



≈ SIGNIFICANT SIRE SERIES ≈

FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND

Genetic Powerhouse

By Stephen Kinney

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Amazing genetics combined to produce the beautiful Futurity French Command (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Avis).

It's a legitimate question. Did the super producing Futurity French Command (Carlyle Command x Nobelle) turn Rick Lane and Cabot into a household name in the Morgan business? Or did Rick Lane's smart promotion do that for the horse generally known as "French"?

Typically modest Rick defers to the horse and he does so with an "I was there" sort of observation. He says he knew he had a hot commodity because, "In the early days people would breed to him. They'd get a foal they liked so much they'd breed back. He did that all for himself. It made me realize the horse was something special."

In the 90s and early 2000s Rick was the proprietor of the leading Morgan stallion station in the breed. French was the centerpiece of the program, but he stood alongside mighty allies such as Cedar Creek Harlequin, Nobility, Liberation First Star and Century Free Spirit.

And here we are in 2018. This will be the twelfth year since French's death. And, genetic giant that he is, he remains number two in the sire ratings (see page 8 in this issue). Rick notes that factor may be explained by the lifespan of the foals he sired and who have populated our show arenas. Offspring like Nicoria, who is 21 this year, and Medomak

French Invasion, who is 20, are still showing and still winning. "I think it speaks to the longevity of his foals," Rick states. "He hasn't bred a lot since he died and for him to stay at the top I think it's because a lot of the foals have stayed up there for years. He's stayed near the top even years after he passed away."

We mention the word modesty. It does not apply to Futurity French Command, however. Everything about his existence on this earth has been special and elevated.

In the late 80s, Dr. William "Bill" Bond was an avid collector of Morgan bloodstock for his Futurity Farm, then in Washington State. At the outset his "livestock agent" was Tim Arcuri of Arcuri Stables in Oregon. Tim was nothing if not connected in the Morgan breed and when Dr. Bond called out of the blue and was interested in acquiring Morgans Tim initially sold him three he had available, two with Leo Picard's Troutbrook prefix. "He bought three," Tim recalls. "He wired in the funds. We chatted a couple times and

about two weeks later he called and said 'I want to have the best.' I said 'You could start out with Westwold Dona Resa, that's the best.' He said, 'Can you buy her?' He said 'You get on the plane and be there tomorrow and I'll have the funds in our account.'

Tim flew to see his friend Maxine Snow who was acting as agent on the royally bred mare. "And I said to Bill, 'Her daughter, Van Lu Love Story is here too.' He said, 'OK, buy her too.' I think after that I was back East once a month for two years. I had never met the guy, still. I didn't meet him for a year after that, but I had this collection of broodmares that was a who's who."

A vital part of the who's who was the blue hen mare Nobelle. According to Registry records, she was transferred into Futurity

Farms ownership in May of 1986. Owing to his persistence in representing his client, Tim Arcuri was offered an extraordinary opportunity by Dr. Bond. Tim says, "We had bought the mare Nobelle for him, and we, of course, had Carlyle (Command). He told me 'If you can acquire that mare you can breed her the way you want to.' But he said, 'you put your prefix on the first one.' We would challenge each other with the idea of how to breed her. We worked together on different things. He said, 'You can put

your prefix on this one and I'll put mine on the others.' When the resultant colt was born he was so beautiful, a gorgeous baby, just a killer. We went back and forth and finally I said, 'Bill let's share this, it's a once in a lifetime colt.' And we named him jointly."

So, from Dr. Bond the colt received the "Futurity" prefix. And "French" is the prefix of Tim Arcuri and his wife Jean.

When Futurity French Command was born in 1987 he was a vision of perfection according to Arcuri. And at the time there was a futurity for weanlings on the West Coast—The Pacific Coast Futurity. It had been designed by stallion owners from that area to be the richest pot for weanlings in the country (this was before there was a Morgan Breeder Sweepstakes). The winner received a purse of "\$20,000 or \$25,000," Tim says.

