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SIMPLY MASERATI

THE UNCOMMON DENOMINATOR

By Stephen Kinney

The sire Simply Maserati is an influential—though lesser known—name in Morgan show horse breeding today. The black stallion who sired 131 get may be a common denominator in many world champion pedigrees but what makes his contribution “uncommon” in the genetic mix is that he is a near total outcross to the concentrated show horse bloodlines of today.

Simply Maserati's persistent place in the pedigrees of champions merits attention. The much-lauded reigning World Champion Stallion Jus' Sayin' descends in direct male lineage. He does so through his sire Dragonsmeade Axios, himself a world champion performer, heir to the title herd sire at the Fu family's prolific breeding program, and a grandson of Simply Maserati. The other man of the hour at Dragonsmeade, Dragonsmeade Spectre,

ABOVE: Simply Maserati under saddle (1) and in harness with Jennifer Panek (Keuhn) (2); his sire, Dancity Sojourn (3); and grandsire Stoneholm Taliesin (4). Trophy's Jade (5) is one of the two Trophy sons in his dam's pedigree. (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Bob Moseder)



AND THE BEAT GOES ON FAMILY

And The Beat Goes On, with Iann Fu Longenecker (1), and get Dragonsmeade Black Dragon GCH (2), Dragonsmeade Eltanin (3), The Piano Man (4), Dragonsmeade Well Played (5), DMH Back In Black (6), and Dragonsmeade Utopia (7). (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Stevie Bagdasarian)

traces in tail female line to the important Simply Maserati daughter Simply Apropos. When asked what horses from the pedigree he saw personified in the 2019 World Champion Stallion Queen's Sebastian CH, the horse's breeder Pete Hendrick mentioned Lamborghini In Black. That son of Simply Maserati is the sire of Sebastian's maternal granddam, Queens Starfire. RWF Dralion, the stallion who sold not once, but twice in 2021 (reportedly for significant prices) is out of a daughter of Simply Maserati and he is the sire of the broodmare Sangre SnapNBlack who sold at auction for \$80,000 at the Buckeye Sale last March.

If you were an exhibitor in the 1990s, a walk past the Oklahoma stall fronts of Bob Hughes and Rock Walker's California operation was, quite frankly, intimidating. The world and Grand National champion coolers, plaques, and tricolors were so plentiful you had to count them by the dozens. It was easy, as a result, to view the stable as home to so much horse show activity that one underestimated the beehive of breeding going on behind the stall drapes. In an interview a couple of years back breeder Sally Longenecker referred to trainer Bob Hughes as a "savant" of Morgan pedigrees. With Bob acting as a de facto CEO, his clients became a virtual consortium whose breeding efforts continue to impact the Morgan marketplace today.

"When you look back," Bob remarks, "so many Hall of Fame Broodmares were part of our program." A quick scan of names brings up HVK Obsidian, HVK Ancient Cry, JLS Deer Sal, Nobelle, and others, all Hall of Famers and one-time residents of Rock Walker Stables (later BLACKRIDGE). "I was lucky to have customers who wanted to show, but who also wanted to breed," he says.

Simply Maserati was a successful example of those efforts. Simply Maserati's breeders are, in fact, Rock Walker and Robert Hughes. The stallion is sired by Dancity Sojourn, a show horse from their string owned and shown at the time by clients James Hangle and Tracy Fietz. The Dancity prefix belonged to Mark and Linda Hanson, also clients of the stable. Sojourn was all Morgan in character, conformation, and trotting ability, winning junior horse titles in Oklahoma in both park harness and saddle, and English pleasure and pleasure driving later in life. He was gelded after siring only 16 foals, including the broodmares Beloved Bettina (Simply Maserati's full sister and dam of World Champion Jumper CBMF Follow Your Heart) and Dances With Destiny (dam of 2011 Junior Exhibitor English Pleasure World Champion Dragonsmeade Courante). Sojourn's sire was Stoneholm Taliesin, whom Rock Walker rode to the English Pleasure World Championship in 1992. Taliesin was sired by Waseeka's Showtime, meaning Simply Maserati's only cross to Waseeka's Nocturne is in direct tail male line and comes



