



STANDING

THE MORGAN HORSE SIRE RATING

Where the Stallions Who Stand Stand in the Breed

BY CRISTINA DIGIOIA

Bronze Morgan stallion courtesy of Maretta Kennedy
Photo by Debbie Keough

It's a new decade and an appropriate moment for a rating of sires to return to the pages of the official journal of the Morgan breed.

To rate a breeding horse on the success of its offspring, there has to be some measure based on documented results. This, then, is a sire rating based on results at class A, All-Morgan shows, specifically the Regionals and Grand National & World Championship Morgan Horse Show, affiliated with and licensed by the American Morgan Horse Association.

Bringing a show horse sire rating home is like ordering comfort food. Many familiar bloodlines and beloved individuals will be instantly recognized as leading sires of the past decade or more. The number one sire and others on the list are no longer living but continue to exert their influence from the

beyond. Others are making an appearance on a sire rating for the first time in the young careers. The comfort in this is that the new is old and the old is new again. As should be the case in such a gene pool.

Proving that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, many of our top sires are producing offspring that are becoming top sires. Astronomicallee (6) is a son of Futurity French Command (1); Stonecroft Byzantine (10) by Stonecroft Masquerade (8) [who himself is by Cedar Creek Harlequin (10)]; and Mizrahi (3) by HVK Bell Flaire (2). It would be remiss to go further in our discussion of top sires without paying tribute to Wham Bam Command. His influence is all over the top sires. In addition to being the sire of Tug Hill Whamuniton, both Liberation First Star and Astronomicallee are out of the wonderful-producing

Wham Bam daughter, Liberation Starbrite (x Austin Flying Cloud). Furthermore, Mizrahi and Stonecroft Masquerade are out of full siblings, Schiaparelli and Carillon Command (Wham Bam Command x Townshend Donachime).

This show sire rating may not provide the yardstick by which every breeder wishes to measure. In inaugurating the new department of *Breed Research*, this sire rating is just one step in trying to find ways to pull meaningful information from the official database. Other subjects interest us: We will look at top producing dam lines discerned while researching the current article. Is there a way to determine if certain bloodlines are dominating Morgan reining

or other disciplines, for instance? How has modern breeding technology impacted the breeding and registering of Morgan horses?

These topics are for future discussion.

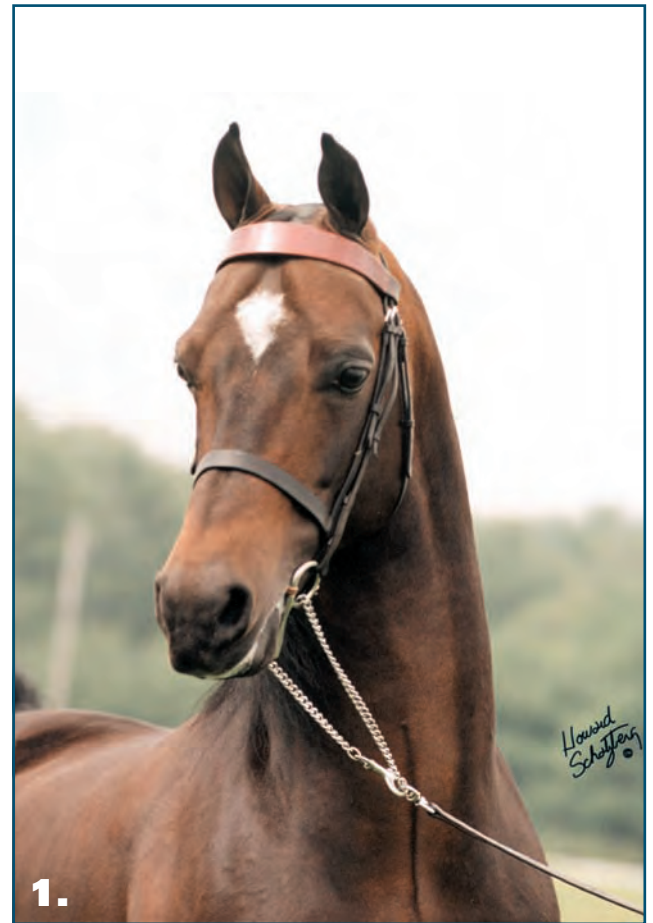
For those who find it meaningful, does a stallion's appearance on such a list make him an obvious choice for breeding your mare? No, so much more goes into a responsible breeding decision. But the sire rating provides a resource by tracking results that would otherwise only be speculative. And it predicts trends, that otherwise might not be obvious for years to come.

