

When Heather McLevin first saw SW Red Velvet as a two year old at a sale in 1986, she did not plan to keep her: "I bid on her for a friend but turns out she bought another horse, so I kept her." As chance would have it, Heather had bought a mare that would turn into the matriarch of the breeding program at Thunderstruck Ranch near Delbourne, Alberta. SW Red Velvet, more fondly known as "Velve", is now retired after a full career. A great example of an Alberta-bred horse that has made an impact, she taught a beginner how to ride, had a successful show career, and produced many outstanding offspring.

Velve was bred by Sid Webber of Sundre, Alberta. Sired by Wyalta Red Apache and out of Toboyo Bwana, Velve is a beautiful bay roan Appaloosa. Shortly after purchasing her, Heather sent Velve to trainer, Darlene Brouwer, and she enjoyed a successful show career in several disciplines including Trail, Western and English Pleasure. Heather remembers when Velve was a show horse, she was "dependable to show with no vices." When Heather's husband, Jim Dobler, started getting interested in horses, she gave Velve to him as a birthday present. Heather comments, "he learned to ride with her. She had a temperament that allowed her to help a beginning Non Pro learn."

Later, reining and working cattle were added to her resume with help from Ron and Darlene Brouwer along with Les Timmons. In 1992, Velve was retired to broodmare and she has produced numerous Canadian Supreme, NRHA, ARCHA & ApHC World Champions. Among them, High Test, High Noon, High Potential, High Limit, Show Me A Sign, and Casual High, all sired by Thunderstruck Ranch's High Sign Nugget. And, in 2006, Velve was inducted into the Canadian Supreme Hall of Fame.

After such a successful career in the show ring and in the breeding pen, Velve is enjoying her retirement at Thunderstruck Ranch with Jim and Heather, who state "We feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to own and be associated with a mare of this quality. She is still the queen of the ranch and is treated as such." How nice it must be to be treated like a queen!