



Peggy Alderman



Paulette Bodnar



Mike Carpenter



Mary Cockriel



Jonalyn Gwinup



Sammi Hazen



John Hufferd



Kurt Hufferd



Robert Hughes



Dwayne Knowles



Lynn Peeples



David Rand



Gerry Rushton

~ ROUNDTABLE ~

# TRAINERS WHO ALSO BREED MORGAN HORSES

*For a variety of reasons not all trainers of Morgan horses are breeders. We reached out to some of those who are to get their perspective on this specialized field and what it has meant to their businesses.*

By Suzy Lucine

Several well-known trainers in the Morgan horse world have participated in this forum sharing information about their breeding programs. Over the years, they have been trusted with the care of our World Champions, as well as our beloved friends, and have gotten to know them in the barn and in the ring, giving them unparalleled insight into the breed. These horsemen and women know how they move, how they compete, and how to make their personality shine. It should come as no surprise many of those who dedicate their lives to the breed have used and continue to use their knowledge to become successful breeders, as well as trainers.

Participating in this forum are: Peggy Alderman of Salem Farm in North Clarendon, Vermont; Paulette Bodnar of Merriehill Farm in Marengo, Illinois; Mike Carpenter of Mike Carpenter Stables in Sutton, Massachusetts; Mary Cockriel of The River's Edge in Elizabeth, Colorado; Jonalyn Gwinup of Gwinfield in Mounds, Oklahoma; Sammi Hazen of PlayMor Farm in Lexington, Kentucky; John Hufferd of Triumph Stables in Roanoke, Indiana; Kurt Hufferd of Cottonwood Creek Ranch in Guthrie,

Oklahoma; Robert Hughes of Blackridge in Versailles, Kentucky; Dwayne Knowles of Broadmoor in Kutztown, Pennsylvania; Lynn Peeples of Lynn Peeples Stable in Creekside, Pennsylvania; David Rand of RAND in Falmouth, Maine; and Gerry Rushton of Gerry Rushton Stable in Perris, California.



~ Peggy Alderman ~  
Bada Bing & Bazinga

**TMH: Name a few significant horses you are proud to have bred, and why are you proud of them?**

**PEGGY ALDERMAN:** I had a hard time narrowing my list to three with more than 130 Morgans bred by Salem Farm. I love Bada Bing (AFF Leroy Brown x Trade Secrets), Brenda Starr (Liberation First Star x AFF Savannah) and Bazinga (Stonecroft Trilogy x Brenda Starr), because they are athletic, beautiful and really push the edge of exotic. Funny, their names all begin with 'B.'

**PAULETTE BODNAR:** It is very hard to pick a few, so Stan and I have chosen Merriehill Hooligan (Medomak King Cobra x Curtain Call) because when he foaled, he had an uphill

Photos © Howard Schatzberg

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battle with color in the time of bays and browns. He was referred to as the orange horse. This orange horse certainly made people sit up and take notice. He loved the show ring, it was his stage and he performed for his audience every time, year after year.

Merriehill It's My Day (Merriehill Hooligan x Brentwood Elegance) was the only daughter of Hooligan, and she produced Merriehill Dusk To Dawn and Merriehill Great Day. Merriehill Dusk To Dawn (Holly Brook Stage Rage x Merriehill It's My Day) is a granddaughter of Merriehill Hooligan. Four of her get have shown so far at the Grand National, and all are world champions. They're beautiful, talented and wonderful examples of the Morgan breed (Merriehill Black Label GCH by Mizrahi, Merriehill After Hours GCH by Mizrahi, Merriehill Carry On by Mizrahi, and Merriehill Nighty Night by Cingate Revelation).

Merriehill Great Day (Stonecroft Byzantine x Merriehill It's My Day) is the dam of Merriehill Black Betty, a world champion sired by Astronomicallee; and Merriehill Soul Sister, sired by Town Assets, whose first foal, Merriehill Maleficent, sired by Merriehill After Hours GCH, became a multi-titled world and Grand National champion as a yearling.

And also never to be forgotten: Merriehill Home Stretch GCH (Tug Hill Whamunion x Futurity Chicago Whitesox x Merriehill Chicagoan), beautiful, talented, and another multi-titled world champion.

**MIKE CARPENTER:** I'm proud of MCS Bandini GCH (Liberation First Star x Carlyle Flying Colors) because he reeked quality from day one, and was absolutely beautiful. I led him to the World Junior Champion Stallion title as a yearling in 2006, and 11 years later, he won the World Junior Exhibitor Classic Pleasure Driving Championship with Ava Bender. He was slow to start in his training, but once he was finished, everything was fine from that point on.

