

The Reverse of the Norm

by JW EQUINE

Diane Grod, who is shorter than most jockeys, has long been identified in tandem with the Thoroughbreds that she or her clients have shown. "We love our Thoroughbreds," her students say unabashedly, even in what have become warmblood-dominated sports. Diane, her students and her clients tend to show their Thoroughbreds under their registered names, making them much easier to trace.

Grod recently accepted the Equestrian-of-the-Year award from the Desert Hunter, Jumper and Dressage Association, which was just another accomplishment in a long history of excellence. She rode a Thoroughbred on the American showjumping team at the inaugural Nations' Cup at Spruce Meadows in 1978, and won the grand prix at Santa Anita Park aboard a Utah-bred Thoroughbred whom she had renamed Sterling Image.

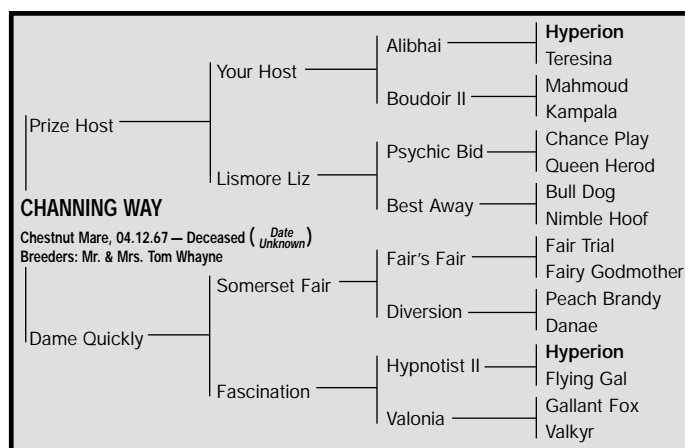
Remarkably, she remembers most of the horses that have passed her way, recalling two California-breds in particular. They provide the title for this article. One became the reverse of the norm by winning against the opposite sex, while the other earned the title for going east and winning against horses that usually came west and won.

Channing Way

Channing Way was a light chestnut mare with a nearly flaxen mane and tail—a redhead with golden accents. She was foaled in the Golden State on April 12, 1967, and was bred by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Whyayne, but she never did race.

Her sire, Prize Host, was a well-traveled stakes-winner of \$163,495, but he did not become a sire of note. Her dam's best progeny at the track was

Channing Way's half-brother, Jim Henry, who earned \$35,626 from 77 starts over eight seasons. Dame Quickly, our subject's dam, was shut out completely in her nine starts, second



dam Fascination won three of her 62 starts, banked \$10,410, and was a half-sister to Sky Rings who set two track records at Atokad Park—one at 11 and another at 16 furlongs. All in all, Channing Way could easily be con-

sidered quite unremarkable in terms of racing royalty.

There were things, however, that (maybe) made the 16-hander truly remarkable, including her great body, her great form over fences, and her great mind. The eye-catching coloration didn't hurt either. She came into the possession of Grod as a 4-year-old.

Her showing career began when she was five, and she started winning lead-line classes almost immediately—with Grod's 4-year-old son aboard in western tack in 1972, and with the same rider in English tack the following year. Grod also rode the mare to many successes in the open conformation hunter classes during the same time period.

The little mare—at least in the hunter ring (where size was often rewarded) she was considered little—handily beat stallions and geldings that were considerably bigger than she was. Grod commented that she wasn't the best mover, but that she was "gorgeous" and a "great jumper." She added, "She won the beauty contests, beating all the boys, but she also won in the working hunter division. She was a very special horse."

The mare actually excelled as a conformation hunter and eventually as a junior hunter with numerous championships to her credit. She was a champion at both the Great Western Forum in Los Angeles and the Del Mar Fairgrounds in Del Mar. As a matter of fact, if you were entered in one of her classes, she had to be considered the horse to beat.

Channing Way continued her winning ways, and by the time that she retired from the ring later in the seventies she had a new owner, namely Cathy Clements. Clements got married, changed her name and moved up the coast to a

new state, and Grod lost track of her.

When the mare retired she made the transition to life as a broodmare, but without contact with her owner, her record is incomplete. Her Thoroughbred produce record includes Briarling, a 1978 colt by Prescribed, and Laurel Street, a 1980 filly by Dr. Reeds Kin, both of whom were, not surprisingly, unraced. They were not bred to be racehorses—they were bred to be show horses. Naturally, her Jockey Club production record doesn't include the non-Thoroughbred future show horses she produced, but it does show that she slipped her foals in 1982 and 1983.

Who knows, maybe as time goes on we will encounter one of her foals or descendants at a competition.

