

≈ PHOTO ESSAY ≈

# Moments That Make You Feel

*A photo essay of Morgan mares and foals from the lens of a talent new to the horse business, Tracey Buyce.*

By Stephen Kinney

Last November, Keith Friday of Rolling Oaks Farm sent us a picture of a girl and her horse, taken at sunset. The photo, ultimately, did not get used in an ad. But it was ethereal.

And the memory of it lingered.

Fast forward to Spring of 2016 and we at *The Morgan Horse* were on the phone with a new-to-us-photographer, aspiring to have her equine photography catch some heat in an equine publication. Turns out that “ethereal photo” was her work.

The photographer is Tracey Buyce.

Like many in her trade, her enthusiasm is palpable and it translates into her work behind the lens.

Explore Tracey’s website ([traceybuyce.com](http://traceybuyce.com)) and you’ll see a spirited array of wedding photography, including a bride carrying a chicken—so the photographer is not shy about being idiosyncratic.

Under the subject of “Approach” Tracey writes about her wedding photography, “On your wedding day I will become part of your family, so your story is told truly, through the eyes of a friend you can trust. To me wedding photography isn’t about hours of posing for photos, it’s about enjoying one of the most important days of your life with the people that matter most to you. By welcoming me into your world, all the moments of your day will be documented with love—from the serious, to the silly, to the poetic.”

On that same website Tracey lays out her feelings about her

newer field, equine photography. She says, “Every horse has its own personality and every equestrian his or her own style and story to tell. My subjects range from ages four to 84, from young girls just starting out, to competitive riders, to women returning to horses after many years away. I love going beyond classic portraits and show photography to celebrate the gorgeous real moments that make riding so magical.”

She continues, “I feel alive when I’m photographing horses and fellow equestrians because I’m a dedicated animal lover and equestrian myself.”

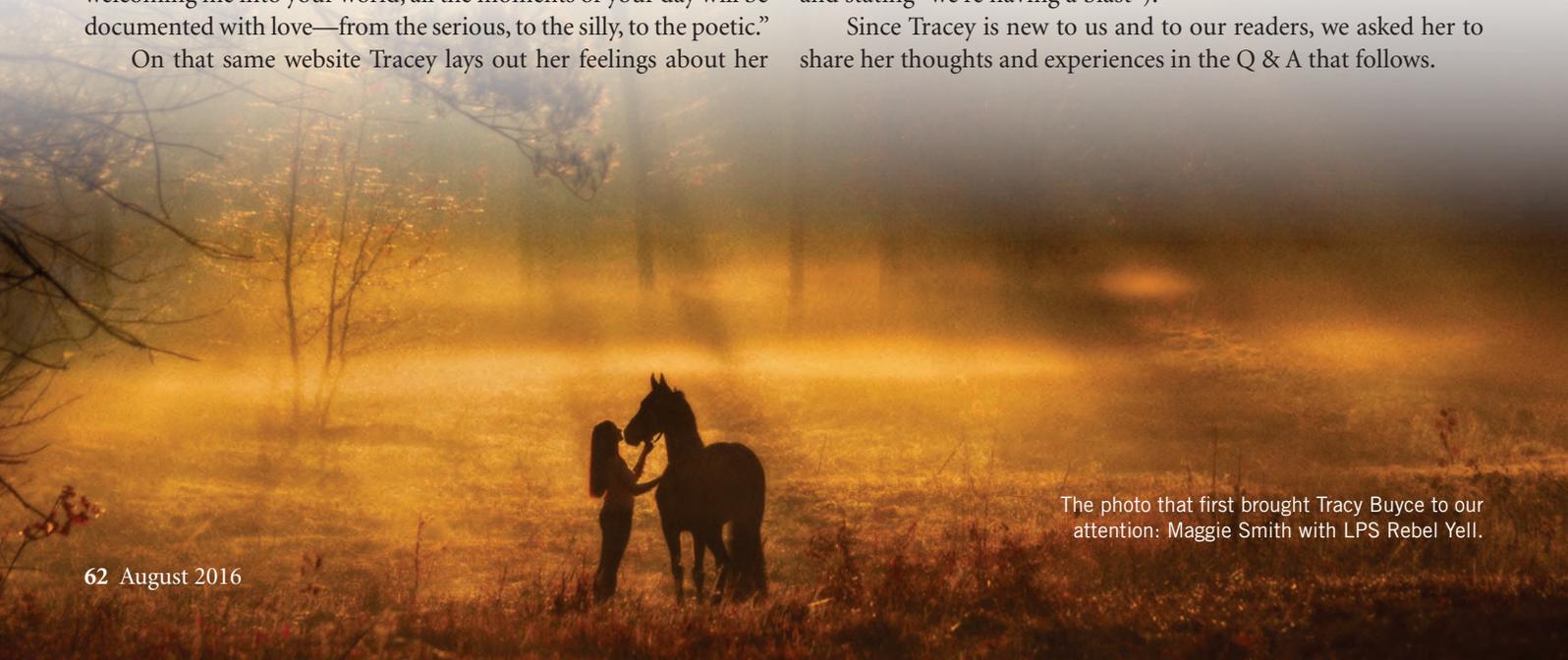
Given that she is now a Morgan owner (more about that later), though not unusual, it was nonetheless fortuitous that this spirited young lady contacted *TMH*.