I leased a Waseeka's Showtime daughter, Windy Hill Starlet, and bred her to Noble Flaire and got Take The Roses, now HVK Take The Roses. She was a good show horse and a great broodmare. One of her offspring is QVM Jocelyn Rose GCH, who is sired by Centerpiece.

And then there was Valpraigo (Saddleback Salute x Serenity City Lights). He was a really cool horse to be around. I gelded him as a young horse, and sold him as a five-year-old. When I moved back East, I found him in Jean



~ Paulette Bodnar ~  
Merriehill After Hours GCH  
& Merriehill Home Stretch GCH



~ Mike Carpenter ~  
HVK Take The Roses & MCS Bandini GCH



~ Mary Cockriel ~  
TRE Master Of Disguise & TRE Friday Buzz

Degutis' barn where the kids loved him and he loved the kids. One year at the Grand National, I watched him in a walk-trot class, and he was pinned Reserve World Champion. It brought tears to my eyes when I saw the name of a horse that I bred up on the Jumbotron in center ring.

**MARY COCKRIEL:** TRE Master Of Disguise (Stonecroft Masquerade x WTS Wing And A Prayer), TRE Miss Me (Faragamo GCH x AMHF Bewitched), TRE Friday Buzz (HVK Top Man x Belle Escada) and TRE Someday (Queen's Romeo x Belle Escada) are four of the horses we've bred that we are very proud of. Master Of Disguise is a multiple world and Grand National champion who is a perfect example of a present day Morgan horse. Friday Buzz has so much character and charisma, and Miss Me was bred with the purpose of producing a Western pleasure horse, and she is that—a top one. She started winning as a junior horse, and has continued in ladies and amateur classes.

**JONALYN GWINUP:** T-Towne Talk About Me (Whispering Whammunion x Pinehaven Ember), T-Towne Tiara (Noblerietty x Triple S My Oh My), T-Towne Super Chic (Springmill Superstition x Cingate Truly Chic), T-Towne Rory Rogers (Gulfwind Sir William x En Pointe), T-Towne Into The Night (The Ignitor x FRF Curtain Call) well represent what we breed for, as they all demonstrate Morgan type and disposition and are athletic in their different divisions. I love to figure out where they are best suited. Each will tell you, if you listen.

**SAMMI HAZEN:** I'm very proud of breeding Meet George Jetson GCH (Mizrahi x Sweet Georgia Brown), Evolution (HVK Courageous Flaire x Sweet Georgia Brown), Playmor's Ecco Domani (Mizrahi x High Stakes Brazen N Bold) and Playmors Prinz Of Bellair (Mizrahi x KIM's Bellegante). These horses have made such a great impact on the breed. They have all gone from the open division to the amateur division. They all have great Morgan type. When you watch these horses show, you know what breed they are and there is no mistaking it. I think that as Morgan breeders we should all be striving for that first and foremost. I think that our breed is really a breed that is enjoyed by so many families because they make such great horses for everyone, amateurs and junior exhibitors. All four of these horses went on to be shown by amateurs in their three- and four-

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year-old years, and all four have won world titles as three- and four-year-olds. They really are the family horse.

**JOHN HUFFERD:** My wife, Belle, and I have not only bred horses ourselves, but we are breeding advisers for several clients across the country. We have personally bred several nice horses. The most famous probably being the SpiceOLife Present Tense daughter Intense (out of SAR's Mephisto's Waltz). We were Margaret VanMeter's breeding advisers when she bred Graycliff Tony GCH (Mizrahi x Pompp And Pazazz), who was sold in utero to Jeff and Lynn Yelton of Graycliff LLC. Also we were breeding advisers for David and Paul Lengacher, on the breeding of Harlan's Star Material GCH (Liberation First Star x CMS Point Blank) and Millennium Force (Minion Millennium x Arboria Fortune).

**KURT HUFFERD:** I have in fact bred a few Morgans on my own—The Fashionista and Soft And Stunning are both examples of my program. I had the great honor of being a consultant to two AMHA Hall of Fame breeding programs—Springmill Morgans, owned by John and Patti Hughes; and Indian Creek Farm, owned by Russ and Jeanette Quilhot. I'm proud of many of the horses we bred for many different reasons. I am fortunate to have been a part of their lives as colts, developed their early show careers, and that they have all gone on to be loved by their people.

