

## Lifetime Commitment

**Sally Andersen,  
River Mist Farm  
make impact  
breeding in Florida**

BY CYNTHIA McFARLAND

**WHEN SALLY J. ANDERSEN** received the 2019 Needles Award for her accomplishments as a Florida breeder, it affirmed more than just her impressive results for that year. The award underscored the passion and dedication of a woman whose love of horses has enhanced her life for decades.

Bruce and Sally Anderson at their farm near Ocala, Fla.

CYNTHIA McFARLAND PHOTOS

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# Choose a Rising Star



## VALIANT MINISTER

#1 FL Sire by Sales Average, OBS  
October 2020 Select Yearlings.



Valiant Minister - Resilient Humor  
filly, \$120,000 OBS Select Yearling.

*OBS Photo*



VALIANT MINISTER, Candy Ride (Arg) – Spooky  
Minister by Deputy Minister. \$3,000 S&N



## TUNWOO

The only son of Medaglia d'Oro  
standing in FL. First Yearlings 2021.

Tunwoo - Resilient Humor  
filly, First-Crop 2020.



TUNWOO, Medaglia d'Oro – Sea Gift by  
A.P Indy. \$2,500 S&N



## CHITU

#1 FL Sire by Sales Average, OBS 2020  
Spring Sale of 2YO's.



Windy City Red, juvenile  
BREEDERS' CUP & STAKES  
contender, Chitu – Gator Hall.

*Vassar Photo*



CHITU, Henny Hughes – Sea Gift by  
A.P Indy. \$3,500 S&N

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Stallions Valiant Minister, Chitu and Tunwoo stand at Bridlewood Farm, Ocala, FL | 352-622-5319 | George Isaacs

## 2020 LEADING SIRES IN FLORIDA


 For daily updated sire lists  
 visit [BloodHorse.com](http://BloodHorse.com)