Together, on that late winter phone call, we came up with the idea of her celebrating the advent of Spring on Morgan breeding farms by (what else?) photographing Morgan mares and foals.

We appreciate UVM Morgan Horse Farm, Ledyard Farms, East of Equinox, and Sarde Morgans opening their doors (or is that gates?) to this dynamic young lady. To a person, farm owners and management shared in Tracey’s enthusiasm (Roxanne Sardelli Greenway was texting us photos of the photographer in real time and stating “we’re having a blast”).

Since Tracey is new to us and to our readers, we asked her to share her thoughts and experiences in the Q & A that follows.

The photo that first brought Tracy Buyce to our attention: Maggie Smith with LPS Rebel Yell.





ABOVE: At Sarde Morgans Tracey got to fulfill a bucket list dream to bond with a sleeping foal.

**You've made the remark that at one time horses seemed like an unachievable dream. How did that change? Tell us about your life with horses these days.**

**Tracey:** I went through a point in my career where I let my business drive my life. I had tunnel vision only on photography and how to make it the best and I let my personal life fall to the wayside. I was at a wedding photography workshop in Mexico. It was a supportive, very artistic group of photographers. I spent all my free time at the stables during this workshop. They were asking "Why don't you have a horse? Follow your dreams." I came home and did research and several equestrians told me to go to Rolling Oaks. I went and had my first lesson with Sue [Friday] and I felt like I found the part of my soul that was missing. I told Sue I was just going to take lessons, but six months later I had Moose.

**Tell us about Moose.**

**Tracey:** He's a 16 hand chestnut Morgan gelding, RBF Marksmen. Today [June 1] is his birthday. He turns eight today. He is a big, goofy, loving, and has absolutely no ambition, which is fine by me! Moose has been incredibly patient with me as we grow together as a team. He has given me confidence and taught me humility. Moose has empowered me to conquer fears and experience the kind of joy only other equestrians would understand. I love my boy with all my heart!

**As a relative newcomer what do you most appreciate about the Morgan breed?**

**Tracey:** Moose has a huge heart and a willingness to learn. Morgans want to have a relationship with humans. They want that connection. They don't call them the Labrador Retriever of the horse world for nothing. There is also a stoic part of the Morgan. They are gregarious and outgoing but every-once-in-a-while Moose will be serene, and I love that about the breed.

