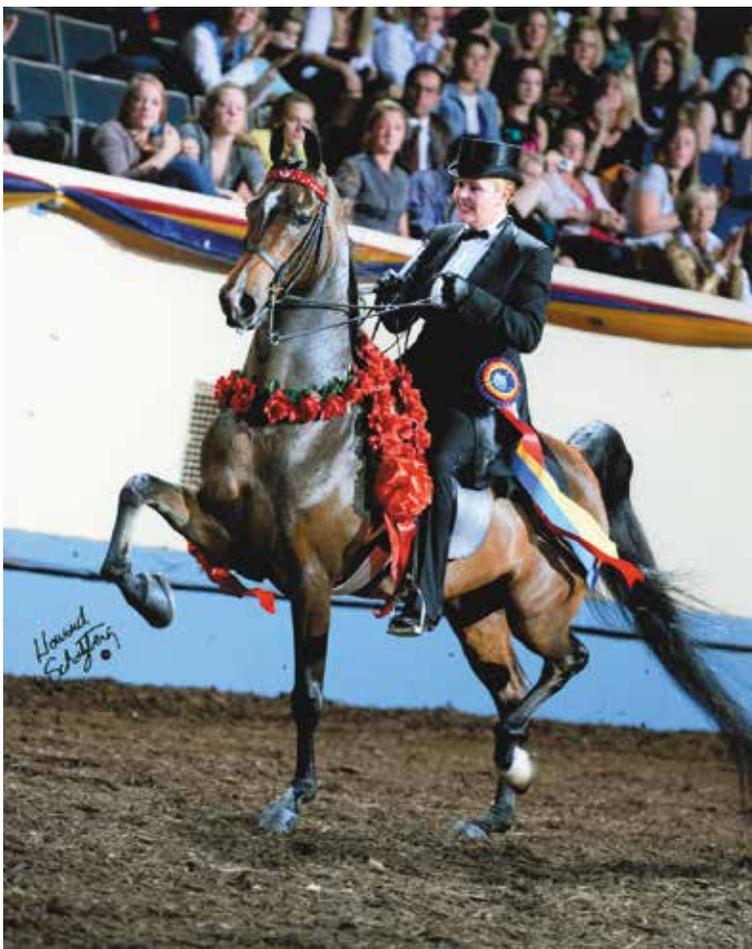
The road to stardom began as a two-year-old park harness horse at the Connecticut All Morgan Show. Bada Bing won that debut with their next appearance being the famed New England Regional where they were reserve to Judy Whitney and Sheza Bell. He suffered a slight injury and didn't show as a three-year-old and not much as a four-year-old.

Back in harness, Bada Bing won his first Oklahoma title in 2004, making the Grand National Four-Year-Old Park Harness Mare & Gelding victory pass, but he "didn't show back well" and was third in the Four-Year-Old World Championship behind Queen's Guardian with Mike Carpenter and MEM No Inhabitions with Shana Gish.

As a five-year-old he only showed once, winning the Novice Park Saddle class at the Vermont Spring Classic. At this point in his career Alderman was torn about what to do.

"In my mind he showed so much trot and charisma. My brain was going, 'he's going to be a hell of a park horse,'" said Alderman. "In reality he was much better with a lighter shoe and less foot. It took a while for me to figure that out. The trainer in me said he was going to be a park horse but eventually I thought he would be the best pleasure horse ever."

That statement turned out to be prophetic. The move to the pleasure division would be amazing and before Alderman and Bada Bing were through they would break the all-time record for English Pleasure World Championships set by the legendary Long View Sundance.



*Peggy Alderman rode Bada Bing to an all-time record five World Champion English Pleasure titles.*

They set forth on that journey in his six-year-old year starting with a win at Granite State as a test drive. A few weeks later New England would be the real test. It was there that they ran up against the reigning World Champion Stonecroft Byzantine, winning both the English Pleasure Stallion/Gelding class and the East Coast English Pleasure Championship. At Oklahoma it would only get deeper. After winning the Grand National English Pleasure Gelding class, they returned for the championship, again meeting Byzantine as well as the 2005 Amateur English Pleasure Reserve World Champion CCR's Outrajus Courajus GCH who was undefeated in open competition to that point in '06 with Stacy Hennessy. Like he was accustomed to doing in his new division, Bada Bing rose to the occasion winning the first of a record five World Champion English Pleasure titles. In fact, Alderman never lost an under saddle class with him.

That, however, was not the whole story. The following year there would be a new twist, a new challenge and a new title. Phil [Alderman] had decided he wanted a nice horse to show the next year in the amateur division so Peggy decided why not Bada Bing.

