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MINION MILLENNIUM

The intensely bred stallion is siring get as versatile as the breed itself.

By Stephen Kinney

ABOVE: Among other things the copper colored stallion is known for his imposing 16.1 hand stature (photo © Howard Schatzberg); **RIGHT:** The park harness performance that brought Minion Millennium to public attention as a four-year-old.

Owner Roxanne Sardelli Greenway and handler John Hufferd are perfectly synchronized when it comes to describing the attributes of Minion Millennium as a sire.

John says, “He almost always throws quality. And also intelligence. What happens is that if they don’t come out doing the park trot they have the quality and the brain to do something else. That’s why he does so well in the sire ratings. He doesn’t have nearly as many foals in the ring as a couple other stallions. He’s had world champions in almost every division, from park to carriage. The biggest thing is the percentage of horses that turn into show horses in one division or another. It’s the quality and they think right.”

Roxanne echoes John, “What attracted me most was that you will see his foals in the ring doing something. He is a useable sire. People breed to him whether they want a dressage horse or a Western horse or a carriage horse or a park horse. And they are in your pocket. They will live in your house. They’re trainable.”

It will not be possible, in this article, to name every offspring of Minion Millennium who has a regional, national or world championship. There are too many for that. But it is interesting to look at a cross section that proves the point both John and Roxanne are making. Millennium Force (who belongs to Roxanne, who says her goal as a breeder is to keep reproducing his likeness) is about as fancy as a pleasure driving horse can get. He was the 2016 Reserve World Champion Pleasure Driving Ladies. Manhattan Sunrise is another high stepping offspring who, in 2015, was World Champion Ladies Park Harness. At Oklahoma 2016, EQE Maker’s Mark CH was the darling of the judging panel, winning World Champion Western Pleasure Amateur and World Champion Western Pleasure Youth, both unanimously. Meanwhile, half sibling Bri-B Crystalpiece cut a swath through the hunter division winning both the open and amateur world championships. Reserve in open hunter was half-sibling Cherrydale Ariella. And elsewhere at Oklahoma the lofty trotting Miles Of Fortune GCH was taking classic pleasure driving victory passes. Reach back a few years and Cherrydale Casseopia was the 2008 and 2009 World Champion Mare. The mare MLB The Ingenue has taken victory passes in various carriage driving events at venues such as New England Regional and Morgan Grand National too numerous to

mention—and she did this with a juvenile driver at the reins.

When asked why people breed to him, Roxanne answers, “The fact that he does throw a horse that would be marketable has really fit into the equation. I think people feel if they take a chance on him they will have a horse that can be marketed into some division.”

Minion Millennium was born in 1998 to the cross of Minion Valentino (Serenity Masterpiece x Serenity Kimberly) on the mare who would become one of the universally acknowledged matrons of the Morgan breed, Pompp And Pazazz (Serenity Masterpiece x Cy Don’s Cynthia). He was bred by Mike Pocobello’s Minion Morgans in Michigan.

Brian Stewart worked as trainer at Minion Morgans at the time and was on the scene for the conception and development of the young stallion.

“I’m the one who suggested Valentino,” Brian recalls. “I brought Valentino in as two-year-old and told Mike we needed to breed him.

Valentino was really cool. Lots of trot and neck. You could tell right away he was a really nice horse. We bred ‘Pompp’ and Points Of Light to him that year.” Brian still has the 22-year-old Valentino with him at his family’s Lookaway Farm in Ohio.

Brian remembers. “There was nothing special about him as a baby. He was a gangly, skinny baby out in the field. But when we brought him in as a two-year-old it was obvious pretty quick he was cool. It took him a long time to grow up and be mature enough to show. I might have shown him in hand as a two-year-old at Gold Cup. But that was it.”

It was his four-year-old year that put him on the map. Brian said he showed at Gold Cup in park harness and had a great class and the same at Mid-A Morgan in August. It is his four-year-old Grand National class that left everyone talking about this colt though.

