

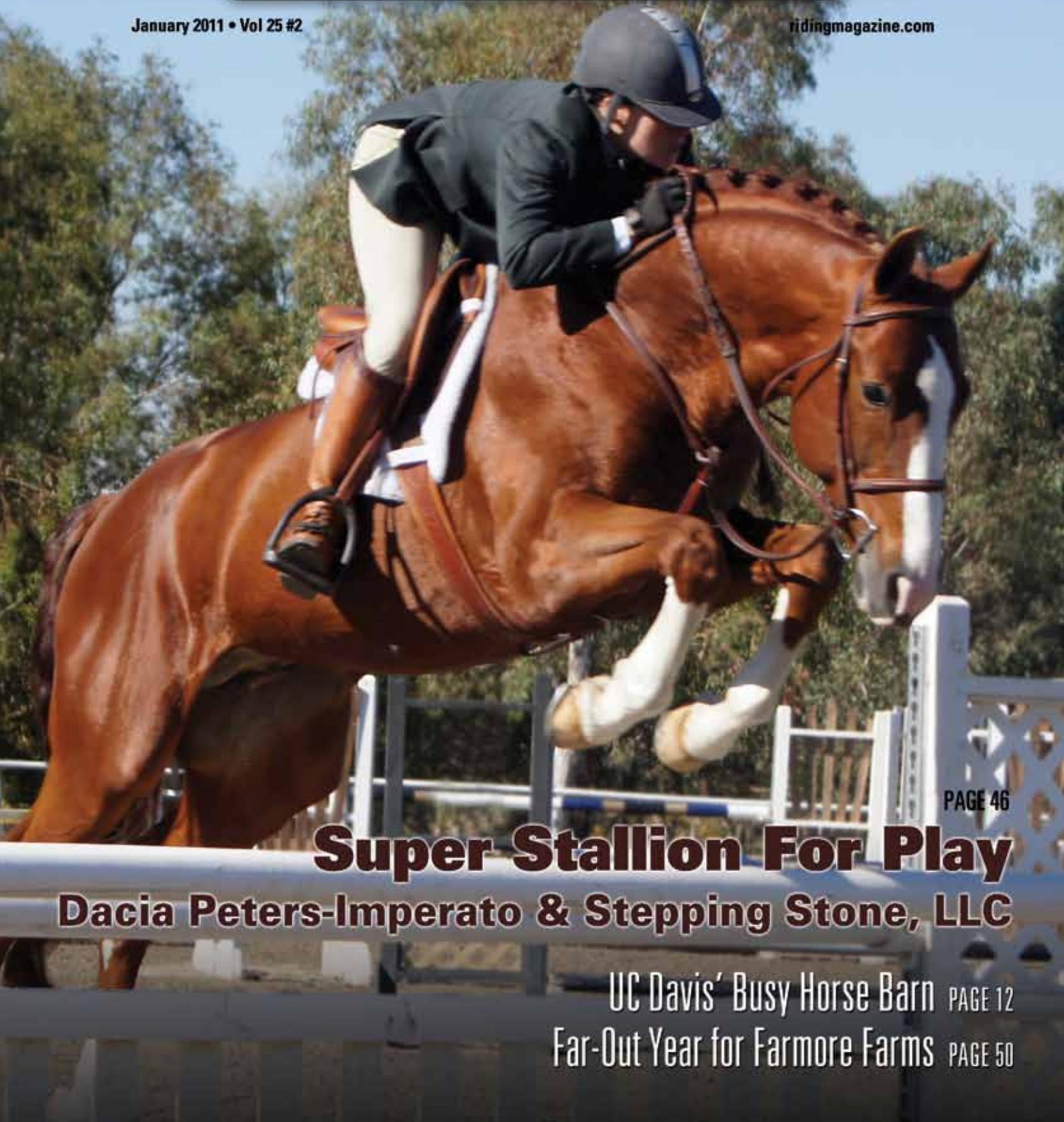
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RIDING

CALIFORNIA RIDING MAGAZINE

January 2011 • Vol 25 #2

ridingmagazine.com



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Super Stallion For Play

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*Spencer TMH, owned by
Monte and Marsha Collins DBA Avocado Farms,
ridden by Lexi.
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Far-out Year for Farmore Farms

Welsh Pony Hunter breeder shines on two circuits.

by Kim F. Miller

Tammy Burgin-Reitzell got her first Welsh pony stallion when she was still a junior. That was back in 1981 and the pony was Talybont Quicksilver. She had not set out to get a stallion, but Quicksilver had a temperament that knocked her out and the gaits and athletic ability to do all she wanted to do as a rider.

The purchase was finalized long before she encountered a snafu. "I had not realized that I couldn't compete Quicksilver because juniors were not allowed to show stallions," she recalls. She rode and trained the pony herself, so it was hard to accept that she wasn't allowed to compete him, but those were and are the rules governing USEF competition.

