

# Tashota's Warrior

*A Little Horse With a Big Reason*

By Holly Butterman



|                             |                             |                            |                          |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 64450 Serendipity Storm B   | 18882 Applevale Cadence     | 10427 Select Of Wind-Crest | 8969 Peccos              |
|                             |                             | 010161 Harmony Brook       | 05202 Janice             |
|                             | 017527 Potvenir B Bonnet    | 12097 Windcrest Bob B      | 8843 Upwey Ben Don       |
|                             |                             | 012169 Highland Gay Bonny  | 08969 Colony Maid        |
|                             |                             | 8361 Senator Graham        | 8843 Upwey Ben Don       |
|                             | 12693 Kings-Haven Senator   | 98552 Choquita             | 08028 Bald Mt Carol      |
| 029584 Cambridge Velvetrose |                             | 10387 Mickey Finn          | 11012 Gay Dancer         |
|                             | 020378 Cambridge Dusty Rose | 012016 Topside Tangerine   | 09203 Bonny Ellen        |
|                             |                             |                            | 6132 Senator Knox        |
|                             |                             |                            | 04736 Fanita             |
|                             |                             |                            | 8514 Pride Of King       |
|                             |                             |                            | 06181 Cinnamon Queen     |
|                             |                             |                            | 8508 King Mick           |
|                             |                             |                            | 05267 Jubilee Joy        |
|                             |                             |                            | 10243 Conoco             |
|                             |                             |                            | 010415 Echo's Bridlewoot |

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On father's day weekend Snowview Morgan's Holly Butterman posted a headshot of 28-year-old Tashota's Warrior on Facebook. Holly had found the stallion with rare bloodlines and shipped a mare to him for breeding several years earlier. The horse in that photo, as you will see, has the unmistakable look of the Serendipity/Porvenir bloodlines. We asked Holly "who is this?" She commenced the story of survival and triumph that follows.

Early in the summer of 1984, the very fancy and extremely well-bred colt Tashota's Warrior (Serendipity Storm B x Cambridge Velvetrose) was transported with hope and pride by his breeders to the Circle J Morgan show. There he won the weanling colt class and was Reserve Junior Champion Stallion. Later, in the fall of the same year, his sire, Serendipity Storm B, was crowned Pleasure Driving World Champion and English Pleasure World Champion, an incredible feat for one horse in one year. Gene and Virginia Cabral, who lived in Colorado at the time, had a very big and a very small champion developing from their breeding program and dreams for the future. Storm B was known across America for his breathtaking beauty and that big, ground-covering extended trot that made him stand out in a sea of contenders that world championship year in Oklahoma City. Warrior was out of Cambridge Velvetrose, who in her own right was royally bred. She was sired by a Senator Graham son and out of a Mickey Finn/Congo bred mare. She also produced a full sister to Warrior, Tashota's Little Fawn, foaled in 1985.

Time passes. Virginia moved from Colorado to Nevada to be closer to her family. Virginia was dispersing all the Morgans that she and her beloved husband Gene had so diligently bred and raised, adored and shown for all of their adult lives. Once a very respected and appreciated program, now it was time to be done, and there was one last very special little stallion who still needed a home. Warrior was indeed a little horse, but he had a big reason. As a yearling he broke his hind leg and spent almost eight weeks in a cast. Virginia was heartbroken but determined for him to have a good life, even if he was never going to see the show ring again. The leg healed and was crooked but Warrior learned how to keep



Photo © AVIS  
**Opposite page:** The headshot that appeared on Facebook and got this article started. **This page, top:** Tashota's Warrior, the weanling, as he appeared in a 1984 The Morgan Horse article on Circle J All Morgan; **Bottom:** A glamor shot of the stallion at the age of 14.

himself balanced and still could trot up a storm (so to speak). He was never trained to ride or drive—he never wore a bit in his mouth. He bred one mare for her and that was his life, happy for him, albeit a little sad for the Cabrals because he never got the chance to grow into the horse of their dreams. Mrs. Cabral said to me, "I loved Warrior to death but was sad I couldn't keep him."

Then, 16 years ago Marilyn Esteb of Stone Pine Farm in Colorado was looking for a teaser gelding. There was an older stallion that Bob Kellert and Mary Cockriel knew about who was available due to a family situation. It was the same stallion for which Virginia so deeply wanted to find a forever home. Marilyn bought him sight unseen. What she described next, in her own words, caught her totally unprepared. "Bob Kellert arrived with my new addition and when he unloaded him—well, I could not believe how beautiful he was, curvy, typey, with a forelock down to his nose, a dark bay, almost black coat." She continued, "He was so incredibly beautiful with huge kind eyes and the most beautiful long croup. Even with his leg problems, he was a beautiful mover and I immediately fell in love with Tashota's Warrior!" That broken leg was the first of a couple very challenging health issues Warrior was going to face.