**You are doing a clinic with your horse in the middle of this photo shoot. What kind of clinic was this?**

**Tracey:** It was a clinic with John and Kathy Baar and the name of their clinic is Raising The Baar. They are certified Parelli instructors. The core was the Parelli seven games and the four savvys. I'm still processing what I learned, but the take away is a deeper understanding between horse and human and that we have to think like a horse to understand them. I loved it. Bonding. Playing games with them. Keeping their brains engaged. I learned they have "horseanality"—Moose is a left brain extrovert. He's outgoing and was really responsive to those games. It gives us something to do other than riding. It builds our relationship and leadership.

**Just to "set the stage," tell us about your background in photography and the nature of your business prior to taking on equine photography.**

**Tracey:** I started shooting in 2003 and went into business full time in 2007. My mom passed away. I was doing photography in the background, going to grad school. I was shooting a wedding, got a call my mom had passed away, no history or heart disease, but just died of a heart attack. It was traumatic. I resigned from grad school and started my business full time. I realized how fragile life was. In her death she gave me this gift. I turned that traumatic moment into something positive. Since then I've been doing weddings, families and animals. I went to Bolivia in 2014 for "Photographers Without Borders" and spent two weeks at animal refuge for several species of monkeys and other animals indigenous to the Amazon. I was covered in monkeys for two weeks and I loved every minute! I have a bite mark on my viewfinder, I will not replace the viewfinder, as I smile at the memory.

I'm also on the board and a volunteer photographer for CANDI International [Cats and Dogs International]. We do free spay neuter clinics in Mexico and Caribbean and to date we have

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sterilized more than 10,000 dogs and cats. I have photographed hundreds of street dogs in Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic to raise awareness. We continue our mission to decrease the overpopulation of dogs and cats.

**When you are out in the field taking horse photos—in the case of this photo essay mares and foals—what are the personal qualities you feel help you relate to the animals?**

**Tracey:** I learned when I got Moose that the energy I brought to a wedding was not the energy you brought to the barn. It took me a long time to learn that and to relax around horses. That and the time I spent in Montana out in a pasture with 60 horses. It's important to be calm and loving and observant. Roxanne [Sardelli Greenway] said "they really like you and respond to you." I really believe they know animal people and know you love them. When I'm photographing horses I'm photographing from my heart and they feel that energy. I love being with horses. It transcends me to a place of joy in my body and soul. When you're at ease and peaceful, so are the horses, especially with mares and foals.

**You've stated the success of your wedding photography is that you capture emotions. Can you say the same thing about equine photography?**

**Tracey:** Yes. A good example of that is when you showed your staff those photos and one commented on the foal with his head under his mother's tail. You feel something when you look at that. It's not traditional. I'm attracted to moments that make me feel something. It doesn't have to be goofy or silly, but I'm attracted to moments that make people feel. The ones that are a little offbeat are the ones people remember. It's OK to be personal.

**Do you think your choice of equipment influences the emotions you capture?**

**Tracey:** Yes. I will say I use a long lens a lot. But when I'm able to work using a shorter lens, it gives a different feeling. A 35 mm lens is the closest lens to how the human eye sees. There's a lot of compression with a long lens and sometimes you need to be away from the horses. But when I'm able to be up close it feels different and it feels different when you look at it. There's a deeper feeling of their presence.

**You've just had access to a number of Morgan breeding farms.**

**Tracey:** A HUGE thank you to all the farms for their warm hospitality and willingness to help!

**What did you take away from them? UVM?**

**Tracey:** The history and that barn is like nothing I've ever seen. It's breathtaking. Steve Davis made me feel so welcome. He's such a personable man. He let me ride one of the horses. It was a stallion that was bred the day before and I was like "Oh wow." The history of being at a place where it all began was very powerful.

**Ledyard?**

**Tracey:** Ledyard's start all their horses with natural horsemanship; I love this approach to show horses. I spent my free time with the colts, they were very friendly and curious. The staff there was wonderful and the property is incredible! I also loved all the other animals: ducks, chickens, Highland cattle, and Jacob sheep.

