

## NORTHEAST/MID-ATLANTIC

# Room for All

*Rene and Lauren Woolcott take pride in finding opportunities for horses*

BY FRANK ANGST  
LYDIA A. WILLIAMS PHOTOS

**RENE AND LAUREN WOOLCOTT'S** Woodslane Thoroughbred breeding farm near The Plains, Va., includes a grade I-winning Phipps family mare as well as a daughter of one of their first claiming horses who has shown enough heart that the Woolcotts see potential.

They are the breeders of multiple grade I winner Tonalist but also take pride in finding roles for each horse they breed, whether it be in racing, in their broodmare band, competing in their steeplechase racing operation, or in a second career.

The Woolcotts currently have five mares at their 243-acre Virginia farm and one mare in Europe. And while the Virginia facility is equipped to house many more horses, the Woolcotts plan to keep a small operation in which they can meet the needs of each mare and horse they breed.

"We don't have a great number of horses. We want to be able to enjoy our farm and for every horse to have a lot of land, a lot of pasture to build good, strong, healthy bodies," Lauren Woolcott said. "It gives us a lot of flexibility. Gives us a chance to get good muscle and bone on the young horses as they're storming around. Plus, if you have a drought, we have a lot of pasture. We never have to worry about what a lot of people have to worry about.

"We never intend to get really big. Our goal in the U.S. is to have maybe 10 broodmares. We just feel like it's too much to have 20, which is what we're kind of set up for here, but our goal is to go from five to 10 from growing within.

"Part of this is we rehab horses here. We retire horses here. We have the land to take back our horses and give them a great rest of their lives or convert them into something else. Virginia is full of that; that's sort of its history. You have jumpers, you have fox hunters, you have riding horses, you have flat horses. Well, that's kind of what we're doing."

As the breeders of Tonalist, the Woolcotts already have ties to a classic winner who earned his fourth grade I victory in the final start of his career Nov. 28 in the Cigar Mile Handicap (gr. I) at Aqueduct before being retired to Lane's End Farm, where he stands the 2016 season for \$40,000.

Belmont Stakes (gr. I) winner Tonalist was foaled in 2011 in Kentucky at Cathy and Wayne Sweezy's Timber Town in



Lauren and Rene Woolcott

Central Kentucky, then raised by farm manager Raymond Figgins and his staff at Woodslane Farm. Lauren Woolcott said they have fully enjoyed being associated with the classic winner.

"Just knowing that we bred a classic horse means more and more to me as time goes by. It meant a lot to me (in 2014) at the time, but for small breeders like us, it just continues to become more meaningful," Woolcott said. "I think we're happiest for the people who work at our farm. They put so much into it."

In 2012 the Woolcotts, through agent Sweezy & Partners, agent, offered Tonalist as a yearling at the 2012 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga select yearling sale where the bay colt failed to reach his reserve on a top bid of \$195,000.

Woolcott said they were genuinely disappointed that day, noting that buyers were shying away for reasons that varied, from his being too long, to some believing that buying gray sons of Tapit was the way to go. The Woolcotts loved Tonalist's conformation and demeanor, but with no bidder reaching the reserve at the auction, they opted to sell Tonalist in a private sale to Robert "Shel" Evans.

Tonalist is out of the Pleasant Colony mare Settling Mist. Evans' father, Thomas Mellon Evans, bred and campaigned  
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# 2015 LEADING SIRES IN NEW YORK