DRAGONSMEADE AXIOS FAMILY

Dragonsmeade Axios, with Iann Fu Longenecker (1), and get Dragonsmeade Sea Dragon (2), Jus' Sayin' (3), Dragonsmeade Vendome GCH (4), Dragonsmeade Adele (5), and Burklund High Octane (6). (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Brian Yoder)

through a son other than Waseeka's In Command. Taliesin's dam, Wales Farm Gidget, was sired by the Orcland Vigildon son UVM Highlight and out of UVM Gale (an actual daughter of Tutor), all Government and Old New England breeding. Taliesin was owned by James Hangle and Tracy Fietz, and sire of 58 foals, ten of whom carry the Hanson's Dancity prefix, again showing the tight knit activity in the group of friends and like-minded breeders.

Simply Maserati's dam, Sioux's Hot Tamale (Jade's Hot Shot x Rhed's Markka), did not accrue a world championship show record but the breed is fortunate Rock Walker and Bob Hughes leased her as a broodmare. In addition to giving us the son who is the topic of this article, she is also the dam of Prada (by HVK Bell Flaire), a Grand National and world titled classic pleasure winner, and Bocelli (by Beethoven), sire of the world champion siblings Cavalli GCH, Zanetti GCH, and Dragonsmeade Varvatos GCH, all out of Donatella. Hot Tamale's sire, Jade's Hot Shot, was bred by the late Hal Hoover, a longtime proponent of the Trophy bloodline. He was sired by Trophy's Jade and out of a Trophy granddaughter. This double dose of Trophy is the only close linebreeding among Simply Maserati's recent relatives. On the other hand, Hot Tamale's dam, Rhed's Markka, was dyed-in-the-wool old California bloodlines, sired by US Menmar, a horse that brought Government breeding to the West, and out of a mare rich with Morgan ranching names like Raven Chief, Headlight Morgan (twice), Linsley, and Querido.

Bob Hughes shares firsthand memories of living and working with these horses. "Stoneholm Taliesin was by [Waseeka's] Show-time, so he was beautiful. The Hansons delivered him to us at a horse show and he got off the trailer as rank as could be. When we got him home, he turned out to be a really nice horse to work and a nice show horse. He was the start of that particular bloodline. His son Dancity Sojourn had a great attitude and was big, black, and had a bouncy trot."

As always with breeders, it is the mare in the mix that seems to inspire detail. Simply Maserati's dam, Sioux's Hot Tamale, Bob says, "was by Jade's Hot Shot who was registered brown but, when you saw him, really looked black. For her time, 'Molly' was extremely upheaded. She won a bunch of classes beating good horses just because she was so much more upheaded than the rest. Rock and I had a lifetime lease on her. Jim and Tracy had leased Yellow Iris June and bred that mare to Sojourn the same year. Tamale had a black colt. And June had a beautiful bay filly. I loved the filly. She was stretchy. And the colt was black and not as stretchy. So we traded. We got the mare Passion, who was shown in Western pleasure, and Jim and Tracy got [Simply] Maserati."

The pedigree of Simply Maserati makes for interesting analysis, suggesting reasons why his is both a powerful influence and a welcome contribution to contemporary bloodlines. With the



LAMBORGHINI IN BLACK FAMILY

Lamborghini In Black, with Hannah Kelley (1), and get Ledgefield La Mia Stella GCH (2), Mendon Twist Of Fate GCH (3), Diablo In Red (4), AW Minutes To Midnight GCH (5), and Queens Starfire (6). (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Shane Shiflet)

exception of the two crosses to Trophy in Simply Maserati's maternal grandsire Jade's Hot Shot, no Morgan sires or dams are repeated into the fourth and fifth generations. Here's an example of how that works. In the fifth generation of the pedigree the eight great-great-grandfathers are Waseeka's Nocturne, UVM Highlight, Upwey Ben Don, Greathill Hampton, Trophy, Paris Trophy, Mentor, and Red Flash. The point being that, unlike many modern Morgan show horse pedigrees, Simply Maserati's is not concentrated or inbred, but widely samples Government, Lippitt, Brunk, and California's historic ranching lines. That, however, accounts only for his more contemporary relatives.

