

CANE

Morgans

QUIN

Serendipity At Work

A paragon of versatility, Canequin's Look Out, owned by Nancy Johnson of Lincoln, Massachusetts. (Photo © Darlene Wöhlart)



by Jessica Morris

Many successful sport Morgan breeders have scientific theories to which they attribute their success. Then there is Beth Benard, who calls herself "born lucky."

"I've decided that I'm just about the luckiest person alive, especially when it comes to horses," she said. "I must have gotten it from my grandmother, for no matter where she went or when she showed up, she would always win the door prize. My family always thought it was a shame she was such a strict Methodist and wouldn't buy a lottery ticket, because we could have been a lot better off than we were. Even though she's been gone a decade or so, every year I still put her name on my UVM raffle ticket! Hey, you never know. . . ."

Canequin is a 35-acre farm just off the thruway in upstate New York. It is presently home to 13 horses and, as Beth says, "produces an 'average' of 1.3 foals a year." Once an abandoned dairy farm, it has been renovated one step at a time by Beth and her partner, Jim Spitler. One step at a time is how Beth taught herself the ins and outs of breeding and training horses. Combined with a lot of determination, an unalloyed love of horses, and a lot of luck, those steps have led Beth

Canequin's Torchlight, owned by Nan and Barry Foster of Wayland, Massachusetts. (Photo © Terri Miller)



and Canequin Morgans to a prominent position in the sport Morgan world.

Born in Ohio, and horse-crazy for as long as she can remember, Beth grew up without any equine contact whatsoever. After this horseless childhood, she eventually received a full scholarship to nursing school through the Army. "I did my first training at Walter Reed in Washington, D. C., which was not exactly an equine hot spot," she recalled. "But I did see my first Morgan there. I was picnicking in Rock Creek Park when the most gorgeous dark brown horse I'd ever seen came cantering out of the woods and stopped on a dime just inches in front of my feet. I can still see that big, glorious horse spin on his hindquarters and canter away from a stand-still without any visible cue from his rider. I didn't know there were horses like that!" To this day, Beth doesn't know whether the mounted policeman issued a ticket—she was too busy staring at the horse! Although she hadn't known it at the time, Beth later learned through reading an article in *The Morgan Horse* that during the early 1970s many mounted park police rode Morgans as a result of the donation of the Upwey Ben Don son, Wind-Crest Abner, to the National Park Service.

After graduation from nursing school Beth was stationed at Fort Devens outside of Boston. With her first paycheck she bought a Thoroughbred-cross mare whom she describes as "a typical warmblooded horse—it took forever to get her going and then you couldn't get her stopped!" This mare was then exchanged for a ranch-raised three-year-old Appaloosa, who Beth could never accustom to the traffic in suburban Boston and who was soon sold.

At that time, a serendipitous breeze blew through her life. A date who knew of Beth's addiction to horses drove her to Middlebury, Vermont, to visit the University of Vermont Morgan Horse Farm. Upon arrival, the main barn was mobbed with tourists so Beth and her companion started up the hill toward the Remount barn, which houses the mares and foals. "A mare and two foals calmly stuck their heads over the fence to me," she said. "I knew in that instant, I'd found my breed."

As she also has known since childhood that she wanted to be a breed-

er, and now had found the breed, Beth set out to find her foundation mare. "I couldn't begin to afford a UVM horse so I started visiting as many Eastern farms as I could," she explained. "I went to Townshend and loved their stock, but couldn't afford them either. I saw Nocturne at Waseeka and Beamington at Windhover. One day, returning from yet another wistful visit to UVM, I saw a hand-lettered sign along the road in Vermont, saying 'Morgans For Sale.'"

Beth came away with Esther Sunmaster, an unbroken Eastern Twilight granddaughter out of a Ulysses mare. Esther and Beth returned to Massachusetts and again, Lady Luck reared her pretty head. Esther was sent for training to a farm outside Fort Devens, that while it specialized in eventing, used Morgans for schooling horses. Beth and Esther got their early training and Beth's first lessons were on Waseeka's Buccaneer (Vigilendon x Upwey Benn Quietude), a horse who had been trained and shown by John Lydon. "Nothing like starting at the top!" she said with a laugh.

"When I graduated from Buccaneer, I got to ride Syndicate's Spanker, a [Lippitt] Ethan Ashbrook son. I learned what a good Morgan should look like and how it should act."

