



The Cardenas Family Will Be Cheering On Two Homebreds At The Pan American Games

After more than 15 years of cultivating bloodlines they believe in, this Florida family will see the fruits of their labor compete on the international stage.

BY CATIE STASZAK

For a dedicated breeder, the only thing more thrilling than having a horse you bred make an international championship team is having two.

The Cardenas family of 3H Equestrian Center in Citra, Fla., will be represented by not one, but two U.S.-bred homebreds—competing for two different nations and in two different disciplines—in the upcoming Pan American Games in Toronto.

The 11-year-old Oldenburg stallion Quincy Car (Galiani Car—Kiss By Star Car, Amour Parfait) will contest

the show jumping for Colombia with Fernando Cardenas Jr., while Pancho Villa (Icarus de Carolina—SS Sassy, Stars N' Stripes), a 12-year-old Selle Français gelding, will sport the U.S. flag on his saddle pad in the eventing competition with Boyd Martin.

Both horses are the result of the careful planning of Fernando Cardenas Sr., a Colombian native with a strong belief in breeding over buying.

"It means a lot to be recognized on this stage," he said. "To have horses doing well at the most prestigious levels of the game is a feeling that makes me

full of happiness."

Fernando Sr., a former Pan American Games competitor who represented Colombia in dressage in 1983, founded 3H Equestrian in 1987. He journeyed from Colombia to Raleigh, N.C., with five horses, hoping to start his own breeding and training operation. The first horse he bred in the United States was a Selle Français stallion—the offspring of an Anglo-Arabian stallion and a Selle Français mare—that he named Amour Parfait (Roky de Roquelaure—Notre Dame III, Chicotin).

After competing at the grand prix





Fernando Cardenas Jr. competes his family's homebred stallion Quincy Car at the grand prix level and will represent Colombia in show jumping at the Pan American Games. MOLLY SORGE PHOTO

level of show jumping and, later, the regular working hunters, Amour Parfait became one of the Cardenas' foundation stallions, and the grandsire of Quincy Car and Pancho Villa.

"My father, while we were still in Colombia, had imported several horses from Spain," said Fernando Sr.'s daughter, Cristina Cardenas, who is also involved in the family business. "When

we moved to the United States, we came with five horses, and those became the foundation for what we have now. Now, the family continues to breed the same bloodlines that we started with. For us, we're very proud to see the bloodlines of the horses that we've been riding for over 20 years the way that we're seeing them now. It's certainly a proud moment for the family."

He's A Special One

Quincy Car, a quick-learning horse with a strong and bouncy jump, was foaled at 3H in 2004, and from the moment he began his training, Fernando Sr. knew he had a special horse. He quickly tabbed the horse as a stallion prospect and decided not to sell him. Fernando Jr. developed him through the young jumper classes and the amateur-owner jumper divisions.

In 2012, the stallion won the first major grand prix in which Fernando Jr. entered him: the \$25,000 George L. Ohrstrom Jr. Grand Prix in Lexington, Va. Their greatest victory to date came in the \$100,000 Sullivan GMC Truck Grand Prix at HITS Ocala (Fla.) in March 2014. The duo topped the field in the \$25,000 grand prix during the Tryon Spring 2 show (N.C.) in April, locking

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up a spot on Colombia's Pan American Games roster.

"When [Fernando Jr.] started jumping him, he said to me, 'This horse is so athletic that everything that I ask him to do, he does very easily,'" said Fernando Sr. "I said, 'He has a future.'"

In addition to his jumping career, "Quincy" also stands at stud at 3H.

"Quincy is a horse that just makes the results that much sweeter," Cristina added. "He's not a horse that we went out and bought for a lot of money. He's a horse that was born and bred on the farm, stayed at the farm, and was trained at the farm from Day 1."

Quincy was the result of a pairing between Galiani Car, an Oldenburg stallion (Grannus—Unnika, Barsoi xx) Fernando Sr. showed in dressage, and Kiss By Moon Car, a daughter of Amour Parfait, who never made it to the show ring.

