

It all started about 45 years ago; Allan Gordeyko began breeding Clydesdales. He has exhibited at the Calgary Stampede every year for the last 40 years.



Over the years, Allan has imported 35 Clydesdales from Scotland and incorporated them into his breeding program. Today, those horses are some of the most sought after Clydesdales in North America with numerous geldings and stallions sold to Budweiser.

Allan and his son Wesley, own Willow Way Clydesdales, which is located in Ohaton, Alberta. Together, they farm the 3000 acres of land and manage a herd of around 90 horses.

Of these 90 horses, only one was chosen to take to the 2011 World Clydesdale Show. That horse was Willow Way Jolie, a 2 year old filly and the best young prospect on the farm.

At the last world show Allan and Wesley had the World Champion 6 horse hitch of mares. This year, they left the hitch at home and decided to take only halter horses. Kristen, Wesley's partner, says "we ended up selling a few we had entered, and in the end just decided to take Jolie.

She was chosen to be shown there due to the fact that she is the best young prospect on the farm. Due to having so many foals in a year, there are usually only one or maybe two females or males in any given birth year who are shown at all by us. The majority of the horses on the farm are breeding stock, older mares and stallions, and we haven't been showing many mature stallions lately. The brood mares are left on the farm to raise foals."

The World Clydesdale Show was held in October in Wisconsin. Over 600 Clydesdales competed for the world championships and breed enthusiasts came from Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand to see the show.

The results were unprecedented, with all three world championships going to horses bred in Western Canada. Willow Way Jolie was named Grand Champion Mare as well as Jr. Champion, Jr. Champion Bred and Owned by Exhibitor, and Best Canadian Bred Mare.

The Gordeyko's put all their faith in Jolie. A risky gamble, but one that paid off. Born on April 29, 2009, Jolie stood out from the other 35 foals born that year. She is sired by Zorra Highland Captain and out of Willow Way Chanel. Her Dam, Willow Way Chanel, was Supreme Champion at Calgary Stampede in 2005, and Res. Champion Mare at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto in 2005.

Jolie is a beautiful bay. Kristen comments, "She is as beautiful on the inside as she is on the outside. She is a mare with a gorgeous, kind eye, and has such character. A real sweetheart of a mare."

Breeder and owner Wesley Gordeyko has shown Jolie since she was a yearling and since that time she has been undefeated in her age class. As a yearling she was Champion Mare at the Central Alberta Draft Horse Classic, beating her dam who was Sr. Champion that day.

But all of those shows were just practice, leading up to the World Clydesdale Show. Kristen remembers, "It seemed like the day of the show she knew she was there to win. She loved every minute of her preparation, stood like a statue in line waiting to be shown, and put on a real show when it was her time to go in front of the judge."

Grand Champion Mare is a big title for a young filly and a credit to the long-standing breeding operation at Willow Way Clydesdales.

And for this young filly, the future is bright and the possibilities are endless. Kristen says, “Our plans for her are to keep showing her. She won't be bred until she is 4. We will maybe break her to drive in the future, and use her in our hitch of mares.”