Among the people with an eye on him, coincidentally, were John Hufferd and Roxanne Sardelli Greenway.

“I saw him earlier in the season, I think at Mid-A,” says John. “And then at Grand National in the four-year-old stallion class he won and he was spectacular in that class. He was just incredible, trotting off all fours. I thought he was amazing.”

Though she and the Hufferds were not associated at the time, the horse definitely made an impact on Roxanne in that class. “I remember him when he came in as a four-year-old in Oklahoma





The get of Minion Millennium show in disciplines as diverse as the breed itself. Pictured here are (left to right, top to bottom) Miles Of Fortune GCH, EQE Makers Mark CH, Bri-B Crystalpiece, Manhattan Sunrise, MLB The Ingenue, and Cherrydale Casseopia (photos © Howard Schatzberg and Shane Shifflet).

and was a sight to be seen. I've loved him forever. He was big and lofty and had a hind end. Unlike anything you've seen before, that big lofty trot. I went to visit him at the stalls and couldn't believe how big he was. When you're at ground level with him it's like 'Wow!'"

Enter John and Belle Hufferd's good friend and client Margaret Van Meter. She had the smarts to purchase Pompp And Pazazz when Pocobello was getting out of the horse business. Brian Stewart recalls the chain of events. "Margie Van Meter bought Pompp in foal to [HVK] Courageous Flaire. The baby died and Pompp got sick. I said to Mike Pocobello, 'this lady spent a lot of money on this mare, you should give her a couple breedings to Millennium.' She bred two mares to Millennium and the babies ended up pretty nice and then two years later she ended up buying him."

Those two "pretty nice" babies grew up to be MSV Genuine Risk and MSV Miss Judy, both of whom racked up titles at Oklahoma. So it makes great sense that "Margie" and the Hufferds were tuned in to the potential of Minion Millennium.

"Margaret Van Meter purchased the horse. He was a crowd favorite at Oklahoma as a junior horse. Brian Stewart made him a good show horse," John Hufferd states, adding a specific memory, "Margaret, liked chestnut horses."

So, the bright chestnut stallion with double Serenity Masterpiece bloodlines came to live with the trainers and managers who have been associated with him ever since, John and Belle Hufferd of Triumph Stables.

Obviously the pedigree is intense. First, his grandsire on both sides of the pedigree is Serenity Masterpiece the famed sire of saddle seat style Morgan performance horses (his get include the park saddle world champions The Master's Touch, Centerpiece, and PLS High Pine Picasso GCH, among other performers).

Roxanne observes, "His length of neck and shoulder are very Masterpiece. He also has a very short back, which is interesting. I love Masterpiece. I think he gets his attitude from him, too. They love to show. Tractable, trainable. They love their jobs and they're expressive at it. A lot of that comes down to



Combining the blood of Minion Millennium and Arboria Noble Victor is a popular cross. Shown here (left to right) are Millennium Force (Minion Millennium x Arboria Fortune by Arboria Noble Victor) and Intense, who is the opposite cross of SpiceOLife Present Tense GCH (by Arboria Noble Victor) on a full sister to Minion Millennium (photos © Howard Schatzberg).

how they're built. If they're built properly it's easy for them. I think that's what transpires with Millennium. That makes his babies so marketable and trainable."

It is not possible to over state the significance of his dam, Pompp And Pazazz, in the equation of this stallion's success. Millennium's maternal half siblings include, perhaps most significantly, Continental Vision, World Champion Stallion and World Champion Park Saddle, sired by War And Peace and Graycliff Tony, World Champion English Pleasure Open, Amateur and Youth, sired by Mizrahi. But the mare has been prolific in dropping winning produce, including: Dutch-Mor's Joy (by Astronomicallee), SPR Pompeii (by Ultras Special Agent), Raintree Rebecca (by Stand And Deliver), OVT Cold As Ice, Playmor's All Night (both by Mizrahi) and SPR Wing It (by Stand And Deliver). Few mares in our breed are more deserving of the "blue hen" moniker.

