

Broadway Joan

1979 2006 CH. M. BY BOLD ARIAN COURTNEYS DOLL, BY WAKEFIELD TOWER

She was obscurely bred, by Bold Arian and out of a Wakefield Tower mare. Richard Bomze, Philip DiLeo, and Michael Spielman purchased her as a two-year-old for \$2,500. Bomze said that when trainer John Hertler realized she wouldn't make it as a racehorse, he recommended they not even try. Yet when the handsome chestnut lady was paired with an unknown stallion — a near-rogue named Compliance — Broadway Joan was world class.

Compliance?

"It was strictly a matter of we had the stallion," Bomze said. "We weren't that involved in racing at the time."

Bomze and Spielman owned Compliance. Despite the stallion's impeccable breeding — he was a full brother to Try My Best and El Gran Senor — he was unaccomplished and aggressive. Windfields Farm had been happy to sell him, Bomze recalled.

While breeders spend years plotting matings, the Broadway Joan–Compliance match proved that legendary horses can come from the unlikeliest of pairings.

Their first foal was a winner, and their second was Fourstardave. Foaled in 1985, the New York-bred won twenty-one of one hundred starts, including thirteen stakes, and earned \$1,636,737. His crowning achievement was winning a race at Saratoga for eight straight seasons, with five of those years including at least one stakes victory. Unprecedented, that feat earned him the nickname "Sultan of Saratoga."

Broadway Joan and Compliance produced Diane Suzanne next, and the lovely distaffer earned more than \$130,000. Next from the pair came Fourstars Allstar, the first American-based horse to win a European classic. He captured the group I Irish Two Thousand Guineas, won eight additional stakes, competed for six seasons, and earned \$1,596,760.

Two foals later Broadway Joan and Compliance produced Fourstar Brother, who won three races and earned \$120,039. Bomze remembers a season at Saratoga when Fourstardave, Fourstars Allstar, and Fourstar Brother shared trainer Leo O'Brien's barn.

After all this success with an obscure stallion, imagine what Broadway Joan could do with the best. Bomze did.

"The biggest mistake I made with her was that when I saw how well she did with Compliance, a Northern Dancer, I said to myself, 'Who's the best Northern Dancer in the world?' Well, Sadler's Wells," Bomze said. "So, wise guy that I am, I called Coolmore Stud and said I want to send this mare over to Ireland. If I got such good stuff out of Compliance, why wouldn't I do better with Sadler's Wells?"

Broadway Joan and Sadler's Wells met six times. Two of their foals never raced, one never won, and the best, by far, earned \$72,392. One, however, named Pittsburgh Phil, was a minor stakes winner over hurdles.

At age nineteen, Broadway Joan was shipped back stateside to Kentucky. By then DiLeo had become partners with investment banker William J. Punk Jr. on several horses, including grade I winner Ordway. When DiLeo and Punk decided to breed Broadway Joan to Ordway, Bomze bowed out.

Broadway Joan's 2000 Ordway filly, Broadway Lady, was stakes placed and earned \$110,300. The mare's final foal, Broadway Chief, also by Ordway, was unplaced in five starts.

Broadway Joan ended up at Suzi Shoemaker's beautiful Lantern Hill Farm near Midway, Kentucky. The aging mare was bred to Grand Slam, Hennessy, and Thunder Gulch but didn't take. DiLeo and Punk pensioned the chestnut lady.

"We kept her as long as we could, and we took good care of her," Punk said.



“It’s expensive, but a horse like that, you owe it to her.”

Broadway Joan became best friends with Priceless Countess, Ordway’s dam.

“They were out in a small paddock together, and they were roughly the same age,” said Rachel Holden, Lantern Hill’s farm manager. “They were like Velcro twins.”

The day I visited Lantern Hill was a cold one, and the bitter wind bothered us humans more than it did the woolly mares. The farm is a gem, and Shoemaker and Holden are natural horsewomen. I immediately felt at home.

I had long wanted to meet Broadway Joan, as her story is legend in New York. She was honored as the state’s best broodmare an amazing three times, and her courtship with the smoldering Compliance made her story even better.

She and Priceless Countess were waiting in the barn. Priceless Countess wasn’t happy with her temporary constraint. Her eyes were large and nervous, and, despite the cold, she was sweating, weaving, and calling outdoors.

She relaxed after returning to her paddock. Broadway Joan didn’t mind the change of routine, and the senior beauty posed with grand comfort.

In the spring of 2006, Priceless Countess passed away. Although Broadway Joan never replaced that friendship, she shared her remaining days with a mare named Smiling Neatly.

Then, on August 17 that same year, Broadway Joan showed signs of tremendous discomfort. A vet was summoned. The twenty-seven-year-old mare was colicking, and the difficult decision was made to put her down. She was laid to rest next to her old companion, Priceless Countess.

“She became quite the queen of the farm,” Holden said. “In summer, she had to have her hay and feed on the same side of the stall as her fan. And she didn’t like breakfast, so she got three feeds at night.

“She was ridiculously spoiled, and she reveled in it. But she was so quiet, never a problem. She really enjoyed her retirement.”