



# TURNING THE BARRELS

The Official Newsletter of the World Professional Chuckwagon Association

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The WPCA is teaming up with Tourism Saskatoon to promote our Tour stop in Saskatoon.

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**SEASON'S GREETINGS  
TO YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES  
FROM ALL OF US AT THE WPCA!**



**ONE FOR THE ARCHIVES**

Curtis Morin and his horse Thor, ready for winter.



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# Remembering Great Horses of the Past

*Eddie Melville* simply loves wagon horses like few others ever have. He is a walking encyclopedia of the great stories about wagon horses, from the times he watched his grandfather **Orville Strandquist** race to today. In the winter of 2004–05, Eddie decided it was time to do something to recognize these star equine athletes. Eddie and his brother **Billy Melville** spent hours that winter discussing what format such recognition should take. Their original idea is still the format used today: During the season, Eddie gathers photos and videos, and Billy designs the award photos once they know that year's Equine Outfit of Excellence.

*Import Tool* has been the sponsor for the award since its inception in 2005. The 57-year-old company sees a strong connection between its own corporate values and traditions and the western traditions inherent in the WPCA. The Equine Outfit of Excellence is now an integral part of the WPCA's annual awards banquet. The drivers consider it to be one of the premier awards because it recognizes the true athletes of the sport: the horses.

In the 13-year history of the award, 29 drivers have had their horses recognized. **Jason Glass** has had the most, with seven. He is followed by **Luke Tournier**, **Rick Fraser** and **Kelly Sutherland**, each of whom have had five horses named. Other drivers who have had multiple horses named include **Jerry Bremner**, **Rae Croteau, Jr.**, and **Kirk Sutherland**, with four each. Three-time award winners include **Gary Gorst**, **Kurt Bensmiller**, **Evan Salmond**, **Obrey Motowylo**, **Grant Profit**, **Leo Tournier**, **Colt Cosgrave** and **Hugh Sinclair**. Only two horses on the wagons have been two-time winners: Luke Tournier's great horse **Port** and Kirk Sutherland's **Chief**. Four outriding horses have been chosen twice, including Obrey Motowylo's **Ben**, Leo Tournier's **Phillip**, **Mike Vigen's Prince** and Jason Glass's **Ratt**.

Last December, we paid tribute to the first six winners from 2005, the horses that established the tradition of season-long performances being recognized at each position on the team.. Here is a look back at the 2006 Equine Outfit of Excellence.

## Left Leader

The 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Left Leader was **Luke Tournier's Puerto Nuevo**, also known as **Port**. In 2006, the then-11-year-old proved to be the kingpin of the Tournier outfit as he helped Luke to show victories at High River, Drumheller and Strathmore, as well as to nine first-place day money runs. Port was also counted on to train Luke's young and upcoming lead horses at a critical time in their development. In 2008, Port went on to become the WPCA's very first two-time Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion—once again as a Left Leader—proving that this Port only got better with age.

## Right Leader

The 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Right Leader was **Moraydan**, also known as **Dan**, belonging to **Rae Croteau, Jr.** Bought in Winnipeg, Dan was an outstanding racehorse with over \$100,000 in winnings on the



Luke Tournier's Port, the Left Leader on the 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.

# Remembering Great Horses of the Past

track. In 2006, Dan, then 12 years old, led Rae to 11 top-five runs. Those highlights also included four day money runs. An aggressive horse and a born leader, Dan came into his own two years after he was trained for the wagon. Dan was known as the boss of the Croteau barn upon his arrival in 2001.



Rae Croteau, Jr.'s Dan, the Right Leader on the 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.



Reg Johnstone's Tiger, the Left Wheeler on the 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.

## Left Wheeler

The 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Left Wheeler was **Reg Johnstone's Play The Tiger**, also known as **Tiger**. The then-nine-year-old was part of nine top-five runs as well as five day money runs on the Tour that year. Tiger was a big push behind Reg's first World Chuckwagon Championship the year before, and also helped Reg win the Rocky Mountain Turf Club Derby for the second year in a row. Tiger was often paired with Reg's 2005 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Right Wheeler **Bob**, and the duo was almost unstoppable in 2005 and 2006. This horse had the eye of a tiger, the heart of a lion and the class of a champion.

## Right Wheeler

The 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Right Wheeler was **Jason Glass's Aloha Missouri**, also known as **Missouri**. This chestnut gelding had been a superstar on the checkerboard wagon since 1998. Originally driven by Jason's father, chuckwagon legend **Tom Glass**, Missouri helped Jason to numerous championships, including the 2000 World Chuckwagon Championship. In 2006, Missouri was not only the oldest horse on the Tour but he was



Jason Glass's Missouri, the Right Wheeler on the 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.

## Remembering Great Horses of the Past



*Above:* Jerry Bremner's Slash, an Outriding Horse on the 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.

