





# *Hands On Horse Breeder*

*It was a banner year for Millstream Farm in 2011 with a Hambletonian Oaks winner among its credits but for owner Claudean Cone it was simply another gratifying chapter in the life she loves.*

By Harold Howe

When Bold And Fresh won the Hambletonian Oaks last August her breeder Claudean Cone was not at the Meadowlands to see the race. She couldn't get away as there was work to be done at the farm and being the hands on type she simply could not dash off from Kentucky at the drop of a hat.

But she could not have been more proud of the filly she raised and sold. As a smaller breeder, Bold And Fresh's victory

was another highwater mark for Cone's Millstream Farm.

Cone is the sole proprietor of the Georgetown, Kentucky, nursery which is never home to more than 10 broodmares at a time. There is no roadside signage designating it to be the birthplace of the Hambletonian Oaks winner. In fact, it is just another of the many visually appealing horse farms in the Bluegrass state.

"She is someone who maybe flies



Photo by Lisa Photo

under the radar screen for many people in the game," says Kentucky horseman Bob Stewart.

"And that is because she is seldom off the farm. She is a breeder who gives her all to get these horses to market and I for one feels she does a very good job."

To own and operate a successful Standardbred breeding operation is a rarity for a single female, but Claudean relishes everything involved with it.

"I feel blessed having this place. How many people in life get to do what they truly love?"

"I can honestly say there has never been a single morning that I dreaded getting up; it's never been a burden," she offers on a tranquil morning last autumn.

When meeting Cone it is easy to discern that she is not a native Kentuckian. Her accent is very distinctly Texas; please make that West Texas.

"I come from Big Springs, Texas even though there is only one spring there," she laughs.

"And once a West Texas girl, always a West Texas girl."

For the record, Big Springs is located

**Bold And Fresh is one of the most successful trotters raised by Claudean Cone's Millstream Farm. She sold her dam to Finnish interests in 2008 but retained a half-sister to the \$600,000 winner in Oleodre. Bold And Fresh's victory in last year's Hambletonian Oaks may be viewed by [clicking here](#).**

approximately 100 miles west of Albilene. It's not far from George Bush country.

Cone has always had horses in her blood although not always harness horses. Her mother's family were ranchers while her father's were involved in a variety of livestock.

"In the early 1950s the family moved into town where my father became the county commissioner and operated a number of liquor stores. My mother was supportive in each endeavour and quite frankly, life was a bowl of cherries.

"It was just a wonderful time to grow up. I like to say that it was an oasis of what life should be like," she remembers.

Cone was part of that generation which saw females start to assert themselves in the workplace and to that end she went to college to study business.

"The truth is that while I did take

business and if nothing else knew I could teach. I went there to get the MRS letters, as in Mrs. so and so. In other words, to get married which was the norm at the time. While women were just beginning to get their independence, most were caregivers and supportive of their men."

She was successful getting the that accreditation as she married upon graduation and had two children, Christina and Stephen, while her husband carried on in the oil business and farming. But the marriage ended and after a period of just over four years she remarried and relocated to Kentucky.

"It was after marrying Jack Cone that I discovered my love for trotters. He was more interested in the racing but I came to love the care giving part of it. Together we founded Millstream Farm."

Millstream is a 50 acre tract of land



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## HANDS ON HORSE BREEDER

located near Georgetown. In the 13 years that Cone has owned the facility much has been replaced or upgraded.

But it goes far beyond being pretty, it is a totally functional operation that exists to grow quality racehorses. To have a look at photos of the farm on its website, please [click here](#).

"I am hands on to a fault. I do my own foaling although I do rely on a couple friends to help in the busy time. Many of my friends ask me why I do this and I just say it is a passion. I'm doing what I like best."

While still married to Jack Cone, Claudean became involved with Walnut Hall Ltd. They partnered with that Kentucky farm in horses like the two outstanding producing Quebec bred trotting mares Amour Angus (dam of former Canadian horse of the year Emilie Cas El, Conway Hall, Angus Hall, Andover Hall, etc.) and Canne Angus (dam of Canland and Cameron Hall).

In 1998 the partners went their separate ways dispersing at the Harrisburg auction. Claudene then secured another pair of Quebec-bred matrons in the now 21-year-old Garlapp 4, T1:55 who would turn out to be the dam of Dreamaster 3,1:54.2 (\$767,636) and Duo Val Car 4, Q1:56 (\$207,145) who would become the dam of Valvec 1:53.3s (\$665,181) and Twocarlane 1:55.1f (\$422,635).

"I am the biggest fan of Garland Lobell (sire of both Duo Val Car and Garlapp). I think he has been an exceptional sire and his daughters have been good producers. Duo Val Car is now 20 years old and is still a favourite for me," says Claudean.

Through her affiliation with Walnut Hall, Claudene can claim to being co-breeder of the much celebrated \$2 million winning mare Cameron Hall and millionaire Banker Hall 3,1:55.2 but Bold And Fresh has now elbowed her way to being among the favourites club after her very impressive sophomore season.

"That (the Hambletonian Oaks victory) was a huge highlight for me as a breeder. She was sold as a yearling for \$40,000 to Doug Miller, a real gentleman and one I was so pleased to get her. Then to have her win the Hambletonian Oaks made me so proud."



**Over the years Claudean has owned some of the most successful broodmares to ever be bred in the province of Quebec. One of her favourites is the \$200,000 winning Garland Lobell daughter Duo Val Car, shown above, who is the dam of the \$665,000 winner Valvec and \$422,000 winner Twocarlane.**

Bold And Fresh also hails from another daughter of Garland Lobell in Odre Coucou who was sold to Finnish interests the same year Bold And Fresh was born. Bold And Fresh herself was sold to Bnornar Hogseth of Norway after winning over \$600,000 last season.

Like every breeder in the game Claudean is faced with the never ending challenge of upgrading her broodmare band.

"I did not have a good year selling my stock in 2011 (her nine head averaged \$20,000) which is a reflection of the economy in my view. Obviously, we all

have to have more selected stock, which is difficult and costly to do.

"I've had to scale back like everyone in not just the horse industry but everywhere here in the US," she points out.

Last year Millstream Farm offered nine head for sale but this fall it will be just six.

"Even deciding on matings is a challenging task. It is so difficult to figure out what the market will want. It keeps us all scratching our heads. If one only had a crystal ball."

One resource she now has to call upon for input is her son-in-law Jonas



**Millstream Farm is very much a hands on operation for Claudean Cone who never has more than 10 broodmares at her picturesque property.**



Czernyson who married her daughter Christina. Czernyson, of course is one of the premier trainers of trotting horses in North America with a long list of credits to his name.

"Jonas has a different perspective and it's wonderful to hear what he has to say. I like to say that I am in the nursery end and he at the college level. I grow

them and he develops them," she notes.

"I think he likes the way I grow a horse. Basically, I leave them outside and let Mother Nature do her thing. Even my yearling prep work sends them to auction not quite as fussy as many but the rest of the package is there."

In spending time with Claudean, it's difficult not to become infected by her

legitimate enthusiasm for the horse industry. She pushes aside the negativity that permeates the game these days and embraces the animal for what it is.

"I keep saying it but I feel so blessed. I've been given the opportunity to do what I love. It's never a burden and I just hope it continues on. I can't imagine life being any other way." 🐾