

# On Course with ... Frank and Stacia Madden

By Jan Westmark

Frank and Stacia Madden are very busy people. In addition to running Beacon Hill Show Stables in Colts Neck, New Jersey, they train a multitude of top equitation winners and spend months out of the year traveling the show circuit. And if that's not enough, they recently starred in Animal Planet's newest television show, HorsePower, the Road to the Maclay.

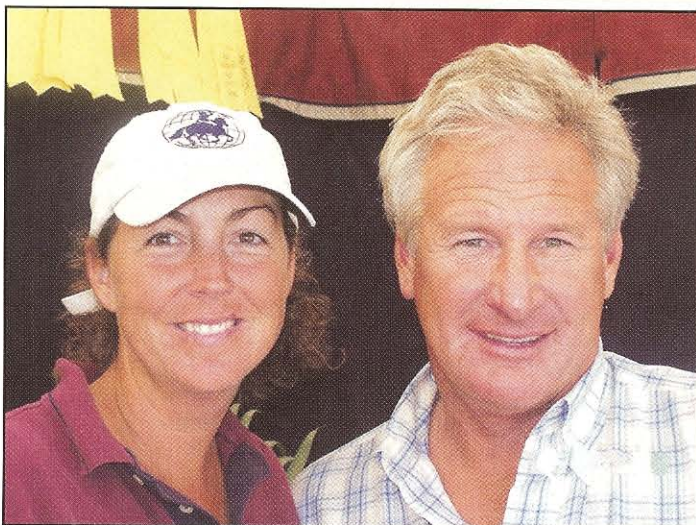
Despite their busy schedules, not too long ago I had a moment to sit down with the couple who have become so well known in the horse world. I wanted to know about the impact of the television show on their lives and a little bit more about the couple who have had so much success training junior equitation horses and riders.

I also wanted to know about the motor home they showed the couple driving in on the HorsePower show. The mention of their home on wheels brought big smiles to the faces of Frank, 48, and Stacia, 36. "We both have a fascination with motor homes," Stacia said. "We were in Tampa one year and we got bitten by the motor home bug."

In fact they still like to shop at motor home dealerships, checking out the latest models and amenities available. They agreed it wasn't out of the question that someday they might buy an even bigger motor home. "When we do something, we do it big," Stacia said.

In addition to their motor home, Frank has a fondness for other vehicles. He has two motorcycles and considers them a hobby. For several weeks at the Winter Equestrian Festival show grounds I had seen Frank pedaling around on a bicycle, from ring to ring and through the barns. While most trainers can be seen in golf carts or on motorized scooters, I wondered if Frank preferred the old-fashioned method of transportation. "I really just need the exercise," he said with a laugh.

Frank and Stacia aren't the only Maddens in the horse show world. Frank's brother is John Madden,



also a trainer, who he is married to Olympic rider Beezie Madden. Between these four people alone that adds up to shelves of trophies, medals and awards and a vast amount of horse knowledge. It also makes for some interesting projects like breeding Stacia's Grand Prix horse with Beezie's Grand Prix horse.

Every year the two couples get away from the horse world by taking a family vacation together. Stacia described it as a week away from all things horsey and said they alternate between snow skiing one year and a warm weather destination the next. "Frank's getting better at leaving it all behind," Stacia said.

One fact that can't be left behind is that Frank is a man who knows what he is doing when it comes to producing equitation winners. He coached Stacia to the winner's circle of the Maclay Finals in 1987 and last year did the same with Brienne Goutal. Despite their success Frank describes them as unchanged. "I do the morning chores and Stacia does the night chores," he said, which includes feeding their three Corgis Iggy, Zoey and Bailey.

They may be unchanged, but they certainly are more recognizable after the airing of the HorsePower series. While I was sitting with them outside their Beacon Hill barn at the show grounds, a mom stopped by to ask if her daughter could have a five minute riding lesson with

Frank. The daughter had helped Frank set jumps the day before when he was teaching lessons. Despite his busy schedule, Frank told her to ride over to his ring the next day at noon.

I wanted to watch the lesson the next day, but didn't get the chance. I wondered what wisdom Frank could impart in a five minute riding lesson, but considering he is a man who knows what he is doing when it comes to teaching I am sure the girl rode away having learned plenty and with lots to practice.

As it just so happens, I was driving into the show grounds after the Winter Equestrian Festival had ended right when a giant motor home was leaving. The motor home seemed to stretch the length of a Grand Prix field and I wondered how it was going to maneuver around the corner and onto the road. When I realized it was the Madden's motor home and I saw Frank behind the wheel I felt relief. Whether teaching horses and riders or driving giant motor homes, Frank is certainly a man who knows what he is doing.

## The Road to the Maclay

Riding in the Maclay Equitation Finals is the goal of many junior riders and Frank has helped many riders achieve this goal. When I ask him about his success he says he might be the trainer but Stacia is the brains behind their operation. She keeps them organ-

ized and everything running smoothly.

Due to the success of the HorsePower show, about teens riding in the Maclay, the Maddens have been overwhelmed with emails and letters from people all across America. Frank said Stacia sits down every night at the computer and answers the emails. "I didn't expect this kind of response but we get emails from kids asking questions about how to qualify for the Maclay and some just sending photos of their ponies for us to see," Stacia told me. "I try and respond to everyone."

While Stacia might be handling everything in the background, Frank is more visible to the public eye. As I sat with them at their barn at the show grounds, dozens of people rode by in golf carts or on horses all shouting encouragement or just wanting to say hello.

"The support from our peers concerning the television show has been fantastic," Frank said. "After the Maclay left Madison Square Gardens it struggled a little, but I am so glad because this show has really helped it."

When I told him the girls at my barn loved HorsePower he got out an Animal Planet poster featuring the show and signed it for my barn. Some of the girls at his barn also signed it. Thanks to the Maddens the road to the Maclay has become a much more fun road to travel.

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