“It went relatively well. He had a canter problem that beat him once in the amateur championship at New England but overall it was pretty good. The family part was the toughest. I couldn’t stop myself from saying things, which I eventually figured out was a problem. I sent Phil to Rick Stevens to ride. Rick trained Phil and I trained the horse. Phil would tell me how wonderful Rick was and all the things he told him and I’m thinking ‘those are the exact same things I’ve been trying to tell you.’ Rick did a great job and changed Phil from a passenger to a rider.”

After winning the qualifier at New England and taking reserve in the championship, Phil and Bada Bing took Oklahoma by storm winning both the amateur gelding qualifier and the Amateur English Pleasure World Championship against some of the best in the business, including Trebles First Take, Queen’s Proud Mary, Rampaige and French Flambeau in the top five.

Peggy reclaimed her ride in 2008 having an undefeated year from Syracuse International, New England, Eastern States and Oklahoma. The next year Phil and Peggy shared Dave, as Bada Bing is affectionately known, and they made history while adding to his incredible record. Phil made another victory pass in the Grand National Amateur English Pleasure Gelding class and



*Lila Tatar closed out the great gelding’s career with a World Championship in the junior exhibitor pleasure driving division. He received a roaring standing ovation for his final show ring appearance.*

then Peggy showed him back in the open championship winning their third World title. With so much heart, Bada Bing returned the very next night winning his second Amateur English Pleasure World Championship with Phil. Winning the amateur and open world championship in the same year hadn’t been done since 1976 when Helicon Eros did so for the Mulcahy family.

“That was the year I split my pants,” exclaimed Peggy. “That might have been the most dynamic he was with me.”

Breaking the all-time record, a fourth English Pleasure World Championship was earned in 2010, along with another East Coast English Pleasure Championship as well as classes at Granite State and Connecticut Summer Classic. Reflecting on their career together Peggy thought at that point it might be time to part ways with him.

“We had broken the record, there wasn’t much left to accomplish, nothing left to win,” said Alderman. “I kind of put the word out that he would be available. The Tatars had tried to buy him after the first year he won but I wasn’t ready to sell and Lila was so young at that time. Now, however, I thought junior exhibitor would be the perfect ending for his career and I couldn’t have asked for him to go to a better place.”

That place would be Lawson Creek Farm with the Tatar family and trainer Anne Judd. It did take a little to get it done though.

“Jaisen von Ballmoos was out here judging and I hadn’t seen him in quite a while,” explained Judd. “I had met him in South Africa and following the show I asked him if he wanted to catch up. We were talking and I had mentioned that we were looking for a special horse for Lila. Jaisen said that he had heard Bada Bing was for sale and someone out here was



*Bred, foaled and raised at Salem Farm in Vermont, Bada Bing was a standout in the pasture before he ever began his formal training.*



*Phil Alderman had a couple sensational rides with Bada Bing at Northampton, in addition to two Amateur English Pleasure World Championships.*



*Bada Bing was Lila Tatar's dream horse and he indeed made her dreams come true.*

looking at him but that I should call Peggy. I thought about it and said to myself that he had been ridden by an amateur so that gave me the courage to call.

"I called the next day and Peggy said someone was coming to look at him in May and she had to honor that. Well, that was more than a month and a half away so I pressed a little harder. I had told Lila about this and she said he was her dream horse and could we please go and look at him. The very next day Peggy called and said she had thought about it and the first one there could buy him. I told her, 'we'll be there next week-end.'"

At that point the great gelding was still let down from the winter and didn't have shoes on. Judd told Alderman she didn't care she just wanted to come and see if Lila could ride him.

"The day before we were supposed to leave Peggy calls and said they had put plates back on him but he had been quicked. I said please pull the shoes and let's see if he is sound in the morning. I couldn't tell them [the Tatars] we weren't going. The next morning he was fine and we were headed to Vermont.

"Lila did great and then I rode him and he had such a beautiful mouth. I also had never seen a horse trot barefooted so well. We got the deal done and it was so close to show season we decided to leave him there through Oklahoma so it would be an easy transition."

"It was kind of unusual," echoed Peggy. "They came to see him and he had been let down for a while. It was the end of March and I had only jogged him once or twice but it worked well."

*"He's the prettiest barefooted trotting horse I've ever seen."*

*- Peggy Alderman*

Syracuse would be their first show and Peggy had instructed Lila to ride him loose and light. They hit the ring and got a little ways in and he saw a shadow on the ground and stepped sideways. Lila landed on her feet. There was an open junior exhibitor pleasure class the next day and they came back and nailed it! The rail was filled with horsemen and amateurs alike watching to see if the new team could indeed do it.

Next stop was New England Morgan where again they attracted a huge crowd to watch as they triumphed in both the 14-17 pleasure class and the English Pleasure Junior Exhibitor 14-17 Championship.

Oklahoma was the next stop and like he had done so many times before in that coliseum, Bada Bing got even bigger and took Lila to the Grand National 14 & 15 Year-Old English Pleasure title and then returned to be crowned Reserve World Champions in the 14-17 division behind Tayler Walters and Dragonsmeade Courante. Extending their all-time record, Peggy showed Bada Bing back to win his fifth World Champion English Pleasure title.