"I don't think of him just as a Masterpiece bred horse," John comments. "I think of him as a great way to get to Dee Cee Mr Trophy blood. The bottom side of Pompp And Pazazz is super interesting. When I was a kid I took care of Serenity Grandmaster (sire of Serenity Masterpiece) and Dee Cee Mr Trophy (maternal grandsire of Pompp And Pazazz) when I was at Highland Farm. When you look at Millennium's small ears, that comes from Dee Cee Mr Trophy. He was very attractive as well as fancy with his legs."

"To have two breeding horses that are at the top of the breed right now, is pretty amazing for one broodmare," John comments referring both to Millennium and his half-brother Graycliff Tony. "That's aside from the many performance offspring she has produced."

Then there are the grand children of Pompp And Pazazz "If you own a Pompp And Pazazz daughter you have a gold mine in my opinion," John continues. "CBMF Restless is out of a Pompp And Pazazz daughter. Firerun's FCM No Boundaries is out of a

Pompp And Pazazz daughter. Intense is out of a Pompp and Pazazz daughter. Ledyard Mysterious Prince is out of a Pompp And Pazazz daughter. It's fun to look at all those world champions from the next generation. Pompp deserves credit for a lot in our breed. It's pretty crazy!"

Margaret Van Meter purchased Minion Millennium in 2005. He was sold to the Rohrs family who continued to stand and promote him, under the direction of the Hufferds, in 2008. The Rohrs' son Josh was a junior exhibitor with Triumph at the time. Then, in 2012, Roxanne entered the horse's life as his owner.

However, Roxanne was already familiar with Millennium as a breeding horse. Remembering that four-year-old performance and seeing the results the stallion was getting in the breeding shed, Roxanne bred Joan Rose (named after Rox's late mother), a Mizrahi daughter out of World Champion Mare Stonecroft Shalimar, to Millennium in 2007. This cross produced Sarde's Insatiable, a mare that was "meant to be" for Roxanne.

"I had sold my Insatiable mare to a woman who wanted to do dressage. I put a not for sale price on her and the woman didn't bat an eye. How do you pass that up? Sometimes you have to swallow your pride! The woman eventually sold her back to me." Today, Insatiable enjoys a spot as part of Roxanne's significant show string, an English pleasure mare lovingly shown both by her owner and by trainer Anne Benson.

The incident, did, however, inspire a new train of thought. "I was depressed about selling Insatiable and thought if I bought the stud I could create another one," Roxanne muses.

With Josh Rohr's junior exhibitor career ending, the family decided to disperse their group of Morgans. Roxanne continues, "I've always considered myself a mare person. I wasn't looking to buy a stallion. John had put a weanling up on Facebook that was for sale and I called about her. He sent me a bunch more pictures



Two 2016 fillies sired by Minion Millennium out of Sunny Acres Miss Scarlet (left) and MSV Victoria (right). Both are out of mares with Arboria Noble Victor in their pedigrees (photos © Tami Johnson).

and I decided I wasn't going to buy her. I called John back and we were chatting and we both said at the same time, 'What about the sire?' I said to John, 'My plan would be to leave him with you.' They've done a fabulous job standing him. The Rohrs and John gave me a great deal on him, so I bit the bullet. I've never regretted it at all. I love him."

In 2013, in support of Millennium's career, Roxanne bought his son Millennium Force. While acknowledging that the stallion crosses on all sorts of mares to produce champions in multiple disciplines, this athletic, chestnut, pleasure driving gelding has set Roxanne on a mission: "I'm trying to recreate Millennium Force over and over again," she acknowledges.