Go to [BloodHorse.com](http://BloodHorse.com) for daily updated sire lists

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2015 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>BIG BROWN</b> (05, Boundary), Dutchess Views Farm	\$10,000	162/73	4/10	0/4	(Dortmund, \$1,353,080)	<b>\$5,339,166</b>	*462	14	1.37	1.79
2	<b>FREUD</b> (98, Storm Cat), Sequel Stallions New York	\$10,000	175/87	5/8	4/5	(Lubash, \$346,650)	<b>\$5,137,763</b>	*917	41	1.64	1.29
3	<b>POSSE</b> (00, Silver Deputy), Rockridge Stud	\$5,000	179/80	4/6	4/4	(Royal Posse, \$304,610)	<b>\$4,296,483</b>	*647	30	1.36	1.35
4	<b>HERE'S ZEALOUS</b> (97, Dehere), Kaz Hill Farm	\$1,000	58/37	1/2	0/1	(Green Gratto, \$480,550)	<b>\$1,893,227</b>	181	1	0.99	0.98
5	<b>FROST GIANT</b> (03, Giant's Causeway), Keane Stud Operations	\$7,500	61/26	2/4	2/2	(Frosty Margarita, \$285,800)	<b>\$1,743,454</b>	*154	6	1.70	1.17
6	<b>DISCO RICO</b> (97, Citidancer)	Died, 2014	50/22	0/0	0/0	(Goodtolook, \$201,032)	<b>\$1,711,215</b>	252	11	1.38	1.22
7	<b>STONESIDER</b> (03, Giant's Causeway), Keane Stud Operations	\$3,500	67/28	2/4	0/2	(Galiana, \$272,290)	<b>\$1,676,387</b>	*185	4	1.18	1.20
8	<b>BUSTIN STONES</b> (04, City Zip), Waldorf Farm	\$2,500	63/35	1/1	1/1	(Hot Stones, \$134,417)	<b>\$1,578,493</b>	114	2	1.29	1.41
9	<b>BOB AND JOHN</b> (03, Seeking the Gold)	N/A	65/36	1/1	0/1	(Pain and Misery, \$259,150)	<b>\$1,461,353</b>	*192	9	0.99	1.33
10	<b>DESERT PARTY</b> (06, Street Cry), Sequel Stallions New York	\$4,000	71/32	2/2	2/2	(Desert Dynamo, \$174,150)	<b>\$1,445,546</b>	107	4	0.96	1.46
11	<b>NOBLE CAUSEWAY</b> (02, Giant's Causeway)	Died, 2014	85/43	3/3	1/3	(Noble and a Beauty, \$91,850)	<b>\$1,215,005</b>	233	7	0.82	1.09
12	<b>GIANT SURPRISE</b> (09, Giant's Causeway), Rockridge Stud	\$5,000	12/5	2/5	2/2	(Sudden Surprise, \$416,300)	<b>\$819,662</b>	26	2	3.24	1.25
13	<b>MR. SEKIGUCHI</b> (03, Storm Cat), Mole's Hill Farm	\$2,500	29/17	1/1	1/1	(Yourdreamsormine, \$165,870)	<b>\$762,609</b>	*89	2	0.96	1.24
14	<b>COSMONAUT</b> (02, Lemon Drop Kid), Keane Stud Operations	\$5,000	30/15	1/1	1/1	(Wonderment, \$111,000)	<b>\$760,376</b>	66	2	1.09	1.05
15	<b>GOLDEN MISSILE</b> (95, A.P. Indy), Milfer Farm	\$3,500	55/21	0/0	0/0	(Estrada's Girl, \$130,826)	<b>\$649,698</b>	*634	13	1.04	1.52
16	<b>CONGRESSIONALHONOR</b> (01, Forestry)	N/A	25/9	0/0	0/0	(Superling, \$128,850)	<b>\$525,036</b>	161	1	0.72	0.96
17	<b>TEUFLESBERG</b> (04, Johannesburg), McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds	\$5,000	30/15	0/0	0/0	(Dominic's Smile, \$101,300)	<b>\$489,995</b>	83	4	1.61	1.17
18	<b>THE CLIFF'S EDGE</b> (01, Gulch), McMahon of Saratoga Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	37/16	0/0	0/0	(Frazil, \$83,433)	<b>\$406,585</b>	234	4	0.82	1.18
19	<b>MIRACLE MAN</b> (02, Yankee Victor), Pucker Ridge Farm	Died, 2015	5/4	1/1	1/1	(Jc's Shooting Star, \$242,940)	<b>\$392,579</b>	8	1	1.94	1.59
20	<b>ALEX'S PAL</b> (99, Valid Expectations)	Died, 2015	16/9	0/0	0/0	(All About Abby, \$95,079)	<b>\$331,117</b>	102	2	1.26	0.93

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dual classic winner Pleasant Colony.

Also in 2012 the Woolcotts privately sold Settling Mist to Charles Fipke in a deal that saw the Woolcotts retain her 2012 Speightstown filly, Settle 'n Speight. Racing for Woodslane, that filly won a maiden special weight race in her second start Sept. 5 at Delaware Park. The Woolcotts, of course, are hoping for more racing success from her and an eventual spot in their broodmare band.

Rene, a Harvard MBA who enjoyed success as a member of the New York

Stock Exchange and a former president of Diebold Venture Capital; and Lauren, a Kenyon College grad and former research director at a San Francisco money management firm, enjoyed living in New York City and San Francisco. But while the world of finance brought them together, the couple immediately felt at home when they initially purchased a home in the Middleburg, Va., area.

