

CANADIAN TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE

## HISTORY & HERITAGE PROJECT 2000

“CANADIAN TIMES OF THE TWH”

### RUN WALKING ON WITH TOPAZ MERRY GO by Bill Howes



On June 16, 1993, near Wildwood Alberta, a foal was born on the farm of Dr. David Schindler and Dr. Suzanne Bayley. The dam was Chiffon's Amber Dream, an amber? champagne TWH, and the sire was McLaren's Robert, a buckskin TWH. This colt, although he was perfectly made, was quite an unusual color. His coat was golden, but his mane and tail were a mix of white, gold and black. His skin was pink and his eyes were blue at birth but slowly became a golden amber, or topaz by the time he was a long yearling.

Bill Howes of Ardrossan, AB, was interested in a 'horse of a different color'. He liked what he saw when he first met the odd colored colt, and bought him on the spot. Weaning and halter breaking occurred the same frosty January day that Bill brought the colt home.

At the time Alberta Agriculture held a Horse Improvement Show for Alberta bred horses in Red Deer each September. Each breed that participated had classes including Yearling Halter, Two Year Old Halter, and Performance Classes for 3 to 5 year olds, in this two day event. All the classes were assessed by three judges, one of whom was a veterinarian.

Bill traveled with his yearling, Topaz Merry Go, to compete in the Yearling TWH class and

placed on top of 21 other entries! Returning the following year he once again came home with the top score over a smaller class of 7 or 8 two year olds! The Horse Improvement Program also awarded Topaz Merry Go the distinction of a SUPREME classification.

TOPAZ went for some training in BC and stood at stud at various AB farms, including Laurindale Stables at Rosalind and Shady Lane Stables of Ardrossan.

Meanwhile Winston and Donna Curtis of Winfield, AB were bitten by the 'champagne bug'. They already owned Cee Dee Canadian Topaz, an ivory champagne TWH son of Topaz, and liked the excitement of the unusual coloring that he was siring on some of their TWH mares.

In 1999, Winston & Donna Curtis and Bill came to an agreement to have TOPAZ pasture breed their 16 registered TWH mares and some others. Bill had decided this was the best opportunity to show Topaz's potential as a stallion worthy of some recognition in the future of the Tennessee Walking Horse breed in Canada and at the same time to add a little color. That first breeding season, after some hasty "come-uppence" by some 20 pasture mares, TOPAZ showed his utter happiness at being there by settling 19 of the 20. Nine foals from that first foal crop proved to be champagnes! The Curtis's sold the offspring of TOPAZ and their other stallions through their annual production sales. Their marketing efforts have shown success in placing TOPAZ's thirty-five known offspring all across Canada as far away as Nova Scotia.

Topaz has now moved east to stand at stud in Regina, Saskatchewan.

As the interest in champagne horses grows we can find many examples of TWH horses showing their gaited abilities with the added feature of unique colors.

For further info on Champagnes  
see [www.champagnehorses.net/index.html](http://www.champagnehorses.net/index.html)  
or [www.chboa.com](http://www.chboa.com).