

# A Passion for Art Appreciation: Newly Imported Figaro R Standing in MN

By Kari Hagstrom

It is a contagious delight to talk with someone who is passionate about what they do. Margot Brady, of Brady Equestrian Center, in Downer, Minn. (near Fargo, N.D./Moorhead, Minn.), is just such a person: she is passionate about what she does, and doesn't do things by half. When she decided to breed Beaucerons (a breed of French herding dog), she spent four years getting a degree in French so she could speak fluently with the French breeders. Brady has that same passion for Swedish warmbloods. After her Swedish warmblood stallion, Bayron 885, died in 2013, she went looking for another Swedish warmblood stallion.

Bayron 885 was a pure Swedish stallion, and the equivalent of a Secretariat in Sweden for desirability and prepotency. Having a keen appreciation for elite dressage horses and their bloodlines, Brady queried after the Swedish stallion, Bocelli (sired by Don Shuffro), and out of Bayron's sister, Ballerina (by Bernstein 761). Bocelli had suffered an inguinal hernia, which the Swedish Warmblood Association considers a significant flaw, potentially passable to other generations, and therefore lost his breeding license in Sweden. Swedish standards are the most stringent in the warmblood breeding world. However, in the United States, an inguinal hernia is not considered serious enough to preclude the stallion from breeding.

The case for Bocelli was

appealed, and he was reinstated as a breeding stallion in Sweden. With Bocelli out of reach, Brady inquired at Gränsbo Stuteri as to which of their other stallions would be available for a potential purchase. While nothing was available at the time, a comment was made, "maybe Figaro," but the price was completely unattainable. Brady came to terms with the thought that there may not be another Swedish stallion in her life. That was one year ago, in April 2014.

that familiar with Grand Prix Swedish bloodlines, let alone that a 16-year-old girl would recognize it. That appreciation of the artistry in breeding helped to develop a friendship between Brady and Runesson. Brady left without Figaro R that trip, but Runesson later contacted her to offer the stallion for sale. He stated, "We want you to have him." Figaro R was bred by Michael Schenk and owned by Rose Mathisen and Gränsbo Stuteri (www.gransbostuteri.com).

offspring. Runesson stated, "even normal people (not professional) can ride Figaro." After not having been in work for two years, Brady's daughter rode him for the first time in the United States the last week in April 2015. He was like an old schoolmaster.

Figaro R is the sire of Faustino 1244, first place World Young Horse Championships Dressage winner, scoring 79.2, and approved Swedish warmblood stallion. Figaro R has 426 offspring in Sweden, with 120 in dressage. A son and daughter (full siblings), were both approved in Verden, placed first in Sweden, and were both finalists in the World Young Horse Championships. Figaro R was the Breeder's Trophy stallion of the year in Sweden for two years in a row. This is awarded to stallions that have produced the top-rated offspring in Sweden over the course of the year. Figaro R was awarded Premium A status as a breeding stallion as he was being transported to the United States in January, 2015, by the Swedish Warmblood Association, indicating his "above average heritability for dressage talent in his offspring. He was also upgraded to Approved breeding stallion status by the Hanoverian Verband in Germany."

With this level of achievement, Brady is delighted to stand an elite stallion such as Figaro R at her stallion facility, Brady Equestrian Center, near Downer, Minn. He has an "incredible temperament. Anyone can ride him," says Brady. After losing Bayron, and finding

Figaro, she says that she and her farm "feel alive again. The farm is about the stallions and the breeding."



Photo: Krister Lindh

### Why Swedish warmbloods?

"Warmblood" is a comprehensive name. A warmblood can be a Hanoverian, a Holsteiner, or any of many other breeds—the definition goes by region: a Hanoverian is born in Hannover, a Holsteiner is born in Holstein, etc; regional breeds have regional names. The Trakehner, however, is a separate breed. Warmbloods have open stud books, whereas Arabians and Thoroughbreds have closed stud books. You can breed a Thoroughbred to a Hanoverian and it is considered a warmblood, for example. The warmblood is a type, therefore.

The Swedish warmblood is "not a breed, it is a breeding system," stated Bo Crabo, D.V.M., Ph.D., retired professor of animal science from the University of Minnesota. Originally from Sweden, Crabo is the former president and one of the founders of the Swedish Warmblood Association of

North America (SWANA), and Brady's mentor in her quest to breed Swedish horses. A Swedish warmblood is one not necessarily born in Sweden; such as Figaro R, who was born in Germany, is of the Hanoverian breed, but who meets the stringent criteria for the Swedish stud book. "The Swedish warmblood is the only type of warmblood that has ever been selected strictly for riding for the cavalry and not pulling artillery for war or plowing for agricultural uses. Due to this stringent selection, they have exceptionally comfortable gaits, especially the canter," says Brady. They are also known for exceptional temperaments and trainability.

### Why import?

The reason to go the trouble of importing a horse is to "bring in new genetics to keep the gene pool open, and to avoid a genetic bottle-neck or 'popular sire syndrome'," says Brady. "By selecting for certain traits you get better horses."

A breeding stallion is "approved" based on his prepotency—how well he passes on his traits, or "stamps" his offspring.