"Ancient" inbreeding is a term used to describe how breed characteristics are set. The Morgan breed presents a great example of ancient inbreeding when, more than 200 years ago, Justin Morgan's sons were bred to his daughters and the progeny were bred to each other. It fixed both the phenotype and genotype of the Morgan breed. Simply Maserati's pedigree has similar credentials of ancient inbreeding. In the seventh generation and beyond are 42 crosses to the Government stallion Bennington (General Gates x Mrs Culvers), more than 20 of those crosses coming through Mansfield (Bennington x Artemisia). In Simply Maserati's pedigree the frequency of these Government names comes not only from Eastern relatives, but stallions like US Menmar, Querido, and Sonfield, who became so prominent out West. General Gates, his

son Bennington, and Bennington's son Mansfield were the Morgan stallions the Government Farm used to establish the type of horse it would produce in the early decades of the 20th century.

(I consulted with Chris and Janet Morris for this article. They know their way around pedigree research. They note that Simply Maserati has a coefficient of inbreeding of 4.5 percent. For comparison, we looked at the pedigree of a 2021 world champion in one of the high stepping divisions who was intensely linebred to Waseeka's In Command—10 crosses in eight generations through Mizrahi, HVK Belle Flaire, Noble Flaire, Carlyle Command, and Nobelle, with additional crosses to Waseeka's Nocturne through other sources. His coefficient of inbreeding, at 9.31 percent, more than doubled that of Simply Maserati's. Chris and Janet added that some of the old Government pedigrees, with the crosses mentioned above, could hit 20 percent. Comparing these figures illustrates the degree to which Simply Maserati blood—his low coefficient of inbreeding—offers a near total outcross.)

So, yes, Simply Maserati injected into pedigrees an assortment of lesser-known names when crossed on mares of the more saturated bloodlines found in the contemporary show stock. His reliability to pass on his desirable qualities, however, came from the commonality among his ancient relatives. He brings the past forward. The fact his line produces a lot of black is a bonus in today's marketplace.



CRD BUGATTI FAMILY

CRD Bugatti, with Shannon Connor (1), and get LC Amazing Spiderman (2) and Bentayga (3). (photos © Jon McCarthy, Howard Schatzberg)

Simply Maserati was born in 1991 and, as mentioned, breeders Rock Walker and Bob Hughes traded him for a half-sister with breeders James Hangley and Tracy Fietz. However, that meant the black colt was still “in the family” and would eventually show under the Hangley-Fietz-Rock Walker Stable banner. In 1994, Simply Maserati was Reserve World Champion Park Harness Three-Year-Old and the next year Reserve World Champion Park Saddle Four-Year-Old. In 1996, while he was being campaigned by new owners Nicole and Jennifer Panek, Rock Walker took Simply Maserati back into the Open Park Saddle World Championship and won the reserve title behind Judy Whitney and Nobility. Simply Maserati broke the string of reserve world championships when he and Jennifer Panek (Keuhn) triumphed as Amateur Park Saddle World Champions in 1998 under the direction of Luman Wadhams. They also won both the Grand National Youth Park Harness and Park Saddle Finals in 1996.

“I never thought I’d get to own a horse like “Spider,” Jennifer Keuhn says. “When I was young, my dream was to have a black horse. When we went to California to look, it was love at first sight. He was definitely a show horse, but so kind. He was the easiest. He just wanted to do a good job and was a people pleaser. Later I showed his son [JNP Simply] Delorean and he was the same horse to ride. They spoiled you. You never had to work for it. When I had riding students of my own and they reached a goal, their reward was to ride Spider. He was so safe for them, but he still put on a show.”

Bob Hughes says “Simply Maserati got his mom’s neck, very upheaded. And her hind end. She was so good behind we had to be careful she didn’t look like she was going downhill when we drove her. Simply Maserati appeared to have more motion than he actually did, and that was because of his attitude. And he was black. He had so many things going for him.”

