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100 TRAINERS TAKE ON THE WILDEST NEW HORSEMANSHIP CHALLENGE

WESTERN HORSEMAN[®]

OCTOBER 2007

START A
WORLD-CLASS
SADDLE
COLLECTION
[PAGE 138]

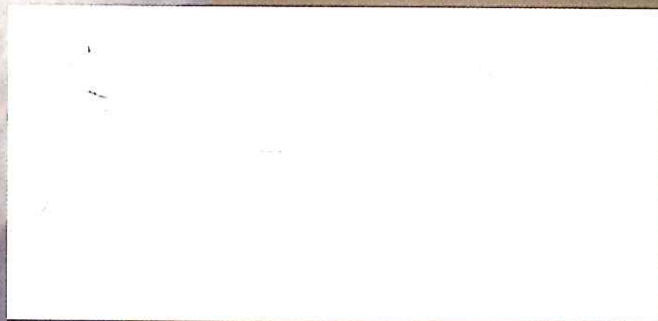
THE **10**
TOP
**RANCH-
HORSE**
Bloodlines

CONTROL YOUR
HORSE'S SHOULDERS
WITH 6 EASY STEPS

[PAGE 50]

RIDE ARIZONA'S
COUGAR COUNTRY

[PAGE 80]



Stuart Ranch sire
Real Gun

The Top 10 Ranch

Western Horseman ranks the top bloodlines

COMPILED BY JENNIFER DENISON AND ROSS HECOX

RANCHERS HAVE BRED FOR THE IDEAL working ranch horse for more than a hundred years. In the early days, cowboys favored Steeldust descendants. Around the turn of the 20th century, Thoroughbred stallions in the U.S. government's Remount program improved bloodlines of ranch remudas throughout the West. And in the heyday of match racing, famous stallions known for their quick bursts of speed and athleticism began influencing

the breeding programs of many working cattle ranches.

The time period from the late 1800s to the early 1900s produced legendary stallions such as Peter McCue, Midnight, Joe Hancock, Oklahoma Star, Joe Reed and My Texas Dandy. These horses became the foundation sires for the Quarter Horse breed and for today's working ranch horses.

In the mid-1900s, horses such as Driftwood, Bert, Hollywood Gold, Grey Badger

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two horses silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. The horses are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with their heads and necks clearly visible against the bright orange and yellow light of the setting sun. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a lighter, hazy yellow at the top. The overall mood is serene and evocative of a rural landscape.

Horse Bloodlines

used in today's working ranch remudas.

III, Sugar Bars, King, Poco Bueno and Leo added another layer to the foundation of the breed.

Within the past 20 years, ranches throughout the country have begun using popular cutting horse bloodlines to enhance their horses' athleticism and cow sense. And, while they identify their horses by contemporary names such as Little Peppy or Freckles Playboy, those horses trace to the foundation sires of the Quarter Horse

breed. At the same time, the names of a few old-time bloodlines, such as Hancock and Driftwood, endure to this day.

After interviewing top ranchers and leading horsemen, and analyzing registration statistics and production sale records, *Western Horseman* editors and staff members cast their votes for the ranch-horse bloodlines that have had the most influence on today's working strings.

Here's our top 10 list: >>

» Sun Frost 10

IN BARREL RACING CIRCLES, Sun Frost's name is synonymous with Dash For Cash, Fire Water Flit and Jet Deck as a sire of running blood. The 1979 palomino stallion has sired progeny who have won or produced winners of more than \$2 million. His notable son Frenchmans Guy, who sired Kristie Peterson's great horse French Flash Hawk (Bozo), has sired get with earnings in excess of \$1.4 million.

