

Dancing With Big

A **Rocknroll Dance** has given trainer Jim Mulinix a taste of racing at the top level of the sport and he's hoping for more opportunities with the talented colt during his sophomore season in 2012. *By Nicole Kraft*

Jim Mulinix was in the Little Brown Jug barn at the Delaware Ohio County Fair last fall, when a realization hit him: the only difference between the Grand Circuit conditioners standing nearby, and the Ohio and Michigan guys with whom he regularly competed, was the quality and quantity of their stock.

The soft-spoken Mulinix was getting his first taste of top bloodlines, having brought Just Crowned and Western Royalty to the 2010 Jug and Jugette, respectively, for owner Bobby Miller.

The trainer was far better known for developing good Ohio-breds like \$300,000 winner Cinder Char and \$250,000 winner Standupnkissme, and selling them off to bigger named horsemen for future glory.

Instead of feeling intimidated among racing's royalty, however, Mulinix decided it was finally time he found, and kept, a good horse for himself. So a few weeks later he hitched up his trailer and drove to Harrisburg in search of a dream at a bargain price.

He found it in hip number 971 of the sale, a son of Rocknroll Hanover bred by Paul Marino of Massachusetts.

With his final bid of \$15,000, Mulinix brought home A Rocknroll Dance who parlayed Mulinix's investment into more than \$860,000 earnings from seven wins in 10 starts during the 2011 racing season. The amount made the colt the richest in his class and a pre-season favourite to not only bring

The Boys





Photo by World Wide Racing Photos

A Rockroll Dance wrapped up his two-year-old campaign with this victory in the Governor's Cup final to give him earnings of \$863,000 from seven wins in 10 outings.

Mulinix back to compete in the Jug and other sophomore classics, but to quite possibly win them all.

Anyone who doubts 59 year-old Jim Mulinix can train a horse need only look at his statistics. In 15 of the past 20 seasons, his training average has been .300 or better, and twice his barn won at a .400-plus rate.

The fact that his annual earnings exceeded \$200,000 in only six of those seasons explains why he is still a relative unknown after more than 30 years in the business and why even when he brings a favourite to the Breeders Crown he is still mistaken for high-level owner Ed Mullinax.

"That's racing in Ohio," Mulinix said in his steady, Midwestern drawl. "We don't race for much money. But we never dodged any competition. That's one of the things I'm proudest of, we sold almost all our good ones, but we still won some races.

"And I knew with better stock, we'd win bigger races."

So Mulinix headed off to Harrisburg with his workman-like practicality to find a single top-level horse with which to try his hand at the Grand Circuit. He knew he wasn't going to bid on any six-figure yearlings, but Mulinix had faith his eye for horse-flesh could spot a diamond in the rough.



Happy Holidays

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Caitrin Hall
3 Year Old PASS Champion
Photo by Chris Gooden Photos



Fresh Idea
2011 James Lynch Memorial
Photo by Racehorsephoto.com



Major Bombay
2011 Woodrow Wilson
Photo by Lisa Photo

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

A special thank you to all
the owners, vendors, and
employees that made 2011
a successful year .

ALAGNA RACING

DANCING WITH THE BIG BOYS



Photo by World Wide Racing Photos

It took him three days, but he finally found one.

From a pedigree standpoint, A Rocknroll Dance was hard to knock as a son of Rocknroll Hanover, out of the Cams Card Shark mare Wichita Hanover, a half-sister to champion racehorse and sire Western Hanover. The colt, however, was his dam's fourth, and the two prior colts and lone filly had brought home a combined \$8,482.

Mulinix simply saw a chance at a bargain.

"A lot of brothers and sisters don't pan out," he said. "Babe Ruth had sister, but she never hit any home runs. I tell everyone I have brother that's a minister and I'm a horse trainer. I look at the individual.

"He was pretty mature and strong and looked healthy. It

Jim Mulinix, far right, Yannick Gingras and Theresa Gentry and Jerry Silva pose with A Rocknroll Dance following his Governor's Cup victory at Chester which concluded his rookie season.

was actually hard to look at him; he was so playful. He had all the things you look for in a good horse."

Just how good became evident from A Rocknroll Dance's earliest days.

"I put in my track; I know that track, and I know how fast horses go without a watch on that track," Mulinix said. "But



Season's Greetings

FROM THE BAX FAMILY
John, Vicky, Marshall, Matthew,
Wyatt and Robyn



Happy Holidays

Wishing everyone in racing a very prosperous 2012.