As successful as Simply Maserati was as a show horse, it was his two earliest sons that would focus even more attention his way. And The Beat Goes On and Lamborghini In Black had Morgan show horse lovers talking from coast to coast after their earliest show ring appearances. Both were from the mare JLS Deer Sal (Waseeka’s Moonshot x Deerfield Ruthie by UVM Flash) and are among that mare’s offspring that put her in the Broodmare Hall of Fame.

Spectacularly, And The Beat Goes On (“Bud”) came out as a three-year-old at Morgan Medallion in Santa Barbara prior to being named Three-Year-Old Park Harness World Champion in 1998. By the next year he had been sold to the Fu family and, with Iann Fu Longenecker at the lines, was crowned Amateur Park Harness World Champion in 1999 at only four years old, a win he so notably repeated in 2001, 2002, and 2003.

Both Bob Hughes and Iann Fu Longenecker repeat the story that when Rock and Bob sold the horse they made the completely honest statement they could assure his buyers of his show ring credentials, but not of his breeding potential. History has proven that caveat unnecessary as And The Beat Goes On is the sire of 85 offspring, many of which are black. The line through And The Beat Goes On is, by far, the most prolific of those going back to Simply Maserati, owing to the many opportunities the stud had with the Dragonsmeade mares. He is the sire of notable world, Grand National, and regional champions DMH Back In Black, Dragonsmeade Carnaros, The Piano Man GCH, Dragonsmeade Odin, Dragonsmeade Well Played, Dragonsmeade Onyx, and others. The cross with World Champion Mare HVK Obsidian (HVK Bell Flaire x HVK Dragon Fly) proved so magical that Iann repeated it several times. The results include full siblings Dragonsmeade Axios, Dragonsmeade Black Dragon GCH, Dragonsmeade Eltanin (all three Oklahoma winners), and the now three-year-old mare Dragonsmeade Utopia.

Of the stallion she first showed and then crossed on mares, Iann says, “Bud is reliable for Morgan type, that beautiful shoulder, and length of leg. [Simply] Maserati was called ‘Spider’ for a reason! He had a great length of leg and Bud inherited that. And that gorgeous head and cute little ears.”

The Dragonsmeade herd is also home to daughters of Mizrahi and his sire HVK Bell Flaire. When asked if she turned to Bud as an outcross, Iann is candid. “Initially, I wasn’t consciously doing that. I was trying things. But we had Bell Flaire daughters, we’d cross them to Bud, and it was magic. They ooze quality. I think the Bud daughters are going to be important producers. I get calls all the time wanting daughters. We have Bud daughters we will never sell.”

Bud’s son, Dragonsmeade Axios, is chief sire at the farm



SIMPLY APROPOS FAMILY

Dragonsmeade Ibarra (1) and her offspring Dragonsmeade Spectre (2), Dragonsmeade Mighty Quinn (3), Dragonsmeade Kept Secret (4), and Dragonsmeade Belle Nuit (5); The Thrill Of It All LBR (6) is a Simply Apropos grandson through his dam (her daughter) Dash Of Spice.

(photos © Stevie Bagdasarian, Shane Shiflet, Howard Schatzberg, Stuart Vesty)

whose prefix he carries. To date, he has sired 58 foals for both his own and other breeders, with a very high percentage of show ring champions. From his first foal crop in 2010 came a son who would set the tone, Dragonsmeade Sea Dragon (x Christinia Della Rose), who won world titles as a junior English pleasure and driving horse with trainer Susan Morey before establishing his own career as a significant young sire. Fast forward to 2021 when Axios' two-year-old son Jus' Sayin' (x Brenda Starr) became the unanimous World Champion Stallion for breeders and owners Phil and Peggy Alderman of Salem Farm. Among Axios' winning get carrying the Dragonsmeade prefix are Kept Secret, Vendome, Well Played, Cloissone, and Provenance, to name only a few.