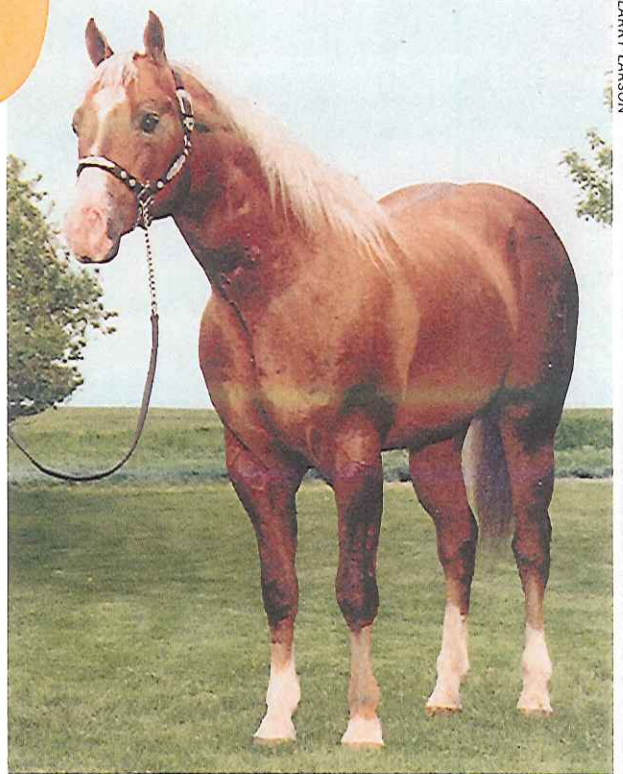
While Sun Frost's legacy is obviously rooted in racing, he's also known throughout the Northern Plains as a sire of roping, cutting and ranch horses.

Bred by Stanley Johnston in Miller, South Dakota, the stallion was purchased by Cowan Cattle Co. of Highmore, South Dakota, as a yearling. His distinctive blend of foundation blood, including Doc Bar, Driftwood and Hancock, made him a prepotent sire of stout, quick, athletic horses with willing dispositions and unforgettable color.

Pedigree: sired by Docs Jack Frost and out of Prissy Cline. Traces to Three Bars three times on his top side, and Driftwood, Hancock and Depth Charge (TB) on his bottom side.

Descendants: French Flash Hawk, Frenchmans Guy, PC Frenchmans Hayday, PC Sun Socks.

Ranches that use this bloodline: Cowan Ranch, Mel Potter Ranch, Merrill Ranch, Weaver Quarter Horses, Open Box Hart Ranch, Open Box Rafter Ranch, Lopez Ranch, Meyer Ranch.



LARRY LARSON

» Jackie Bee 0

FROM THE MOMENT KANSAS QUARTER HORSE BREEDER Duane Walker set eyes on newborn foal Jackie Bee, he knew he wanted to add him to his breeding program. It took five years of negotiations before he could call the horse his own. In the meantime, he'd bred some mares to the young stallion and raised some of his foals.

An easygoing horse with substantial frame and muscle, Jackie Bee stamped his offspring with size. In the 1970s, people sought Jackie Bee's progeny for their halter potential. When the look of halter horses changed in the 1980s, Walker focused on breeding Jackie Bee to get versatile performance horses. Respected rancher and horseman Bill Smith of Thermopolis, Wyoming, recognized how quickly and efficiently Jackie Bee horses worked cattle and began incorporating the stallion's bloodlines into his breeding program.

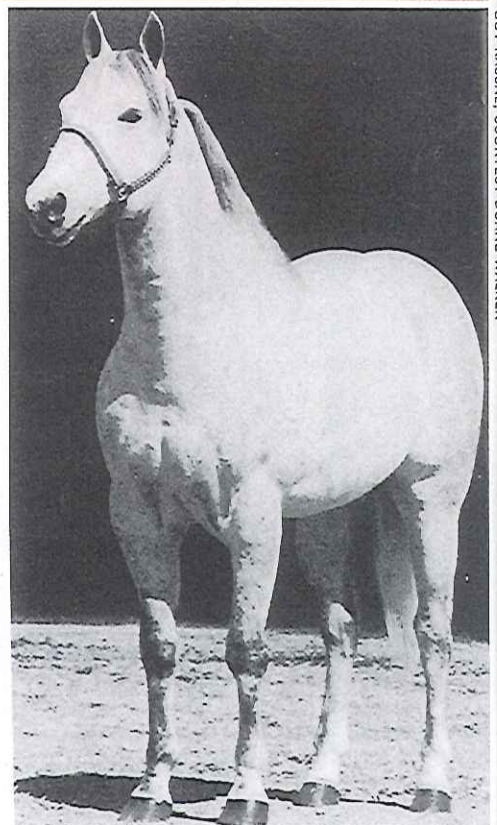
Jackie Bee never had the chance to be a ranch horse himself because he spent most of his time running with the mares, but his offspring became known as premier ranch and cow horses.