Lauren credits Rene with the idea of looking for a home in the horse-crazy area of Middleburg, which is home to the National Sporting Library and Museum, and

she described her first visit there in 1987 as love at first sight. They immediately began enjoying trips to steeplechase races and in 1988 purchased land. Two years later they moved there.

A year into their new home, neighbors helped organize a partnership to buy a steeplechase horse to be campaigned by local trainer Mairead Carr. That marked the Woolcotts' entry into horse ownership and they spun off a smaller partnership, that also campaigned horses trained by Carr. Today the Woolcotts continue to maintain a steeplechase racing stable, and Lauren Woolcott has served as chairwoman of the Middleburg Spring Races at Glenwood Park Racecourse since the late 1990s.

In 2002 the Woolcotts sold their original Virginia property and moved back to California to take care of some business interests, but in 2006 they purchased their current farm, also near Middleburg, which already had a barn, paddocks, and arenas from when it was used in a dressage operation. The time seemed right to act on their longtime plans of launching a Thoroughbred breeding farm.

"Now when we bought this farm all set up, we looked at each other and thought, 'I guess it's time,'" Lauren Woolcott said. "At that point we claimed a couple of Thoroughbreds, flat runners, and that was our

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The Woolcotts purchased the 243-acre Woodslane Farm in 2006

**Special Note For Sire Lists:**

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the states featured in this section (stallions that are dead or exported prior to 2011 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through December 31, 2015. As supplied to Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., include adjusted money from Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Adjusted earnings are put on par with average North American earnings from the previous year. For example, the average North American purse in 2014 is \$21,617 or 45% of the 2014 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 45% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 19%; Singapore by 54%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled stakes winners worldwide and any S.H.-foaled horses that won a N.H. stakes. \*Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ¶ indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).

\*AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX and COMPARABLE INDEX: Lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00; COMPARABLE INDEX indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX higher than their mares' COMPARABLE INDEX.

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# 2015 LEADING SIRES IN MARYLAND



Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2015 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>NOT FOR LOVE</b> (90, Mr. Prospector)	Pnsd	109/57	2/2	1/2	(Broad Lover, \$154,910)	<b>\$3,047,555</b>	926	77	1.70	1.45
2	<b>LION HEARTED</b> (96, Storm Cat)	Died, 2015	86/48	1/1	1/1	(Jar of Hearts, \$119,580)	<b>\$1,972,211</b>	*599	18	1.21	1.29
3	<b>ORIENTATE</b> (98, Mt. Livermore), Northview Stallion Station	\$5,000	103/56	1/1	1/1	(Oh Baby Oh Baby, \$126,787)	<b>\$1,808,949</b>	*751	33	1.28	1.71
4	<b>GREAT NOTION</b> (00, Elusive Quality), Northview Stallion Station	\$3,500	54/25	3/4	1/3	(Plash Phelps, \$165,512)	<b>\$1,338,289</b>	196	12	1.53	1.23
5	<b>LOUIS QUATORZE</b> (93, Sovereign Dancer), Murmur Farm	\$2,500	62/34	0/0	0/0	(Senor Louie, \$107,520)	<b>\$1,239,422</b>	*965	21	1.15	1.33
6	<b>PETIONVILLE</b> (92, Seeking the Gold), Murmur Farm	\$5,000	65/35	0/0	0/0	(Pesci to De Niro, \$56,415)	<b>\$973,234</b>	*690	41	1.31	1.28

# 2015 LEADING SIRES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2015 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>JUMP START</b> (99, A.P. Indy), Northview PA	\$10,000	177/90	4/7	1/4	(Pants On Fire, \$204,040)	<b>\$4,804,751</b>	*1112	38	1.53	1.34
2	<b>ROCKPORT HARBOR</b> (02, Unbridled's Song)	Died, 2013	191/111	6/6	3/6	(Majestic Harbor, \$230,740)	<b>\$4,503,912</b>	439	23	1.35	1.42
3	<b>CORINTHIAN</b> (03, Pulpit), Pin Oak Lane Farm	\$4,000	197/87	3/4	1/3	(Cash Bonus, \$102,418)	<b>\$2,500,082</b>	*472	11	0.78	1.39
4	<b>FAIRBANKS</b> (03, Giant's Causeway), Northview PA	\$2,500	104/47	1/1	0/1	(One Go All Go, \$248,400)	<b>\$2,401,764</b>	197	3	1.11	1.28
5	<b>MEDALLIST</b> (01, Touch Gold), Northview PA	\$2,000	58/39	0/0	0/0	(Love Came to Town, \$181,984)	<b>\$1,682,998</b>	186	5	1.29	1.41
6	<b>SILVER TRAIN</b> (02, Old Trieste)	Died, 2013	126/66	1/2	0/1	(Silver Ocean, \$90,051)	<b>\$1,677,475</b>	*438	10	0.99	1.29

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experience on getting into Thoroughbred breeding for flat racing.”