We welcome it to our pages and trust it will provide one more piece of *Breed Research* for informational purposes.

1. FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND

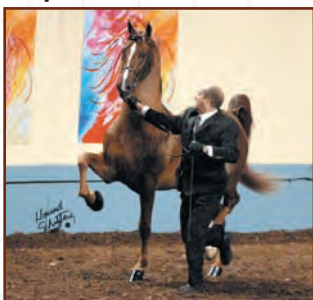
(Carlyle Command x Nobelle)

Despite his death in 2006, "French" continues to be pervasive and prolific. In these years of diminishing breeding numbers, the stallion continues to register foals begotten through frozen semen with nine foals recorded from 2007 and eight in 2008. There are inevitably more champions still to come from his concentrated genes. It was indeed these concentrated genes that directed Rick Lane, of Cabot, to become the horse's steward throughout his breeding career. Through his world champion sire he receives one line to Waseeka's In Command. But it is in the pedigree of his dam, Nobelle, that things get intense. The four horses three generations back in her pedigree (Waseeka's In Command, Waseeka's Interlude, Waseeka's Showtime and Helicon Caliope) are all sired by Waseeka's Nocturne. World champions from his earliest foal crops in the 1990s are now household names, many still showing and winning: In the past 15 years, there has not been an Oklahoma without a world championship title going to get, almost too numerous to mention. A distinguishing factor in the French story is the success of his offspring across the divisions. A park horse himself, he has sired high stepping world champions, but he has also put his stamp on hunter pleasure, classic pleasure, Western pleasure and in hand horses, which is what makes him such formidable competition in a sire rating. And now sons like Astronomicallee, MEM Bailamos, Online and others are in turn siring world champions. Four years after his death, French not only leads the sire rating, but shows every sign that he will be a dominant presence in this list well into the new decade. Futurity French Command was owned by Rick Lane of Cabot at the time of his death.



IN HAND SIRE

1st place: ASTRONOMICALLEE through his get; Cedar Creek



Flambeau, Locutus, Meadowmist Danica, Merriehill Black Betty, Merriehill Roxie Hart

2nd place: MINION MILLENNIUM through his get; Cherrydale Casseopia, Jaklee Bravo Papa, MSV Miss Judy, RWJ Mille'

PARK SADDLE SIRE

1st place: LIBERATION FIRST STAR through his get; DAS



Starcaster, KJM Five Star, MEM Forever Yours, MWR Illegal Motion, Set To Dance, Temptations First Star, Trebles First Take

2nd place: MIZRAHI through his get; Dragonsmeade Bulgari, Dragonsmeade Icon, ECP Scandalous, Indian Creek American Girl, Samadhi



2. HVK BELL BLAIRE

(Noble Flaire x HVK Belleek)

In 1992, the Morgan show world saw a youngster burst onto the scene that would change the face of the breed forever, HVK Bell Flaire. Coming off wins at New England, he captured two world titles that year. He would win the distinction of being the only horse in the breed to be crowned World Champion Stallion, World Champion Park Harness and World Champion Park Saddle, before retiring to the breeding shed. His exotic look and extraordinary talent captivated breeders everywhere, and he was an exciting next step to his sire, Noble Flaire, enhanced by the beauty of Vigilmar and the strong hind ends of the Breezy Cobra line on the bottom side of his pedigree. Soon the get of Bell Flaire earned popularity on show strings, and constant trips to winner's circles. Although his get win in a variety of divisions, they have shown dominance in the high stepping and in hand divisions. Bell Flaire would go on to sire champions who, in turn, are amping up production records of their own, such as Mizrahi, GLB Bell Pepper, Kim's Bellegante and Tara's Firewalker. He has produced World, Grand National and Regional Champions non-stop from the outset of his breeding career and he is particularly distinguished as the sire of another record breaker, four time Park Harness World Champion JW That Special Flaire. Bell Flaire has been owned throughout his show and breeding career by Barbara and Arthur Jones of Top O' The Hill Morgans and he stands with his breeders at Kohler Stables.