"He came along when people were wanting bigger horses than they were riding," Walker says. "He was made like a ranch horse—stout with big withers—and he had a great mind. He was pleasant to be around. He did whatever it took to get along."

Pedigree: sired by Jimmy Mac Bee and out of Jackie Diane, by Jackie R, who traced to the My Texas Dandy line of running and roping horses.

Descendants: Tee Jay Badger Bee, Tee Jay Hancock, T J Black Jack, Tee J Black Jill, Tee Jay O'Hara Miss, Tee Jay Three Bars

Ranches that use this bloodline: Bartlett Ranch, Raymond Sutton Ranch, Tee Jay Quarter Horses, WYO Quarter Horse Ranch.



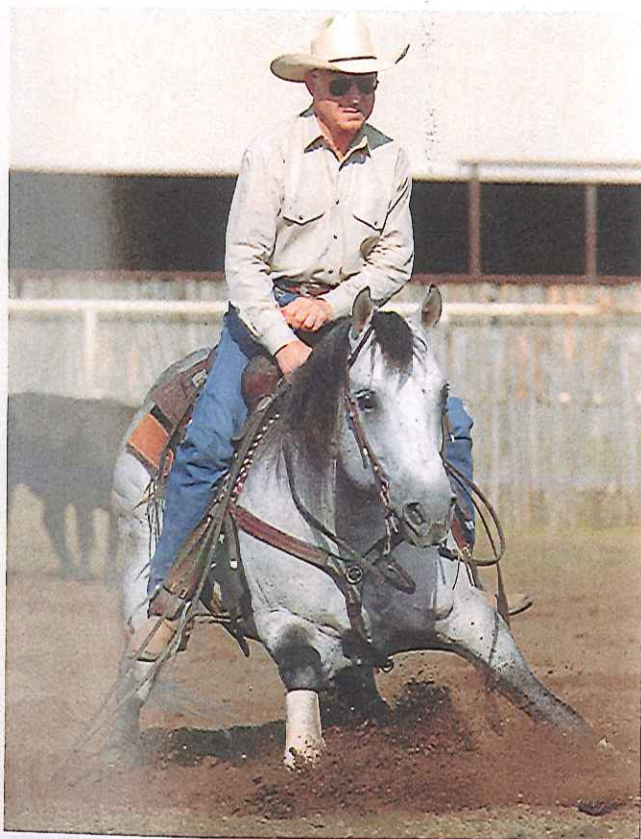
GUY MASAHL, COURTESY DUANE WALKER

Playgun 8

ALTHOUGH PLAYGUN WAS FOALED IN 1992, the gray stallion's offspring are already a hot commodity among ranchers, particularly in the Southwest. A number of reputable ranches are using sons of Playgun as their herd sires. For example, the Four Sixes Ranch breeds a few mares to Playgun each year and also stands Seven From Heaven, a son of the stallion.

"There haven't been many options for us to use top performance bloodlines on the ranch," says Dr. Glenn Blodgett of the Four Sixes. "But I've always thought Playgun had a lot of potential. He was a good performer in the show arena, and he has the size and bone structure we look for in a good ranch horse. And certainly his gray color doesn't hurt him, either."

Playgun was purchased as a yearling by his present owners, Dick and Brenda Pieper of Marietta, Oklahoma. After winning more than \$185,000 in National Cutting Horse Association competition, Playgun has sired the earners of more than \$5 million in cutting, reining, working cow horse, roping and ranch versatility competition.



JOHN BRASSEAU

Pedigree: sired by Freckles Playboy and out of Miss Silver Pistol. Traces to legendary sires Jewel's Leo Bars, Sugar Bars, Rey Jay, Doc's Hickory and King's Pistol.

Descendants: Real Gun, Seven From Heaven, Silver Gun, Peppy Plays For Cash.

Ranches that use this bloodline: Four Sixes Ranch, Haythorn Land and Cattle, Stuart Ranch, Bogle Ranch, Pitchfork Ranch, Bar B Ranch.

Blue Valentine 7

JUST LIKE HIS GRANDSIRE, JOE HANCOCK, Blue Valentine was known for his abilities on the ranch and in the rodeo arena. His blood can be found in remudas from Arizona to Montana.

Blue Valentine's sire, Red Man, was himself a prolific sire of quick-starting racehorses and top ranch mounts. He was a well-built horse, with a long hip, deep heart girth, ample bone and muscle, and prominent withers. As a sire, he passed his size, athletic ability and roan color to Blue Valentine.

