



Hard Work

- pays off

The Scandinavian cutting pro Styrbjörn Persson has done an almost impossible trip from wild child to one of the most successful trainers and breeders in northern Europe. Born in a family with a breeding facility of jump and dressage horses the interest of the business came early. But no one could even in their wildest fantasy imagine that he would become, what we in Scandinavia call him "Mr Cutting himself".

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This year a longtime dream became reality for Styrbjörn Persson and his wife and companion Mona Göransson. Styrbjörn became the European Champion as well as Reserve Champion in junior cutting 2012. The achievement was not only the greatest for him because of the title, the horse he did win on was one of their own results of long time breeding with lots of thoughts, good mix of cold and warm blood and gosalts, around how to breed the best mares to the best and suitable stallions.

Styrbjörn developed in the early years an interest for horses. Back home he was the son in the family that broke his fathers horses though he realized that he where both scilled and happy doing it. The joy he felt working with his fathers horses became the "fuel" for his future choice of career. After some years working with this and that, cutting came into his life. When he and Mona for the first time visited a western event and he got a hint of what it was all about, he new that

this were something he must do. Back than it wasn't very many westernriders in Scandinavia and most riders didn't even had a quarter horse or a clue for that matter.

Styrbjörn got hooked and visited almost every event possible that year. He and Mona decided to give it a go and bought their first quarterhorse, a ranchbred mare with a good mind but almost no skills or bloodlines for what he wanted to do, cutting. Even though this horse didn't got any proper skills or bloodlines for cutting, Styrbjörn manage to train her to become the first junior cutting horse AQHA World Show Qualifier 1997. At this time we didn't have any NCHA approved events in Scandinavia, something Styrbjörn wanted and worked hard to change on.

To understand how impossible his thoughts were, you must get some background facts.

In Sweden we have around 9 million people, 300.000 horses and only around 4000 of those are quarter



horses and only a few of those are cutting bred. And back when Styrbjörn started we only had around 300 quarter horses in Sweden. The other fact is that most of the, in total 360.000, cattles live their whole life in barns and to use horses for ranchwork hasn't been an option until the last few years, when the animal protection laws did change. More and more ranches starting to have their cattle outside and some ranchers discovered the positive effects of using horses for cattedrive, branding and so on. But that is now, not back when Styrbjörn started.

The other important fact that made Styrbjörns achievements fantastic is that when he started, almost noone on this side of the Atlantic Ocean knew how to cut a cow.

But all those facts didn't bother Styrbjörn, he knew that this is what he wants to do, nothing else.

- The time you have in your life is the only time you have to enjoy yourself and spend on what you believe is the right thing for you, not what others expect from you, says Styrbjörn.

After spending some year with buying affordable "ex-cutting-horses" from Germany, train them back in to shape, as good as he could, the big change came on. His best stallion had an accident in the middle of the season and he was then without horse to compete on. His wallet was almost empty, but with some people he knew, who were believing in his talent, he managed to raise money to buy his first really really good horse, the stallion Pablo Quixote.

Pablo Quixote wasn't properly cuttingtrained he was trained for reined cowhorse. But when Styrbjörn felt how he could turn on the cow, he knew that this was going to be a really good horse with at least 73-74's.

- The first year he went 60 every show, says Styrbjörn smiling.

But anyway, Styrbjörn was right. With Pablo, both he and Mona competed in cutting and reining and he was almost as good in each disciplin.

- He has the perfect mind of a real good showhorse, he always do that extra for you and he likes to show off, says Styrbjörn when he pets his old friend and partner Pablo in the barn.

Last year, 2011, Pablo Quixotes son Hotroddersidquixote became the first europeanbred horse to win the European Futurity in Working Cowhorse at Americana. And Pablo has left many babys that have maid it to the european top in both reining, working cowhorse and cutting.

2004 Styrbjörn bought his first readytrained cuttinghorse from USA. It was the young stallion A Smart Little Leo. And he was the first offspring in northern Europe after Smart Little Lena. Leo became a great partner to Styrbjörn with a supermind and a will to always do his best in the showpen, from the start til the end.

After three years of hard work and training Styrbjörn and Pablo Quixote became European Champion in senior cutting 2005. At same show he and A Smart little Leo became Reserve Champion. Thru the coming years,

Styrbjörn Persson and A Smart Little Leo.



Pablo retired to the breeding barn and A Smart Little Leo and Styrbjörn did win almost everything possible in Scandinavia, thru the upcoming seven-eight years.

A Smart Little Leo had an accident last winter and had to be put down. It all happened after a visit to the NCHA Futurity and a spontaneous buy of a new horse. Gary Ray recommended Styrbjörn to buy the young mare Miss Hickory Cat, a daughter of Smooth as a Cat, the first one in Scandinavia.