Expectations were high when Bud's full brother, Lamborghini In Black, hit the show ring. The stallion, born in 1997, exceeded those expectations. With Bob Hughes driving, "Luigi" took back-to-back titles in Oklahoma, winning Futurity Park Harness Two-Year-Old World Champion in 1999 followed by world championships for his age group as a three- and four-year-old. The last two were under the new ownership of Robin and Robert Veghte's Mendonhall Morgans. Health issues sidelined Luigi for a while. Then, at the 2006 New England Regional, the Veghte's trainer, Rick Lane, rode him to win the Park Saddle Novice class

and Luigi began his domination of that division. After the class, David Rand tapped his friend Rick on the shoulder and asked, "is he for sale?" He was, and no one ever looked back. His new owner, Grace Steere, took the Amateur Park Saddle Championship victory pass under the lights at New England before riding Luigi to consecutive Amateur Park Saddle Reserve World Championships in 2008 and 2009. Lamborghini changed hands again when he was purchased by Dan and Leslie Kelley and gelded for daughter Hannah to show. In 2010, Hannah rode him to the Junior Exhibitor Park Saddle World Championship. That same year trainer David Rand earned his first win of the Park Saddle World Championship atop Lamborghini.

While Lamborghini In Black was known primarily as a show horse, he did sire 35 offspring. Those who followed in his championship steps include Queens Starfire (granddam of multiple world champion Queen's Sebastian CH), Ledgefield La Mia Stella GCH, Diablo In Red, AW Minutes To Midnight GCH, Unbreakable Bond, and Mendon Twist Of Fate GCH.

As a breeding stallion, the Simply Maserati son CRD Bugatti may well be an underutilized asset for the Morgan breed. His dam, Surprise Party, has one cross to Waseeka's In Command through her maternal grandsire, World Champion Stallion Carlyle



Patchwork Simply Amazin (1) and son RWF Dralion (2). (left photo © Howard Schatzberg)

Command. The rest of the pedigree is rich in outcross bloodlines to Beamington, Elm Hill Star Leader, and Bar-T Invader. Typey and talented, CRD Bugatti was crowned 2008 Park Saddle Reserve World Champion when only four years old. He is owned by the Connor family and resides with his lifetime trainers at Arcuri Stables. Though he is the sire of only six registered get, two of them are world champions which is quite a high number if you are calculating percentages. His son, Bentayga, was Amateur Western Pleasure World Champion and Open Western Pleasure Reserve World Champion in 2021 with his owner Victoria Walz riding. CRD Bugatti is also the sire of LC Amazing Spiderman whose many titles include World Champion Park Harness with Nikki Woodworth-Cruz on the lines.

Tim Arcuri praises the temperament of Bugatti's offspring, saying, "they are unbelievably trainable. Our grooms wish we had more Bugatti babies in the barn, they take to everything so easily. We broke Bentayga as a two-year-old and he felt like he was fully trained when we got on him. We could have shown him that same year." Tim also remarks, "their joints and legs are built to handle work. It's their structure. We don't spend a lot of money with vets." CRD Bugatti stands at stud at Arcuri Stables. "His semen is incredible," Tim adds. There is also frozen semen on both And The Beat Goes On and Lamborghini In Black.

Another son from Simply Maserati, LVM The Black Ace, foaled in 2004 and owned by Morningstar Morgans, is the sire of 186 registered foals. His dam is 1999 World Champion Mare HVK Crystal Bay (Noble Flaire x HVK Crystalmarch, a maternal half-sister to HVK Courageous Flaire).

Other significant lines to Simply Maserati descend from his highly productive daughters. Simply Apropos was the "other" foal from the stallion's first crop in 1995 and she has

belonged to Dragonsmeade for most of her life. "We bought her to be a broodmare," Iann Fu Longenecker says. In that role, Simply Apropos has an impressive record. Iann calls Apropos' daughter Dragonsmeade Ibarra (by Bocelli) "one of our most valued mares. She brings in a lot of spice and that comes from Sioux's Hot Tamale." She is referring to the fact that Hot Tamale is the dam of both Bocelli and Simply Maserati, so Ibarra has a double dose of that legendary hock action. Ibarra is the dam of the titled offspring Dragonsmeade Mighty Quinn CH, Dragonsmeade Kept Secret, and Dragonsmeade Dark'NStormy. Dragonsmeade Spectre, Apropos' multiple-world champion son by Dragonsmeade Icon, is the next-in-line herd sire at the farm and Iann says, "Spectre's babies remind me a lot of Simply Apropos, with their long, hinge necks."