Bred by Kenny Gunter, with subsequent owners who included Del Haverty, Buster Hayes and Hyde Merritt, Blue Valentine was frequently used for ranch work, but the horse's main claim to fame was as a steer-roping horse.

Chip Merritt, Hyde's son, grew up with Blue Valentine and occasionally competed on him.

"He was really quick out of the box," Chip recalls. "You had to really be holding on."

As for Blue Valentine's offspring, Chip says they're just as athletic, attentive, surefooted and smart as their sire. Many are still sold as ranch and rodeo horses, while an equal number are purchased for recreational riding.



JIM JENNINGS

Pedigree: sired by Red Man, by Joe Hancock, and out of Beauty's Dream. Traces to Peter McCue on his top side and Valentine and Little Joe 1 on his bottom side.

Descendants: Blue's Contessa, Gooseberry, Hancocks Blue Boy, Hayes' Pronto, Leo Hancock Hayes, Mr Roan Hancock, Plenty Try, Roan Ambrose, Rowdy Blue Man, Salty Roan.

Ranches that use this bloodline: KeSa Quarter Horses, Haythorn Land & Cattle Co., Leachman Cattle, Merrill Ranch.

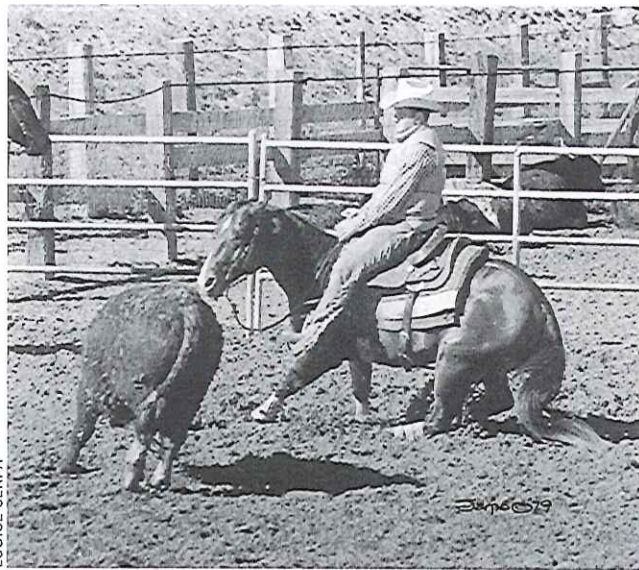
» Freckles 6 Playboy

FRECKLES PLAYBOY WAS BRED AND RAISED BY MARION FLYNT of Midland, Texas. The 1973 sorrel stallion began an illustrious show career with a reserve championship at the NCHA Futurity in 1976. Later, he was purchased by Kay Floyd of Stephenville, Texas, who owned the horse during most of his breeding career. Freckles Playboy's offspring won more than \$27 million in competition, particularly in the cutting arena. In addition, his grandget have earned more than \$58 million.

While Freckles Playboy has greatly influenced the cutting and reined cow horse arenas, his descendants have proven to be great ranch horses.

"That doesn't surprise me a bit," says Terry Riddle, who trained and showed Freckles Playboy. "He was out of a Rey Jay mare, and Rey Jay mares were some of the best producing mares at that time. He was super-athletic, smart and had a lot of cow. You could do anything on his colts. They had that killing stop."

The Jewels Leo Bars-Rey Jay cross has produced another great sire of both show performers and ranch horses. Colonel Freckles, by Jewels Leo Bars and out of Christy Jay, by Rey Jay, won the NCHA Futurity the same year in which his half-brother, Freckles Playboy, was reserve. Along with being recognized as a leading sire of Western performance horses, Colonel Freckles can be found in the pedigrees of many ranch remudas throughout the United States.