It was judged by a three judge system and in the year French was born one of the three judges was the well-known Arabian persona Don Burt. And, as Tim explains it, this caused some



SIGNIFICANT SIRE SERIES ≈ FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND



Some of the blood behind "French," who has five crosses to Waseeka's Nocturne and seven to Upwey Benn Quietude. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Carlyle Command, Nobelle, Waseeka's In Command, Waseeka's Nocturne, Parade, and Upwey Benn Quietude (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Jack Schatzberg, Freudy).

concern among those nominating as Don was well-known for not liking to see a horse stretched. He would ask for entries to "square up" when he was judging them. Tim says, "That was our first foal out of Nobelle. It was a three judge system. We had a lot of babies. Everybody else had nice babies, too. One of the judges was Don Burt. He was into correctness, wanted to see horses square—he didn't want them to stretch. Dr Bond called me and said, 'What do you think?' And I said, 'He'll love him. This colt doesn't have to stretch, he's perfect square.' He went unanimous under all three judges and Don Burt wanted him to stand square and he could do that and look just about perfect. He was so correct."

So omens were good about this colt from the day of his conception. And it did not stop there.

The next step to illustriousness was with Bob Hughes and the late Rock Walker. Futurity Farms was producing a lot of horses and they looked to various trainers to train and show their horses and to represent them in the marketplace. All these trainers were called to Futurity Farms just before the calendar turned making French a two-year-old. "Futurity had all those horses and had called Rock and myself and others and had us all come up there for a weekend to look at all the horses," Bob Hughes says. "French was the one I wanted. They put all of our names in a hat and whoever got pulled out first got first choice. Rock and I got called out first and we chose French. (I also had to go white water rafting, which I was scared to death of, but French made it a worthwhile trip.)"

Bob describes French's life at Rock Walker Stables, "We did not show him in harness as a two-year-old. We showed him as a three-year-old in 1990 and he won the World Park Harness Three

Year Old Championship. Then when he was four I showed him in the four-year-old stallion harness class at Oklahoma and Tommy (Caisse) won that with HVK Courageous Flaire. Then I had Manya Duggar show him and they won the Grand National Amateur Park Harness Stallion class and he was reserve to Topa's Krystal in the championship. Then we sold him."

The mare Nobelle was a huge force in the life of Bob Hughes. He knew her when she was at Whitney Stables and he was her final owner, breeding the multiple world champion The Noblest from her, among others (the mare is also dam of multiple world champion HVK Ancient Cry). A lot of his feelings for Nobelle are reflected in his respect for her son. "He was a lot like his mother. He went out everyday and it was all about work for him. He did the same thing in the same spot when you warmed him up. He didn't trot way high, but they both had such a presence about the way they carried themselves. They had so much charisma about them. He was a delight. He was a character. He was beautiful. He was pretty much everything you would have expected of that cross."

French attracted the attention of Maxine Snow, of Carlyle Farm, and Marti Morse, of Cabot, at the 1991 Morgan Grand National and World Championships. Maxine had a reputation for associating herself with some of the Morgan breed's finest and Marti already owned some special mares for her fledgling breeding program. Both were clients of trainer Rick Lane who was 100 percent behind the purchase of the four-year-old stallion. (Marti Morse would buy out Maxine Snow's share of French in 1992. After Marti's unexpected death in 1997 Rick Lane inherited French and owned him for the rest of his life.)

SIGNIFICANT SIRE SERIES ≈ FUTURITY FRENCH COMMAND



Some of the successful and versatile get of Futurity French Command. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Nicoria, Medmak French Invasion, CBFM Burn Notice, Cabot French Lieutenant, CFF Personal Advantage, Fait Accompli, Hollybrook Touche, Optimus Prime (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Shane Shifflet).

When asked why they thought the unproven young show horse would have breeding credentials, Rick says “It was his quality and his intense pedigree.”

