



## ALISON MCLEOD

Yearling sale season is a time of hope and pride for breeders across Ontario as they present their young horses at the CTHS Ontario Canadian Premier Yearling Sale, being held this year on September 2.

Alison McLeod has been breeding Thoroughbreds for about 20 years, always searching for the magical pedigree cross that might produce a champion racehorse.

McLeod's name was recently in the news because she previously owned Ruby Frost, the dam of Woodbine Oaks winner and King's Plate favourite Luster. She owned the mare for several years before selling her to Luster's co-owner, Gainesway Farm.

Now, the Whitby resident has two yearlings entered in the CTHS sale that she hopes will catch the attention of prospective buyers.

"I love the deep, line-breeding," said McLeod, who often finds well-bred mares advertised on social media. "It's hard for a small breeder but I do the best I can. I just love breeding and looking after the horses."

Born in Toronto, McLeod remembers the Welsh pony she had as a child. "I used to ride him bareback up and down country roads."

After studying nutrition at university, she owned Quarter Horses that she showed in both English and Western disciplines. She later began a career as a Grade 1 teacher in Whitby, "to help pay for the horses," she said.

Trips to Woodbine Racetrack with a girlfriend sparked McLeod's interest in Thoroughbreds and pedigrees. She began studying winning horses and successful breeding crosses, compiling her own list of sire lines that worked particularly well with certain female families.

McLeod bred her first mares at Windfields Farm in Oshawa. She sold the resulting yearlings at auction and then followed their racing careers, watching several make their way to the winner's circle.

"I only usually breed one or two a year," said McLeod. "I have about 10 mares that I could breed but two is all I can do each year."

Two McLeod-bred horses she sold last year are now nearing their first starts at Woodbine.

Northern King, owned by Canadian soccer star Cyle Larin, was purchased for \$6,000. He is a son of Travers Stakes winner Keen Ice and the Sky Classic mare Simply Good.

Treasured Mischief, purchased by Jeff Stritzel, has been working steadily for trainer Mike Wright Jr. The filly is by By My Standards and out of Golden Treasury, a nine-time winner.

McLeod can readily trace generations of pedigrees behind some of racing's greatest horses. When she saw the breeding of a mare named Ruby Frost, who was advertised for sale on Facebook, she "bought her in 10 minutes."

Ruby Frost, a daughter of The Factor from the Northern Dancer sire line, had a particularly strong pedigree cross, according to McLeod.

"She had Chief's Crown (a Champion 2-year-old and multiple Grade 1 winner), from the Secretariat line, on the bottom of her pedigree and also Le Fabuleux, which you almost never see that anymore. And there was tons of Princequillo in her breeding."

McLeod purchased Ruby Frost for \$3,500 from Ravi Sugrim and was subsequently bred by McLeod but she not carry the foal to term.

By then, however, Ruby Frost's 2023 offspring, bred by Sugrim, was emerging as a potential star. Her name was Luster.

When Gainesway Farm learned that Luster's dam was still in Ontario, it offered McLeod US\$50,000 for Ruby Frost. She accepted.

"That is why Luster is so fast, she has all that Princequillo breeding but she is also by Knicks Go and he has deep line breeding to Buckpasser (one of the world's greatest sires)."

McLeod has two yearlings entered in this year's CTHS sale, including a colt by Goldencents out of the Tiz Wonderful mare Towson. A winner of eight races and more than \$200,000, Towson is represented by her first foal.

"My colt should be good, he has the same breeding line as [2024 Kentucky Derby winner] Mystik Dan."

Mystik Dan is also by Goldencents and is out of a granddaughter of Tiznow.

McLeod, who is consigning her horses through agent John Carey, will also offer a Frac Daddy colt out of Hypothetical Sky, a half-sister to multiple stakes winner Lokinforpursemonee.

For a small breeder, producing a top racehorse requires patience, knowledge and a measure of luck. McLeod has already shown that she has an eye for a pedigree. Now she is hoping one of her own graduates will soon come storming down the stretch in a stakes race.

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