These days the Woolcotts can hardly wait to see how their new broodmare band fares in the years to come. The emphasis will be on breeding to race. Their five current Virginia broodmares include Bridey's Frolic, a daughter of Unbridled's Song; Cat Myth, a daughter of Hennessy and full sister to 2001 champion 2-year-old male Johannesburg; Cup o' Luck, a daughter of Borrego who is out of one of the first horses the Woolcotts claimed; Dynaire, by the late successful sire Dynaformer; and Oh What a Windfall, a grade I-winning daughter of Seeking the Gold bred by the Phipps Stable.

Woodslane Farm landed Oh What a Windfall for \$510,000 at the 2010 Keeneland November breeding stock sale where she was offered in foal to Malibu Moon as part of a Phipps Stable reduction. Oh What a Windfall has produced two grade II-placed winners in Pick Six and Conservative, but her first stakes winner earned his victories over jumps for Woodslane.

With Oh What a Windfall already in the barn, Woodslane purchased her 2010 Hard Spun gelding Overwhelming from Phipps Stable after his 2013 racing season with a plan to convert him to jump racing. That plan, recommended by trainer Jack Fisher, came together in 2015 as the gelding registered stakes wins at Belmont Park and Callaway Gardens.

“We're proud of him,” Lauren Woolcott said. “Early on in the transition from flat to jumps, he earned the nickname ‘Underwhelming.’ The light bulb finally went on,

and he has won the 2015 Sport of Kings championship.”

Three of the other Woodslane mares were purchased as yearlings and campaigned by the Woolcotts before being retired to the broodmare band. Woodslane bought Bridey's Frolic for \$450,000 at the 2008 Keeneland September yearling sale. At the 2009 Keeneland September sale, Woodslane landed Cat Myth for \$600,000 and Dynaire for \$360,000.

Homebred Cup o' Luck may not have the flashy sale numbers of her stablemates, but the Woolcotts love her determination and see enough potential further back in the pedigree to stick with her.

“We keep with her because she pulled out of two life-threatening situations and she also showed that grit on the track,” Lauren Woolcott said. “She's a winner; not a fancy winner, but a winner; just has tons of heart. So we've decided we want to keep her as a project and see if we can't get back to some of those champions in her pedigree.”

Lauren Woolcott said Virginia's love of all things horses has helped them assemble a top staff headed by Figgins.

“They're absolutely key; especially as much as we travel,” Woolcott said. “With the horses we have and are buying and paying for stud fees, you have to know that they're in good hands. We're very, very lucky. Raymond so knows the horses; he understands them. He just gets it. And Virginia has many people like him.

“I think that's part of the story of Virginia,” Woolcott added, noting problems that have seen racing discontinued at Colonial Downs the past two seasons, forcing Vir-


ginia to conduct some flat racing at venues traditionally used for steeplechase events. “You can try to strip racing from Virginia, but you can't take that history that contributed to the land and generations of families that know and love the horses so deep down. That's where we have found that Virginia shines. You just have quality people with knowledge of horses.

“A lot of people are working really, really hard on the racing side. I'm a glass-half-full kind of person and they might be successful with some of these ideas now that (Colonial Downs owner Jacobs Entertainment) has surrendered the racing license. What they have put together so far has been really fun. One step at a time; we can't build it all in one swoop.”

The Woolcotts already have bred a horse that many dream of breeding in Tonalist and they're working to repeat that magic. Lauren said she loves to research possible matings and then Rene likes to review her research and provide input on which direction to go. Lauren Woolcott said she and Rene are getting a better feel for each one of their mares—their personalities—and the types of foals they are producing.

“That stage has been a real, real pleasure for us,” Woolcott said.

Many of those insights come on quiet mornings on a farm that has been a dream-come-true for the Woolcotts.

“We both love to go down to the barn every morning and do the morning rounds,” Lauren Woolcott said. “We love the mares, and we love the babies. It's really a passion for us to watch them develop and grow.” 

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