**Sarde?**

**Tracey:** Roxanne is a really special person. All her horses are beautiful and well cared for. She has her show horses, but Rox also has many animals she's rescued. I think she is an incredible person. One of my bucket list dreams was to cuddle with a foal in a pasture. Roxanne said we'd make that happen and we did! She wants to make other people happy and that's simply an aspect of herself. I fulfilled a horse dream and Roxanne got it all on video. A 12-day foal took a snooze on my chest and Rox captured it all on video and photos. Thank you Rox!

**East of Equinox?**

**Tracey:** I thought it was amazing to photograph that foal which was part of Morgan history [a newborn resulting from frozen semen by the late Courage Of Equinox]. I loved Ivan and Jennifer. They both have a quiet, warm energy about them. Ivan's passion for the Morgan breed was very evident. The property is breathtaking—with a spectacular view of the mountains of Vermont. Jennifer and I bonded over our mutual love of giving horses treats. There were two really curious foals and they stayed to have their photo taken with the wide angled lens. You can feel their inquisitive nature in the imagery.

**You refer to your horse photos as "wall art." Why is that a novel concept in this day and age?**

**Tracey:** Because I think people take a lot of photos, but they live inside of a computer or on Facebook or on a website. I have three or four pieces of wall art of just Moose, and every time I walk by that piece of art in my home I feel joy

and love. I have wall art from other photographers that I love as well. Printing your photos and framing them and showing them in your home lifts you psychologically.

**What are your goals and aspirations as you add equine photography?**

**Tracey:** My goal is to focus on fine art and the equestrian photography. I would also like to travel and photograph equine farms in the United States and abroad. I'm photographing wild horses this month. I'm going to camp with Wild in the Pryor's at 8,500 feet to document the wild horses of Arrowhead Mountain.

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The results of Tracey's enthusiasm and its interactions in pastures full of Morgan mares and foals can be seen on the following pages.



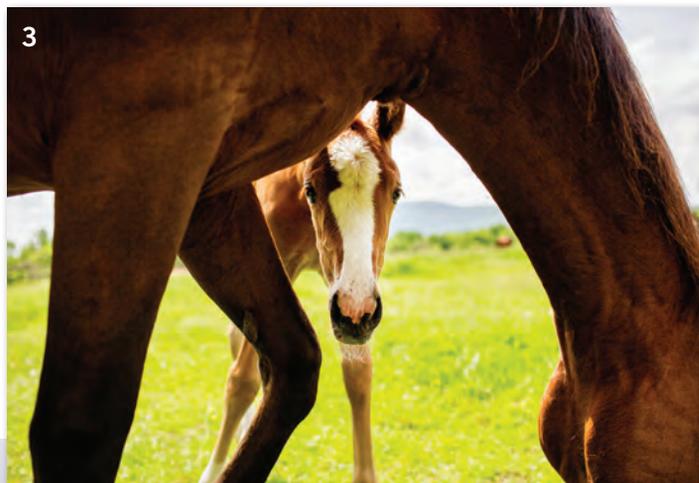
**ABOVE:** Tracey and her Morgan "Moose" (RBF Marksman) (Photo © Vicki Grafton); At UVM Tracey got to ride Otter Brook Xenophon (Photo by Margot Tucker).



