

# STRIKING *Success*



**by Kathy Rumleski**  
**Photos by Iron Horse Photo**



A lifetime of investment is finally paying off for **Bobbi and Terry Morley**. The Morleys' professional care of horses at **Westwind Farm**, on the property of the former Cuddy Farm at Strathroy, Ontario, has meant an increasing demand for both their time and expertise.

**T**he success of stallion Striking Sahbra - Canada's leading sire of two-year-old trotters, who stands at Westwind - has also brought the Morleys into the spotlight. "They've worked hard for years and they've come into their own and they're starting to get the returns," says Rick Bodi, who owns a horse transport business based in Montreal and Ottawa and who

has known the Morleys for a number of years.

Terry says there were a lot of years when the pair worked "seven days a week, 365 days a year. You couldn't even go to a restaurant without a pager going off. You invest your life, basically. It's like most overnight success, it takes about 30 years."

Westwind has been referred to as a

spa for horses because staff are so hands-on and caring. The yearlings there are also taught to behave properly, though. So in that sense, it's like a prep school. Throw in a veterinary clinic on site and lots of good food and you've got the perfect retreat for the equine set.

"The horses always look very comfortable, happy," Bodi says. And the Morleys aim to keep every one of them that way. "Whether it's a \$2,000 yearling or a \$50,000 yearling, we try to treat them the same way and put them through the same program," says Terry, a veterinarian who specializes in reproduction. "We treat them with respect."

The husband and wife team operate the multi-faceted farm and employ four full-time employees and in the busy season, up to 12. They have 80 horses

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on site now, but at their peak they handle 150. The Morleys prepare yearlings for the sales, breed mares and send them home in foal, with some permanent borders.

Besides the reproductive vet services, London Equine Hospital sometimes sends horses their way for post-operative care. At this time of year, some trainers also send their horses to the farm for a lay up.

On the day of this interview in mid-November, Majestic Son had just arrived from competing in the Ontario Sires Stakes Super Final at Woodbine, where he won the two-year-old trotting division. Besides Striking Sahbra, Westwind also stands Goliath Bayama. Terry says he and his wife would like to add to their stallion ranks at the farm, which will take them in a different direction from a few years ago when their main focus was providing full services to broodmares.

The stallions have become the kings of Westwind and Bobbi raves about her boys, and with good reason. "If I had to keep a pet, my pet would be Striking Sahbra. When his career is done he has a place to stay," she says. "He's very much a gentleman. He knows his business. He's got a lot of personality."

Two-year-old Striking Sahbra daughter Pure Ivory also won her \$300,000 Super Final, adding another feather to the stallion's hat. "We believed in him. We felt he was going to have to prove himself on the racetrack and he certainly did," Terry says.

Striking Sahbra's stud fee was increased to \$12,500, up from \$10,000. In contrast, Goliath Bayama's stud fee was reduced recently but the Morleys believe the cost is appropriate. "I thought that \$6,000 was too high," Terry says. "Now he's at \$5,000. People that bred to him last year at \$6,000 will get a breeding at \$4,000."

Goliath Bayama made Canadian harness racing history in 2001 by pacing to a 1:48.1 clocking at Hippodrome de Montreal, which was the fastest mile ever witnessed on Canadian soil. Some of his offspring are also doing well. "He does have potential," Terry says. "People in Ontario don't know that."

Goliath Bayama stood stud for three years in Quebec. "The people that bred to him two years ago and have a foal on the ground now, they love them. It's going to come around."

Bobbi also loves Goliath. "He's

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just a clown. He's always going to be a 15-year-old freckled redhead in my mind. He's just a big goof."

Bobbi and Terry both laugh when asked how they handle all of their duties - laughs that convey the craziness that can befall them at certain times of the year. "About mid-May, we sometimes look at each other and say, 'Why are we doing this?'" Terry admits. "Then it quiets right down in July and we take a holiday and

Terry says. "They come around and say, 'Is there anything we can do for you? Is there anything we could do better for you next year? We have eight horses there. They just treat us like we're important to them, that we're good customers and they want to keep us happy.'"