Beth's education in Morgans had begun in earnest and she quickly realized that Esther Sunmaster was not destined to be the foundation of Canequin. Nonetheless, Esther produced foals sired by Wales Farm Gaylite, UVM Flash, and Green Meads Marauder for the farm. Through Beth's previous farm visits and research, she had discovered that Orrin Beattie of East of Equinox Farm made it a practice to buy quality mares from dispersal sales and then sell the foals at reasonable prices. "One spring day I went to look for possible foundation mare prospects," she said. "There were only a few fillies on the ground and one colt. As we left the foal pasture a little black streak came road trotting up, screeched up to a halt, and gave us a 'who gave you permission to be in the pasture look?'" Well, like many prospective Morgan buyers, Beth abandoned her practical search for a foundation mare, and bought a horse who captured her heart, the stallion Equinox Locomotion (Wales Farm Gaylite x Gladgay's Lady Lea).

"When I learned that he was out of an Upwey Ben Don daughter, I was even more ecstatic," Beth explained. She learned that Locomotion was the result of a stallion service purchased through the annual AMHA Auction, and, because of the outside stud fee, the little black colt had a bit higher price tag than Beth had planned on. Undaunted, she charged him!—I wonder if MasterCard's billing department could ever have guessed what the \$800 charge on Beth's card was for!

In 1975, Beth finished her Army obligations and moved to Vermont. As luck would have it, her real estate agent was UVM's Steve Davis's wife at the time, Colleen, and the house she bought was just a mile down the road from Leonard and Leslie Wales' farm, home to Locomotion's sire.

Beth described her first years in Vermont. "Becoming friends with Steve Davis gave me unlimited visitor's privileges at UVM and I spent many hours trying to figure out why they crossed

Introducing . . .

Canequin's Local Hero

(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)



Thank you, Beth Benard of Canequin Morgans, for your superior breeding program and the opportunity to purchase this talented 4-year-old gelding.

Watch for "Hero" in Open Dressage Competition in 2000.

PROUDLY OWNED/RIDDEN BY:
NANCY MANGUM
SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT

STABLED AT:
DESTINY MORGANS
BARRY & DAWN RUSSELL



Equinox Locomotion.



Roman Elite, the "Golden Goose," pictured at age 21.

this mare with that stallion. I asked Dr. Balch a million questions. . . . In addition to getting a graduate education in breeding Morgans from the UVM herd, I was also learning basic training at Wales Farm. Leonard had reached the age where he no longer looked forward to climbing on green horses, and I was still young enough and dumb enough to ride anything. It was a tremendous experience . . . he was a wonderful trainer—he taught me how handle stallions, foal out mares, and the importance of a teasing routine.

"One of the most enjoyable horses I rode for Leonard was a young gelding named Wales Farm Colonel. He's been ridden by Leonard's grandson and had turned into a bit of a runaway, but I clicked with him from the start and discovered he had a whale of an extended trot that he could hold for miles. Leonard thought we could sell him as a competitive trail horse, so I started logging miles on him and he ended up being one of only 22 horses to complete the grueling 1977 Vermont 100-Mile Ride!"

Beth continued, "Leslie was just as essential to my education; she helped me set up my farm as a business, taught me basic farm accounting, and even gave me her system for naming foals—using the same letter of the alphabet for every foal out of the same mare. She said when I was old and senile, I'd always be able to remember which mare had which foals!"

Beth was still without her foundation mare during these years and she had her eye on a UVM Flash daughter of Leonard's, Wales Farm Starlet (x Sleepy Hollow Gayconga). While Starlet was not for sale, Beth did purchase her filly, Wales Farm Tiffany (x Wales Farm Captor) on installment! "She was big-boned and Governmenty looking," Beth recalled. "Just OK in the head, but with a great body and terrific disposition. I was on my way." Tiffany produced Canequin's Flashback (x UVM Flash); and four by Equinox Locomotion: Canequin's Fatima, Canequin's Favorite, Canequin's Fort Knox, and Canequin's Film Star. Tiffany's daughter, Fatima, went on to produce a number of offspring including Canequin's Annemarie (x UVM Watchman), Canequin's Assets (x Morgan Guaranty), and three by the late Big Bend Doc Davis: Canequin's Aviator, Canequin's Aloha, and Astronomer.