Warrior's job at Marilyn's farm was to help tease mares during the breeding season, and he did have the opportunity to be bred and produced six offspring. From those there were three mares, three colts, three chestnuts and three bay. The first was a colt named Tashota's Wild Fire, out of Roy-El's Paradise, bred and owned by the Cabrals in 1989. It was a full ten years before he produced his next foal, the second, a daughter named Stone Pine Xena out of the beautifully bred Casland Juliette and sold to Cindy and Scott Dulaney. The next was also a mare, TPR

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Penny Lane, out of RRG Keepsake, and she belongs to Rich and Joyce Fiorella. Stone Pine Zachary, out of Lone Pine Starlite, was bred by Marilyn and sold to Therese Marumoto. Woodmore's Native Son was out of the mare Destined To B and loved by Anne Kelly. The last registered offspring was a dark bay filly, Laila Ali, out of the great producer LCS Fine Crystal. Sadly, she suffered a spinal injury that ultimately took her from us at the age of two. I was blessed to be the one to breed and raise Laila and she taught me so much in that short time, I hear from others that their Warrior offspring are (like their dad) charismatic, stunningly beautiful and athletic. They are "characters" and have very definite personalities and tend to make everyone smile.

Warrior has been robust and healthy most of his 16 years with Marilyn—though he did have a life-threatening bout of Pigeon Fever in his sheath and during a particularly cold winter he "hard ground foundered." Marilyn's vet wanted to use typical treatment methods and she found Keith Seeley from Georgia, known for his work and success with foundered horses. He flew out to treat Warrior three times and he's never had sore feet since. More evidence of what a vital and determined horse he is.

But here's the best part of Warrior's story. He has lived a pretty typical life at Stone Pine. A stall and turnout run, he is often hand grazed and sometimes turned out on his own special "woodland" created by the farm person, Zig. He was always a handful, maybe because he was so beautiful when you took him out. He would rush to challenge if there was another stallion close by. While he has done his job as tease stallion at SPF he is a handful of a horse, even in a small suit. This past winter Marilyn talked with two women in the area about doing some work with her herd and knew that Warrior needed to be included.

Justinn Harrison took on the task and was immediately drawn to the little dark stallion that for all the world looked like a shaggy pony with his "soft" back and big eyes and little ears. Justinn told me, "He kinda spoke to me from the very first day." She likened him to folks who

end up in retirement homes and don't have regular family visits—"they quietly go through the day and eat and sleep and don't bother anyone." She knew that he had lived most of his adult life with a

rear leg defect that left him with a rather twisted lower fetlock and foot. He had compensated for that and learned how to get around, but it was awkward. In a few short months, she taught him manners and patience and most important, where the ground is. Warrior has gained a new and wonderful element of being grounded and this has given him a new way to look at his world and respect Justinn as his partner. In return, he has shown her a desire to learn more. So onward they go! For the first time in his life he has learned to lunge and wears the back pad. He has had a bit and bridle on and he knows all the basics of a two-year-old. Sound corny? Well, imagine turning that hairy pony into the proud and confident, but now respectful and very beautiful, stallion that he has transformed into.

Every session is started with grooming and bodywork, where Justinn stretches and grounds Warrior and asks him what he wants to do that day. The previous life of the little stallion who was a lot to handle has (in a very short time just from March until June, 2012) become a life of walking the fences with other horses on the other side, trips to the indoor and up the hill to "his woods" and out and about in places no one else has taken him before. Now he does that because he is confident and he relies on Justinn to keep him focused.

"I love Warrior too; he's a very special little man. There is so much truth in the old saying 'We do not stop playing because we get old—we get old because we stop playing.' So, we will play as long as he wants!" She also refers to him as "A world class smooch" because he likes to give kisses and wouldn't think of hurting her or anyone—he has a kind heart.

The pictures speak volumes and Warrior looks forward to her visits. Even at 28 you can teach an older handsome horse a new trick or two. Justinn ended our phone conversation sharing with me that she hoped to teach Warrior to drive this summer if he continues to progress. How cool is that? ■



**This page:** At work and play today with trainer Justinn Harrison. **Opposite page:** The look of ages in the eyes of Tashota's Warrior (photos © Marilyn Esteb).

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