Kinda Sudden

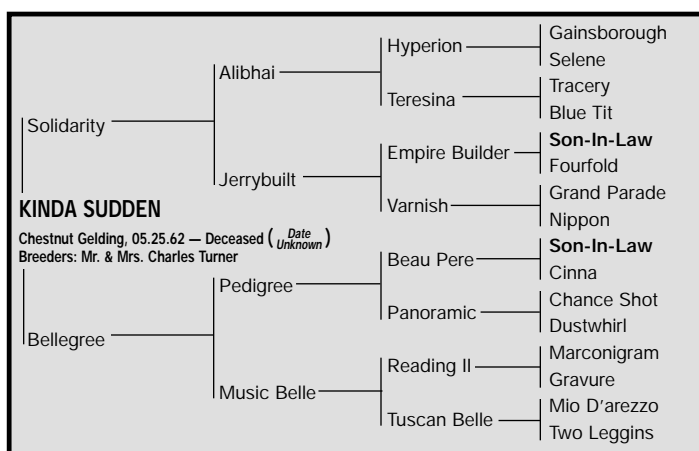
Kinda Sudden, a dark chestnut colt of 1962, was bred by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Turner. By the time Kinda Sudden came into being on May 25, his half-brother, Park Royal (by Royal Page) had been third as a juvenile in both the Bay Meadows Futurity and the Cabrillo Stakes. The following season, the older brother added a runner-up finish in the Bay District Handicap, as well as third-place efforts in the San Francisco and Hillsdale Handicaps, to his record.

The younger brother, described as a liver chestnut by Grod, went to the track as a 3-year-old where he started five times without breaking his maiden. His \$570 in earnings that year came from a second and a third. As a 4-year-old, he started 10 times. He won once, was second once, and had three thirds for a season total of \$1,820. With lifetime earnings of \$2,390, he had fallen short of all the other colts out of his dam. Of the starters, Bellegree's lone filly, Whirl a Belle, was the only one to earn less—not a cent from three starts.

Kinda Sudden was by the Alibhai son, Solidarity, who earned \$357,435 from 1947 to 1950. He had 52 starts in that time frame, winning the Hollywood

Gold Cup and the Westerner, Bay Meadows and San Pasqual Handicaps. He was also second in the California Breeders Champion Stakes in 1947. If you recall the articles on Molly Warmington's champion showjumper, Mr. Pacific (*California Thoroughbred*, February and September 2001 issues) you remember another of Solidarity's descendants.

Kinda Sudden's dam was a daughter of Pedigree, a son of Beau Pere and thus a full brother to the great California-bred mare Honeymoon. That mare, Bellegree, was a full sister to Aremess, a colt who was second in the Inland Empire Marathon Handicap, made 211 starts, and even set a new track record, going nine furlongs in 1:53 at Raceway Park. His second dam was a half-sister to Call Bell, the winner of the 1947 California Breeders



Champion Stakes and the runner-up in the 1948 Santa Anita Derby.

At the end of his racing days at the track in Caliente, the flashy 4-year-old gelding, with his abundance of white markings, fell into the hands of Grod.

The California hunter/jumper rider and trainer purchased him as a sale prospect for one of her clients.

Grod was initially attracted to him by his rich color, his wide blaze and the white that edged over his knees and hocks. She recalls, "He wasn't the quietest horse and he wasn't the soundest either. What he was, was a good-feeling horse, but he was super smart and he trained up fast."

He had matured to a hair over the 16-hand mark and was shown lightly, "with TLC (tender loving care)," but successfully. He won a lot in California as a hunter and, on the strength of that success, he went east to take on the competition in what was a hunter mecca. According to Grod, he won or placed in just about every class he was in while he was there. "He won a ton back east in '67—the reverse of the norm," she says with an air of satisfaction.

As a flashy hunter who was consistently in the ribbons, Kinda Sudden attracted the kind of attention that a seller likes. He caught the eye of George Morris, a former U.S. team rider and for many years the chef d'equipe of the U.S. showjumping team. Morris had an interested client, and a tryout was arranged. Sadly, the client was too tall for the gelding.

Grod returned to California with Kinda Sudden in tow and in 1968, he found a new home with Reese Perak, who won consistently in the amateur divisions with him. That must have been the right home, because he died about nine years ago, never having another owner.

You can hear the pride in Grod's voice when she describes Kinda Sudden as, "A beautiful mover and a fabulous jumper." You can also hear the regret when she says, "If he had held up, he would have been a great jumper." But the true measure of her feelings for the gelding is undeniable when you learn that she had him immortalized on canvas. That painting still hangs in a place of honor in her home.