

The Harder they Work, the Luckier they Get

Lou Petty thought she had a winner. Her horse's steps were more fluid and rhythmic than ever.

by Summer Best

It was Saturday morning, October 25, 2003, and as Lou Petty clucked to her 4-year-old bay stallion, Lethal Persuasion, the sparkling duo jogged slowly and softly into the indoor show ring at the All American Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, Ohio. Lights were bright. The crowd was huge. Despite the excitement and intense pressure, Lou felt a sense of tranquility.

"I wasn't really nervous...it was weird," she says, remembering that morning. "I was thinking, 'I just want everybody to know he's a good one.' And as I was riding I kind of told him (her horse), 'You know, I'm just going to let you do your job. And I'm not going to get in your way.' And you know what? That's just what he did."

On the sidelines, Lou's husband, Tim, and several members of the Petty family quietly watched their favorite rider and horse float around the ring. After the final whoa, the judges tallied up scores, agreeing that Lou and Lethal Persuasion should win the first-place finish in amateur western pleasure – a remarkable feat at the largest single-breed, 22-day horse show in the world.

"It's like a fairy tale, and we're ecstatic!" Lou says. "I like to go to the Congress with an open attitude. My goal for Lethal Persuasion was that all the people watching, and not just the judges, would see that he's a great horse."

A Great Horse

Lethal Persuasion, by Kcees Lethal Weapon and out of Ultimate

Persuasion, seems to be getting that recognition. Not only did the bay wonder win the Congress Amateur Western Pleasure – he also made a clean sweep in the Congress John Deere 50 and over Western Pleasure class. What's more, in 2001, Lethal Persuasion won the Congress 2-Year-Old Limited Western Pleasure with Dale Hamilton. Tim and Lou Petty of Ocala, Florida, purchased the stallion in 2002. Lou Petty & Lethal Persuasion won amateur western pleasure and 50 and over amateur western pleasure at the 2003 All American Quarter Horse Congress. Mike Petty will campaign Lethal Persuasion in 2004.

Lethal Persuasion's first foals won't arrive until spring 2004, but Petty Quarter Horses' other stellar stallion, NSBA high-money earner Certain Potential, has youngsters from several foal crops already making it to the limelight, winning all over the country with youth, amateur and professional riders.

"They have great hocks and a great head," Tim said of Certain Potential's foals. "He really stamps them, no matter what color they are!"

Lou enjoys riding the Certain Potential youngsters, particularly because they seem to love their jobs as show horses. One in particular, A Certain Melody, moved to the top of the charts in 2003 when she and Lou won the Congress 2-year-old limited non-pro western pleasure.

"These guys go out there, and they want to show," she says. "The show ring never bothers them. Before I rode the Certain Potential horses, I never understood what it meant to have a push horse, but now I realize – with a push horse, you ride every stride. They'll go faster if you need them to, but they just don't want to go fast! It's exciting to know you have a consistent product when all the babies have the same attitude. We thought we had a product, but you never know until you get them out there and see how they compare."

In the future, Lou will continue riding Certain Potential and Lethal Persuasion super stars, and she's even considered practicing for the tough trail class and western riding divisions.

Michelle Corrigan and The Mouse Is Talkin placed in the top10 at the 2003 AQHA World Championship Show. Retirement, Sort Of
Tim and Lou Petty enjoy their horses as a business and as a hobby – albeit a hobby that requires a lot of time and attention.

At Petty Quarter Horses in Ocala, with the help of their trainers Stanley and Connie Ryan and Darci Howcroft, the couple manages a full string of show horses, 20 broodmares, two performance stallions, and a typical foal crop of 15 – most of which are destined for the highly competitive western

pleasure market.

And in all their spare time, the Pettys are part owners of the Ocala Speedway and four car dealerships in western Michigan. They also run the new marketing and advertising agency, V.12 Marketing Group, located in downtown Ocala. For seven years, Lou was youth advisor for the Michigan Quarter Horse Youth Association, and she's currently the youth advisor for the National Snaffle Bit Association.