3. MIZRAHI

(HVK Bell Flaire x Schiaparelli)

One of the most popular sires today, one can always recognize Mizrahi's progeny by the typey, refined head, laid-back shoulder, and lofty hocks. He is the top siring son of HVK Bell Flaire and is often credited with carrying forward a Wham Bam Command look from his dynasty-making dam Schiaparelli. He sires offspring that are balanced and beautiful, but also well-suited to the saddle seat divisions. At the age of 14, the number three sire has ten foal crops on the ground. His breeding career got off to such a spectacular start due to his association with the breeding programs of the Design Group, comprised of Dragonsmeade, Queens River Farm and Blackridge and its satellite breeding programs. He

PARK HARNESS SIRE

1st place: HVK BELL FLAIRE through his get; Bellerophon, Dragonsmeade Fusion, Indian Creek Cipriani, Intrepid Dynasty, JW Call Me Sweetheart, **JW That Special Flaire**, Lux Stargait Antares, Mach One, Rare Piece, SLB Da Vinci, The Alchemist



2nd place: LIBERATION FIRST STAR through his get; Azeedads Lucky Star, KJM Five Star, MEM Ultimate Star, Springmill Stardust, Temptations First Star

ENGLISH PLEASURE SIRE

1st place: TUG HILL WHAMUNITION through his get; **Boston's Big Whammy**, Enthusiastic, LA Ricochet, Pacific Rim Take Aim, Skywarrior, TE Ammunition, Wendigo's Tenderfoot



2nd place: HVK BELL FLAIRE through his get; Basic Black, Bellissimo, Cedar Creek Cariad, Dragonsmeade Infusion, Dragonsmeade Vivace, Hello Kitty, Indian Creek Bellagio, SLB Puccini, Tomeri Tango

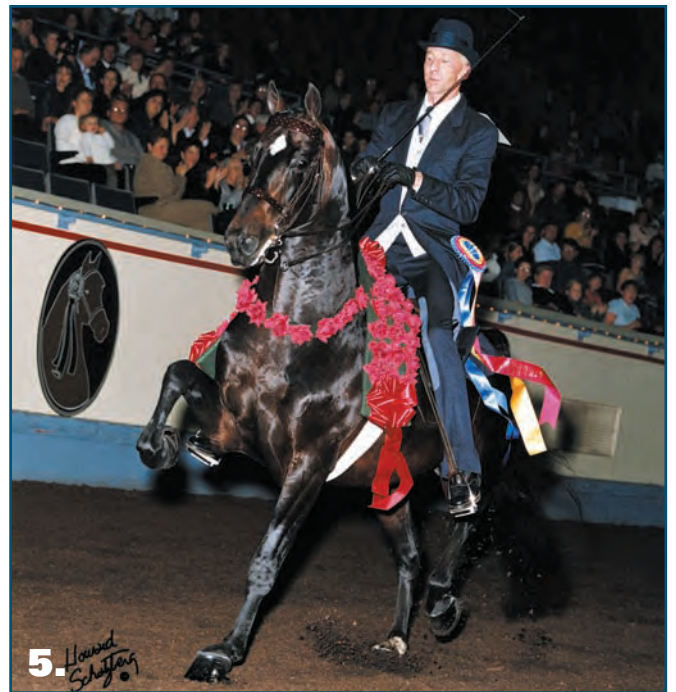
earned 2009 points from such show ring superstars as Dragonsmeade Icon, Mastroianni, Dragonsmeade Bulgari, Graycliff Tony, Miz Saturn Star, ECP Scandalous, Queen's Guardian, Dragonsmeade Tahari, Dragonsmeade Balenciaga, and Kosta Boda. Mizrahi is owned by and standing at PlayMor Farm, who brought him to his World Champion Stallion title.



4. TUG HILL WHAMUNITION

(Wham Bam Command x Fiddler's Majesta)

For nearly 20 years, Tug Hill Whamunion offspring have graced the show ring with their overwhelming presence and regal good looks. "Jesse" himself is one of the greatest park saddle horses the breed has ever known, holding eight world championship titles, including, world championships in the park saddle three-year-old, four-year-old, open, and amateur divisions (as well as being the holder of a World Champion Stallion title). He then proceeded to sire some of the greatest show ring favorites of yesterday: Heavens Mikaela, Tug Hill Guns N Roses, LilacHill Under Fire, Smith & Wesson, Boston Enchantress, Whispering Whammunion, Tughill Slight Indulgence, About Last Night, FZM Crossfire, Paradigm Hot Chocolate and Long Acres Broadway. Today, he has many other terrific offspring carrying the torch. Miss Voodoo, GI Jane, Merriehill Homestretch, The Noblest, TE Ammunition, Pacific Rim Take Aim, LA Ricochet, Enthusiastic, Wendigo's Tenderfoot, On Target, Merriehill Times Square, AKM Armageddon, Treble's Spring Loaded, Merriehill Major League, Roadshow Annie Oakley, Skywarrior and Tomeri Delovely are prime examples. In addition, he has contributed some great broodmares to the breed, such as MLF Jessica, Tempest Ariel, LCS Strip Tease, Heavens Mikaela, and Heaven Can Wait. He is owned and loved by the Crawford Family of Boston Morgan Farm.