Beth's mentors, Steve Davis and Leonard Wales, had convinced her of the importance of campaigning Locomotion in the show ring if she wanted to promote him at stud. He was sent to Luman Wadhams, who was at the time just setting up his own stable. "I was clearly Luman's worst nightmare as an owner," Beth said. "I insisted Locomotion be short shod and I wouldn't let him use a bustle or truck him long distances!" Despite these limits, Locomotion was a saddle champion at New England. As Luman said, "He was just another horse in harness, but under saddle he was spe-

cial." Beth explained that part of what made him special was the naturally balanced canter, that would prove priceless as he began siring sport horses and passing it along.

Locomotion's first foal was out of Wales Farm Starlet, the mare who Beth had so wanted as her foundation. One year, Starlet didn't settle when Leonard bred her, and Beth convinced him that she just needed a change of scenery and a young stallion, namely Locomotion. The result of that cross, Canequin's Trademark, convinced Leonard to finally sell Starlet to Beth. Instead of charging this one, Beth sold her engagement ring and washing machine. "I spent the next 12 years in laundromats, but I finally had my foundation mare!" she explained. In addition to Trademark, Starlet produced Canequin's Ticonderoga, Canequin's Torchlight, and Canequin's Trilby, all by Locomotion, and Canequin's Trifecta by UVM Watchman.

At that time, in spite of working two jobs, Beth was having trouble making financial ends meet. She and Jim Spitzer, who is a career Air Force officer, decided to move to upstate New York, where the cost of living was lower and Griffiths Air Force base would provide better-paying employment.

Her grandmother's spirit must have been with her for she ended up in Rome, a small town that was also home to Bill and Carol Lutz, who owned the Upwey Ben Don son, Oldwick Crusader. Throughout the next winter, visiting the Lutzes and their herd, Beth kept noticing one particular chestnut mare. "She was small, rough-coated, thin, and always had a pile of ice or snow on her back; you just knew she was at the bottom of the pecking order."

That same year, an Oldwick Crusader daughter, Roman Empress (x UVM Elaine) was sweeping the Dam and Produce classes at all the shows, including the Grand National. Jokingly, Beth asked Bill Lutz if he had any more from that cross and to her surprise, the scrawny little mare in the pasture was Empress's full sister, Roman Elite! Beth was unable to get Elite out of her mind and finally swapped one of her last commodities, a used Kingston trailer, for the little mare.

"That Ben Don/Tutor cross she carried kept gnawing at me; it was the flip side of Locomotion's breeding and had worked so well at UVM," Beth said. "I put a lot of groceries into Elite and she grew from 13.3 to almost 15 hands in two years. She was never typey, however, and showed a lot of her Saddlebred blood through King Peavine on top and the Government stallion Hudson on her

dam's side. When she blossomed I advertised her for sale, but got no takers so I bred her to Locomotion. And the rest, as they say, was history."

Beth rues the fact that she sold the early Locomotion/Elite foals so cheaply since she had not yet realized what slow maturing animals they were. "Eventually, though, I wised up to the fact that I'd hit the motherlode," she added. "Roman Elite was clearly my golden goose." That "golden goose" crossed with Locomotion produced Canequin's Lite Lea, a dressage mare currently working at Fourth Level; Canequin's Limoges, who was exported to France and foaled the first registered Morgan born on French soil; Canequin's Loandbehold, a consistent open hunter champion until his premature death last winter; Canequin's Look Out, who is a paragon of versatility, currently competing in advanced CDEs; Canequin's Loyalty, who was just starting her dressage career when she died of a freak pasture accident at her trainer's; Canequin's Lionheart, a young dressage and event horse, who already has racked up wins in both divisions in his first year of competition; Canequin's Leatherstocking, who's looking like a real CDE contender; Canequin's Local Hero, a natural born dressage horse who debuted this year and turned a lot of heads; and Canequin's Letter Perfect and Canequin's Lemon Fair, who are both still at home, too young to compete.

Just as it took time for Beth to realize that she had hit on something with the Locomotion/Elite cross, it took a while before she realized she was breeding sport horses. As she explained, "I never really woke up one day and said 'Hey, I'm gonna be a sport horse breeder!' Many of my early foals ended up in show homes and weren't happy in that environment. They hated the 23 hours a day in a stall and trainers were telling me they had to work the Locomotion horses hard for 30-45 minutes before they'd even begin to settle down and pay attention. Yet at the same time, I was getting great feedback from the amateurs who'd purchased them for sport disciplines. They were amazingly sound, bold, forward, smart, and would go all day." Beth continued, "I'd always believed a horse ought to go where he's best suited, and it was becoming increasingly clear the show ring wasn't it for Canequin Morgans.