LOUISE SERPA

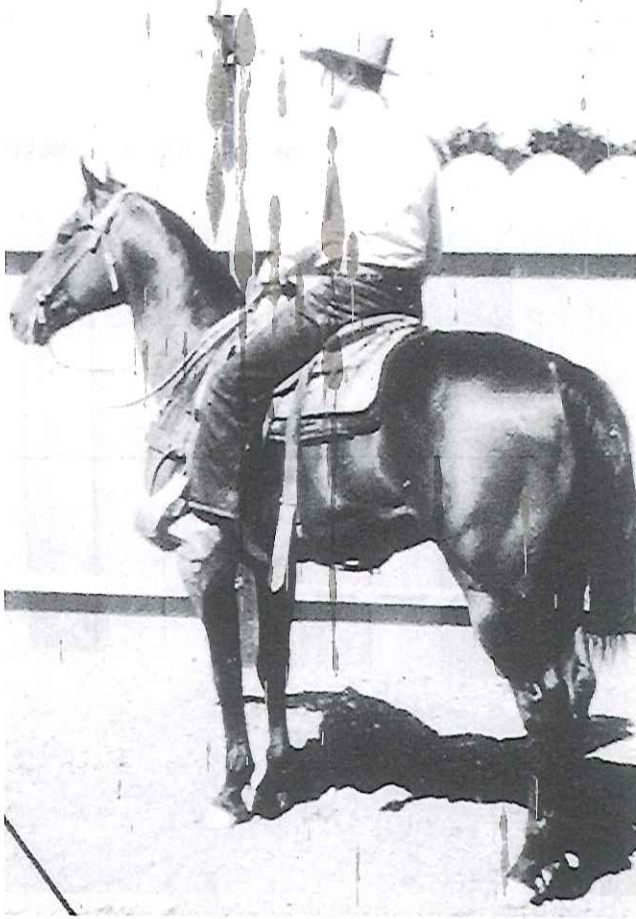
Pedigree: sired by Jewels Leo Bars and out of Gay Jay. Traces to legendary sires Sugar Bars, Leo and Rey Jay.
Descendants: Freckles Merada, Playgun, Playin Stylish, Playboys Buck Fever, Bet Yer Blue Boons.
Ranches that use this bloodline: Four Sixes Ranch, Miller Land and Livestock, Pitchfork Ranch, Drummond Land and Cattle Company.

» Driftwood 5

BRED BY "OLD MAN" CHILDRESS OF SILVERTON, Texas, and foaled in 1932, Driftwood emerged from a relatively unknown pedigree. Nevertheless, he quickly became a top match racehorse in West Texas.

Later, Ross Brinson brought him to Arizona, where he dominated in the rodeo arena. Under Asbury Schell, one of several of the horse's owners and a top rodeo hand, "Speedy" became a famous rope horse and later was well-known throughout Arizona and California as a top sire of rodeo mounts.

At age 11, Driftwood was purchased by Channing and Catherine Peake of Lompoc, California. The Peakes used Driftwood to establish one of the most respected bloodlines of rodeo and ranch horses, known for their speed, intelligence and ability to cross well on other bloodlines. Mel Potter of Marana, Arizona, is largely responsible for keeping the Driftwood line alive.



KATY PEAKE

Pedigree: sired by Miller Boy and out of The Comer Mare. Traces to Barow, Hobart Horse and JA Ranch breeding.
Descendants: Poker Chip Peake, Woodwind, Driftwood Ike, Lone Drifter, Drifts Chip.
Ranches that use this bloodline: Babbitt Ranches, Diamond A Ranch, Bar B Ranch, Wagonhound Ranch.

Two Eyed Jack

JIM BRINKMAN, THE GRANDSON of legendary breeder Howard Pitzer, rode Two Eyed Jack as a boy and has ridden the stallion's descendants all his life. He's done everything on them, from working cattle to roping to showing them in halter. Their versatility and disposition have made them ideal ranch horses, particularly in Nebraska, where the Pitzer Ranch is located, and throughout the Midwest.