But the joy of the new horse went away when A Smart Little Leo got injured. Mona and Styrbjörn were both devastated over the loss of Leo, but they were at least expecting some babies after him.

But when they were able to think forward again, Styrbjörn and Mona decided to breed Miss Hickory Cat before the transport over to Sweden. While she waited for breeding Styrbjörn went over to Texas and made his first start in the NCHA Super Stakes.

- It was great even if I'd only had three days training before the event. My first cow was good, but on the second I did some mistakes. But I was happy anyway, just to do it was a great experience and also what makes me motivated to go on.

Before left off, for Miss Hickory Cat from USA, Styrbjörn and Mona got the happy news, "Missy" were expecting a babyhorse with One Time Royalty.

More happy things

One of Styrbjörn's greatest achievements ever happened this year. The daughter Leos Little Chrome out of A

Smart Little Leo became European Cutting Champion. Styrbjörn also won the Reserve Champion on Sweet Royal Darlin.

- I'm always happy when the horses are good and do their best, but to make it with a horse that you bred, and trained all the way, makes it a little bit extra nice, I always like to think back on the father and the mother of an offspring and how good the breeding turned out, says Styrbjörn.

And that is a little bit of what it all about for Styrbjörn and Mona. They bring the bloodlines over from USA and then breed them to get new horses to train and succeed with.

Differences

The differences between Scandinavia and USA are among many things, most of all; To survive here as a trainer and breeder you have to be able to do more than one discipline and more than one part of the horsebusiness. All though Styrbjörn's main interest is cutting he early decided to also train bridlehorses for reined cowhorse events. In that way he can get that best out of every horse he gets in training. This is a reality adjustment to the small but fastly growing market of Scandinavia.

In that way Mona and Styrbjörn are the perfect couple though they always fill in where the other one aren't enough. Mona is a real good reiner and she has also competed all around the globe with some great results. And they always help each other with everything about their business.

But there are more. To be a cutting pro in Scandinavia have lots of differences towards USA. First the



The whole team from European Championship, from left, Torbjörn Johansson, xxx Royal Sweet Darlin, Lennart Wallin Styrbjörn Persson, Leos Little Chrome, Mona Göransson and Brita Clarenfjord.

lack of cattle, the small amount of good horses and not at least the climat. Styrbjörn has developed a training technique to save on fresh cattle. Most of his training is on the mechanic cow and that is also what he teach to his customers. On their own ranch he just breeds enough cattle to get some real practise for the horses now and then.

- To make this work, one has to be careful towards the cattle and not finishing them after one use, Styrbjörn says.

- I prefer a crossbreeding between Highland Cattle and Angus. I always try to learn the cattle to move in front of the horses before I quit them. I try to do it the same way as the americans use buffalos, Styrbjörn continues.

The other "must have" is an indoor arena. With almost seven months, at least, with snow there are no other choice. Styrbjörn and Monas facility has it all.

Styrbjörn talks a little bit a about how it all started to happen for him. Some of the other swedish cutters went over to Ft Worth watching some cuttingevents and met some good trainers, thru this Styrbjörn made contact with Gary Ray. Gary started to help out with both training and finding good horses for Styrbjörn and other swedish riders. Gary that almost immediatly became both a good friend and also a mentor for Styrbjörn, early pointed out how important it is to unite. Styrbjörn who already were a member of NCHA since 20 years ago, then started work even harder to make the swedish NCHA Affiliate grow and get better.



Styrbjörn Persson and Mona Göransson.



Styrbjörn Persson and Pablo Quixote

Styrbjörn are convinced that this is the only way to make cutting grow in Scandinavia. To learn more about rules and regulation to get NCHA approved events, to have NCHA approved judges and to help riders to learn the sport in a serious way.

- And nowadays all the biggest events in Sweden have AAAA-judges from USA, a big difference from when I started back in the early 90's, says Styrbjörn.

- I'm so grateful for everything NCHA stands for and all the help we have got here in Scandinavia. Last year Russel McCord went over here to judge the Scandinavian Futurity. At the same time he offered a judging program with test to become NCHA-judge. This were one of the greatest thing happening for the development of Scandinavian cutting, Styrbjörn says.

The program with Russel ended up in that Sweden nowadays have four AAA-judges and five AA-judges.

Another important component to develop the sport over here except for bringing in good horses, learn the rules and arrange approved events is to get continuous education. Over the years and the trips to USA Styrbjörn and Mona met some good trainers and Styrbjörn who never miss a good chance always invites them to sweden for clinics.

- It's necessary Styrbjörn says, to get help to educate ourselves and others and in that way make the sport better and better. Cause thats the only interest of mine, to make Scandinavian cutting grow and to progress. I'm so happy and thankful towards all the good trainers and judges from USA that I have met and got good help from during the years, he concludes.