5. LIBERATION FIRST STAR

(Century Free Spirit x Liberation Starbrite)

Because of him the word "star" has started to show up in Morgan nomenclature, the way "French" did earlier in the generation and "Command" did before that. One of the few breeding sons of world champion Century Free Spirit, he got added credentials from his dam, a mare many consider among the best in our breed:

PLEASURE DRIVING SIRE

1st place: HVK BELL FLAIRE through his get; Basic Black, GLB Bell Of The Ball, Hello Kitty, Indian Creek Bali Hai, Indian Creek Miss Margret, JW Here I Am, **Tara's Firewalker**, Tomeri Tango, VVM Dare To Dream



2nd place: FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND through his get; Alleswell In Monte Carlo, Can't You See MEM, CFF Personal Advantage, GLB Leader Of The Band, Indian Creek Double R, Indian Creek Warbird, KN-JK'S-Brooke, MEM Say My Name, Queen's Johnny Angel

(This page: Photos © Debbie Uecker-Keough & Howard Schatzberg)

CLASSIC PLEASURE SADDLE SIRE

1st place: FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND through his get; **C'est La Vie**, Med-E-Oka French Morocco, MEM Taser, Queen's American Idol, Paris By Night, Rowenda French Twist



2nd place: CENTURY FREE SPIRIT through his get; Narragansett Spirit, Pondview EZ Spirit



6.



7.

Liberation Starbrite, making him a double grandson of Wham Bam Command. Such genetic intensity delivers great show ring potential and First Star crowned his show career as Park Saddle World Champion. But the genes proved even more predictable in the breeding shed as he started producing champions for Amy Wilson Scott's Tall Tails Farm before being purchased by clients associated with Rick Lane's Cabot, at the time the major stallion station in the Morgan breed. No matter which division they compete in, his get consistently possess their sire's size, power, and boldness. His achievement in a sire rating is so remarkable given his untimely death while still in his early teens. His offspring are very much a dominant force in the park division, as well as the hunter division.

6. ASTRONOMICALLEE

(Futurity French Command x Liberation First Star)

An injury as a youngster prevented "Astro's" show career from blossoming, but did not put a damper on his breeding career. He is by number one sire Futurity French Command and one of two stallions produced by the great Liberation Starbrite to be on this list. Astute breeders were quick to catch on to his value as a breeding stallion, and take their best mares to him. In just seven years of breeding, he has produced over 100 offspring. Despite being the youngest sire in the rating, he has already produced world champions in the in hand, park harness, and park saddle divisions, establishing his place among the best stallions in the breed. However, it is his up-and-coming offspring that promise to propel him above and beyond. Merriehill Black Betty, Cedar Creek Flambeau, and Cingate Starry Night all made a smashing showing along with their more seasoned siblings, Get Busy, Love Her Madly, Cingate Lucky Star, and Lake Holiday Magic. He was bred and is owned by C.A. "Tony" Lee III and stands at Broadmoor.

7. BEETHOVEN

(Noble Flaire x MyBlue Heaven)

Beethoven's beauty and smooth, correct conformation that he passes to his offspring allow them to excel in a variety of divisions. They claimed top ribbons in the English pleasure, pleasure driving, classic pleasure driving, hunter, and halter divisions this year.