"The only thing that suffered from my 'coming out of the closet' as a sport horse breeder was Locomotion. Owners of show horse mares suddenly forgot he existed. Sport horse breeders wouldn't consider him because he was only 14.3, completely overlooking the fact that he had already sired a phenomenally high percentage of successful open competition horses. As a result he only has 35 offspring to his credit, and most of those carry the Canequin prefix."

The fact that Locomotion is not as widely used at stud as he could be doesn't seem to bother Beth. She's always pleased with the foals he does sire, saying, "The Locomotion foals are uncommonly correct. Any one of his progeny could be photographed for use in vet texts to illustrate perfect leg structure. They have big feet, short cannons, short, strong backs, powerful loins, and good length of neck. The lucky ones also got his incredible head. He never sired a horse that I'm ashamed to admit was his."

Beth is quick to acknowledge that she had a lot of luck at key points in her career as a breeder; she's also smart enough to recognize a good thing and to hold onto it. In describing her plans for the future, she said, "I plan to continue to breed on a small scale with the open competition market in mind. Someone once said to me, '99.9 percent of the horse owners in the world do not ride saddle seat.' It's something to think about. But what really convinces me I'm on the right track is not only the success of my horses against other breeds, but the people who own them. My owners are the most marvelous group of horsepeople anywhere. We share training tips, anecdotes, highs, and lows.

"I genuinely believe the Morgan breed will return to

prominence on the backs of the open competition horses and, for my part, I'd rather labor in anonymity in the open competition ocean than be a big fish in the little Morgan pond."

She continued, "I also think we sport horse breeders need to support every Morgan that's out there competing against other breeds. I don't care if it's a Statesman horse, a Kennebec horse, or a Dragonfire horse; if it's a credit to the breed, I'm behind it all the way. Of course I'd be lying if I said I didn't want my own horses to come out on top, but that doesn't stop me from cheering on all the Morgans in the open competition arenas.

Beth concluded, "I couldn't be happier in any other role. If a genie ap-

Words of Wisdom

Beth learned her trade from many people; here she shares a few choice pieces of advice.

"Geld every colt that's not better in every aspect than his sire. It's the only way the breed can progress." —*Marilyn Childs*

"Keep your broodmares bred. If a mare needs a year off, she'll take it." —*Dr. Donald Balch*

"Breed a stallion to the best line on his dam's side." —*Tesio, a legendary Thoroughbred breeder*

"Never reject a breeding animal solely on its size. If you want to know if your line is hiding any nasty recessives, every once in a while you have to inbreed." —*Beth Benard's grandfather, Herbert Bobb, breeder of national champion dogs.*

"Never turn your back on a stallion, no matter how well you know and trust him.

The best thing for an unhappy horse is a night out under the stars." —*Leonard Wales*

"There's no such thing as an empty stall." —*Jim Spitler*

peared from a bottle and gave me a choice of having ten more Grand National winners or taking an autumn trail ride through a Vermont woods, I'd pick the canter through the leaves without a second's hesitation. And now that 50 is just around the corner, I think I'll finally start working toward some of my lifetime goals. In addition to reading every Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, I want to complete the Tevis Ride, the Vermont 100-Mile, a Training Level event, and a Fourth Level dressage test—all on a Canequin Morgan." She paused and said, "With four of my horses now in their 20s, and most of my young stock selling before they can be trained, I know some broodmares who are in for the shock of their lives!"



Canequin

The following pages are presented as a historical record, and also as a small thank you to the many wonderful owners who have cared for, cherished, and believed in their Canequin horses for many years, and finally, as a tribute to marvelous Morgan mares everywhere.



Equinox Locomotion

Wales Farm Gaylite	UVM Highlight	Orcland Vigildon
		Symphonee
EQUINOX LOCOMOTION	UVM Gale	Tutor
		Romantic
Gladgay's Lady Lea	Upwey Ben Don	Upwey King Benn
		Quietude
	Promenade	Orcland Leader
		Glady



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Wales Farm Starlet

(UVM Flash x Sleepy Hollow Gayconga) • 1962-1990



Canequin's Torchlight

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Starlet)

Owned by: Nan & Barry Foster • Wayland, MA



Canequin's Trifecta

(UVM Watchman x Wales Farm Starlet)

Owned by: Lynn Follett • Yucaipa, CA



Canequin's Ticonderoga

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Starlet)

