

Dashing Through the Snow

Editor's note: In early December when we asked Andy and Dave to photograph Morgans in snow for our January issue, there was no snow on the ground. Taking their assignment very seriously, Andy put a call out on facebook for farms in the Northeast to allow them to shoot after the next snow storm. And snow it did. The duo spent the next three weeks shooting Morgans in snow, logging over 40 hours of driving, producing close to 2,000 photographs. Dave is battling cancer, and although there are parts of him that are sick, his artist eye and appreciation of beauty is untouched. Andy's enthusiasm is infectious, and the two of them are a huge part of our team at TMH. Their collective work, whether snapping candid shots at horse shows or visiting their equine friends at home, is a vivid expression of what makes Morgandom special. What follows is a sample of the moments they captured dashing through the snow in the early New England Winter, 2011.

What began as an off-season assignment quickly turned into the great snow adventure of 2011 for Photos By Dave & Andy.

We jumped at the opportunity to interpret the assignment we'd been given, "Morgans in Snow." From the start, we knew we wanted to capture the individual experience of how we all love our four-footed kids outside the show ring and we wanted to honor and capture those experiences for all their splendid differences. We were overwhelmed with folks who wanted to participate, and we wish there had been enough snow and hours in a day to make it to every farm. Thank you to all of the farms who volunteered their beautiful Morgans for this assignment.

Our first stop was to see Christine Nava at Timber Hill Stables. We went, literally in the middle of a snowstorm. The shoot was amazing and we caught some wild pictures of the Western stallion Equinox Bossanova having a grand time in the turnout.

From Timber Hill, we went north to Burkland Farm with Josh Noble. Josh is the grandson of Dr. Bob Orcutt and is keeping things going at Burkland Farm. There we got to shoot two of his horses pulling a sleigh. There were friends of the Noble Family there with three kids that tied a sled to the back of the sleigh! Even the dogs got to ride in the sleigh. It was beautiful and relaxing and picture perfect!

From Burkland, we headed even further north to Taylor River Farm in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire where Sarah Gove and Richard Boulé welcomed us with open arms and some of our favorites were captured. The beautiful and typey stallion Sea-Vu Justified and Sara Heffernan's new hunter, CBMF Head Of The Class, put on a great show in the snow. We were proud of Richard for daring to come outside the warm "bubble" of the indoor!

Maggie Hood's KGA Morgans with trainer Nikki Rae Woodworth was next and we spent about five hours shooting there.

It was a gorgeous day! Some favorite moments captured included Maggie Hood's gorgeous stallion Whispering Whammunion playing with Nikki Rae's two bulldogs, Gracie and Patty-Pants, in the turnout. Another favorite moment was watching Nikki slip and land in a snow bank while LNT Cassanova was being lunged. She was laughing so hard, she could not get up, which made me laugh so hard, I could not see through my lens.

From KGA, we headed northwest to Meadowmere in Vernon, Vermont. Over 600 acres gave us a plethora of backdrops to pick from and hiking up the mountain to find those spots made me happily "NOT" regret eating the chocolate-chip cookies for breakfast! Kyle Sewing and Katelyn Houghton were wonderful hosts.

Next stop was Dave's neighbor Mary Kuhn. Mary literally lives just a short hike over the mountain and through the woods from

Dave's house. Dave's daughter Hayley was beyond thrilled that we were coming to take pictures of her reserve world champion equitation horse, Versailles, and Mary turned out Kris Kroft Hot And Spicy for a fantastic and accommodating visit. A favorite moment was watching Hayley spontaneously jump on Versailles bareback in the pasture. We even got treated to a father-daughter ride with Dave jumping on Callie and Hayley on Sy. That's the good stuff!!

From Mary's we headed to Judy Wesson Candage's house where we shot her daughter, Kayla, on her mare Sassy. She was an amazingly peaceful subject and it was a treat to watch her horse respond to her kindness. Judy took us in her home after shooting and made us a lunch. Dave was a happy man being that because of his cancer treatments has to eat every couple hours—just like a newborn!

The ride to Cedar Spring in Charlotte, Vermont was very last minute decision due to the fact they finally got snow, and also somewhat treacherous as it stormed two out of the four hours



By Andy Illes & Dave Porter



Riders at Moreland Farm

up but wow, was it worth the ride! Dave, who was not feeling so good due to chemotherapy, was forced to be a passenger on this trip so he could rest. I got to drive his new Ford F-150 that is approximately the size of a herd of elephants and from someone who has a Toyota Corolla, has the maneuverability of several large airplanes tied together with dental floss. It made for a funny and interesting trip. I am proud to say, there are no dents in the truck! Dave would also like everyone to know, there was very little “resting” as he watched me drive.