Suffice it to say, this family doesn't do anything halfway. Between Tim, Lou, and their two grown children, Michelle Corrigan and Mike Petty, they claim 14 youth, amateur and open AQHA World Championships, and an abundance of Congress ribbons.

"I'm kind of retired now," says Tim, who has shown horses in the past. "I'm busy marketing and promoting our studs and babies. We sold two at the World Show this year, and one is going to Germany."

Part of retirement for Tim, who grew up in Detroit, has been working on his new showroom/garage, where he maintains 10 restored antique automobiles. Lou's interests include designing and making jewelry, gardening and snow skiing.

Tim and Lou Petty's home and farm at Petty Quarter Horses in Ocala is the epitome of Southern style, elegance and function. Family Fun No doubt, Tim and Lou Petty are proud of their horses and each of their business successes, but one of the biggest reward has been their ability to incorporate their entire family into the journey of showing and enjoying horses.

"It's been a great family thing for us for a long time," Tim says. "It's great family support. We're fortunate that our family does enjoy it, and our kids gave up a lot to be able to work with horses."

Daughter Michelle Corrigan, married to Terry, has two children, Carson, 4, and Dawson, who is 1. Son Mike works at V.12 advertising and marketing company.

Busy with Breeding

Both breeding stallions owned by Petty Quarter Horses live onsite at Benker Equine Center in Morriston, Florida. Artificial insemination is the only method used for breeding, and the team has recently begun transferring embryos. In 2003, the farm transferred seven embryos: one Certain Potential embryo and one Lethal Persuasion embryo out of world and Congress champion mare Chips Original Cooki, and they repeated the exact process on two embryos from champion mare The Mouse Is Talkin and Aint She Stately. The farm also transferred one embryo by

Lethal Persuasion from a 2-year-old mare, A Certain Melody, who is by Certain Potential.

“Lethal Persuasion is only 4 years old, so we don't have any of his foals on the ground yet, but it could be really exciting,” Lou says.

Congress champion A Certain Melody, shown here with trainer Stanley Ryan, is one of Certain Potential's shining stars. The Pettys admit that the 2004 breeding season could get a little confusing as they try to remember all the statistics for their foals.

“Up until now, it's been pretty easy because they're by one stud,” Lou says. “Next year, we'll have to focus even more!”

Stallions Standing

Lethal Persuasion, 1999 bay stallion (Kcees Lethal Weapon x Ultimate Persuasion)

- Winner of limited 2-year-old western pleasure and co-champion of open 2-year-old western pleasure at 2001 All American Quarter Horse Congress.
- 2003 Congress winner of amateur western pleasure and 50 and over amateur western pleasure.
- National Snaffle Bit Association winner of more than \$20,000

Certain Potential, 1996 bay stallion (Potential Investment x Miss Surely Bars)

- National Snaffle Bit Association winner of more than \$43,000
- AQHA World Championship Show Top 10 winner 1997 and 1998
- Sire of Potential Diva, 2002 high-point NSBA western pleasure horse
- 57 AQHA registered foals (as of 2003)
- Sire of A Certain Melody, All American Quarter Horse Congress Champion in 2-year-old limited non-pro western pleasure

Nutrition at Petty Quarter Horses

The Petty family relocated to Ocala from Michigan in 1997 and instantly began constructing their dream facility, which is now complete with home, show barn, pristine paddocks, broodmare facility, round pens and more.

From their first weeks in the sunshine state, the family has utilized Seminole Feed as its nutrition provider of choice.

“When we first moved here, Carol Harris (owner of Bo-Bett Farm and AQHA two-time Superhorse Rugged Lark) told us we should use

Seminole Feed,” Tim says. “So we have. And we never, ever have to worry about our feeding program. We take the feed with us wherever we go. When we go on the road for two weeks to horse shows, we take a ton with us.”

Petty Quarter Horses prefers to feed pellets instead of textured feed, and their program centers around Seminole Gold Chance 12+, and premium product that contains 12 percent protein, 6 percent fat, and added lysine for growth and development.

“Pretty much everything on the farm eats the same thing,” Tim says. “We feed orchard/alfalfa hay, and we have really good pastures, so six months out of the year, the mares have a lot of grass to eat and we cut back on their hay.”