When asked what initially attracted himself and his clients Rick elaborates a little bit more. “It was his extreme quality and his pedigree. Obviously we all love Nobelle. He had so much quality. He was intensely bred with five crosses to Nocturne. And he was so beautiful.”

Regarding that “intense pedigree” let’s look a little closer. French is sired by Carlyle Command, a signature son of Waseeka’s In Command, who, of course, is sired by Waseeka’s Nocturne. Carlyle was a significant horse in his generation winning the titles of both World Champion Stallion (1985 & 1987) and World Champion Park Harness (1987). French is arguably his significant heir and great claim to fame in the breeding department. “Carlyle” was a complete outcross, his dam Wawayanda Bay Mabel being of Broadwall breeding on the top, tracing to Parade, Lippitt Georgia and Panfield through her sire Broadwall Patrician.

When it comes to Nobelle’s pedigree, the word outcross does not come into play. She is an extreme example of linebreeding. Nobelle is a daughter of Noble Command, again an important son of Waseeka’s In Command (Noble Command is also sire of significant stallions Noble Flaire and Nobility). Noble Command is out of Waseeka’s Interlude who is sired by Waseeka’s Nocturne and out of Waseeka’s Thisizit, who, interestingly, brings in another cross to Parade, her sire. Nobelle’s dam is Waseeka Valiant Lady who is sired by the Nocturne son Waseeka Showtime who is also out of Waseeka’s Thisizit (Thisizit, while being by Parade, is out of Upwey Benn Quietude, the dam also of Waseeka’s Nocturne. So the two crosses to Thisizit bring in two additional crosses to that influential mare.) Back to Valiant Lady, however, she is out of Helicon Caliope, herself a well-known daughter of Waseeka’s Nocturne.

So Futurity French Command has one cross to Nocturne through his sire, Carlyle Command and four additional



George Schott's Maine Event Morgans used Futurity French Command as a centerpiece of the program. M E M Blue Chip and MEM Bailamos GCH are two world champions to emerge (photos © Howard Schatzberg).

crosses to Nocturne through his intensely bred dam. What is less often mentioned, however, is that there are seven crosses to Upwey Benn Quietude, five through her son Nocturne and two through the mare Waseeka's Thisizit, Upwey Benn Quietude being her dam. This is indeed concentrated breeding and it is one of the factors of which his purchasers were aware and which led to their conviction that here was a breeding stallion just waiting to be proven.

It didn't take long and it didn't take a whole lot of advertising to alert the Morgan world to the breeding potential of Futurity French Command either. His first foal crop was in 1993. "At the Morgan Breeder Sweepstakes in 1993, we had five foals and all five were in the top ten. That was his first foal crop and that was when we thought we had something," Rick Lane recalls.

That first crop from 1993 included Cabot French Pepper (x LCS Pepperpot). He would be crowned World Champion English Pleasure as a five-year-old in 1998. From that same foal crop came Cabot French Cuffs (x Bery Banke La De Da), with his matching four white socks. In 1998 he was crowned World Champion Ladies Western Pleasure.

Justanotha Coquette (x Medomak Countess) was born the next year. She would cut a swath through the pleasure driving division in her two-year-old year winning the world title for her age group in 1996. The lovely park harness mare Med E Oka French Riviera (x Dash Of Pepper) was also born in 1994. In addition to her own incredible record she has given us a daughter, Tomeri Symphony, who is now one of two mares ever to be crowned World Champion Park Harness. And also from the 1994 crop came Cabot French Lieutenant (x Bery Banke La Te Da). He won the Western pleasure world titles over and over again in the early 2000s.

