

### ***Sweet Dreams of Aura-Mae's Cressida's Yvette***

The herd name Sweet Dreams Alpines conjures up the image of style, productiveness, longevity and history. It is one of those herd names that everyone recognizes for its' lasting impact on the alpine breed and all started 32 years ago with the last pick at the 4H sign ups. The following is an interview with Kristina Bozzo-Baldenegro in her own words.

By: Kevin W. Kinney

#### ***When and how did you start in dairy goats?***

In 1977 my parents were on a trip to Mexico and my grandmother was taking care of us, when we got a call from the Rangeview 4-H group about the first 4-H meeting of the year. I begged my grandmother to take us and she did. I wanted to get an animal and the mere thought of raising an animal for meat and then having to sell it at auction in my mind was not an option. The only animals left were horses (too big), and dairy cattle (not enough space and too big for any 8 year old to imagine caring for), that left dairy goats. I triumphantly signed up for the dairy goat project and waited for my parents to come home to tell them the great news. At that time I didn't realize that mom and dad could have put a stop to what now is our 32<sup>nd</sup> year raising these animals that we are still captivated with after all these years.

#### ***Have you always worked with the Alpine lines?***

We started out with one doeling from our 4-H leader's herd, her name was Aura-Mae's Cressida's Yvette an American Alpine, whose grandsire at the time was a Swiss Alpine (now Oberhasli), Play Fair Coacoochee. We decided that she needed a companion and during breeding season we visited the Las Alas herd in Lincoln, CA Phyllis and Charles Wing owned one of the few dairies in our area. Their daughter Andrea had this beautiful doe, GCH Potpourri Entrd-Fidg Helena that she was showing and winning with in our area. We bred Yvette to a son of Helena's Las Alas, Juan Nino de Helena, a Laurelwood Acres John-Boy son. It was at that time that we purchased Las Alas, Julieta de Tres a son of Play Fair Sir Winston and a maternal granddaughter of Coacoochee. Julieta was bred to Las Alas, Don Mateo who was a son of Pinky's Kan't Miss. The fact that we started out with two does that were so related from different herds is amazing to me, especially since at the time we were so unaware of how bloodlines worked. The Yvette and Juan breeding produced our first permanent champion doe, CH Yvette's Meggin. Julieta's first daughter Julieta's Roseallee was the granddam of one of herd favorites, Sweet Dreams SOS Twila (dam of GCH Sweet Dreams Royal Wailea, SGCH Profet Pate, and 13 additional offspring) whose bloodlines are still in our herd with our doe CH Sweet Dreams T Willa.

We have had one Experimental, a Saanen Alpine cross, a daughter of Chateau de Ville's Impatience and Chateau de ville's Renaissance.

***What lines were people working with when you started?***

Most of the breeders from what I can recall in my area were using bucks from Redwood Hills, Nixon's, Perfection, Sodium Oaks, Laurelwood Acres, and Sunshine. However the 4-Hers locally were using Las Alas and Casa Capri.

***How have you seen the breed evolve over the years?***

What I have seen in the breed is a fluctuation of styles, the most evolved I would say would have to be the mammary system, and if you look back over the last thirty years, that is what you will notice is the most significant change. At some point in time in the early 80s I was attending a show held at Cal-Expo in Sacramento, it was one of the larger open shows held in Northern California. I saw the most beautiful red chamoisee doe with the most stunning mammary system I had ever seen (mind you I was maybe 13 or 14 at the time) and I knew that is what I wanted in my herd, that doe was GCH Sodium Oaks Kiwi Mallow. It was also about that time that I remember seeing an ad in the old Dairy Goat Journal from Raintree-Jan Palmer was advertising GCH Wa-Shaw-Me-Snowbird, and she to me was striking, her color and overall area of mammary system to me was what I wanted in our herd. The animals today are more correct in many aspects, especially general appearance, but in my mind those are two does that would still stand out in the show ring today.

***How do/did you select bucks to use in your breeding program?***

In the beginning we actually had a 4-H leader, Ann Moya del Pino tell us to always use a buck with a GCH dam, that it didn't matter what the buck looked like but to make sure that we used a strong dam line.

Currently we use both live service and artificial insemination both allow us to use bucks that have proven to cross well with our lines and incorporate those lines that we see working for other herds across the nation. We have continued to search out bucks that do have strong dam lines, those dams that may not be outstanding themselves but have proven themselves with outstanding offspring. Most recently we've used both Sweet Dreams Street Sense (linebred on Chateau de Ville's Renaissance) and Redwood Hills Lance Shamus (full brother to the stunning SGCH Redwood Hills F. Sebastienne 11\*M) on our does even though both bucks' dams are not finished nor will they be, we based our usage of those buck on their dams and their outstanding relatives.

***What were/are your strongest dam lines?***

Two of the dam lines that we are working with are decendants of Sodium Oaks CDR Zebrina, the last GCH Sodium Oaks Kiwi Mallow daughter and SGCH Sweet

Dreams R. Romance, a granddaughter of GCH Laurelwood Acres Knevil. The majority to the herd is related to those two does, specifically SGCH Sweet Dreams SB Silver Charm, a line bred Chateau de Ville's Renaissance daughter. We currently have 17 does in the herd and 14 are related to Silver Charm, two go back to Romance and one goes back to one of older dam lines, Sweet Dreams SOS Twila.

***What lines are you currently working with or would like to use in your breeding program?***

Currently we are using Redwood Hills Lance Shamus, Sweet Dreams Street Sense, Clovertop's Firestarter and Sodium Oaks Sasin. We will most likely be incorporating some additional bloodlines next year thru AI. We attempt at least 3-4 artificial inseminations a year in hopes of getting 2-3 does settled, this year we were lucky enough to get 2 does settled with 3 attempted.