A special thank you to all the owners, drivers and grooms who supported me as well as the training centre this year.

MARK FORD STABLE

Mark & Kelly

DANCING WITH THE BIG BOYS

whatever you went with him, you'd look at your watch and you realize you went 10 seconds faster than you thought.

"Even when we started getting some quarters around 30, he could go that like he was jogging."

His confidence in the colt was high even in February, when most horsemen might take a few deep breaths before deciding to stake their two-year-old. Instead, he and partner Denny Miller paid their colt into every major contest, spending more to stake A Rocknroll Dance than he had actually cost to purchase.

The colt's early abilities also brought Mulinix, and A Rocknroll Dance, a spot of luck.

"Most of the horses we get, we geld," Mulinix explained. "We were lucky enough to see the talent and not geld him."

A Rocknroll Dance started his career inauspiciously enough, with a trio of qualifying efforts at Raceway Park, Hoosier Park and the Meadows, before jumping into stake company with the July 30 Arden Homestead at the Meadows.

Getting him to that first race was not without its challenges.

The colt goes extremely wide-gaited behind, said Mulinix, resulting in the need for a specially constructed sulky, which the trainer ordered from Brodeur and unwrapped from its packaging at the Meadows just hours before A Rocknroll Dance's first start.

After checking up his colt for the post parade, Mulinix walked back to the paddock, and when he came out again he

saw his colt nosed up against the outside fence, and driver Dan Charlino walking on the racetrack. A collision with the tractor had dumped the driver and crumpled one shaft and tire of the new sulky.

Despite being hooked to Mulinix's only remaining sulky option, an ancient, rusted model found behind the paddock, A Rocknroll Dance ended up second by a nose in 1:53.1.

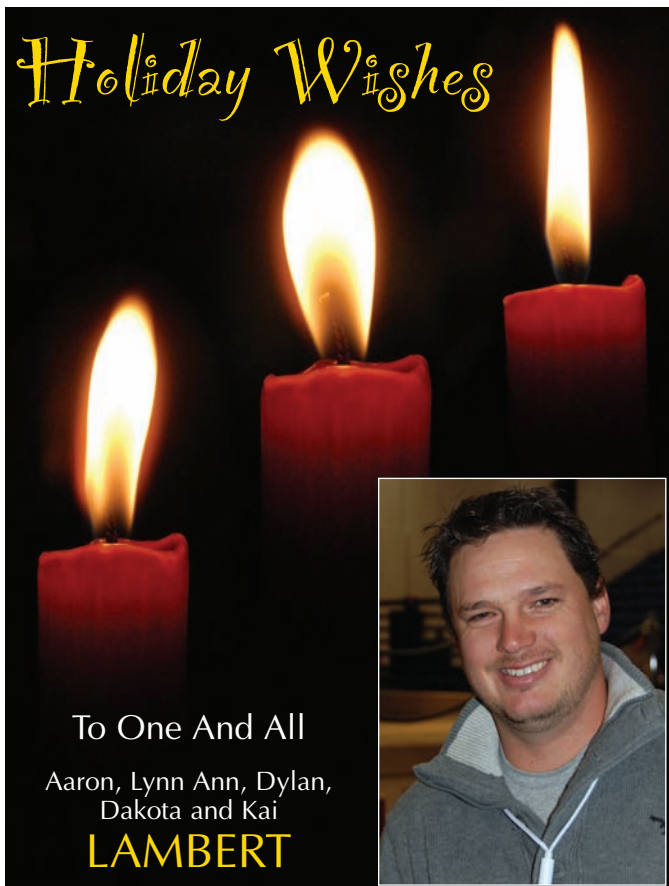
It was the effort Mulinix needed to take his colt to the next level, and three weeks later the pair headed east to the Meadowlands for a date at the Woodrow Wilson. Mulinix admitted it was a lofty goal for a colt with only one pari-mutuel start to his name, but he knew A Rocknroll Dance was ready.

"I've had some 1:50 horses," he said. "I knew this horse could do it. I told my wife, 'We're going to win the Woodrow Wilson.'"