We can point to M E M Blue Chip (x Miss Bluegrass) who has entertained us as a park saddle horse, including his win of the Amateur Park Saddle World Championship in 2016. MEM

Bailamos GCH (who is one of several from the famous cross with AFF Beulah), dominated the hunter pleasure arena for a number of years including two back to back wins of that world championship in 2009 and 2010. Recently CFF Personal Advantage (x GLB Bell Of The Ball) and Medomak French Invasion (x Vega Sweet Dream) have been powerhouses in the classic pleasure driving division. CVH Celtic Command (x Hollybrook Lady Godiva) turned heads as a park harness performer with the showmanship of the late Bernard Parker at the lines. Nicoria (x Royal Crown Cajun) has been invincible, first in English pleasure, then in classic pleasure and nowadays carrying little riders in the walk-trot classes. Fait Accompli (x UVM Robin) was the standout Ladies English Pleasure horse of Katie Mair's career. Both KJM French Confession (x Carlyle Confession) and Pondview Unforgettable (x Pond View Portrait) won the top purse in the Morgan Breeder Sweepstakes. Hollybrook Touche (x Berry Banke Arboria) was Western Pleasure World Champion in 2012. The exotically beautiful Optimus Prime (x Erotic Dancer) has been both Amateur English Pleasure World Champion and Reserve World Champion Pleasure Driving before making a move to Western pleasure recently. The charismatic CBMF Burn Notice (x Candelabra) is a popular young stallion making his presence known in the Western pleasure division. The list goes on and on.

The very prolific stallion sired a total of 291 foals and he is still breeding some through the miracle of frozen semen. It would not be possible to itemize all the class A, regional and world champions by Futurity French Command. The point here instead is to show the range, which may indeed be among the reasons the stallion became a mainstay in so many breeding programs. He didn't just sire horses for one discipline; he sired winners across the divisions from the very beginning.

Says Rick Lane, "I always found that most all of his foals went on to be someone. Regardless of the division his foals had extreme



Astronomicallee (photo © Scott Trees) and Pondview Tres Bien are among the breeding sons carrying on the line.

quality and trainability. Whether they were park or Western, those two things—quality and trainability—make up his legacy.”

Two more things require mention.

One is that another legacy is that he gave the breed individuals that bred on. His important son Astronomicallee, owned and bred by Tony Lee, is among the leading sires in the breed today. Of course, his dam is the great Liberation Starbrite, so he had a leg up from both sides of his pedigree. And George Liberty has placed great faith in the sire of champions Pondview Tres Bien to head up his fledgling breeding program near Cabot in the Portland, Maine area. Mares have been prodigious producers, too. We’ve already mentioned Med E Oka French Riviera who has an impressive production record for her owner Teri Brisco. Rick Lane’s own Cabot Joie De Vivre has given him great foals. Queens Hail Mary has given the Hendricks numerous babies at Queens River Farm, including a favorite, Queen’s Soul Mate, and Queen’s Dirty Deeds.

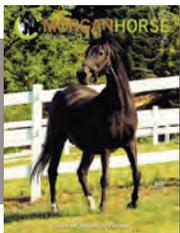
An additional thing that must be mentioned is the breeding program at Maine Event Morgans. With Rick Lane as advisor

and manager, George Schott accumulated a group of broodmares as coveted as those mentioned earlier at Futurity Farm. They included AFF Beulah, AFF Evening Episode, Miss Bluegrass, Star Lake Ellisa, and many others. French has been central to Schott’s breeding plans at MEM. The cross with Beulah (who was by Cedar CreekHarlequin) especially proved golden and some years they had multiple foals from that cross utilizing embryo transfer. Many of French’s most successful get bear the MEM prefix.

The Futurity French Command phenomenon continues with owners still breeding to him via frozen semen. As Rick states, “Last year he bred ten. It’s kind of interesting that he stayed up there. I put him in the auctions. He hasn’t consistently bred ten a year, but that’s how many he bred last year and I think it’s pretty good.”

Rick Lane is a man of few words—he’s really good at summing something up in the most concise of terms. French’s contribution, he feels, “was that most all of his horses were really good amateur horses. I think the trainability was the great contribution...and the quality.” ■

IF IT’S ABOUT THE MORGAN BREED



it’s in the official breed journal!

Subscribe: 802-985-4944 ext 203; www.morganhorse.com/magazine/subscribe