With the amount of prep time the couple gives to each yearling heading to a sale, they know their horses are going to behave well in the ring. "We do handle our hors-

*Striking Sabbra has placed the Ontario breeding operation squarely in the limelight. His first Ontario crop took to the races last year and surpassed most expectations with the likes of Was It A Dream 2,1:57s (\$519,646), Pure Ivory 2,1:57s (\$465,804) and Birmingham 2,1:57.1s (\$351,561).*

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then start back with the yearlings in early August. Our first sale this year was Forest City, so that gave us a bit of a break because we didn't sell anything in September."

Besides a consignment of 30 yearlings at the Forest City sale in London, Westwind sold eight yearlings at Harrisburg. "We were happy with both sales," Terry says. "We got what we expected to get."

Bobbi says one of the stressful parts of being an agent is that people sometimes have unrealistic expectations of what they will get for their horses. "You blend that with the reality of the marketplace," she says. The Morleys rave about their treatment at Harrisburg. "The sales company treats us like they really want us there,"

es a lot. They do obstacle courses. They're taught to trailer load and back in and out. We're at the point where 95 per cent of them are pretty easy to deal with. I expect those horses to walk on a loose lead, not running off," says Bobbi, who takes the teacher role for the horses.

"We get a lot of compliments from trainers that when they get the horses, they like what they can do with them," her husband adds.

It was horses that brought the couple together in the first place. Bobbi and Terry have been wed for 31 years. They met in Edmonton. They've been around horses all of their lives. Bobbi's family had the hunter-jumper kind and Terry, who gradu-

ated from the University of Guelph, grew up with riding horses and some standard-bred mares. At first he figured he'd train horses, but that didn't pan out. "After trying my hand at training, I realized I wasn't going to make a living. I decided to be a veterinarian."

Bobbi grew up in a small community south of Edmonton. "I can't remember ever not having a horse." In fact, she rode a horse to her one-room schoolhouse in Grade 1. After graduation, Bobbi landed a good job with the telephone company in Edmonton, but left it to be around horses again. "I just missed the horses so much that I took a great big dive in pay." She and Terry both ended up working at a large riding school.

Terry also did work for Northlands Park. After getting married, the couple planned to work in Ontario for six months and in Edmonton for the rest of the year. But once they came to Ontario, they never went back. "One thing led to another and then we worked at Armbró (Armstrong

Bros.) for 10 years and then we came here from there."

They raised their two boys, Jordan and Scott - both living in Taiwan now - in Ontario. The Morleys have been on the Cuddy site since 1997. Although Bobbi, who used to breed and show dogs, didn't know much about standardbreds when she met Terry, her husband says she's a pro now. "She caught on really quickly and knows pedigrees and bloodlines as well as anybody. She watches a race and analyzes it. It got in her blood."

They love watching the races the most when a horse they bred is competing. "It's a thrill to watch them race; we follow all of them," Terry says. Terry and Bobbi each say their work is their dream job and they are extremely satisfied with what they've accomplished. They have one more aspiration, though, before they ride off into the sunset, and that's selling a yearling of their own for \$100,000. "We'll take more," Bobbi laughs, "but that would be a goal and I think it's a realistic goal."

The highest price paid for a Morley yearling was \$57,000 for Bailey Bug, a Run the Table sister to Rickards Ed. While they know selling "their babies" is part of the business, the pair always hopes they go to a good home. "Sometimes we're quite thrilled with where they go and sometimes we're less thrilled with where they go," Terry says.

"You sometimes start to tremble when you see who's really interested," Bobbi admits.

The Morleys love horses so much that even their holidays revolve around them.

"We go trail riding now. Last summer we went to Wyoming and rode in the mountains. We find if we do holidays without horses we get bored," Terry says.

"There's no part of our life that doesn't involve horses," Bobbi continues. "Most of our friends are involved in horses." Last Christmas, Bobbi's sister asked her: "Have you ever had a meaningful experience that does not involve a horse?" The answer was an unequivocal: "No."



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The 2004 Yearling Supplemental Nomination Fee for 2003 foals is due February 15, 2005.