Simply Apropos' dam line is also breeding forward through her daughter Dash Of Spice (by Beethoven). She is the dam of The Thrill Of It All LBR, a stallion who caused excitement when he came to public attention as the last son of Arboria Noble Victor. The Thrill Of It All LBR now stands at stud at Alena Nicholson's Kyalami Farm.

Patchwork Simply Amazin (Simply Maserati x HollyBrook Amazin Grace) was a dramatically elegant show mare with world and Grand National titles in park saddle. When bred to Dragonsmeade Icon she produced RWF Dralion, the upheaded black stallion popular in the heartland of Amish breeders. He sold twice in 2021, reportedly for high dollar figures, and is the sire of 55 registered foals including Sangre SnapNBlack, a broodmare who brought an auction price of \$80,000 in 2021. Jonathon Fisher, the new owner of RWF Dralion, says "I was drawn to Dralion the first time I laid eyes on him, from his big eyes and tiny ears to his long, upright neck, and amazing conformation. It all spoke of a superb breeding stallion. The next thing I noticed was how



ALL IN THE FAMILY

BRMF Lailani's Fireball GCH (1), BRMF Final Explosion (2), DM Bugatti Royale (3), VDM One More Time CH (4), Tomeri The Regalest GCH (5), RJMF Belle Of The Blvd (6), and Ultras Special Diva (7). (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Shane Shiflet)

he stamps every one of his foals with all these qualities. I know he has something positive to contribute to the breed. We hope to show Dralion in 2022 if his breeding commitments permit." The stallion's trainer, Reese Richey adds, "The Dralion offspring are by far some of the most trainable, show-worthy prospects a trainer could ask for."

Other Simply Maserati daughters who have produced show ring winners include Graywood's Morgase (x Salem Showgirl), dam of World Champion Roadster VDM One More Time CH (by MEM Bacardi); Soul Sister (x Salem In Excess), dam of the equitation gelding RWF Perfect World CH (by DBA Street Talk); Tomeri Etoile Riviera (x Med-E-Oka French Riviera), dam of Three-Year-Old Pleasure Driving World Champion Tomeri The Regalest GCH (by The Noblest); SPR Diva (x Vive La Difference), dam of Ultras Special Diva GCH (by Ultras Special Agent), World Champion Junior Classic Pleasure Driving; and Lailani (x AMF Alexis), dam of BRMF Lailani's Fireball GCH and BRMF Final Explosion, both by Harlan's Star Material and both world title holders in English pleasure. The Simply Maserati daughter Riesca (x Paradigm First Amendment) has produced three beautiful Western pleasure winners for The Morgan Horse Farm, namely RJMF Belle Of The Blvd (by GLB Bell Pepper); RJMF Zappa CH (by ZZ Top); and RJMF Simply Defined (by SYP High Definition GCH).

Get of Simply Maserati who have been enduring and successful show horses include SLB Andiamo GCH, Dragonsmeade Divine MissM, Mantic Diva, Match Box GCH, DM Bugatti Royale, and Whispering Wild Flower, to name a few.

Bob Hughes bred Simply Maserati, and worked his sire, dam, siblings, and get. He brings the perspective of both breeder and trainer when considering the stallion's place in the breed. Bob observes, "I would totally say Simply Maserati brings Trophy into the mix. You look at I Will Command and Wham Bam Command, they are sons of Waseeka's In Command, but they are both out of the Trophy daughter Trophy's Corrigan. When In Command got so prominent, we got away from Trophy blood. But the magic was in the Trophy/In Command cross. That is what Simply Maserati blood is doing when crossed on these mares."

The evidence supports Bob's conclusion. The blood of Simply Maserati is an outcross in the pedigrees of so many notable, contemporary Morgan show and breeding horses. As results are proving it is an outcross that involves no concessions in terms of talent, temperament, or type. ■

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