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2021 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstret SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2020 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>KHOZAN</b> (12, Distorted Humor), Journeyman Stallions	\$10,000	93/52	5/8	3/5	(Princess Secret, \$434,300)	<b>\$3,496,717</b>	*127	6	1.72	1.37
2	<b>BRETHREN</b> (08, Distorted Humor), Arindel Farm	\$7,500	103/53	2/2	0/2	(Key Biscayne, \$171,520)	<b>\$2,250,607</b>	176	5	1.29	1.51
3	<b>FIRST DUDE</b> (07, Stephen Got Even), Double Diamond Farm	\$7,500	120/64	2/2	0/2	(Ready to Runaway, \$166,150)	<b>\$2,178,255</b>	397	13	1.15	1.19
4	<b>ADIOS CHARLIE</b> (08, Indian Charlie), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	93/51	1/3	0/1	(Jean Elizabeth, \$189,398)	<b>\$1,847,153</b>	231	7	1.42	1.19
5	<b>GONE ASTRAY</b> (06, Dixie Union), Northwest Stud	\$4,500	108/44	2/4	1/2	(Noble Drama, \$337,435)	<b>\$1,813,591</b>	*293	9	0.93	1.09
6	<b>TREASURE BEACH (GB)</b> (08, Galileo), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$4,000	131/43	1/1	0/1	(Sugar Fix, \$190,539)	<b>\$1,578,765</b>	*581	3	1.06	1.40
7	<b>BIG DRAMA</b> (06, Montbrook), Stormborne Stallions	\$5,000	91/43	0/0	0/0	(Inter Miami, \$105,820)	<b>\$1,518,202</b>	263	4	0.88	1.22
8	<b>THE BIG BEAST</b> (11, Yes It's True), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	57/38	3/3	1/3	(Up in Smoke, \$173,318)	<b>\$1,394,281</b>	93	3	1.13	1.27
9	<b>HANDSOME MIKE</b> (09, Scat Daddy), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$4,000	73/42	0/0	0/0	(Running for Riz, \$76,422)	<b>\$1,330,890</b>	112	0	0.82	0.81
10	<b>AWESOME OF COURSE</b> (00, Awesome Again), Ocala Stud	\$2,000	59/31	1/2	0/1	(Shivaree, \$334,355)	<b>\$1,175,156</b>	*270	12	1.27	1.27
11	<b>FIELD COMMISSION</b> (05, Service Stripe), Solera Farm	Died, 2020	75/32	0/0	0/0	(Lil Commissioner, \$136,710)	<b>\$1,142,668</b>	167	2	0.81	0.96
12	<b>SONGANDAPRAYER</b> (98, Unbridled's Song)	Pnsd	91/32	1/1	1/1	(Boston Cadillac, \$76,655)	<b>\$996,010</b>	*1052	37	1.06	1.36
13	<b>OVERDRIVEN</b> (09, Tale of the Cat)	Pnsd	50/23	0/0	0/0	(Red Crescent, \$87,002)	<b>\$955,887</b>	162	3	0.94	1.13
14	<b>CAJUN BREEZE</b> (08, Congrats), Stonehedge Farm South	Private	26/14	2/3	1/2	(Breeze On By, \$303,000)	<b>\$949,785</b>	38	3	1.80	1.40
15	<b>RATTLESNAKE BRIDGE</b> (08, Tapit)	N/A	54/26	0/0	0/0	(Loriloupies, \$54,020)	<b>\$664,085</b>	145	0	0.52	1.00
16	<b>CHITU</b> (11, Henny Hughes), Bridlewood Farm	\$3,500	37/16	0/0	0/0	(Lugamo, \$65,140)	<b>\$549,856</b>	82	0	0.70	0.87
17	<b>WINSLOW HOMER</b> (07, Unbridled's Song)	N/A	31/15	0/0	0/0	(Oh Deborah, \$66,150)	<b>\$505,414</b>	79	0	0.79	1.12
18	<b>HIGH COTTON</b> (03, Dixie Union)	Pnsd	42/17	0/0	0/0	(High Five Cotton, \$80,245)	<b>\$500,725</b>	*415	11	0.93	1.20
19	<b>GREATNESS</b> (99, Mr. Prospector), Solera Farm	\$3,500	21/11	1/3	0/1	(Lady's Island, \$219,400)	<b>\$465,816</b>	*262	8	1.30	1.00
20	<b>BAHAMIAN SQUALL</b> (09, Gone West), Double Diamond Farm	\$3,000	34/9	0/0	0/0	(Assertiko, \$69,490)	<b>\$419,795</b>	55	0	0.73	0.88
21	<b>¶ JESS'S DREAM</b> (12, Curlin), Ocala Stud	\$4,000	29/7	0/0	0/0	(Restofthesty, \$135,400)	<b>\$401,716</b>	*59	0	0.71	1.53
22	<b>FLASHSTORM</b> (04, Storm Cat), Northwest Stud	\$2,500	31/15	0/0	0/0	(Flashdynamite, \$83,560)	<b>\$379,384</b>	123	3	0.86	0.91
23	<b>FURY KAPCORI</b> (10, Tiznow), Journeyman Stallions	\$2,500	26/9	0/0	0/0	(Napa Rules, \$70,350)	<b>\$323,513</b>	57	1	0.60	1.37
24	<b>AMIRA'S PRINCE (IRE)</b> (09, Teofilo), Pleasant Acres Stallions	\$2,500	20/10	0/0	0/0	(Our Fantasy, \$51,740)	<b>\$267,439</b>	33	0	0.59	0.95
25	<b>BACKTALK</b> (07, Smarty Jones), Stormborne Stallions	\$2,500	23/11	0/0	0/0	(Nick the Cardshark, \$54,465)	<b>\$254,968</b>	63	2	0.90	0.77

Although born in Ohio, Andersen has lived in the Sunshine State since high school when her family moved to Ft. Lauderdale, but her horse connection started much earlier.

"My mother rode, and she introduced me to riding when I was young, so that was the start," Andersen said.

She met Bruce Andersen in 1959 when they were both students at the University of Florida. While he was in college, Bruce was roommates and fraternity brothers with Jim Hill, later of Seattle Slew fame. Sally and Bruce married in 1960 and soon purchased a 20-acre farm in South Florida where Sally rode hunters and tried her hand at breeding them.

In 1985 the couple bought 80-plus acres on the St. Johns River in northeast Florida

and built a house on the water. Not long after that, Sally purchased a Thoroughbred filly with classic Florida bloodlines (On to Glory and In Reality). Oh My Jessica Pie would win the 1990 Churchill Downs Budweiser Breeders' Cup Handicap (G3)—capping a five-race win streak that included three other stakes scores—and earn \$403,707 before becoming Sally's first broodmare.

Bruce has ardently supported the considerable time and effort necessary to be a Thoroughbred breeder, but his international medical supply business kept him busy traveling the world for many years. Because Sally was content to stay closer to home raising their family and devoting herself to breeding good horses, foals have always been recorded under her name as breeder.

"I like the horses too, but they were more her thing," said Bruce, who retired in 2005 and is happy to now be spending more time around the farm.

#### SETTLED IN OCALA

While living on the St. Johns River, the Andersens met Raymond Burr, "a rather iconic individual in the Thoroughbred business," as Bruce puts it. Well known in both the show and Thoroughbred worlds, Burr was a legendary horseman and a National Show Hunter Hall of Fame trainer.