Owned by: Linda LaFrance • Pittsford, NY



Canequin's Trademark

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Starlet)

Owned by: Sharie Dreesen • Canandaigua, NY



Canequin's Trilby

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Starlet)

Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY

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Canequin



Wales Farm Tiffany

(Wales Farm Captor x Wales Farm Starlet)
1975-



Canequin's Film Star

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Tiffany)
Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY



Canequin's Flashback

(UVM Flash x Wales Farm Tiffany)
Owned by: Sue Nerland • Rogersville, MO



Canequin's Fort Knox

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Tiffany)
Owned by: Liz Gesler • Etna, NH



Canequin's Favorite

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Tiffany)
Owned by: Heidi Osgood • Piermont, NH



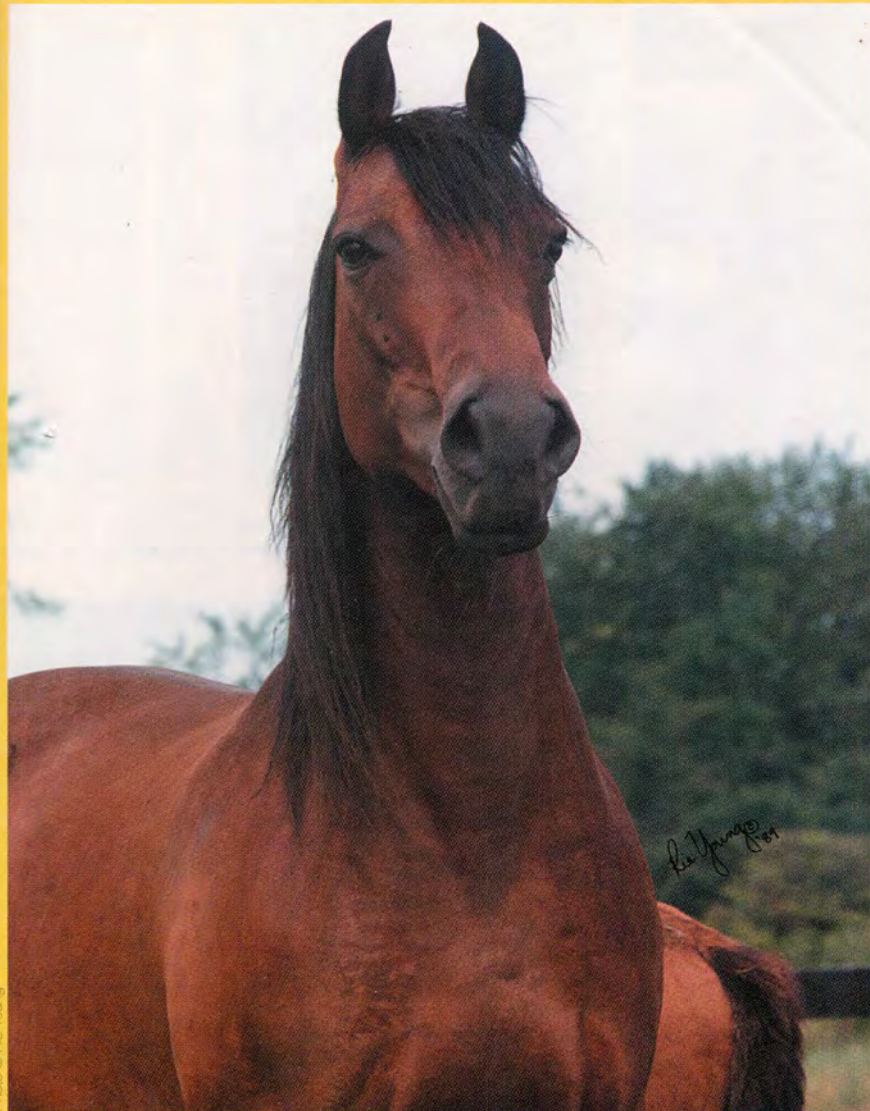
Canequin's Fatima

(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Tiffany)
Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY



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Canequin's Fatima
(Equinox Locomotion x Wales Farm Tiffany)
1981-



Photo © Reflections Of Wilmington

Canequin's Aloha
(Big Bend Doc Davis x Canequin's Fatima)
Owned by: Ellen Fallon, • Hinesburg, VT

