

2002 Gem Twist



Gem Twist, owned by Michael Golden, was bred and trained by Show Jumping Hall of Famer Frank Chapot and ridden by Greg Best, Leslie Howard and Laura Chapot.

Formally retired at the National Horse Show at Madison Square Garden on November 1, 1997, Gem has an incredible list of victories. He won three American Grandprix Association (AGA) Horse of the Year titles and won the AGA's Championship with three different riders: Best in 1987, Howard in 1993, and Chapot in 1995.

In addition to nine years' worth of Grand Prix wins, Gem earned two Silver Medals at the Seoul Olympics in 1988 and was named "World's Best Horse" at the World Equestrian Games at Stockholm, Sweden in 1990. Gem also accumulated more than \$800,000 in prize money and attracted purchase offers of \$2.5 million.

One of the early milestones that showed Gem Twist's unbelievable talent was his win in the 1985 U.S. Equestrian Team Talent Derby in Hamilton, MA at the age of six. This first prestigious victory, with Best in the saddle, set the stage for future stardom. In 1987, Gem carried Best to wins in his first two Grand Prix events – the Grand Prix of Tampa and the Grand Prix of Florida. That year, Gem captured AGA Horse of the Year honors and Best won Rookie of the Year. That year also included a team Silver Medal at the Pan American Games in Indianapolis, IN.

The highpoint in the partnership between Best and Gem Twist came when the pair represented the United States at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea, where they came away with team and individual Silver Medals.

Leslie Howard became Gem's rider in 1992 after Best suffered a shoulder injury. Howard continued as Gem's rider for two more years, winning many prestigious competitions including Gem's second AGA Championship and third AGA Horse of the Year award.

Laura Chapot took over the reins in 1995. That year, Chapot and Gem won the World Cup class at the \$100,000 Autumn Classic, helping to propel the young rider to Budweiser Rookie of the Year honors. Chapot also rode Gem to his third win in the American Grandprix Association Championships.

In the 1995-1996 season, Gem and Chapot won three World Cup qualifying classes and placed well at several other competitions. Their win in the final World Cup class in Tampa was over an extremely large starting field of 80 horses. This win clinched Chapot the World Cup USA East League Championship and was a fitting win at the close of Gem's career at the site of his first Grand Prix win with Best nine years earlier.