It's a conundrum familiar to all pony breeders: promoting sires of mounts intended mostly for children without being able to have children show off those sires in competition. In the pony world, the stallion must rely on his get to demonstrate his performance potential. That reality, combined with Burgin's passion for the breed, became the catalyst for Farmore Farms, one of the country's most successful Welsh Pony Hunter breeders. Located in

the Sacramento area's Galt, Farmore Farms has been on a roll for many years but 2010 may take the cake.

Quicksilver's successor, Telynu (pronounced "Tell un eye") Royal Charter is the USEF's 2010 Pony Hunter Breeding Sire Of The Year; Burgin is the USEF's leading breeder and owner; the 2-year-old filly, Farmore Royal Gala, is Zone 10's 2-year-old Pony Hunter Breeding Champion; and Farmore Royal Inspiration is reserve champ in the Zone's 3-year-old division. And that was accomplished even though Farmore's itinerary was split between the hunter/jumper circuit and the Welsh Breed circuit, especially in the late summer and fall when many were pressing to earn points for year-end awards.

On the Welsh circuit, Farmore continued to be one of several West Coast breeders giving the longer established East Coast counterparts a fair fight in the national standings. "Since 2001, West Coast Welsh breeders have been among the toughest competitors in several divisions," Burgin notes. Her own Farmore Royal Design (a half Welsh son of Telynu Royal Charter) is the high scoring 3-and-Over Half Welsh. Proving he is not just a pretty

face, Royal Design is also the high scoring English Pleasure and Western Pleasure pony in the nation. The 2 year old daughter of Charter, Farmore Royal Gala, is the high scoring 2-and-Under Section B filly in the nation with only four months of showing. And Farmore Imagination, another Charter daughter, was Reserve Champion Section B Mare as well as a top three finisher her first year in performance in Low Hunters, English and Western Pleasure.

Telynu Royal Charter

Talybont Quicksilver blazed the hunter pony breeding trail for Farmore throughout his 17 years there. His legacy lives on through several Farmore broodmares and stallion sons owned by other breeding programs, like Darden Welsh Ponies' Farmore Publicity. Quicksilver was a hard act to follow, but Telynu Royal Charter has more than pulled that off.

Burgin imported the 1993 sire in 1999 and he ruled the Welsh show scene from 2000 to 2004. At

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Farmore Royal Design with rider Jennifer Rond at the American National show in September, 2010. Photo ©Tammy Burgin



Farmore Royal Gala. Photo ©Tass Jones Photography



Telynu Royal Charter at the 2010 American National Show when he was 17 years old and six years out of the show ring. Photo ©Tammy Burgin



(left to right): Farmore Royal Heir, Farmore Royal Design, Farmore Fifth Avenue, Farmore State of the Art, Farmore Good as Gold. Photo ©Tammy Burgin



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the American National Welsh Show that year, Royal Charter was Double Supreme Champion, Double Best In Show, and Hunter and English Pleasure Division champion. "We retired him at that point because there was really nothing more for him to win," says his owner. Royal Charter's first babies arrived in the USA in 2001 and, over time, they went on to earn him more accolades as a sire. Thanks to points earned by his progeny, Royal Charter has the Sire Legion of Honour, Sire Award of Honour, Sire Award of Excellence, and Sire Legion Of Merit, the latter two of which he also earned as an individual.

To the delight of fans, the coming 18-year-old sire returned to the show ring last fall. First, Burgin loaned him to 12-year-old Sarah Ryan, who needed a win to qualify for the Sacramento Area Hunter Jumper Assn. medal finals. Burgin knew from many years ago that SAHJA did allow juniors to ride pony stallions. "I confirmed that was still true and was told they couldn't recall the last time a child actually competed on a stallion." Ryan probably didn't have a stallion in mind, notes Burgin, but with his advanced training Royal Charter was by far the best candidate. Ryan and Charter won their class, and the fun of seeing him loving the limelight again helped Burgin say yes when her trainer, Jennifer Rond, suggested showing him in the American Nationals, held last September in Sacramento. The breed's annual championships only come west once every three years, and Farmore was already taking nine ponies. Royal Charter won both his over fences classes and fans old and new got a kick out of seeing him in action.

As Farmore Farms royalty, Pajama Party plays queen to Royal Charter's king. Farmore snapped up the mare at the end of what was a long and super successful Pony Hunter show career. The last of her foals, the 4-year-old Farmore Royal Design, had a remarkable year in in-hand and performance classes on the Welsh circuit. At Burgin's last count, Royal Design had racked up 35 firsts in English Pleasure and 13 division championships. Sired, of course, by Royal Charter, Royal Design has several full siblings that are frequent visitors to the winner's circle. These include Madison Voss's senior stallion Farmore Royal Ecstasy.

