

Laura Karabin

As a young girl, Laura Karabin was captivated by the winner's circle photos that lined the walls of her grandfather's home—mementos from a time when he was part of a syndicate that owned both Standardbreds and Thoroughbreds.

“The initial love of racehorses started when I was really little,” Karabin recalls. “My grandfather passed away before I was old enough to ask him about it, and no one else in the family was into horses, so everything ended there.”

But not for long.

This spring, Karabin celebrated the birth of her first homebred Thoroughbred: a striking chestnut colt by champion Avie's Flatter out of Silver Ami (by Silver Train), foaled at her Fawkham Farm in Washago, Ontario.

Karabin, a full-time firefighter, purchased Silver Ami for just \$1,000 through the 2024 CTHS Ontario Digital Mixed Sale—her very first Thoroughbred acquisition—from Ivan and Colleen Dalos of Tall Oaks Farm.

“In a weird coincidence, a few weeks after I bought Silver Ami, my aunt—without knowing anything about the purchase—sent me two of my grandfather's old winner's circle photos she'd found while cleaning out storage,” Karabin says. “It felt like a sign that I'd made the right move.”

Karabin bought her seven-acre property in Washago in 2012 and gradually developed it with two small barns. While breeding Thoroughbreds wasn't initially part of the plan, she had gained some experience in the industry as a teenager working at Westover Farm and showing yearlings for Hill 'n' Dale.

She also dabbled in sport horse breeding, raising two foals from a Thoroughbred mare she had been given to retire as a riding horse. But when that mare, Dallian M. (by Frac Daddy), proved unsuitable under saddle, Karabin bred her instead and sold the resulting foals for the sport market.

Then, she started hearing about the success Frac Daddy's progeny were having at Woodbine.

“I used to think being a Thoroughbred breeder was out of reach,” she admits. “But everyone I've talked to has been so helpful. Colleen [Dalos] has been amazing to work with, and the CTHS and Michaela Kemp at Ballycroy Bloodstock have been incredibly supportive.”

Karabin is especially drawn to the research and detail that go into breeding—bloodlines, statistics, and, of course, the thrill of the races. “It's so much more exciting than the sport horse world. It's a bigger risk, but way more thrilling.”

Silver Ami, a multiple winner who finished fifth in the 2011 Woodbine Oaks behind Inglorious, has already produced four winners, including stakes-placed Gamble's Silver. Her three-year-old this season, Sil's Gamble, is on the cusp of breaking her maiden.

“My family and friends who've followed my journey are all in now. We host watch parties at the farm when Sil's Gamble runs.”

Looking ahead, Karabin has a five-year plan in mind and intends to sell her Thoroughbred foals at auction. For now, she's enjoying every moment with her Avie's Flatter colt.

“He's awesome—huge and super correct. It's pretty exciting.”