*Below:* Colt Cosgrave's Rogue, another Outriding Horse on the 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.



also the highest pointed horse. Always full of himself, Missouri walked around with an arrogant swagger reserved for true champions—he was good and he knew it.

### Outriding Horse

One 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Outriding Horse was **Jerry Bremner's Slash Dancer**, or **Slash**. This Texas-bred bay horse, 10 years old in 2006, was part of 10 top-five runs, including four day money runs, that year. Consistency and soundness are two key features in any good outriding horse, and these characteristics described Slash as he helped Jerry to show wins at the Medicine Hat Exhibition & Stampede, the North American Chuckwagon Championship and the WPCA Tour Championship, proving this champion was no Slash in the pan.

### Outriding Horse

The other 2006 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Outriding Horse was **Colt Cosgrave's Formidable Rogue**, also known as **Rogue**. Then a 10-year-old, this bay gelding was a stalwart in Colt's late-season charge to qualify for the 2007 Calgary Stampede Championship. Originally bought from Colt's uncle (and former chuckwagon driving legend Tom Glass) as a wagon horse, Rogue found his niche in the outriding pen, and was primarily ridden by Colt's champion outrider brother **Chad Cosgrave**. In 2006, Rogue chased Colt to three day money runs and helped him win his first show at the Red Deer Chuckwagon Championship. In a sport that is full of renegades, this Rogue proved to be a champion.

*Thank you to the folks at Import Tool for their annual support of the Equine Outfit of Excellence Award.*



## 2017 Equine Outfit of Excellence

*In 2005, outrider Eddie Melville developed the Import Tool Corporation Equine Outfit of Excellence. This prestigious award was designed to recognize the outstanding achievements of the true athletes of chuckwagon racing: the thoroughbred horses. Here are profiles on the six horses that make up the 2017 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence, the latest additions to this magnificent team.*

### Left Leader

The 2017 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence Champion Left Leader is **Gary Gorst's Me the Sea and GT**, also known as **GT**. This 12-year-old Ontario-bred bay gelding was bought in the fall of 2014 in Fort Erie after a long and productive 72-race, seven-year racetrack career that saw him post seven wins. GT began his chuckwagon career in 2015 as a left wheel horse but let his desire to be a leader be known when he kicked the bottom barrel over on the way to the track in his first show. The Gorst team listened and immediately moved him up to the left lead, where he has been ever since.

GT's career was in jeopardy after an off-season injury prevented him from competing on the 2016 Tour. In a testament to his heart and desire, as well as the Gorst team's patience and persistence, GT was given a clean bill of health and was ready to compete again for the 2017 season. Paired with a new partner after the opening show in Grande Prairie, GT helped power Gary to show wins in Saskatoon and Strathmore en route to becoming the highest pointed horse on the 2017 WPCA Tour.

### Right Leader

The 2017 Champion Right Leader is **Dragon's Dancer**, owned by **John Walters**. Nicknamed **Dancer**, this 12-year-old Kentucky-bred grey gelding was bought by current WPCA judge **Dale Haroldson** from Hastings Park in Vancouver and sold to the Walters team in the fall of 2009. Dancer's future was not necessarily a bright one; he had never finished better than seventh in any of his races on the racetrack and failed to collect a cheque. However, after a change in scenery, some time and patience, he discovered a new lease on life as a chuckwagon horse.

He began his career as a right wheeler in 2010 before moving up to right lead in 2011. An honest horse that always starts



Gary Gorst's GT, the Left Leader on the 2017 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.



John Walters's Dancer, the Right Leader on the 2017 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.

## 2017 Equine Outfit of Excellence

hard, Dancer overcame the odds once again after a serious leg injury in 2016 put his racing career in jeopardy. But, as true champions do, Dancer came storming back in 2017 and led the charge as the Walters wagon caught fire in the second half of the season with show victories at the Bonnyville Chuckwagon Championship as well as a championship final heat victory off the 4 barrel at the Battle of the North in Dawson Creek. He was also named the Top Right Leader at the Calgary Stampede. Not bad for a horse that nobody seemed to want. While the bugler's call to the post at the racetrack was nothing more than an invitation to a slow gallop, the sound of the horn to start a chuckwagon race proved to be music to this horse's ears as he danced all the way to the winner's circle on the WPCA Tour.

### Left Wheeler

The 2017 Champion Left Wheeler is **Kurt Bensmiller's Tenth Power**. This 11-year-old Kentucky-bred bay gelding was bought out of Prairie Meadows Racecourse in Nebraska after an impressive eight-year racetrack career that saw him win 19 races and over \$180,000 in earnings. A big horse, Tenth Power began his chuckwagon career as a left wheeler in 2015 as a rookie and was soon moved to the right wheel where he has been ever since.