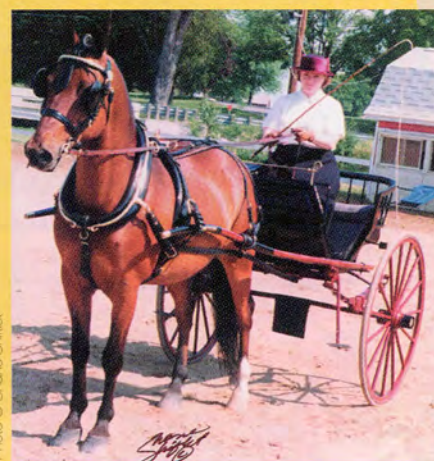
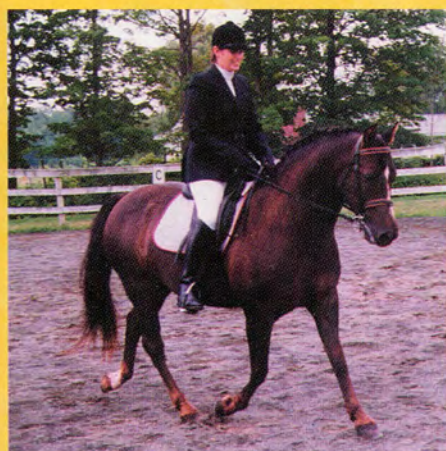


Photo © Shana Smith

Canequin's Aviator
(Big Bend Doc Davis x Canequin's Fatima)
Owned by: Carol M. Yates • Leonard, MI



Astronomer
(Big Bend Doc Davis x Canequin's Fatima)
Owned by: Eileen Wright • Chesterfield, MA



Canequin's Assets
(Morgan Guaranty x Canequin's Fatima)
Owned by: Jeanne Gibbons and
Kathleen Pasquerello • Richwood, NJ



Photo © Nassim Photographers

Canequin's Annemarie
(LVM Watchman x Canequin's Fatima)
Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY



Canequin



Roman Elite

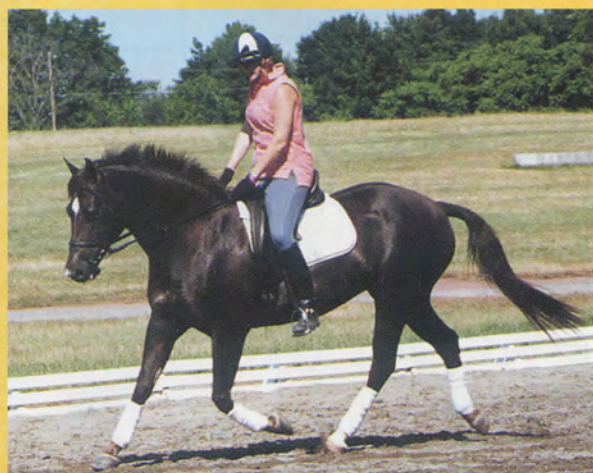
(Oldwick Crusader x UVM Elaine)
1978-



Canequin's Limoges

(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)

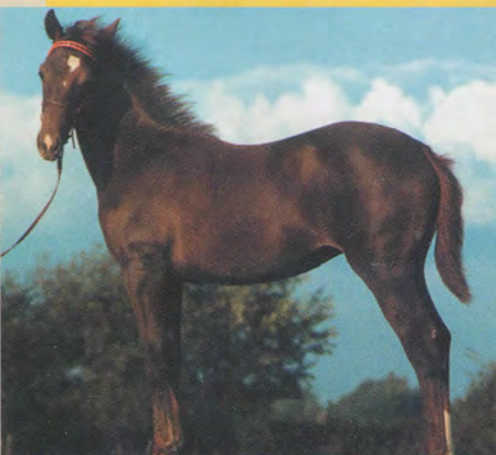
Owned by: Mme Lauren Henry • Provence, France



Canequin's Lite Lea

(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)

Owned by: Ingrid Sawicki • Devon, PA



Canequin's Loyalty

(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)

Deceased



Canequin LoAndBehold

(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)

Owned by: Canequin • Mia Rickenback
Haymarket, VA



Canequin's Look Out

(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)

Owned by: Nancy Johnson • Lincoln, MA

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Canequin



Canequin's Lionheart
(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)
Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY



Canequins Leatherstocking
(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)
Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY



Canequin's Local Hero
(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)
Owned by: Nancy Mangum • South Burlington, VT



Canequin's Lemon Fair
(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)
Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY



Canequin's Letter Perfect
(Equinox Locomotion x Roman Elite)
Owned by: Canequin • Rome, NY

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