"He was a wonderful man and really the ultimate horseman. I had a lot of respect for him," recalled Sally, noting that Burr taught her a great deal about conformation. He also gently steered her deeper into the Thoroughbred business.



River Mist Farm is spread out over 60 acres in Central Florida

“He was the one who got me thinking about breeding and selling horses,” Sally said. “We were living on the St. Johns River, and I had one broodmare. He told us if we were really serious about getting into horses and were going to spend money on breeding, we might want to think about moving to Ocala.”

“I wanted water; she wanted horses. So eventually we ended up in Ocala,” said Bruce, noting that they bought their first farm in Marion County in 1997, and seven years later bought their current operation. In 2004 the Andersens purchased the Ocala farm they christened River Mist Farm. After they acquired adjoining acreage, the farm now totals 60 acres.

With its spacious pastures and an abundance of majestic live oaks, the farm is located along a quiet country road that epitomizes the best of Ocala’s picturesque horse country in the northwest part of Marion County. Bruce notes the farm name was inspired by the scenic surroundings at their former home along the St. Johns River.

“One morning the mist on the river made me get poetic,” he said. “Even though there’s no river here in Ocala, we kept the name when we bought this place.”

Today, a total of 23 horses currently call the farm home, including seven broodmares, five yearlings from the 2020 crop, and 11 retirees. Longtime employees Caesar Zapata and Gwen Ajar help keep the farm running smoothly.

In the Andersens’ small broodmare band are daughters of Awesome Again, Smart Strike, Maria’s Mon, Super Saver, Candy Ride, and La Defense. More Oats Please, a New York-bred by Smart Strike, which Sally purchased in 2010, has earned her spot as one of the farm’s top producers.

“She’s probably our best mare now,” she said of the dam of grade 1 winner Peace and War, a daughter of War Front. Consigned by Kaizen Sales to the 2013 Keeneland September yearling sale, Peace and War sold for \$300,000 to David Redvers Bloodstock. Campaigned by Qatar Racing, she won the 2014 Darley Alcibiades Stakes (G1) at Keeneland. After her racing career she was purchased for \$1.45 million by Katsumi Yoshida at the 2016 Keeneland November breeding stock sale.

Although the Andersens don’t always



Caesar Zapata and Gwen Ajar keep the farm running smoothly

name their babies before sending them off to the sales, Bruce has been known to get creative. He recently named the 2019 filly out of More Oats Please by Frosted.

“Bruce came up with Frosted Oats and that was too good of a name not to use,” laughs Sally.

At the 2020 Keeneland September yearling sale, Frosted Oats sold for \$250,000 out of the Kaizen Sales consignment to Spendthrift Farm and Myracehorse.com, which had teamed with other partners on 2020 Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (G1) and Longines Breeders’ Cup Classic (G1) winner Authentic.

Off her Alcibiades win, Peace and War was named champion 2-year-old Florida-bred filly. Trained by Graham Motion, Peace and War finished with career earnings of \$439,667.

### STAKES-WINNING WAYS

Besides Peace and War, other graded stakes winners bred by Sally Andersen are such horses as Baroness Thatcher, Hierro, and Omega Code.

Andersen has also bred stakes winners Bog Wild, Millennium Storm, multiple graded stakes-placed stakes winner Tempest Fugit, and stakes-placed winners It-sabeautifulthing, Merrill Gold, and Victim of Love to mention only a few.

Although the Andersens typically have sent their mares to Kentucky for breeding, in recent years they’ve been patronizing Florida sires, including First Dude and Khozan. Both Sally and Bruce believe Florida breeders’ options are improving when it comes to stallion choices.

Over the years the Andersens have relied on longtime Ocala consignor Richard

Kent of Kaizen Sales to sell their horses at Ocala Breeders Sales, Keeneland, Fasig-Tipton, and Saratoga yearling sales.

“I’ve been really privileged since coming to Florida to work for some incredible people, including Arthur Appleton and Harold Plumley, but you couldn’t ask for better than Sally and Bruce Andersen,” said Kent, who has worked with the Andersens for more than 25 years. “They keep you to task but are just very appreciative of everything to do with the horse.”

“Raymond Burr was one of the finest horsemen in Marion County. He had helped Sally and Bruce get started and really gave them good guidance and a great foundation,” Kent said. “First and foremost, it’s always about the horse with them. They treat it like a business, but it was Sally’s passion that drove them to get in the business. It was her love of the horses, and she has a very good eye for a horse.”

Kent points out that it’s more than just the fact that the Andersens’ horses are well-bred that makes his job easier.

“Their horses are always extremely well behaved and well-prepped when I get them. Caesar Zapata is such a good horseman,” Kent said.