The 2017 season saw Tenth Power start off on the 1 and 2 barrels while helping Kurt rattle off show wins in High River and the Richard Cosgrave Memorial, as well as championship final heat victories at the Ponoka Stampede and Calgary Stampede. It has been said that greatness is often defined by those who make their teammates better, and Tenth Power is one of those special athletes who does just that. After being crowned the Champion Right Wheeler at the Calgary Stampede, he was moved to Kurt's short barrel outfit for the second half of the season and was a big factor in securing Kurt's second world championship.

### Right Wheeler

The 2017 Champion Right Wheeler is **Chanse Vigen's Kid Slick**, also known as **Slick**. A 10-year-old BC-bred chestnut gelding, Slick's story is unique. He went from being a horse

that nobody wanted to one that everyone wanted. He was originally bought as a two-year-old maiden from Hastings Racecourse in Vancouver for the cost to truck him to Alberta after he suffered a bowed tendon.



Kurt Bensmiller's Tenth Power, the Left Wheeler on the 2017 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.



Chanse Vigen's Slick, the Right Leader on the 2017 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.

## 2017 Equine Outfit of Excellence

He began his career as a four-year-old left leader for former driver Tim Haroldson and has since raced for **Jerry Bremner**, **Rae Croteau, Jr.**, and **Kirk Sutherland** before Chanse



*Above:* Jason Glass's Calm, an Outriding Horse on the 2005 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.

*Below:* Evan Salmond's Zip, another Outriding Horse on the 2005 WPCA Equine Outfit of Excellence.



acquired him for the 2017 season. Driven as a left leader for most of his career, it was evident that a change in scenery was needed. The results were instant as Slick helped power Chanse to a day money run on the last night in Grande Prairie in his first trip at his new position. Slick excelled for the rest of the season and was named Champion Right Wheeler at the Calgary Stampede while helping Chanse make his first \$100,000 championship final heat. Although well travelled, this good-looking horse looks pretty slick in the winner's circle.

### Outriding Horse

One 2017 Champion Outriding Horse was **Jason Glass's Accommodator**, known as **Calm**. Calm is an eight-year-old chestnut gelding, well travelled before he was three years old. He was bred in Kentucky, sold as a yearling in New York, sold again as a two-year-old in Florida before being moved to Alberta to begin his racetrack career in 2012, where he won two races. In 2014, this half-brother to 2012 Kentucky Derby winner I'll Have Another was bought by Jason as a wagon prospect. But after former outrider **Rob Olson** jumped on him and rode him bareback to the river, it was thought that he would be a natural fit in the outriding pen. Calm has proven to be well named, as he was immediately inserted into the lineup as a stove horse. He's remained at that position for the past four seasons. He took quickly to his new job and is a favourite among those outriders who are lucky enough to ride him.

### Outriding Horse

The second 2017 Champion Outriding Horse is **Evan Salmond's Zip the Hurricane**. Nicknamed **Zip**, this 14-year-old BC-bred brown gelding was purchased by former WPCA driver **Lincoln Douglas** in the fall of 2007 from Hastings Racecourse in Vancouver after a rather modest racetrack career that saw him win two races. He was bought by Evan in 2011 and has been a mainstay in the Salmond barn ever since. A durable and reliable horse, Zip loves his job and has proven to be a favourite among the outriders on both leaders and stove. This hurricane showed no signs of slowing down as he blew through the 2017 WPCA Tour.

# A New Partnership With Tourism Saskatoon

IN EXCITING PARTNERSHIP news, the WPCA has recently teamed up with Tourism Saskatoon to promote our Saskatoon Tour stop and encourage local businesses to become either event or tarp sponsors.

Their Sports Tourism team works with local organizations to bring sporting events to Saskatoon that raise awareness of Saskatoon at the national and international levels and that have an economic impact on the community.

Saskatoon Sport Tourism and Prairieland Park recently joined forces to host a Corporate Event Night at Sports on Tap. **Steph Clovechok**, Director of Industry Development and Sports Tourism for Tourism Saskatoon, hosted the evening. She explained the benefits of being a sponsor, which include having a business logo on chuckwagon tarps.

She went on to explain that becoming a sponsor for this event not only offers an opportunity to market businesses but also includes opportunities for incredible experiences. When individuals and companies sponsor a tarp, they get behind-the-scenes access to all things chuckwagon.

Some of the perks include access to the barns, the chance to meet and work with the horses, one-on-one time with the drivers and their families, and the opportunity to dine, play, and hang out with drivers and outriders.

*Right:* Driver Roger Moore engaging with participants.



*Above:* Drivers Kurt Bensmiller and Dustin Gorst with Tourism Saskatoon’s Steph Clovechok.



Photos in this issue supplied by Ed Wittchen and Billy Melville.

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