Moving to the West Coast, Bada Bing and Tatar only lost one class in 2012, the 14 & 15 year-old qualifier at Oklahoma where they were reserve. Now under the direction of Anne Judd, the pair started at Carousel and moved on to Charity Fair and then Morgan Medallion. Following their reserve qualifier at Oklahoma they came back stronger than ever to win their first World Championship together and giving Bada Bing world titles in three different divisions now.

The following year they followed the same path, except this time they won both of their Morgan Grand National classes. Instead of taking the rest of the year off after Oklahoma the pair began a new venture, pleasure driving at Jingle Bell in December. Their two wins set the stage for the following year.

As we know now, 2014 was the final season for Tatar and Bada Bing and they went out on top with an undefeated season, including the World Champion Junior Exhibitor Pleasure Driving 14-17 title and the Grand National Champion Junior Exhibitor Pleasure Driving 14-17 title. This was the tenth world championship for the great gelding.

"It was pretty amazing to be so good at either," said Judd of Bada Bing moving to the driving division. "It was easier on him physically at this stage of his career to drive."

Looking back on the three years with her special students Judd credited Bada Bing with making it happen.

"He educated Lila," said Judd. "He was probably a better teacher than I was. She wanted it badly and we bypassed a lot of steps in between. They matured together."

"He is such a fun horse to work. Every day he comes out ready to work and never drops an ear. When you get into him just a little he knows it's horse show time and gives you 10 times the effort. As a trainer I don't think I've ever been around a horse that thrived off of entertaining people and had that strong a desire to please you."

Judd also shared the story of Saddlebred celebrity Carson Kressley stopping by the barn one day and she put him up on Bada Bing. It was something both of them will never forget.

"I haven't ridden many Morgans so I've been incredibly spoiled by riding one of the greatest in Bada Bing," said Kressley. "When you rode him you knew – and HE knew – you were riding one of horsedom's greats. Quite simply, he's a grand horse."

Kressley wasn't the only one who thought that. He is such an outstanding individual that he crosses all breed barriers. In a few of the all-breed shows he attended a crowd always gathered whether he was working or showing.

"I remember that year at Syracuse Bob Phillips came up to me and said, 'I heard Bada Bing was here. I'd sure like to watch him work.' And then I noticed what a crowd we attracted when we went to the show ring," added Alderman." People lined the rail. He was such a grand horse in the sense that he came with it every day. He went for the roses every day. He couldn't wait to go work."

"I miss his face every day. He has more personality than any horse I've ever been around. I miss giving him back rubs, which he loved. I miss having a celebrity in the barn. Everybody that came to the barn wanted to see him."

Alderman and his legion of fans will have one last chance to see one of Morgandom's all-time great entertainers in the show ring. A great celebration of his career is planned for the Del Mar Charity Fair in June, 2015.

"I want to have this retirement represent our relationship and honor how great a horse he has been," said Lila Tatar, the third and final person to have ever shown Bada Bing. "I first noticed him when he won his first World Championship and then followed his career. I thought a horse like that could only be a dream."

"When we learned that he was available we jumped on the opportunity. Peggy said he was still barefooted and we said we didn't care we'll be there next week. When I first got on I was in awe that I was actually sitting on Bada Bing. And then when I rode him I knew we would be a good match. I still watch the video of me trying him. He was barefooted and trotting above level."

Many times the build up is far better than the reality, but in the case of "Dave" it turned out to be even better than expected.

"He exceeded the build up," she added. "He is the ultimate show horse, even at home. A casual ride at home turns into a horse show when he comes out of a turn. He'll look to the middle and squat down, getting bigger with every step without ever entertaining him. He's also such a goof ball in the stall. He's such a baby if you have been playing with him and then walk away. He will try and do anything to get your attention to come back."

And what does the superstar get for treats? "He likes everything: skittles, apple sauce, but I guess mints are his favorite."

While winning World Championships is the ultimate goal for most trainers and exhibitors who show horses, the ultimate honor is to be able to give them a life of retirement while they're still at the highest level. The bonds that are made, the unspoken communication between horse and man go far beyond the sheen of silver trophies and satin tricolor ribbons.

With the planning of a retirement comes a lot of reflection. Memories come flowing back in full color.

"My most exciting time was 2012, our first World Championship," said the young lady who will now spend hours and hours with Dave just being a horse. "We were in a six horse workout and that was my first world championship so it was pretty special."

"Most of all, I'm going to miss getting to look through his ears going down the chute. He's my forever dream horse."



Winner of 10 World Champion titles, Bada Bing won two Junior Exhibitor English Pleasure 14-17 World Championships with Lila Tatar.