

A close-up photograph of a horse's eye. The eye is dark and glossy, reflecting the stars and stripes of the American flag. The horse's coat is a light, golden-brown color, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

# *Red White & Blue* **BLOODLINES**

By Kathleen Kirsan

Photos courtesy of Showjumping Hall of Fame



## *The pedigrees of American Show Jumping Hall of Fame Champions reveal that the best bloodlines aren't from Europe, but right here at home!*

This is a brief analysis of those super show jumpers, the select few, that have made it into the American Show Jumper Hall of Fame. After writing an article on Gordon Russell who produced two Hall of Famers, it hit me that I should take a closer look at the genetics of the best jumpers we have had in America. Peter Birdsall did an admirable job of cataloging the best hunters and jumpers in his 1980's texts, but I decided to take a look at the genetics of those few that broke all the records and made it to the Hall of Fame. What I found surprised me a little. First of all, only 20 horses have made it so far to the list. Two of those, *Snowman* and *Main Spring*, are of unknown breeding, and I expected more Warmbloods, but found only one *Trakehner* (*Abdullah*) and one 'Dutch' Warmblood who is actually half American TB (*Calypso*). The rest were all Thoroughbreds!

I am a product of our modern sport-horse breeder experience, and I fully expected to see by this time the proven merits of the 'European' Warmblood more in evidence at the very top of the game; although I am sure undisputable great like American-bred Dutch Warmblood, *Judgement* and his rider Beezie Madden will be added shortly. But we in

America have been breeding our own heavy type Warmblood since the mid 1800's- in that it is part coach horse mixed with racehorse. At that time it was regular practice to add Cleveland Bay, Irish Draught or other coach types to our racehorses to produce our heavy hunters. And of the unknowns in the Hall of Fame, it seems likely from his known history and temperament that *Snowman* was a part Irish horse - a heavy hunter.

That said, the evidence is undeniable that the Thoroughbred has reigned supreme at the very upper levels of achievement seeing that 16 out of the 20 (80%) Hall of Famers are Thoroughbred, and significantly for us, is that many of those are of American Thoroughbred lines.

It just has to be our lack of knowledge that has allowed us to agree with the Warmblood Association's view of our domestic TB. And I am ashamed to admit that when I was actively involved in breeding in the 'European' manner and following the Warmblood registries instructions, that I accepted their decidedly unfavorable view of our domestic Thoroughbred. But the evidence is clear; our Thoroughbred produces sport horses of the very highest excellence and ability.

As breeders we want to be enlightened as to what bloodlines- domestic or foreign - produce the winners because it is a key to our success. And in the Hall of Fame inductees you do see the same bloodlines repeated over and over, such as *Nearco-Pharos*, *Teddy*, *Black Toney-Domino*, *Man O'War*, *Fair Play*, *Hurry On*, *Rock Sand*, *Dollar*, *Blandford*, and *The Tetrarch-Roi Herode*. For example, the magnificent *Sinjon* carries *Roi Herode* on his top line through *The Tetrarch* and his dam sire is *War Glory*, a three-quarters brother to *War Admiral*, a *Fair Play* grandson. And we see that *For the Moment* descends from *Teddy* on the sire line through *Bull Lea* and from *Double Jay*, a grandson of *Black Toney*, on the dam side.

*But the evidence is clear; our Thoroughbred produces sport horses of the very highest excellence and ability.*



Gem Twist at the Seoul Games. Photo by Tish Quirk



Gem Twist's father, Good Twist.

GEM TWIST 1979	GOOD TWIST 1960	NEW TWIST 1955	BONNE NUIT 1934	ROYAL CANOPY 1914	ROI HERODE
			SISTERLY LOVE 1945	BONNE CAUSE 1915	
				GREAT WAR 1936	MAN O' WAR
		BRAVE BONNIE 1933			
		IANTHE 1946	ETHNOS 1934	ETHNARCH 1922	THE TETRARCH
				ELLANVALE 1936	
	FLYING SALMON 1936		KING SALMON 1930		
	COLDLY NOBLE 1970	NOBLE JAY 1959	DOUBLE JAY 1944	BALLADIER 1932	BLACK TONEY
				BROOMSHOT 1926	
			NOBLE NURSE 1954	COUNT FLEET 1940	
		ESKIMO PRINCESS 1964	ARCTIC PRINCE 1948	GALLANT NURSE 1948	WAR ADMIRAL
				PRINCE CHEVALIER 1943	
			ULTRA ROYAL 1957	ARCTIC SUN 1941	NEARCO
				ROYAL NOTE 1952	
		ULTRA 1947	WAR ADMIRAL		



Gem Twist 1987-1996

I want this to be a brief analysis, and so I will just pull a couple of these top American Thoroughbreds out for our inspection. Pictured above is *Gem Twist*, who won Individual and Team Silver at the Seoul Olympics in 1988. He also was the Grand Prix Association's 'Horse of the Year' an astounding three times in '87, '89, and '92.

