



MURRAY SMITH

Buying a yearling at the CTHS Ontario sale a decade ago began as a fun venture for Murray Smith and a couple of friends. That single purchase has since helped Smith become one of Canada's noted Thoroughbred breeders, having already bred a champion and millionaire in the popular grey My Boy Prince.

"He's changed my life," Smith said of My Boy Prince, the second foal out of Hopping Not Hoping, the yearling Smith purchased in 2015.

A son of Kentucky stallion Cairo Prince, My Boy Prince topped the 2022 CTHS Canadian-Bred Yearling Sale when he sold for \$115,000. The following year, he was named Canada's Champion Two-Year-Old Male after winning the Cup and Saucer Stakes and Soaring Free Stakes and finishing a gallant third in the Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf at Santa Anita.

Now five, My Boy Prince is a graded stakes winner who continues to compete at the highest level. His earnings are just \$250 shy of \$1.5 million.

His success has helped Smith develop a small, high-quality broodmare band, many owned in partnership, and has brought increasing attention to Smith's boutique yearling crop each summer.

Horses have been part of Smith's life since his youth, when he worked at Kemur Camp, an equestrian day camp in Cambridge, Ontario.

He later tried Thoroughbred ownership "years and years" ago, but without much success. By 2015, his professional career was well established.

That year, after seeking advice from bloodstock agent Webb Carroll, Smith paid \$25,000 for an Ontario-bred Silent Name filly selected for him by trainers Travis Durr and Barbara Minshall.

"I brought in two friends to partner with me, so we didn't spend a lot of money. It was just a lot of fun."

The filly, named Hopping Not Hoping, quickly gave the partners plenty to celebrate.

Smith said the filly had three speeds: "fast, faster and fastest."

Trained by Barbara Minshall, Hopping Not Hoping broke her maiden in only her second career start as a two-year-old in 2016. Sent off at odds of 22-1, she earned \$27,000 for the victory.

Three weeks later, she powered through yielding turf at odds of 12-1 to win the Shady Well Stakes and collect \$90,000.

Unfortunately, Hopping Not Hoping raced only once more, finishing seventh in the Muskoka Stakes before a tendon injury ended her career.

"I wanted to breed her," said Smith. "But I didn't know how to go about it."

Through Barbara Minshall, Smith met Shawn Minshall, who helped arrange for Hopping Not Hoping to be bred to Belmont Stakes winner Lemon Drop Kid.

The resulting foal, Right Matter, attracted a bid of \$80,000 at the 2020 CTHS sale, an encouraging result for Smith. He ultimately retained the filly. Although she did not race, her first foal, by world-class sire Medaglia d'Oro, is scheduled to sell in Kentucky in September.

Hopping Not Hoping's second foal was My Boy Prince, who was consigned to the CTHS sale by Gail Wood and purchased by owner Gary Barber. He is trained by Mark Casse.

"I didn't know he would be a sale topper, he was just a nice-looking yearling. What he has done is a lot about Gary Barber, who is not afraid to run his horses in big races."

As My Boy Prince was emerging as one of Canada's leading juveniles, Smith sold Hopping Not Hoping's next foal, a striking colt by Kitten's Joy, for \$585,000 at the 2023 Keeneland September Yearling Sale.

Last year, Barber purchased the mare's Classic Empire filly for \$210,000 and named her Swift Rules. Hopping Not Hoping's 2026 yearling is a filly by leading American sire Constitution.

A member of The Jockey Club of Canada, Smith credits the generosity and guidance of Ontario

breeders with helping him build his breeding operation.

“I really like the breeding aspect of the sport. And the Breeders’ Awards offered here have been amazing.”

Smith works with Shawn Minshall to select matings for his broodmares.

“I’m a black and white kind of guy; I’m a data type of guy. I used software for pedigree matches and then ask Shawn what he thinks.”

Smith credits much of his success to Minshall, while also pointing to breeders Glenn Sikura, Colleen Dalos and David Anderson as important mentors.

“These people are so dedicated and so passionate.”

He is also encouraged by the Ontario government’s recent commitment of additional funding for breeders’ programs and race purses.

“I think we breeders have some time to prepare for next year’s sale. Everyone is committed to making it successful. There is a willingness to invest again and we have new blood in the industry and good stallions. There is a brand new enthusiasm.”

**93 Skyway Avenue, Suite 106 Toronto, Ontario M9W 6N6 T:416-675-3602 E:
info@cthsont.com**