CLASSIC PLEASURE DRIVING SIRE

1st place: **STONECROFT BYZANTINE** through his get; GLB



Amazing Grace, Intrepid Behold, **Libretto's Bravado**, Stonecroft After Midnight

2nd place: **FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND** through his get;

MCS Color Me Happy, Med-E-Oka Nobel Prize, MEM Just Alike, MEM Taser, Rowenda French Twist

WESTERN SIRE

1st place: **FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND** through his get; **Cabot**



French Lieutenant, ECP Pretty Woman, K N Curiosity, MCA Seawind Serenade, MJD French Quarter, RJM Pardon My French

2nd place: **TUG HILL COMMANDO** through his get; Battons Maestro, Chase Manhattan, Grand Cru Beaujolais, MTN Laurel Election Day, Trebles Mucho Uno, Trebles Tanqueray



Very astutely, Dragonsmeade has made him a cornerstone of their breeding program, and he has not disappointed! Consistently passing along his quality, he has sired such gems as Dragonsmeade Courante, Dragonsmeade Carnegiehall, Dragonsmeade Bravura, CBMF Cutting Edge, RWF Paganini, and LBJ Sweet Music. He is owned by and stands at Dragonsmeade.

8. STONECROFT MASQUERADE

(Cedar CreekHarlequin x Carillon Command)

Stonecroft Masquerade is part of a breeding dynasty formed from the relatively small program at Stonecroft Farm. He is another example of father and son being present on this list simultaneously. He is the only foal of his dam, the full sister to Schiaparelli, Carillon Command. At age 19 he has about 120 registered offspring, and an obviously high percentage of winners among them. Breeders have sought him out when wanting to breed modern Morgans of size and athletic talent while maintaining the Morgan character stamped in his amazing pedigree. His get are particularly successful in hand and in the saddle seat divisions. 2009 was a crowning year for the stallion and the breeders at Stonecroft as Masquerade's son and heir Stonecroft Trilogy claimed the Park Saddle World Championship. He has been owned since birth by John Scheidt and Don Spear at Stonecroft.



9. AND THE BEAT GOES ON

(Simply Maserati x JLS Deer Sal)

And The Beat Goes On, or "Bud," had a very illustrious career in the park harness division, garnering six world championships, several of those in the amateur division with Iann Fu Longenecker. His successful get have been racking up points mostly in the saddle seat and high stepping divisions. Park horse get include DMH Back In Black, Dragonsmeade Warlock, Dragonsmeade Elevation, Queen's Upbeat and Dragonsmeade Bacara. At the top of their class in other divisions are Uppercase Innovation, Own The Night, Dragonsmeade Sirita, and Dragonsmeade Carnaros. Though some breedings have occasionally been available, And The Beat Goes On does not stand to the public and has established his record largely from foals bred by his owners, the Fu Family at Dragonsmeade.

HUNTER PLEASURE SIRE

1st place: FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND through his get; Cabot



Betty White, Cabot Custom Order, Cosmic Girl, MEM Bailamos, MEM Evening Affair, MEM Once Again, MJD French Quarter, Merriewold Diplomat

2nd place: LIBERATION FIRST STAR through his get;

GLB Moonlight Sonata, Graycliff Jack Star, Graycliff Miss Liberty, Narragansett Bay, SPR Music By Starlight, Toast Of Broadway

REINING SIRE

1st Place: VICTORY'S SELECTION through his get; AMCF Jelly Bean, AMCF Just A Jiggallow



2nd place: PAINTERS PINE RIDGE through his get;

W's Mesquite Ridge, W's Ready To Rumble



10. CEDAR CREEKHARLEQUIN

(I Will Command x Serenity Anna Rose)

Born in 1983, the late Cedar CreekHarlequin is the grand old man of the sire rating. He has a son and a grandson with him in this listing. His ability to pass on size and length of neck made him so popular to breeders very early in his life. His tremendous popularity allowed him to sire nearly 200 horses. Among them were such show ring greats as AFF Tattered Lace, AFF The Stalker, MEM Just My Style, MEM No Inhabitions, HollyBrook Van Gogh, and Ladies Night. And the stock bred on with the breeding shed successes of Stonecroft Masquerade, AFF Leroy Brown, Cartier, HollyBrook Stage Rage, AFF Obsession, AFF Little Liza Jane, AFF Evening Episode, and AFF Beulah. This year, he was represented in the show ring by Stny Pt Harlequin Romance, Cartier, Matrix, MEM Have You Ever, MEM Twisted Sister, LGH Destiny's Treasure, Lateda, MEM Bad Boy, MEM Just My Style, Plum Haven Capistrano, Graywood's Kera, French Touch, Ladies Night, MEM Look At Me, and KJM Moulin Rouge. He was owned by George Schotts's Maine Event Morgans at the time of his death.