Millennium Force is out of Arboria Fortune, a daughter of Arboria Noble Victor. Thus Roxanne has sought out the blood of Noble Victor to cross on her stallion. She has acquired the 1993 mare Arboria Victor's Pride (a full sister to Arboria Fortune, dam of Millennium Force), a mare who had a great career as a park harness horse. In 2016 Sarde Morgans got two foals, a colt and a filly, from Victor's Pride sired by Minion Millennium and the mare's former owner Kevin Schengrund got a filly. MSV Victoria (Arboria Noble Victor x Windhover Antigone [dam of Century Free Spirit]) has also joined the Sarde herd and was bred to Millennium producing a 2016 filly whose pictures lit up Facebook last summer. And, when she sold Sarde's Insatiable, she replaced the mare with Sunny Acres Miss

Scarlet, who is out of Arboria Witchcraft by Arboria Noble Victor. "Scarlet" does double duty as a park saddle mare, again ridden by both Anne Benson and Roxanne, and as a broodmare in the court of Minion Millennium. She produced a filly by Millennium in 2016. (Note that Roxanne also owns and the Hufferds also train the filly Intense. Intense is the same, but opposite mixing of blood her sire, SpiceOLife Present Tense GCH being by Arboria Noble Victor and her dam being a full sister to Minion Millennium. Intense was the Weanling Gala Champion in 2014 and was World Champion Two-Year-Old Pleasure Driving in 2016.)

"I love those mares that think so much of themselves," Roxanne remarks.

The stallion is among the most promoted breeding animals in the Morgan breed. He benefits from stunning photography, which can be the lifeblood of a stallion after his show career is over. He breeds something in the area of 30 mares a year for owners who are drawn to the versatility of his get, his size (16.1) and, for some, his brilliant color (his world champion son EQE Maker's Mark CH is a deep golden palomino).

John Hufferd thinks the stallion appeals to the breeding public on another level as well, and that is finances. John and Belle Hufferd are well-known as the all-time winningest trainers of the Morgan Weanling Gala (previously known as the Morgan Breeder Sweepstakes). The get of Minion Millennium have won more sweepstakes and gala money than the get of any other stallion,

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Partners in the promotion of Minion Millennium: (from left) Tyler Hufferd, Roxanne Sardelli Greenway, John Hufferd, and Belle Hufferd with Intense at the 2016 Grand National & World Championship Morgan Horse Show®.

John points out.

Another financial consideration pertains to breeding with shipped semen and Millennium is a champ when it comes to shipping.

John sees the equation this way: “My opinion might vary from others’, but what I did first with Clearview Commander and now with Millennium, is I put those horses in the sweepstakes programs to try to win the foals some money. That gets them quality mares and produces a quality product.”

“Then, there’s nothing worse than having a mare all ready to breed and you have thousands of dollars involved in getting ready and have the semen arrive and have it be bad.”

Roxanne says, “I’m thankful to Neil and Robin DeRue, of Stallion Services, for doing a phenomenal job collecting and shipping ‘M&M’. Their stallion services are top notch.”

She adds, “He’s got very good semen. I’ve bred quite a few to him and the only time I’ve never caught one on the first breeding was because there was an issue with the mare. Nineteen out of the 29 mares he bred last year caught on the first shipment. There were only three mares we shipped to more than two times.”

John sums up, “You send a quality product with good semen, you give them a chance to make some money, and you give them a chance to turn a profit. They aren’t all doing it for fun.”

The promotion of the stallion is a team effort, Rox acknowledges, and both Roxanne and John are quick to include advertising agent and friend Tami Johnson as part of that team.

Says Roxanne, “We pretty much do it together. We always talk about things we could do the following year. We’re pretty much always on the same page which makes it easy. John is a master at this stallion thing, I have to say. He comes up with some great ideas. I’m so happy to be in this relationship with them, pertaining to Millennium. He’s really, truly their horse. They’ve done so much for him over the years. John’s always on the phone and talking to people. I’m pretty thankful for that.”

While his credentials are secure and his future can assume to be productive, his team has no thoughts of resting on their laurels.

Roxanne states, “I think we just continue to promote him as we have. We have new photos. Ken Martin was out there and got some nice shots of him. He puts that neck up over his withers and its kind of hard not to get a good picture of him.

“I’m very pleased that he’s still proving himself. I’m thrilled with him.”

That may prove to be something of an understatement regarding the career of one of the most prolific stallions in the Morgan breed today. ■