**ROBERT HUGHES:** The Noblest (Tug Hill Whamunition x Nobelle), Mastroianni (Mizrahi x KIM's Bellegante) and Faragamo (Mizrahi x Heaven Can Wait) are just a few of the horses I am proud to have bred. Noblest is out of one of my all-time favorite mares. He is beautiful, extremely up-headed, and has a very balanced trot. Mastroianni was foaled the same year as The Noblest, and from the time he was a weanling, he always looked special. He never went through a bad stage growing up, and always thought he looked like a world champion. Faragamo was very regal, and had the attitude that he thought he was special. He liked to stand up and pose. Ironically when I started him, he had the most talent and was sold as a two-year-old. He ended up being a beautiful Western pleasure horse.

I've also been a breeding advisor with Tomeri, SLB, and Dragonsmeade. I've helped



~ Jonalyn Gwinup ~  
T-Towne Rory Rogers &  
T-Towne Talk About Me GCH



~ Sammi Hazen ~  
Meet George Jetson GCH  
& Playmors Prinz Of Bellair



~ John Hufferd ~  
Intense

them on picking a stallion to cross with their mares, as well as buying young stock to show and eventually add to their breeding programs.

**DWAYNE KNOWLES:** Get Busy and Visual Addiction are two of the horses Mike Goebig and I are proud to have produced in our breeding program. Get Busy (Astronomicallee x So Vain) was everything we wanted in a show horse and now as a breeding horse. He has Morgan type and conformation, along with an amazing attitude and expression. His animation is natural and fluid. Having the opportunity to work his sire and dam makes it icing on the cake.

Visual Addiction (The Master's Touch x Triton Royal Dawn) is a mare we bred and raised. We leased Triton Royal Dawn with the hopes of her producing a filly. We wanted a daughter of The Master's Touch, so we combined the two bloodlines. Luck was on our side and we have Visual Addiction.

She has produced four foals [by Astronomicallee] for us so far, and they all have the breed characteristics we are looking for: talent, type, and attitude. Two of the four have become World and Reserve World Champions, and one is also producing another generation of top Morgans.

**LYNN PEEPLES:** I'm proud of the four World Champion Stallions I have bred: Pot Of Gold (Trija Mr Pepperpot x MI First Love), Man About Town LPS (Tug Hill Celebrity x MI First Love), Man In Motion (Man About Town LPS x Devan Melmore), and LPS The Boogie Man GCH (Man About Town LPS x Honeytree's Simply Unique). They have gone on to produce many world champions. Mares that I've bred have included City Kitty, U Two, LPS Out Of Bounds, Illicit Love, and Simple Dreams. They have many world championships between them and now they are producing world champions.

**DAVID RAND:** Jungle Love (LPS The Boogie Man GCH x HVK Heartbeat), Invitation Only (Queen's Soul Mate x CBMF Private Party), Booyah (BKC Valiant Star x Queen's Sweet Caroline), and Blurred Lines (Queen's Glory Days x TTMF French Enchantress) are a few significant horses I have bred. Each of these horses has been successful in their own right, but also possess what I look for in a top Morgan horse. These horses all share a common theme: quality and athleticism.

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Jungle Love, World Champion Mare, represents Morgan type and athleticism. Invitation Only, World Three-Year-Old Futurity Pleasure Driving Champion, represents quality and athleticism. Booyah, World Futurity Champion Yearling Colt, I'm proud to have bred a quality stud and to have sold him to be an instrumental breeding stallion in another program. Blurred Lines. World Three-Year-Old English Pleasure and World Three-Year-Old Futurity English Pleasure Champion, represents the epitome of a Morgan mare—incorporating attitude, athleticism, and quality.

**GERRY RUSHTON:** The horses Stacey Hennessy and I are very proud to have bred are: Lucky As Me GCH (CCR's Outrajus Corajus x Noblesse) who is a perfect combination of his sire and dam. Not only did he win a World Championship, but also he's produced three Oklahoma winners himself. Glory Days GCH (CCR's Outrajus Corajus x HVK Dreamscape) is what a Morgan should be. He is a star [World Champion] in the show ring and then he goes home and his people enjoy him there, too. He's honest, game, and kind. Still The Same (CCR's Outrajus Corajus x Noblesse) is another beautiful Oklahoma winner that did so with a junior exhibitor. State Of Grace (MLF Sharper Image x Bellamore) was a Reserve World Two-Year-Old Pleasure Driving Champion with me. We sold her and she also won in-hand. She was game, fun, and oozed personality!! All of these Morgans were and are great representatives of the breed.