Unquestionably Welsh

Like his predecessor as Farmore's resident stallion, the late Quicksilver, Telynuau Royal Charter epitomizes the "Section B" Welsh pony. As defined by the Welsh Pony and Cob Society of America, Section B is one of four types, all descendants of the Welsh Mountain Pony of Wales. "Remarkable soundness of body, tremendous endurance and a high degree of native intelligence," are among the inherited traits of all such ponies, explains the Society's website. Welsh ponies cropped up in America as early as the 1880s, and their numbers in the States began to boom in the 1950s. Today, approximately 45,000 Welsh Ponies and Cobs are registered in the States.

Section A and B ponies share the breed's distinguishing characteristics: refined beauty, conformational substance, soundness, stamina and friendly temperaments. The Section C is also known as the Welsh Pony Of Cob Type, and a Section D

pony is a Cob, which can exceed the 13.2 hh limit that applies to sections B and C ponies.

Size is the main difference between a Section A and B: As cannot exceed 12.2 hands and Bs cannot exceed 14.2 hands in the U.S. "I breed to the U.K. standards," Burgin explains. "I want good moving, sound, beautiful, willing ponies that you can ride and jump with temperaments that enable kids to ride and enjoy them as well."

Height is huge for pony breeders. Burgin's goal is 13.0-13.2 hh, which, under USEF rules, is a Medium Pony. Ponies up to 14.2 hh can compete in USEF sanctioned hunter classes as Large Ponies, but above that they are referred to by insiders as "honies," a very small horse that's ineligible for pony competition. Getting a handle on how tall Royal Charter's offspring would be is one of the reasons Burgin looked at his get and grandparents before she imported him from England. What she saw gave her confidence to breed several crossbred pony mares to him to produce large pony hunters.

Temperament is another top priority at Farmore. "When the breeders at Telynuau brought Royal Charter out of his stall I could see that he had the best manners and was the sweetest and most gorgeous animal on the face of the earth," Burgin recalls. He had the bloodlines, from Telynuau Stud's senior sire Eyarth Rio, that she sought, and time with his relatives confirmed that his pleasant personality was a family trait that ran as deep as conformation and good looks.

Burgin acknowledges that some ponies give the breed a bad rap, but she describes the "naughty pony" stereotype as a fallacy. When a pony of any breed behaves poorly she suspects it's due to poor handling and lack of proper training rather than breeding. "Because ponies are smaller, it's not always an adult that does the training," she notes. "Even at a hunter/jumper show, it's not often the trainer who gets on the pony to school it when there's trouble, as they would a horse, it's a child. I think you would get the same result with any breed if they are not started properly and/or schooled by children who lack the experience of a professional."

The 5'6" Burgin, Farmore's trainer Jennifer Rond or another adult professional start all Farmore's ponies, and the breeder recommends the same to those who purchase Farmore youngsters, sometimes in utero. With a good, solid foundation, she says, even a pony that strays from good behavior can be brought back in line.

What's In A Name?

The joys and stresses of foaling season are compounded by the challenge of finding the perfect name for each youngster: "ones that will stick!" Burgin tries to find names cute or clever enough that new owners will keep them. That makes it much easier to track her ponies' accomplishments and for the breeding program to earn the points and awards it's due.

Even though she polls friends and employees about the appeal of prospective monikers, it often happens that new owners, often young girls, want to name their adorable pony themselves. For example, Burgin thought "Farmore Envious" was a fantastic name when the Quicksilver baby was born. She sold him as a 3-year-old and he went onto great successes in the Pony Hunter world, but

unfortunately, as "All That" instead of his given name. Campaigned successfully on the A circuit, his accomplishments for many years were not attributed to Farmore or his sire. Unlike many such tales, this one has the happy ending: Burgin recognized him at the Norcal Medal Finals last fall and he's now owned by a close family friend's granddaughter who now knows his registered, given name.

"It's an age-old problem for us Welsh breeders," Burgin sighs. She applauds the WPCSA's program in which scholarships are awarded to owners of registered Welsh ponies. Administered by the Society's Dr. Ruth Wilburn, the program gives hunter/jumper competitors an incentive to campaign their ponies under their registered names. "Usually the trainers know if a pony is registered or not, but unless the pony retires and is a breeding prospect, nobody pays much attention to it." Names are not a problem on the Welsh breed circuit because ponies must compete under their registered names.

By any name, Farmore Farms' ponies are sure to continue their winning ways on the Welsh and hunter/jumper scene, carrying on a great tradition for their farm and their breed.



For more information on Farmore Farms, visit www.farmorefarms.com or call 916-687-6518. For more information on Welsh and Cob ponies visit the [Welsh Pony & Cob Society of America](http://www.welshpony.org) at www.welshpony.org.

Article reprinted with permission, *California Riding Magazine*, January, 2011.