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### EAST OF EQUINOX:

1. (left to right) *Equinox Mystikate* (Courage Of Equinox x Equinox Aristokate), *bay colt* (White Rock's Caliopy x Equinox Mystikate), *bay filly* (White Rock's Caliopy x Equinox Shania), *Equinox Shania* (Equinox Challenge x Equinox Independence);
2. (left to right) *bay colt* (White Rocks Caliopy x Equinox Mystikate) and *bay filly* (White Rocks Caliopy x Equinox Shania);
3. *Lies And Innuendos* (Cedar CreekHarlequin x Quail Run Cicada) with *Chestnut filly* (Courage Of Equinox x Lies And Innuendos);
4. (foreground) *bay colt* (White Rocks Caliopy x Equinox Mystikate) and (background) *bay filly* (White Rocks Caliopy x Equinox Shania);
5. *Chestnut filly* (Courage Of Equinox x Lies And Innuendos). She is the first Courage offspring born since 2002, and the semen was frozen in 1987;
- 6-7. *Bay colt* (Issues 'N Answers x Equinox Heiress). He is the last offspring of Issues 'N Answers, who passed away on May 27, 2016;
8. (left to right) *Bay colt* (White Rock's Caliopy x Equinox Mystikate), *Equinox Mystikate* (Courage Of Equinox x Equinox Aristokate), *bay filly* (White Rock's Caliopy x Equinox Shania).



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**SARDE MORGANS:**  
1. *Filly* (Minion Millennium x Sunny Acres Miss Scarlet);  
2, 3 & 4. *Colt* (Minion Millennium x Sarde's Gypsy Rose).





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**SARDE MORGANS:**

5. *Colt* (Minion Millennium x Sarde's Victoria Anne);  
6. *Colt* (Minion Millennium x Sarde's Gypsy Rose)  
(left) and *filly* (Minion Millennium x Sunny Acres  
Miss Scarlet) (right); 7 & 9. *Filly* (Minion Millennium  
x MSV Victoria); 8. *Sarde's Victoria Anne* (Stonecroft  
Masquerade x Lady Hot Topic) and *colt*.





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**LEDYARD FARMS:**  
1 & 4. "Quaker," colt  
(Man In Black x Rare Piece);  
2. LPS Out Of Bounds with  
her filly "Quince" by Gray-  
cliff Tony GCH.

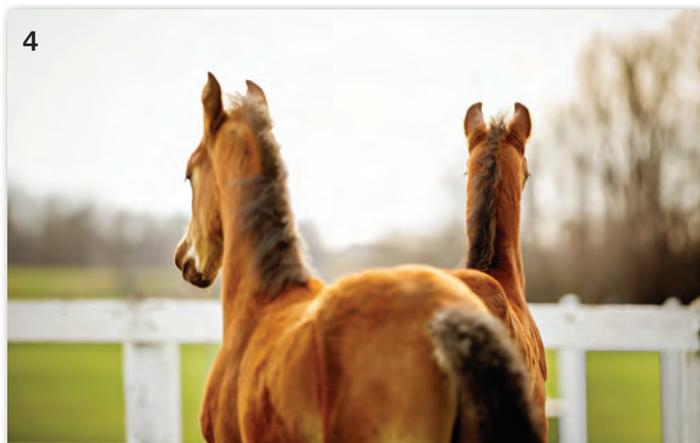


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**LEDYARD FARMS:** 3. “*Quinn*,” filly (Man In Black x CBMF Who’s That Girl); 1 & 4. “*Quaker*,” colt (Man In Black x Rare Piece); 5. “*Quimby*,” colt (Man In Motion x Wild Imaginings); 6. “*Quixote*,” colt (Man In Black x CBMF Immortal Belle).



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**UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT MORGAN HORSE FARM:** 1. Mares and foals in front of historic main barn; 2. *UVM Nuance* with her bay colt by *UVM Unchallenged*; 3-5. *UVM Yankee*, the 2016 Raffle Colt (*UVM Unchallenged* x *UVM Integrity*), and bay colt (*UVM Unchallenged* x *UVM Nuance*).



**UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT MORGAN HORSE FARM: 6 & 10.**  
*UVM Oneida* (right) and her *chestnut colt* by UVM Jubilant;  
**7 & 8.** *Chestnut filly* (Otter Brook Xenophon x UVM Halcyon) and *UVM Halcyon*;  
**9.** *Bay colt* (UVM Unchallenged x UVM Nuance).