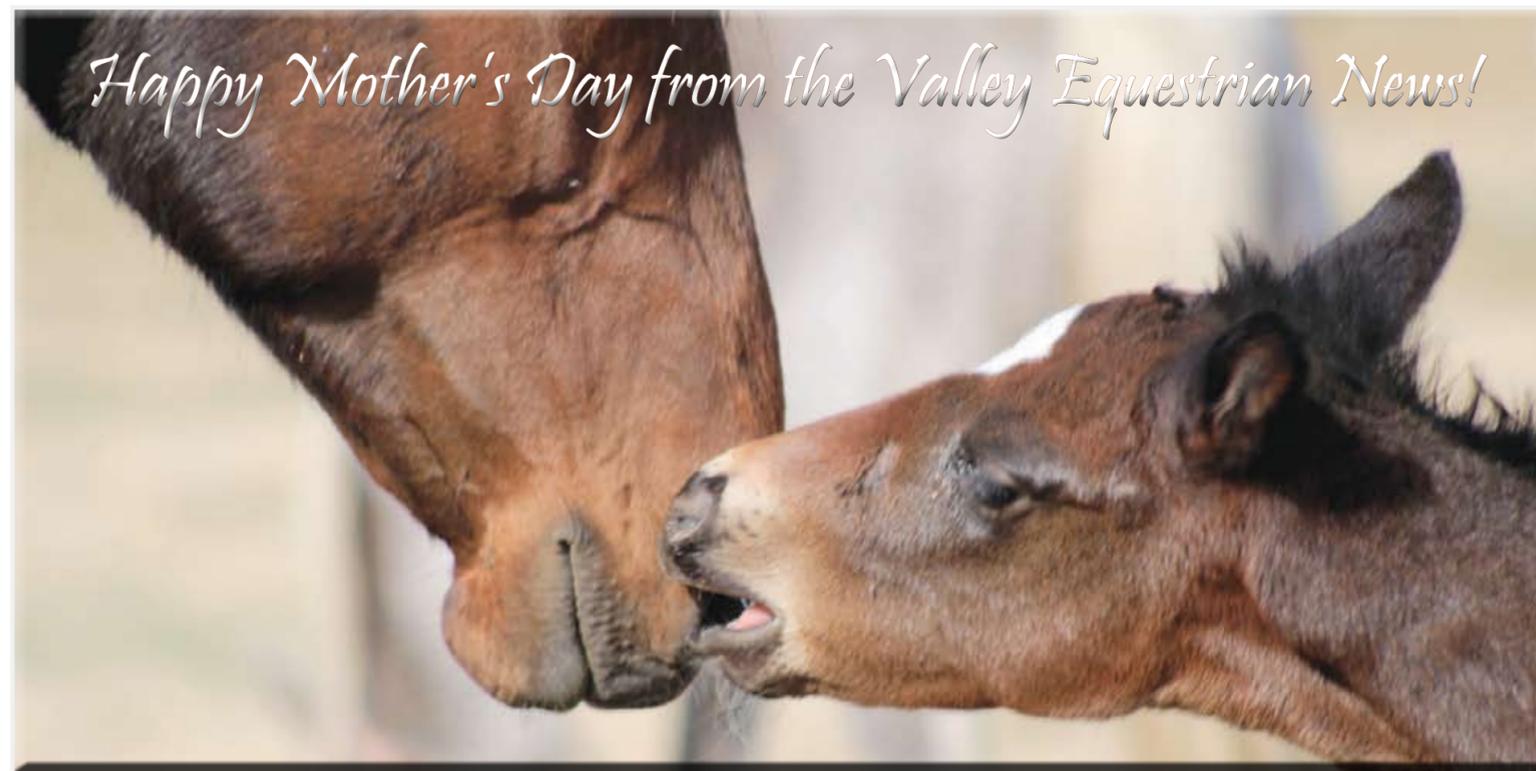
According to Brady, the short answer on how to import is "call Tim Dutta." She recommends utilizing the Dutta Corporation, chaired and founded by life-long horseman, Tim Dutta, www.timdutta.com. "They do everything" in the importation process, says Brady, and save all the legwork of getting health certificates, arranging flights, transportation, and quarantine. Gränsbo Stuteri recommended Jenny Tholin to arrange transport of Figaro R. Her company got him from the stud farm in Sweden, to Amsterdam, to New York, where Dutta Corporation

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Photo: Göran K. Josefsson

Over the summer, while visiting friends in Sweden, Brady met with Per Runesson, one of the owners of Gränsbo Stuteri, just to meet the stallions, including the beautiful Figaro R 1085. During the tour, her 16-year-old daughter noticed a young stallion and she commented that he "looks like Master." Master was the stallion ridden by Kyra Kyrkland, who is comparable to being the Pat Parelli of dressage. Master won every one of his starts in Grand Prix competition. Runesson was impressed that Americans would be



## Figaro R

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took over and got him to an official quarantine farm in Maryland. Tholin and Dutta Corp. often work in tandem. After the 30-day quarantine at a USDA farm, Brady arranged a hauler to bring Figaro to Minnesota. She said she had excellent haulers, who dodged the numerous snow storms hitting the upper United States this past winter. "They got him here in two days," said Brady.

Brady hasn't learned Swedish yet, but plans to; she's busy working on her master's degree at the moment. She is a professor of biology at North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) in Wahpeton, ND. She can be reached for more information about Figaro R 1085 or stud fees at Brady Equestrian Center, LLC, www.bradyequestrian-center.com, 218-789-7704, or at mturkish@msn.com.

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