"The mother of Quincy Car was a good jumper, but I never broke her," Fernando Sr. said. "I saw her moving well and jumping well, so I said, 'She should be a broodmare.'"

Quincy is based with Fernando Jr. at his New Hill, N.C., farm. Fernando Jr., who works as a veterinarian with the 3H Veterinary Service in New Hill, competes as an amateur.

Ability From Day 1

While Quincy's pedigree is loaded with size and power, Pancho Villa's is brimming with blood and athleticism.

His sire, Icarus de Carolina, is just 15.2 hands. "Icarus" is by Amour Parfait out of a pony mare named Zhar Beduette, who, according to Fernando Sr., out-jumped her size. She contested the 1.45-meter jumpers at the Winter Equestrian Festival (Fla.). Fernando Sr. then bred Icarus to the Thoroughbred mare SS Sassy to produce Pancho Villa Car, now called Pancho Villa.

"In breeding [Icarus de Carolina] to a Thoroughbred, I looked to produce an eventer," said Fernando Sr. "In breeding [Sassy] to a European jumper, I should produce a good jumper."

Michelle Taylor purchased "Pancho" from the Cardenas family as a 2-year-old, and she sent him to Louisiana-based event rider Sydney Conley Elliott for



The Cardenas family bred Pancho Villa, and Boyd Martin began riding him in 2013. Now the pair will represent the Land Rover U.S. Eventing Team at the Pan American Games. LINDSAY BERRETH PHOTO

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Quincy Car, shown as a foal with his dam Kiss By Star Car, will represent the Cardenas family’s breeding program at the Pan American Games with Fernando Cardenas Jr. riding.

training. Elliott, who competed the horse through the advanced level, said Pancho had immense potential but was difficult to handle in his early training.

“He was quite wild,” Elliott recalled. “He was a huge baby and very rank. You could not get a halter on him. You could not get him from Point A to Point B. He was a pretty tough baby to break and handle, but he obviously came around years later.

“The ability was always there from Day 1,” she added. “The movement was there. The jump was there. We just had to get his mind. He really needs to trust the rider, but then he’s honest as the day is long. He’s absolutely a one-rider horse.”

Martin formed a syndicate group to purchase Pancho in 2013. This spring he rode the gelding to third-placed finishes in the Jersey Fresh CIC*** (N.J.) and in the Pan Am Prep Trial at the inaugural Land Rover Great Meadow CIC*** (Va.).

“I’m absolutely thrilled,” Elliott said. “When Michelle decided it was time to sell him, we actually had a discussion about who would be the best rider for him, and we picked Boyd for him. We didn’t know if he’d be interested, but we were crossing our fingers and toes that he would want the ride on him. Sure enough, he did, and we are just ecstatic. We were hoping through this whole time that this was going to be part of the plan to make the Pan Ams.”



So too were the Cardenas family members, who take extra pride in the fact that their breeding program not only produced two Pan American Games competitors, but also two horses that will compete in different disciplines.

"The fact that we have two horses competing at that level now and in two different disciplines epitomizes the effort my dad has made to breed not just strictly jumping horses or eventers or dressage horses," Cristina said.

The Cardenas family's stallion **Amour Parfait**, who show jumped to grand prix and showed in the regular working hunters with Daniel Geitner (*pictured*), is the grandsire of both **Pancho Villa** and **Quincy Car**. ANDREA GUZINSKI PHOTO

"We're so proud of the breeding operation and the patience that it takes to breed those quality of horses. Breeding takes time. It's not something that you see how it's going to work until years later, and I think that's what we're seeing now." 🐾



Pancho Villa (foreground)
as an unbroken 2-year-old.
PHOTO COURTESY OF SYDNEY
CONLEY ELLIOTT



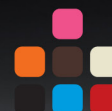
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