

BENEFICIAL (BELLA) CANADIAN BRED HORSE OF THE YEAR



PhotoCredit: Amanda Ubell Photography

The Belle of the Year! Beneficial (Bella) named Canadian Bred Horse of the Year

Owner: Alicia Gadban-Lewis

Breeder: Paula Leweke

With content from Christine Van Reeuyk, Victoria News and Rita Mingo, Horse Sport

Beneficial (Banderas x Timebreaker) has been named the 2021 Canadian Bred Horse of the year after becoming the 2021 Truman Homes Canadian Show Jumping Champion with Alicia Gadban-Lewis on November 8, 2021 in Calgary, AB. This award is given to a horse bred within Canada who holds an outstanding performance record that has helped to enhance the reputation and visibility of Canadian bred horses.



The ten-year-old Oldenburg mare owned by Gadban-Lewis of Delta, BC, “Bella” was bred by Paula Leweke with sire Banderas of Dreamscape Farms in Vancouver to her dame Ivy at her Robin Hill farm in Metchosin, BC. With a show name of Beneficial, Bella Balatora is her registered name – Bella, for beautiful and Balatora, a feminized version of the second highest mountain in the Himalayas. Leweke has said that she wanted something that meant beautiful, strong and powerful.

And that she has proven to be. Friend and grand prix level rider, Gadban-Lewis happened into the ownership but is very happy with where the pair are now. “She’s really special,” said Gadban-Lewis. “Since Bella was born, Paula always said ‘Alicia, you need to have her, she’s a special horse.’ I liked the mare from the get-go. Nobody believed in her.” But their first show together proved others wrong. It was the Royal West for five-year-olds and she was champion.

Bella has extremely successful bloodlines like her dam sire Timebreaker, who like his granddaughter won the National Five-Year-Old Championship title at the Royal piloted by Eric Lamaze back in 2005. “Both have Olympic grandsires,” explained Leweke who is well known for not only breeding but for rescuing horses and rehabilitating and training them at her lovely farm on Vancouver Island.

Gadban-Lewis and Bella have spent the last few years working on their partnership and spent time in Belgium as well as training with Canada’s Tiffany Foster in the summer of 2021. “I kept asking more of her,” said Gadban-Lewis. “She’s a super-smart mare; every time I moved her up a level, it would take her a second to learn it, but she’s a genius with using her body, careful and efficient – everything you look for in a super athlete.”

It all came together at the Royal West in November 2021. “I was thrilled with how my horse jumped and thought that she got better every day of the championship,” said Gadban-Lewis of this year’s winning mare. “I was able to push her to the next level in the jump-off, which really helped with the competitive field of riders in the class.”

Her performances this year also exemplifies the strong partnership she has with her rider. “Her and I have a really strong partnership. I put a lot of trust in her and I think she puts a lot of trust in me,” Gadban-Lewis said.

Both owner and breeder harbour not-so-secret Olympic dreams for Bella. “Sometimes these horses only come once in a lifetime,” Leweke has said. Even with it being a long way away with a lot of hurdles before that, the plan is to do as much as they can with the potential they have together. With this recognition the equestrian community believes it just may be possible.