Yannick Gingras was Mulinix's driver of choice, but he was already committed to Mel Mara, so Mike Lachance took up the colt's lines. Their lone race together proved unfulfilling for all, as a Rocknroll Dance drew post eight in the \$317,800 Wilson, and finished eighth, five lengths behind winner Major Bombay.

"(Lachance) tried leaving but he saw the horse was going to get in trouble leaving parked," Mulinix reflected. "He asked him to go in the last turn, and the horse started moving. He didn't abuse the horse, because the next week was the Metro."

And when Lachance got off the bike, said Mulinix, he had encouraging news for the trainer: "This is a good, good horse. He drove perfect. He won't embarrass you anywhere you go."



Holiday Wishes

To One And All
Aaron, Lynn Ann, Dylan,
Dakota and Kai
LAMBERT

A graphic featuring three lit red candles against a dark background. The text "Holiday Wishes" is written in a yellow, cursive font at the top. Below the candles, there is a portrait of a smiling man, Aaron Lambert, wearing a grey hoodie. At the bottom, the text "To One And All" is followed by the names "Aaron, Lynn Ann, Dylan, Dakota and Kai" and the name "LAMBERT" in large, bold, yellow capital letters.



Season's Greetings

ED HART STABLE

A graphic featuring a red gift box with a white ribbon and a yellow star on top, set against a background of falling snow and a blue sky with white clouds. The text "Season's Greetings" is written in a red, cursive font at the bottom. Below that, the text "ED HART STABLE" is written in a black, sans-serif font.

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OSS GRASSROOTS CHAMPIONS

2YO	Filly Trot	THUNDERING OVATION	1:58.3
2YO	Colt Trot	NORTHERN VICTORY	1:58.3
2YO	Filly Pace	EAT ME UP	1:54.3
2YO	Colt Pace	SECRETSOFTHEKNIGHT	1:52.2
3YO	Filly Trot	DEFY TIME	1:56.2
3YO	Colt Trot	TYMAL RECAP	1:55.2
3YO	Filly Pace	THREE CHARMS	1:53.3
3YO	Colt Pace	MUSSELSFRMBRUSSELS	1:50.4

OSS GOLD SUPER FINALS CHAMPIONS

2YO	Filly Trot	MISS PARIS	1:57.2
2YO	Colt Trot	PRESTIDIGITATOR	1:56.3
2YO	Filly Pace	APOGEE HANOVER	1:52.2
2YO	Colt Pace	WARRAWEE NEEDY	1:50.3
3YO	Filly Trot	CHINA PEARLS	1:54.2
3YO	Colt Trot	MISTER HERBIE	1:52
3YO	Filly Pace	WAASMULA	1:51.2
3YO	Colt Pace	CAMAES FELLOW	1:50.1

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Upon registering with the ORMP program, qualifying broodmares who are resident in Ontario at the time of enrolment and remain resident in the province for 180 consecutive days surrounding the date of foaling will produce foals eligible for Ontario Bred Status. The breeder, owner or lessee who enrolls the mare in the Ontario Resident Mare program will be eligible for rewards attached to the OSS racing program and selected "Open" stakes races in Ontario. Open stakes eligible for Breeders Awards are published annually by the Program.

The Mare Enrolment form and all fees must be received by Standardbred Canada before your mare foals in 2012. Forms are available from the Standardbred Improvement Program section of the Ontario Racing Commission's website at www.ontarioracingcommission.ca. The date upon which the form is received by Standardbred Canada will be recorded as the first day of the mare's Ontario residency period. Mare owners must apply annually to acquire Ontario Resident Mare status for mares in foal.

For more information on the Ontario Resident Mare Program, contact:

Standardbred Canada
 1-2150 Meadowvale Blvd, Mississauga ON L5N 6R6
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DANCING WITH THE BIG BOYS

Lachance's words proved prophetic a week later in the Metro eliminations when, paired with Ron Pierce, A Rocknroll Dance survived getting steppy off the gate and a subsequent inquiry rocketing home in 26.4 to win in 1:49.1

While Pierce was committed to Simply Business in the final, Gingras was finally available, so he jumped behind A Rocknroll Dance in the \$1 million final. The colt led from the half and Gingras thought him a winner, until he was nipped by Simply Business on the far outside in 1:50.1.

"My horse just didn't see him," Gingras said. "Knowing my horse now, if that horse was right beside us, we would have won." That race may be viewed by [clicking here](#).