10. STONECROFT BYZANTINE

(Stonecroft Masquerade x Century Enjolie)

His sire and grandsire are represented here on the sire rating. His dam is one of Tedwin Topic's most beautiful daughters, herself a World Champion Mare. Byzantine's maternal half sister, Stonecroft Shalimar is also a World Champion Mare. It's a good family! Stonecroft Byzantine is himself a talented show ring star, having won at his first Grand National the Yearling Colts World Futurity in 1997, and holds the prestigious English Pleasure World Championship. He continues to win, being crowned the 2009 English Pleasure Amateur Masters World Champion. His get made a very good showing in the classic pleasure division, although they excel across the board. They all share their sire's gusto and presence in the show ring. HyLee's Bella Donna, Cedar Creek Danseur, GLB Amazing Grace, Intrepid Behold, and Libretto's Bravado are just a few of his tremendously successful offspring. He is part of the fabulous collection of stallions at PlayMor Farm.

Continued on page 48



DRESSAGE SIRE

1st place: JMF WINDWALKER through his get;



Derawnda
Hercules

2nd place:
DIRECTUS
through his get;
RWD Direct Class

CARRIAGE SIRE

1st place: CADUCEUS NAKAI through his get;



The Chairman Of
The Board

2nd Place:
ELK CREEK
RAINMAKER
through his get;
BWR Enchanting
Melody

OVERALL STANDING

1. Futurity French Command	638.4
2. HVK Bell Flaire	472.7
3. Mizrahi	303.45
4. Tug Hill Whamunion	285.6
5. Liberation First Star	284.6
6. Astronomicallee	220.05
7. Beethoven	166.2
8. Stonecroft Masquerade	146.35
9. And The Beat Goes On	128.1
10. Cedar CreekHarlequin	118
Stonecroft Byzantine	118

DIVISION STANDING

In Hand Sire

1. Astronomicallee	121.45
2. Minion Millennium	88.15

Park Saddle Sire

1. Liberation First Star	97.2
2. Mizrahi	90.3

Park Harness Sire

1. HVK Bell Flaire	137.85
2. Liberation First Star	61

English Pleasure Sire

1. Tug Hill Whamunion	119.6
2. HVK Bell Flaire	110.3

Pleasure Driving Sire

1. HVK Bell Flaire	109.4
2. Futurity French Command	90

Classic Pleasure Saddle Sire

1. Futurity French Command	70.2
2. Century Free Spirit	38.5

Classic Pleasure Driving Sire

1. Stonecroft Byzantine	75.6
2. Futurity French Command	64.55

Western Sire

1. Futurity French Command	106.6
2. Tug Hill Commando	69.85

Hunter Sire

1. Futurity French Command	125.85
2. Liberation First Star	88.8

Reining Sire

1. Victory's Selection	55
2. Painter's Pine Ridge	49.65

Dressage Sire

1. JMF Windwalker	69
2. Directus	55

Carriage Sire

1. Caduceus Nakai	59
2. Elk Creek Rainmaker	56

Continued from page 46

METHODOLOGY:

To calculate the sire rating, a point value was given to each regional championship, reserve championship and blue ribbon. All regional shows received the same point values. Regardless of the size of the event, each is given regional status by AMHA and so scored equally. The top five placings in world championship classes were considered, as well as the top three placing in the Grand National. A slightly heavier point value was given to the open champions. The intent was to develop a balanced point system that rewards the sires whose get showed in 2009 at the top of their disciplines. All points resulted exclusively from Class A Morgan shows, the results tracked and entered in horse's permanent records in the AMHA database. Many Morgans competing in sport horse divisions are active in open shows which, regrettably, could not be tracked for the purposes of this article.

CRISTINA'S BIO

Cristina DiGioia, of CRD Morgans in Springfield, Oregon is the newest in a short list of breeders and Morgan devotees to put their name on a Sire Rating. Cristina has ridden Rumbrook Immortal Mystic to the Ladies Classic Pleasure World Championship. Her passion today is as a Morgan breeder. With her small collection of select mares she has produced the Park Saddle Reserve World Champion, CRD Bugatti. She is also the breeder of a Circle J Yearling Futurity Reserve Champion. She's spent her years soaking up everything Morgan, attending shows, clinics and seminars all over the country. She is a freelance writer, a breeder, international traveler, and a graduate of University of Oregon holding dual degrees. ■



Cristina DiGioia & Springmill Ring Of Fire.

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