In looking at the topline of *Gem Twist's* pedigree, you will see he descends from *Bonne Nuit*, who is a grandson of *Roi Herode* and also has the great *Dollar* line in his dam. These are French jump lines. Notice also the presence of *Bonne Nuit's* half-sister *Brave Bonnie*, who is out of a *Domino* line sire – an American sprint line - that reinforces the *Dollar* influence. We find three more lines of *Roi Herode* through his best son,

*The Tetrarch*. Don't miss the *Man O'War* son *Great War*, and notice that the dam carries two lines of *War Admiral* through daughters, as well as three lines of *Black Toney*, and another line of *The Tetrarch*. These are the genetic powers behind this world-beater.

I found a curious coincidence when looking at the genetics (pedigrees) of the Hall of Famers. There was another world-beater back in the 1950's - a mare called *Miss Budweiser* whose registered name was *Circus Rose*. She is a three-quarters sister to *Sisterly Love* who is the dam of *New Twist*, the grandfather of *Gem Twist*. Her pedigree contains many of the strong genetic lines that contribute to *Gem Twist*. She is by *Great War* (*Man O'War* son) out of a daughter of *Valorous*, a *Pennant* son from the *Domino* line.

One other thing before we leave *Gem Twist*. His father *Good Twist*, a stallion, also made the Hall of Fame list. Described as a speed horse with a tremendous jump, he managed to win an amazing 21 international level classes in both Europe and America.

*For those of you who aspire to breed the best jumpers, these are bloodlines that are proven transmitters of jumping talent.*





Touch of Class.

Next, let's look at an incredible mare - *Touch of Class*.

In the 1984 Olympics, *Touch of Class* won two Gold Medals. She also had the first double clear rounds in Olympic history. What a mare! Usually teamed with Joe Fargis, she also won on the Nations Cup teams in Aachen, New York and Washington, and she won the Grand Prix of Tampa. After the Olympics she and Fargis continued their winning ways including reaching the top in the World Cup U.S. east coast standings. She then retired to broodmare duties where she also succeeded. Her pedigree can become a blue print for us, illustrating how to breed top mares- mares that succeed both in sport and as mothers.

We see *Black Toney-Domino* on the sire line through *Blue Larkspur*, but also through two lines of the inbred *Ultimus (Domino)*. A strong filly factor of *Sir Gallahad* daughters (*Teddy line*), the full brothers *Fairway* and *Pharos* multiple times on both sides of the pedigree, a strong presence of the three-fourths brothers *Chance Play* and *Mad Hatter* from the *Fair Play* line, as well as a beautifully sex balanced *Blandford* and his half-sister *Felina*. There is a great background build up of the taproot mare *Canterbury Pilgrim* through lines of *Chaucer* and *Swynford*, producing an extremely strong genetic structure.

For those of you who aspire to breed the best jumpers, these are bloodlines that are proven transmitters of jumping talent. Look for them and build them into your foals.

You just might end up with a horse in the Hall of Fame.

For more information visit *Kathleen Kirsan's website* [www.sport-horse-breeder.com](http://www.sport-horse-breeder.com)

TOUCH OF CLASS 1973	YANKEE LAD 1965	REJECTED 1950	REVOKED 1943	BLUE LARKSPUR 1918	
				GALA BELLE 1937	SIR GALLAHAD
		TABARINA 1949	BY LINE 1940	BLenheim 1927	
				SABLE SCARF 1934	SIR GALLAHAD
	KLUWALL 1966	CORNWALL 1947	THE YUVARAJ 1943	FAIRWAY 1925	
				EPONA 1937	
		KLUTASSEN 1950	SCOTCH GIRL 1943	VALERIAN 1933	
				SCOTCH HUSSY 1937	
		HILENA 1930	SOME CHANCE 1939	CHANCE PLAY 1923	FAIR PLAY
				SOME POMP 1931	
	CORINNE DAILEY 1932		SWIFT AND SURE 1923	SWYNFORD	
			HEADRESS 1927	MAD HATTER	
		RUSTOM SIRDAR 1942	NEARCO 1935		
			MRS RUSTOM 1931	BLANDFORD	
		HIGH CLOUD 1916	ULTIMUS		
		FELINA 1920			