**TMH: Is income from breeding helpful to running your training business?**

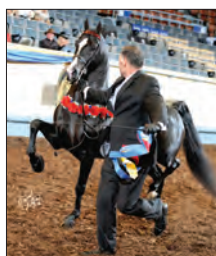
**PEGGY:** When I was running a public stable [1975-1999], the training stable supported the breeding horses. I believe it is quite difficult to make a breeding operation pay. Further, at Salem Farm we commit ourselves to ensuring the horses that we produce go on to productive lives. That often involves training them to a certain degree. If you are a public trainer and your homebred colt needs training, then you are turning away a paying customer for that stall and training time.

**PAULETTE:** The income from sales and stud fees does help quite a bit. I have always felt you would be safer in this business the more capable and flexible you became in all areas. It is



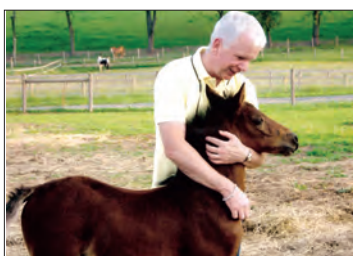
~ Kurt Hufferd ~

The Fashionista & Soft And Stunning



~ Robert Hughes ~

Mastroianni & The Noblest



~ Dwayne Knowles ~

Get Busy & Visual Addiction as a weanling, with Mike Goebig

sometimes helpful when you just have holes in your show lineup that you need to fill in order to maintain a competitive winning show string and to have top quality stock available to offer for sale.

**MIKE:** I look at breeding horses as more of a passion and hobby, than a business. It's expensive. But, yes, there have been times that I've sold a few and that income has helped balance the books, and given me money to improve my business with maintenance and upkeep on farm and show equipment. I try to follow Kari Beaton's [former co-owner of Hillock Farm] rule about not going into double digits of horse ownership.

**MARY:** Absolutely. When we've sold horses that we've bred, it's always good.

**JONALYN:** We don't breed enough to make a big impact to the training business income. My husband, Gayle, loves the babies so it is fun for him to foal and bring them along until it is my turn to bring them into the barn. We usually bring them in as coming two-year-olds. He does such a great job in handling them that by the time it is my turn, they are ready to go.

**SAMMI:** Absolutely. For us at PlayMor, the breeding has been the big breadwinner. Most trainers don't make much profit on board and training. Those fees are barely covered by the small amounts charged monthly. They almost all have something else that helps keep their business going; whether it is a breeding income or selling the foals that we have breed, or a lesson program. The entire reason we started the breeding program at PlayMor was to breed good Morgan horses, but also to offset the expense to help with running the farm. We have been fortunate to have been blessed with a great stallion, so his income really made it possible for us, as a family, to breed and show our horses.

**JOHN:** Belle and I enjoy breeding horses. We do not necessarily do it for the income. We say that, but we must admit the extra money coming in every once a while is very helpful to our business.

**KURT:** Yes! You are literally raising your own business! It lets you be the first to get your hands on great young horses that can be developed and assessed once they are of age. They may

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go on to be world champions and sell for six figures or they may be the perfect fit and fill a need for one of our customers in the barn which allows them to become another training horse. Some horses may never be a World Champion, but they still are able to find a job they can do and a person or family that loves them. I believe the reward is worth the risk. One of the many terrific things about the Morgan breed is that with our diversity, there is a place for every horse. As long as you aim to breed horses with great minds and quality, every horse can find a job he will excel at and people who love him!

**BOB:** Unfortunately, I ended up a hoarder, and kept too many horses that I bred. As part owner of Mizrahi, when he sold, he brought in income for all of us.

**DWAYNE:** The income produced from selling our offspring is always put right back into the farm for capital improvements and invested into other breeding options. So yes, we find it beneficial to be able to produce offspring that have appeal to the horse community. This income allows us to maintain and enhance the farm on a consistent basis.

**LYNN:** Yes, all income is helpful, but I like to use some of that income as “get ahead” money.

**DAVID:** Yes, the breeding income is beneficial to be able to put back into the business. The sale of those horses and being able to keep those quality horses that you have bred in your training program is advantageous.

**GERRY:** You really have to hit a home run occasionally to make it contribute much financially to the training business.

**TMH: Does being a trainer give you insight into breeding decisions?**

**PEGGY:** Once you’ve worked a good horse you appreciate the adage “great horses make great horse trainers.” And so begins the lifelong pursuit for the great horse. They are hard to buy and hard to breed, but it only takes one to suck you in. Trainers work various bloodlines and usually know the pros and cons of the major families. We know what bloodlines we go to when purchasing a specific type of horse. There is also a great deal of luck involved—just sayin!



