

# The Making of a Champion and a New Barn

A chance encounter in of all places Brooks Feed Store was the beginning of a story almost too good to be true. A trotter who wouldn't trot, a trainer and part time farrier with deep racing roots who wouldn't give up, a big win over an undefeated rival and the defending champion in a legendary trotting race became one of the biggest stories in harness racing this year.

Rodney Hughes a fourth generation Standardbred trainer recalled the day he showed up at the Brooks store in Port Perry and was offered a chance to train a 2 year old by the stallion "San Pellegrino" out of a proven producer mare called Village Beauty. The problem was the big dark gelding "broke" on the turns and that along with an imperfect hock caused by a kick as a foal had scared off other trainers.



The Van Camps were only looking for a months effort from Rod to see if the gelding had potential but Rod Hughes is anything but a quitter. It took 8 months but Rod's persistence, encouragement and help from father Jerry and wife Emily paid off when San Pail was ready to qualify at Kawartha Downs.

After some promising starts the next unlikely chapter in the story came when Rod Hughes asked experienced driver Randy Waples to take over as San Pail's regular driver. Since then it's been one cheque after another including five winners in the last six starts. Nothing however topped the winning of the \$720,000 *Maple Leaf Trot* on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 at Mohawk. San Pail held off defending champion Arch Madness and a late challenge from undefeated American Lucky Jim coming home to the ecstatic cheers of a throng of supporters.

The lifetime winnings of over \$950,000 helped put up a new barn on the Dunsford farm Rod owns with wife Emily. Rod hasn't given up his day job though. Each day he leaves some of the chores to father Jerry and wife Emily and heads out to shoe horses. The Hughes farm is proudly served by *Durham's Feed Supplies*.

The Van Camp's are very quick to give credit to Rod and family for the amazing turn around. Of course Rod is quick to emphasize that ***"The only feed I put in the pail is a Brooks Feed"***

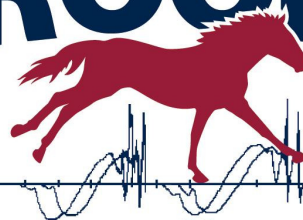
*We wouldn't expect anything else of course. After all*

***"Fueling champions is what we do"***



Rod Hughes (right) and Glen Van Camp  
share the Maple Leaf Trot Glory

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