

# MID-ATLANTIC REPORT

—PENSIONERS ON PARADE—

## CROSSPATCH

Walk into the barn at Mantua Farm in Glyndon, Md., on any given morning, and you'll be greeted by the sound of snoring. Follow that sound to its source in a spacious corner box stall next to the tack room, and there you'll find Crosspatch.

"That's the sign of a good horse," grinned the gray gelding's breeder/owner, Baltimore venture capital businessman Frank A. Bonsal Jr. "He comes in, has his breakfast, and then sleeps for the rest of the morning. He sleeps through everything that's going on."

Now 15, the handsome, sturdy son of Waquoit and the Hatchet Man mare Hatched enjoys an ideal retirement at Bonsal's 300-acre family home-stead.

"He has his regular routine," added farm manager Lea Edmunds. "And he has dreams in his sleep. He's galloping across the fields."

But Edmunds, who foaled the horse, remembers him as a tough customer from the very beginning. Bonsal explained that "Hatched, his dam, was out of Restless Spring, who was bred by my father and was by Restless Native. She was a winner and very fast. Hatched herself was stakes-placed. She was a very nice mare although she was very high-strung and difficult to train. But we did win a number of races with her."

And Crosspatch was his mother's son. Unraced as a 2-year-old, he began his career at 3 in late 1997 and hit the ground running. Trained by Berkley Kern, he won his first four starts, all under jockey Edgar Prado at Laurel Park. Never entered for a claiming tag, Crosspatch faced the starters 23 times over four seasons, making all but three of his starts in Maryland. He plied



Frank Bonsal shows off his star homebred.

his trade alongside such Mid-Atlantic stalwarts as Leave It to Beezer, Big Rut and Waited. It was Waited who followed him home in his first stakes win, the John B. Campbell Handicap-G3, under Rick Wilson at Pimlico in April 1999. Back at Pimlico the following year at age 6, Crosspatch won the Jennings Handicap with Joe Rocco aboard. Later that summer, he followed up with another stakes score in the Find Handicap under Nik Goodwin, winning by an authoritative five and three-quarters lengths.

He made two more starts after the Find, finishing second in the Damascus Handicap at Laurel and fourth in Timonium's Taking Risks Stakes in September 2000. Recurring soundness issues caught up to him, and Bonsal brought him home to the farm.

A second career over fences seemed like an option, and Crosspatch headed to the barn of Tom Voss.

"We gave him to Tommy Voss to train as a steeplechase horse," Bonsal said. Voss prepped the gelding by run-

ning him in the 2001 Awad Stakes on the turf at Pimlico, but he drifted out and quit, finishing a dismal fifth. "And then Tommy had him right up to a jump race, entered him at Saratoga. He was very talented over fences, but that was when things went wrong."

Deciding to finally call it quits, Bonsal brought Crosspatch home for good, with a record of 24-8-2-2 and \$292,217 in earnings.

Meanwhile, a Crosspatch cheering section of sorts had formed in the area.

As Edmunds recalled, "When Crosspatch came home, he had this little fan club of women. They came out to see him once. He had trained at Bowie; the women contacted Berkley and that's how they got hold of us. They stayed in touch with us for a while. It was very cute, and they were big fans of his. They left stuff down on his stall at Bowie. Apparently they followed him around and went to his races."

These days Crosspatch hacks around Mantua Farm three or four times a week with

riders Charlie Frock and Ashley Stees. Turned out with Crosspatch each day is McNamara's Band, a 14-year-old Fuzzbuster gelding owned by Bonsal's daughter, Adair Bonsal Stifel. Stifel rides the lovely chestnut, a gifted jumper, in local point-to-point races. Her father still laments that Crosspatch could not follow a similar course.

"He has the ability as a jumper, but he doesn't understand how to relax. He always thinks it's time to get going. I was really hoping I could make Crosspatch a foxhunter for myself, and unfortunately it's not going to happen because he's just too hot—even at 15," said Bonsal, who won the 1956 Maryland Hunt Cup aboard Mr. and Mrs. Hugh J. O'Donovan's Lancrel (Fr).

"It's a shame," Edmunds interjected, "because Crosspatch is such a lovely, easy horse to sit on over the jumps. But he just doesn't have the right attitude for foxhunting. He sees ghosts that nobody else sees."

Bonsal's regard for Crosspatch was evident as he proudly pointed out framed win photos hanging in the tack room at the farm. Steeped in history, the walls are also adorned with pictures of stars such as Mongo, Pilaster and Ruffian's dam, Shenanigans, all of whom were trained by his father, Frank A. (Downey) Bonsal.

"This horse was the real deal," Bonsal reflected. And whatever suits Crosspatch these days is fine with him. Stifel stuck her head in the tack room to bid her father good bye. Before leaving, she made a suggestion for the story.

"You know," she said, "you should get some pictures of Crosspatch sleeping, because that's what he does."

/Maggie Kimmitt