Kent also appreciates Andersen’s commitment to the horses she’s bred long after they leave her farm.

“Sally is a genuine horsewoman,” Kent said. “She had me chasing down horses that had dropped into lower claiming races at different tracks long before it became the ‘politically correct’ thing to do. She absolutely follows her horses from conception through to the end and has a tremendous responsibility for the horses. She’s raised some exceptionally good horses, but



River Mist Farm mares produced five foals in 2020, all of which will be sold as yearlings

it gives you a whole different appreciation working for someone like that.”

Attending the sales when their horses were selling has been routine for the Andersens over the years, but because of the pandemic, they didn't go to any auctions in 2020.

“I'll always have horses because I have had them forever, but I have been cutting back on breeding,” said Sally, whose mares produced five foals in the 2020 season that will be sold as yearlings this year.

### NEEDLES AWARD

Sally was recently honored by the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association with the 2019 Needles Award, which honors “Florida breeders who own small Thoroughbred operations and have made outstanding contributions to the Florida Thoroughbred industry.”

Needles, of course, was the first Florida-bred winner of the Kentucky Derby, winning the Run for the Roses in 1956.

Winning the award was a great surprise, says Sally, who as a breeder in 2019 recorded Florida-bred earnings of \$843,513. She was represented by 10 starters that posted 15 wins, four seconds, and 12 thirds.

Among those 10 starters, the star performer was multiple stakes winner Anyportinastorm, a 5-year-old son of City Zip out of the Andersens' good mare La Defense, by Wild Again.

Anyportinastorm had three stakes victories in 2019, winning the Lost in the Fog Stakes at Golden Gate Fields before heading to the Northwest to capture the Governor's Stakes and Budweiser Stakes at Emerald Downs. Owned by Peter Redekop, Anyportinastorm is trained by Blaine D. Wright. The horse hit the board in every start in 2019, closing out the year with a second in the Longacres Mile Handicap (G3) at Emerald Downs for a season record of three wins, one second, and one third in five starts. He was recognized as 2019 horse of the meet at Emerald Downs.

Continuing his winning ways in 2020, Anyportinastorm won the Oak Tree Sprint Stakes at the Alameda County Fair meet in Pleasanton, Calif., and ran third in the Albany Stakes at Golden Gate Fields.

In 2020, in addition to Anyportinastorm, Sally Andersen has been represented as a breeder with wins by Ampersand (by Speightster), Expurgated (by Exaggerator), and Blissful Breeze (by Colonel John).

“The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association was excited to present to Ms. Andersen the 2019 Needles Award,” said Brock Sheridan, editor in chief of Florida Equine Communications. “The FTBOA is always proud of small Thoroughbred breeding operations such as her River Mist Farm and the success she had that year as the breeder of West Coast star Anyportinastorm and others.”

### SAFE HAVEN

River Mist Farm is currently home to 11 retirees, mostly older broodmares, but there also are a couple of geldings that are former racehorses.

“We've bought some off the track, when we know where they were going to end up, and bring them here,” said Bruce.

Sally finds it heartbreaking that some farms send older mares through the sale ring at the end of their breeding careers. She vowed long ago that would never happen to any of her broodmares, and she's been true to her word on that.

“They've worked for me and produced, so I'll keep them and they'll live out their lives here. I don't breed them anymore, and I won't sell them when they're old,” said Sally. “I think you owe them something.”

In addition to Thoroughbred breeding, for many years Sally enjoyed being on horseback herself, particularly after she first got involved in polo when living on the St. Johns. Her passion for the activity continued after the Andersens moved to Ocala. A large open field near the main barn at River Mist Farm became the site of enthusiastic matches with other area equestriennes.

“We used to play polo here with a group of women; some of those ladies are still around Ocala today,” said Sally, smiling at the memories. “It was a great time.”

Andersen has long liked to walk out in the pasture in the evening to spend some up-close-and-personal time with her horses...often with a bag of carrots in hand. As satisfying as her horse pursuits have been over the years, she doesn't hesitate when asked about the best thing in her life.

“My family is the best thing in my life. We have four kids and nine grandchildren,” she noted. “They all live in Florida, and I get to see my family as much as I want to.” **BH**

*Cynthia McFarland is a freelance writer based in Ocala, Fla.*

#### Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the selected region (stallions that have died or been exported prior to the 2015 breeding season are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available Northern Hemisphere statistics through January 10, 2021. As supplied to *The Blood-Horse* by The Jockey Club Information Systems, Inc., earnings 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 2019 is \$25,300 or 53% of the 2019 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 53% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 17%; Singapore by 85%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled black-type stakes winners worldwide. \*Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners include all countries. (A ¶ indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).