MEM Bailamos. In a word: amazing. Keely Sogolof made for a fun and funny host as Dave, Keely, myself and two Corgis, Iris and Oliver, waded through waist-high snow drifts to capture this magnificent boy. It was cold, windy and overcast, with fresh snow and endless acres of beautiful paddocks and mountains as a backdrop. Keely and her beautiful dogs, did a wonderful job chasing him around, even though at some points we lost both Keely and the little dogs in a snow drift. Bailamos did not disappoint. What a treat to shoot a horse like him—so full of presence; so charismatic, and so willing to run Andy over while she stood in the middle of the ring. Then, the unexpected happened! I got the offer of a life time to ride the king himself. Poor Dave had to listen to me talk non-stop about it the entire ride home, all night and even a week later, to any stranger on the street or in the office who would listen. I still have my perma-grin on.

Next, we were lucky enough to shoot Carol Wesson’s two pregnant mares! Lucky for us, Carol only lives a short ways from Dave. As most breeders will, she regaled us with amazing stories, as we shot, of wonderful horses and the ever-present excitement of the babies to come in March. Finally, after 10 shots, her mare Diva treated us to a roll in the snow! Snowy muzzles and whiskers were the theme of the day and we captured them all in their relaxed winter glory of being heavy in foal. Carol’s husband, Seth, was kind enough to send us both home with bottles of Butler Rolled Gold homemade maple syrup! I can’t wait to try it because I am literally like Buddy the Elf and enjoy syrup on everything.

Bellewether was next with its beautiful and expansive hills and white fenced turnouts. The drifts were at some points chest-high on the horses and the wind was intense! Smiles greeted us at the door as Judy Nason, Katie Hodges and Jenna Britt wondered what this experience would bring for pictures. Personally, I have

never seen horses have so much fun in the snow. FCF Montego Bay entertained us the most as he raced through the drifts with flailing legs and endless excitement, stopping to dig his way through them to bury his face, only to race off again. Watching his playfulness was so fun!

From Bellewether, we rounded out our assignment at Moreland Farm with Melissa Morrell. We arrived to the shoot and it was -2 degrees and even with hand and feet warmers and enough layers of clothing and socks for several people, it was still a chilly day to shoot. Moreland had a wonderful group of kids and amateurs to shoot and we captured some truly memorable moments and group shots!

There are endless things about this assignment Dave and I will never forget; Andy getting run over in the turnouts at every shoot by exuberant ponies and Dave wearing his moose hat. We logged over 43 hours in a car. Yes friends, that’s 43 hours of Andy singing at the top of her lungs. I now feel like I am great personal friends with the lady that is the voice of the GPS (her name is Barbara). Both my car and Dave’s truck look like a tornados hit them—with water bottles, juice containers, empty hand warmer packages, pairs of winter boots, extra coats, gloves and camera supplies scattered throughout. Oddly, I have also gotten used to driving Dave around like Miss Daisy and him suddenly pointing to a Friendly’s yelling out “FROSTY,” scaring me to death while I swerve to get the man a snack. Dave and I got to experience everything from a two-stall backyard barn, to pregnant mares, to huge show barns with multi-titled world champions, to horses that climbed snow-covered mountains so I could find the perfect backdrop. With no show rings in sight, we got to witness Morgans and the owners that truly love them being who they are; relaxed, mellow, crazy, playful, funny and soulful. We laughed throughout every single shoot- we were met with open arms and open hearts and we felt so honored just to have been asked to do this by *The Morgan Horse*. When summing up our collective experience, the quote that truly encapsulates it is: “People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they’re not on your road doesn’t mean they’ve gotten lost.” —H. Jackson Browne.

Would we do it again? You better believe it! We are already asking for our next assignment!

Andy Illes

Photo Essay ~





*MEM Bailamos owned by Nau Is The Time
photographed at Cedar Spring Farm*





Photo Essay ~



Dave & Andy

Sleighriding at Burkland Farm



Whispering Whammuniton owned by Maggie Hood photographed at KGA Morgans





*Equinox Bossanova owned by Heidi Kunkel
photographed at Timber Hill Stables*





Sea-Vu Justified owned by
the Gove Family Partnership
photographed at Taylor River Farm

Photo Essay ~



FCF Montego Bay owned by Joanne Kieger photographed at Bellewether



A fond farewell from the snowbelt