

Jovee Farm's Weanling Pony Colt 'Phenix' Stands Up to the Big Boys at Dressage at Devon

Smallest in his class, Phenix earns 5th in the USDF/GAIG Foal Championship, and 8th out of a field of 18 in the 2012 Colts Class

By Sarah Blanchard

Great treasures often come in small packages.

Angela Mirarchi, owner and manager of Jovee Farm in Brown Summit, North Carolina, knows this to be true. Jovee Farm's handsome sport pony Phenix, just six months old and only 50 inches tall, earned a 76.7% score to place eighth out of 18 foals in the Colts of 2012 Class at the prestigious Dressage at Devon Breed Show on September 25.

And then he topped that, by placing fifth with a score of 76.1% in the USDF/GAIG Breeders Championship East Coast Series Final Foal Championship, becoming the highest-placed North Carolina-bred colt in that class. Comments by the judges included: "balanced proportions, good alignment in legs, good reach and swing through back, balanced and steps under, promising athlete."

In both classes, he was the smallest colt in the ring. Phenix held his own against the best of the best, a stunning array of Hanoverians, Dutch Warmbloods, Oldenburgs and others from internationally renowned breeders.

But Phenix's pedigree is nothing to sneeze at. His sire is Popeye, an imported ISR/Oldenburg NA/Westfalen top-ranked stallion who stands only 14.2 hh. Phenix's dam is the Section D Welsh Cob mare Clanfair Mary Kay, owned by Jovee Farm. Mary Kay is a granddaughter of Kentchurch Chime, one of the first ponies to compete in upper-level dressage in the US. Kentchurch Chime won Grand Prix dressage classes and the Region 9 Grand Prix championship.

Phenix is the product of Jovee Farm's selective breeding program for sport ponies and small horses, which carefully matches proven pony mares with top-performing small stallions. When discussing her breeding goals, Angela Mirarchi explains that she looks for well-mannered, small athletes that excel in dressage, jumping and eventing.

"That often that leads us to crossing Welsh ponies with German sport pony bloodlines, such as Oldenburgs and Westfalens," she says. "The foals are inspected and entered into one of the sport pony registries—the pony book of the International Sport Registry (ISR), Oldenburg NA, or the Welsh book, depending on their bloodlines. And we make sure they're lifetime-registered with the U.S. Equestrian Federation, so they're eligible to earn national points as well."

Phenix earned a score of 8.2 for movement at his recent

Oldenburg/ISR inspection, and is branded ISR-pony.

To qualify for the USDF/GAIG Foal Championship at Devon, Phenix topped the field of 2012 colts and geldings at the Virginia Dressage Association/Nova (VADA) Summer Breeding Shows I and II in August, where he easily won the Colts/Geldings of 2012 class in both shows with a top score of 76.700%. Even more impressive, he placed first in the large Oldenburg NA/ISR class—with horses of all ages—at VADA with his best score of the show, 77.100%.

"Phenix loves attention," explains Angela, who bred and raised him. "He has great manners and a super temperament, along with excellent conformation and movement. And Christine Smith, who handled him in the ring at VADA and Devon, does a superb job presenting him to the judges."

Dressage at Devon was a good show for North Carolina-bred colts overall, as the 2012 Dressage at Devon Foal Championship was won by the Hanoverian colt David Bowie MF, bred by Maryanna Haymon of Marydell Farm in Columbus, NC. Third place in the Colts class was earned by Lisa Shuler's Dutch Warmblood colt Hadar MCF from Magnolia Creek Farm in Castalia, NC.

Phenix doesn't care much about his bloodlines, or the blue ribbons. For now, he's living happily in the field with his full sister Princi at Jovee Farm, waiting for his next adventure. And he's already proven he can stand up next to the big boys.



(Photo by David Mirarchi)