~ Lynn Peeples ~

Man About Town LPS & Man In Motion



~ David Rand ~

Blurred Lines & Jungle Love GCH



~ Gerry Rushton ~

Lucky As Me GCH & Still The Same

**PAULETTE:** When you train you get to know what lines you work the best with and produce the type of horse that can make you stand out and complement each other. As breeders we are always looking to the future in making our crosses.

It is important to us to leave a mark on the breed that we have spent our lives working with. Yes, we have made our livings from these beautiful animals, but we also feel we have given back to the Morgan breed by breeding the best possible individuals we could who have and will go on to be important members of the Morgan family.

We love to hear when people say, “That must be a Merriehill horse.”

**MIKE:** Absolutely, I know what I like in a horse I’m training. I try to breed to a horse whose family has traits that I like. I also try to get rid of the traits I don’t like.

Sometimes I experiment when crossing a stallion and mare. But the bottom line is I have to be able to sell the offspring. I have to produce a horse that someone else will like. The horse has to be good enough so it can go on and be good for someone else. It’s always fun and rewarding for me to train a young show horse and then sell it and have it go on winning for years for new owners.

**MARY:** After we’ve worked horses from many different bloodlines, we like certain bloodlines and don’t like others. This does have influence on our breeding decisions.

**JONALYN:** I think what I look for in a stallion is not only conformation, but also disposition. I love a good thinking horse. So hopefully being a trainer gives me the ideas of who I want to breed to. Mostly Gayle likes a sire with good drive off the hocks and body type that looks like a Morgan.

**SAMMI:** Absolutely. I think that as a trainer, we learn the different traits of the different bloodlines, good and bad. Some crosses seem to work better together than others, and therefore I think we can help people make good choices for their mares. When someone comes to the farm and wants to breed to one of the stallions, one of the first things I want to know is the breeding of the mare. We try really hard to match up the right mares with the right stallions. Sometimes we get those few that just want to breed to one

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certain stallion, but most of the time they see the reasoning behind choosing one stallion or the other for their mare. I think that being trainers really allows us to know the strengths and weaknesses in the different bloodlines. At PlayMor, we believe that breeding is more about the gene pool. I believe that if you're wanting a particular horse because you want one that looks like him, then you should breed like gene pools not to different ones, and then hope for the best.

**JOHN:** I suppose being a trainer gives you a little insight on the personalities of the horses you have worked. The biggest advantage that we think we have is the 40 years of watching Morgan show horses perform in the ring. I can read a pedigree and see the good, the bad, and the ugly. I personally saw with my own eyes some of the great breeding horses of the '70s, '80s and '90s—now that's a real advantage!

**KURT:** The years of experience training many different families of horses gives a trainer loads of insight. We spend so much one-on-one time with all of the horses we train that we are able to gain a real understanding of which traits are more dominant in certain bloodlines verses other bloodlines. Although it doesn't always hold true, you start seeing patterns in the different families. You start to learn which bloodlines tend to cross better on others.

The fun part of breeding horses is that unknown factor. You may think you know how a foal will be because of its family, but in the end, it is a gamble to which only Mother Nature knows the true answer!

**BOB:** Yes, to some degree. There have been times when I've had a young horse in training, and another time, I trained his sire and/or dam, and grand-sire or grand-dam. So I was familiar with this young horse's traits, abilities and personality. I knew what he might need in training and showing.

**DWAYNE:** I think you need to have a certain amount of luck. I prefer to look at the characteristics of the stallion and mare, and go from there. If you have a tough one, I might search for a sire that I know will throw foals with a level temperament and try to compare the two. Take some of each and hope for the best.

**LYNN:** Yes, I think working with different bloodlines you know the strength and weakness of the lines. So when thinking of breeding, you can choose a line to improve the other's shortcomings.

**DAVID:** Yes, being a trainer is 100 percent helpful when making breeding decisions. I want to breed the type of horses I want to work and show. I want to be successful in the show ring, so I aim to breed the quality of horse that will keep me successful.

**GERRY:** Yes, absolutely. We know what horses are like to work. We see talent early, and we see if they want to do this. We see so much when we work with a variety that comes through our hands. You start to see similarities and you figure out what you like to work, what you do best with, and maybe what you would rather stay away from. We try to breed horses that we think we'll enjoy working most, because we aren't getting paid to work them. ■



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