

YONKERS' FAVORITE BIT OF A LEGEND N RETIRES
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @
Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Thursday, December 12, 2019—Peter Tritton, that fairly competent Down Under imported trainer, was asked about Bit of a Legend N, that fairly competent Down Under imported pacer.

“We were coming off after a race one night and Jordan (Stratton) said to me, ‘Every driver should have a chance to sit behind a horse like this.’ ”

Bit of a Legend N, who rarely ran out of real estate on the racetrack, has nonetheless run out of daylight as a racehorse. The 10-year-old double-millionaire is set to retire after a Yonkers Raceway winner’s circle send-off Saturday night (Dec. 14th). The son of Bettor’s Delight is off to Midland Acres in Bloomingburg, OH, to begin a stallion career.

“I’m going to have to plan a road trip to go see him,” Stratton said.

Bit of a Legend N and Stratton have gone down the road together, the number of memorable miles too numerous to mention.

“He’s my favorite horse. No question,” Stratton said.

Bit of a Legend N came over as advertised, having won Australian Breeders Crowns at ages 3 and 4.

“Peter (Tritton) told me he was a getting a pretty nice horse,” Stratton said of the then 7-year-old who the late Harry Von Knoblauch purchased for \$103,000. “I went to the farm to see him. He just looked good running in the paddock and in his first qualifier (Yonkers, January of 2016), I knew.

“He didn’t go much (third, timed in 1:57.1), but the way he drove, the way he carried himself.”

Rising through the overnight ranks with two wins and two seconds in four tries, it was time to wear the big-boy pants and the ’16 George Morton Levy Memorial Pacing Series.

Sweep.

Bit of a Legend N won all five of his preliminary legs starts, including a stirring, track-record 1:51.2 dead-heat with Wiggle It Jiggleit. In the \$609,000 final a week later, he drew well, took control early and won in a facile 1:51. He was (and remains) the only Free-For-Aller to run the Levy table.

The 2016 season saw Bit of a Legend N win 13-of-28 starts (with six seconds and one third), socking away \$723,850.

Proving he was no one-hit wonder, Bit of a Legend N threw down consecutive half-million-dollar seasons in 2017 and ’18.

The 2017 Levy saw Bit of a Legend N win twice (with two seconds) during preliminary-round competition before a no-chance-trip fourth (to Keystone Velocity) in the final. He then hit the road, winning the \$109,600 Molson (Western Fair,

1:51.3), \$260,000 Gerrity Memorial (Saratoga, 1:50.3...at 15-1) and Quillen Memorial (Harrington, 1:52.1).

The next season saw another standout Levy-leg log (two wins, two seconds, one third) and yet another less-than-no-shot trip in the final. From post position No. 7, Bit of a Legend N charged home for second, again to Keystone Velocity.

Bit of a Legend N eventually returned to Londontown, looking to defend his Molson (renamed to Camluck Classic) title.

He wound up a flat, never-in-it fifth and “the only time he ever disappointed me,” Stratton said.

“He’s had some EPM (parasite) issues throughout his career,” Tritton said. “We’ve been able to stay on top of it, usually, but I think that, and the ship up to Canada, was too much for him. His blood was no good, but he bounced back.”

Indeed. A week later at Northfield, it was a first-up, life-best 1:49.4 effort in the \$200,000 Battle of Lake Erie, putting away the same horse—Rockin’ Ron—who had dusted his rivals in the Camluck.

“Everyone was excited for him,” Stratton said. “There were people, wherever we went, who said he was their favorite horse.”

Bit of a Legend N’s 2019 season was hampered by some poorly-timed quarter cracks, essentially costing him any shot of doing damage in the Levy.

“It’s never a good time to get them, but this was a bad time for him, and us,” Tritton said. “It took about six or seven weeks to completely heal and the series doesn’t allow for any time off.”

“It not that he’s even slowed down that much, but the competition is just better,” Stratton said. “Before, you could win a race in 1:52. Now, it’s no better than third.”

Stratton offered some of the same platitudes about Bit of a Legend N that were bestowed upon Foiled Again by his primary driver, Yannick Gingras.

“He can relax and go a quarter in 30 (seconds), then sprint in :27. He won’t do more than what’s necessary. It’s just his way of taking care of himself. Look at his races. The margins are never that much. He knows what he has to do. That’s why he’s lasted so long.”

The plan was for Bit of a Legend N to be racing Saturday nights through the end of the season, but after a second-place finish in late November, Tritton detected a bit of a problem with an ankle (“There was nothing to gain by having him go a couple of more weeks”), so the North American racing career ended with 33 wins in 99 starts and earnings of \$1,909,935 (more than \$2.5 million including foreign take-home).

“I’ve had good horses before,” Tritton said, “but he’s different. To have the longevity he’s had and to produce in the big races the way he did, that’s what stands out.”

...and they named him right, too.

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(FFI...Frank Drucker, Yonkers Raceway Publicity Director,
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