The Metro brought A Rocknroll Dance more than just a new driver. It also brought in new ownership in the form of Theresa Gentry and Jerry Silva, who agreed to leave the training to Mulinix.

Silva is long known for buying into potential stars, and Mulinix admitted he liked the safety net the Silvas provided.

"If something did go wrong, this way we have a little money put away," Mulinix said with a chuckle. "Jerry is a good guy to be involved with, to have on your side in the future. He knows all about syndicating these types of horses; a lot more than I do."

And the Silvas investment looked like a good one from the colt's very next start, with a victory at Indiana Downs in the Elevation (in 1:51.3), followed by wins both weeks in Lexington (in 1:51 and 1:49.4, respectively), and at Woodbine in his

Breeders Crown elimination (in 1:51).

What the streak could not survive, however, was a freak October snowstorm that grounded several top drivers, including Gingras, in New Jersey, for the Breeders Crown final.

"I guess I was glad it wasn't just my driver," Mulinix said. "I didn't know until the last second before that they weren't coming and the judges made no allowances."

At Gingras' suggestion, it was Randy Waples who sent the colt postward, and steered him to a second-place finish behind the Ron Burke-trained Sweet Lou, steered by his regular driver, Dave Palone, after a tough overland journey. That race may be viewed through [this link](#).

Mulinix admitted the colt's runner-up earnings of \$162,000 was more than any purse he had raced for, but he was still frustrated.

"I never thought I'd be disappointed being second in Breeders Crown, but that was a big disappointment to me," Mulinix admitted. "Burke's horse was so sharp; Palone just got away from us. We just never got in the race."

Reunited with Gingras a week later at Harrah's Chester, A Rocknroll Dance ended his season with a 1:51 romp in the \$510,000 Governor's Cup. His \$863,325 in earnings was second only among two-year-olds to filly Economy Terror, and was \$176,678 more than Sweet Lou, his nearest divisional competitor.

"I think he's as good as anything out there," Gingras said. "He was better at the end of the year than at any other point."



Happy Holidays

To the trainers, drivers, owners, caretakers and patrons who made 2011 an outstanding year.

The Western Fair District Board of Governors, Management and Staff extend our best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season and a joyous New Year!



Season's Greetings



Thank you to my supporters throughout 2011 with particular appreciation to the caretakers in the stable - Gary Bishop, Terri McNair and Shawna Henderson. The stable could not have done it without you.

TRAVIS UMPHREY

Best Of Racing Luck To All In 2012




Thank you to everyone who participated in our 2011 racing season including our clients, caretakers and drivers.

Have a great Christmas and Happy New Year.

RICHARD "NIFTY" NORMAN

BEST WISHES FOR
THE HOLIDAYS



New Image Media

WAASMULA

BRUCE GOIT
STABLE

I just knock on wood he comes back as good. I've never had a two-year-old as good as him."

Mulinix admitted he now knows a little bit more about campaigning a Grand Circuit colt, but he also knows what has brought him success over all his years in racing. To that end, he will keep A Rocknroll Dance in training at his Wauseon, Ohio, farm throughout the winter, with an eye toward the North America Cup in June.

"I'm not even sure when that is," he said laughing. "I guess I'll figure that out so we know when we have to be ready."

Considering how handy his colt is on a half-mile track, Mulinix also likes his chances of becoming the second consecutive Buckeye State trainer to capture the Little Brown Jug, following in the footsteps of Ron Potter and Big Bag John.

"There are so many big races and opportunities, but it's a lot longer season," he said. "I don't have enough experience at this level to look too far ahead, but I do know he'll be more mature and I won't be afraid to train him a little stiffer."

"It's going to be a tough group. That Sweet Lou is a top horse, and this year Burke did a better job than I did having his horse sharper."

"I know a lot of people are probably wondering who will be the best three-year-old next year. The two guys wondering that the most are Ron Burke and Jim Mulinix." 🐾

Season's Greetings

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From the Standardbred Breeders of Ontario.

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CHINA PEARLS
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Photos by New Image Media



Season's Greetings

A Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year To All.

Mark, Katherine, Shawn, Clark and Clarke Sr.
MARK STEACY STABLE



Season's Greetings

Best wishes for a great holiday season to our many customers and a sincere thank you for your business in 2011.



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R.R. 1, Campbellville, Ontario L0P 1B0
519-856-2046
Email: stutzman@sentex.net
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