***What are your future goals for your herd?***

We would like to maintain a small easily manageable herd of less than twenty total animals, including the bucks. One aspiration of course would be to breed the perfect goat, or at least one that we think is perfect, realistically we'd like to improve width of chest and correctness in rear legs, both width and angle.

***A number of national level breeders as well as hobbyist breeders have used your lines.***

We feel thankful everytime we are able to see our bloodlines in other herds.

***What kind of influence are these lines making or have made across the nation?***

We don't really consider it influence as every breeder has a choice as to what lines they use. It's all a matter of choice, if we choose to use an animals it's based on what we've seen at shows, in advertisements or at the nationals. It is however nice to see does in different states with our bloodlines winning, and excelling in the ADGA performance programs. We hope when people think of Sweet Dreams does they think of quality.

***What have your animals done on the National Show level, DHIR, and Linear Appraisal or other awards?***

On the National Show level we've been the owners of the ADGA National Show Premier Sire-GCH Clovertop's Snapple and the breeders of the Reserve Best Udder at the Nationals, in addition to a few class winners. On the DHIR level there have been relatives of our animals that have earned the Top Ten designation and others that have shown marked improvements in the components, such as butterfat production and overall milk production. Linear appraisal has been one of our strong points, currently our herd consists of 10 mature appraised does including two first

fresheners and our herd average is 91. While we certainly can't complain there is always room to move that average higher.

***What do you feel has been the most significant accomplishment of your breeding program?***

The most significant accomplishment, hmm...I would have to say consistency. Not so much with every bloodline that we've used, but with the core herd of animals that we've shown and sold. The consistency has certainly improved over time, especially as we learned what worked and what didn't work with our animals. For having such a small herd we feel proud of the quality we are able to have with so few animals.

***What would you do differently - What would you do the same?***

Honestly we probably would not have done anything different. We are pleased with where we've been and where we are with our herd.

***What advice would you give new breeders?***

Start out with a strong foundation, buy or breed to the best you can afford. Afford being the key word; if you can't afford them then don't get them. Goats are a 365 day a year JOB, keeping the animals well cared for is expensive, don't kid yourself if you think you are going to be able to just feed them once a day and get a herd that you can be proud of in the milk parlor and the show ring. They are not like children, they never learn to clean up after themselves and they certainly can't learn to feed themselves, go to the feed store, order supplies or go to the vet.

***Today, what do you see as the over all strength and weakness of the Alpine?***

The Alpine today is stronger in mammary system and topline than those of two decades ago. The overall area of udder attachment and strength of both fore and rear udder in combination with a more clearly delineated teat are much more impressive than those does from days gone by. The major weakness in the Alpine breed in my mind is one that I have not seen marked improvement in years it is front end assembly. It is not so much the side view it is the width and strength of front legs and the smoothness of blending and tightness of the shoulder blades.

***From the time you started breeding dairy goats what bucks or lines do you feel have made the most impact on the breed? The most impact on your herd?***

There is no right or wrong way to answer this question. You could ask ten different people and get ten different answers. If I was to break it down by herds, bucks and does my answers would be:

Herds: Clovertop, Sodium Oaks, Redwood Hills, Nixon's, Hoach's, and Sunshine  
Bucks: Risk, Sasin, Profet, Joi Huckster, Goldenboy, Laison, Royal Image, Snapple and Freelance

Does: Snowbird, Mallow, Profecy and Lyric

The most impact on our herd would be: Chateau de Ville, Clovertop, Rocking M and Sodium Oaks.

***What bucks or lines do you feel are NOW making a major impact on the Alpine line, as well as on your lines?***

There seems to be a number of bucks and lines that are making their impact, if you look at my answer to 16, I think that most of the top producers both in the milk room and show ring, in addition to the linear appraisal program are either direct descendants or offspring of the above mentioned animals. I do feel that because there are more herds keeping and selling animals that there isn't really one buck or line that is making the impact as we saw just a few years ago.

***How do you feel about French vs. American Alpines?***

In our herd there is no difference. I certainly would support the opening up of the herdbook, it would be a win-win for herds that breed Americans as most of us will use bloodlines based on what works for us, without having to worry about the animals being purebred or American.

***In general what future do you see for the alpine?***

I am not really sure how answer this, I think there are both a positive future and negative future for the Alpine and for dairy goat breeders in general. I certainly think some breeders have a great future, but there will be others that won't. Now let me explain, I think it has to do with the use of artificial insemination. With the increased use of AI, some breeders have been able to use bloodlines that in the past would have not been cost effective to use or purchase. There are more folks selling animals, particularly bucks from animals because they were bred to 'the son of the two time National Champion' or the lines are from the "XYZ Herd", this to me waters down the bloodlines, flooding the market with animals that should not be sold as breeding stock. Breeders and dairy goat owners need to remember that just because you bred your doe to the son of a National Champion, does not mean that you should sell a buck from that breeding.

***What should breeders be workings towards, correcting, or adding to the breed?***

Feet and legs and front end assembly, these are two areas that are certainly lacking as a breed in the Alpines of today. Now don't get me wrong there are herds with outstanding General Appearance, but looking at the US as a whole, there is certainly a lack of correctness in those areas of the scorecard, at least in my mind.

***What direction should the alpine breeder take?***

Just the fact that breeders are out there breeding and showing, adds to the breed. Individually, they should be working on what they feel is most going to get their herd where they want it to be. I think that's what keeps most of us interested, is trying to breed the ideal dairy goat. This year the focus will be on improving one thing and next year it will be something else.