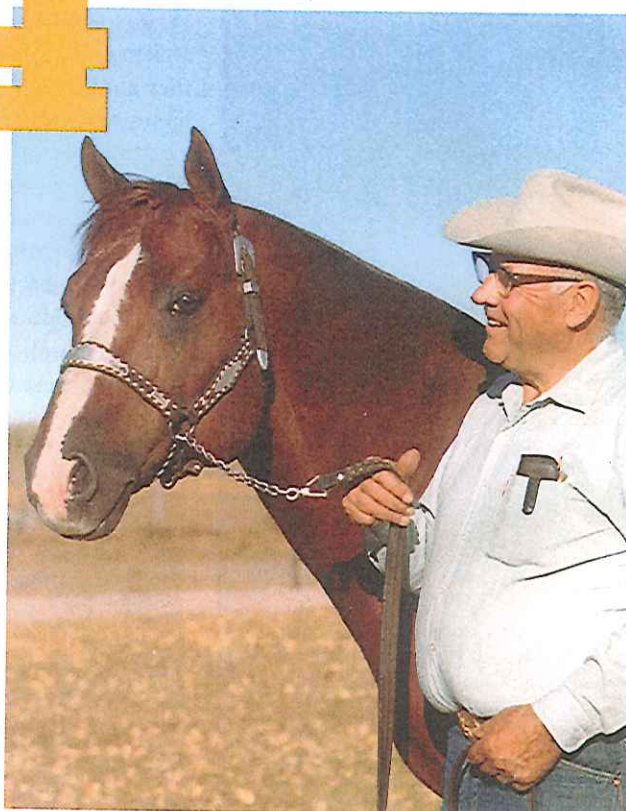
"Whenever someone came to look at [Two Eyed Jack], Howard threw me on him bareback with just a halter on him," Brinkman recalls. "You didn't worry about him being broncy or anything. His foals were all gentle horses, on the verge of being a little lazy. But at the same time, they had a lot of bottom."

Two Eyed Jack was bred by Herman Mass of McHenry, Illinois. Pitzer acquired the stallion in 1964 as a 3-year-old. The 1961 sorrel earned a Superior in halter and AQHA points in a wide variety of events, including reining, working cow horse and Western riding. He sired 1,416 foals and 149 AQHA Champions.

Pedigree: sired by Two D Two and out of Triangle Tookie. Traces to legendary sires Silver King, King, Grey Badger III and Roan Hancock.

Descendants: Watch Joe Jack, Mr Baron Red, Two ID Bartender, Two Eyed Red Buck.

Ranches that use this bloodline: Hutchings Cattle Company, Pitzer Ranch, Bartlett Ranch.



COURTESY PITZER RANCH

Joe Hancock

JOE HANCOCK'S HISTORY IS FILLED with approximation and uncertainty. Bred by John Jackson Hancock, Joe Hancock was foaled sometime between 1923 and 1925. His sire was the great foundation stallion Peter McCue, and his dam was a grade mare by a Percheron stallion and out of a Thoroughbred-type mare. This unusual cross gave Joe Hancock his stout conformation, calm yet tough disposition, speed and cow sense.

After a colorful match-race career, during which he stood open to race any horse for three-eighths of a mile, Joe Hancock retired virtually undefeated. Tom Burnett paid \$2,000 for the horse, and retired him to stud on the Four Sixes/Triangle Ranches.

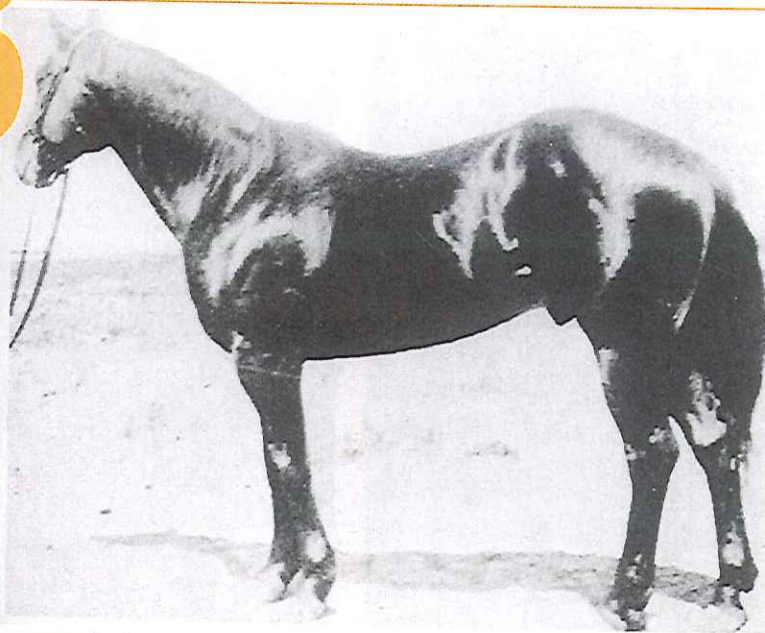
Today, rodeo competitors, ropers and ranchers appreciate Hancock-bred horses for their big, stout conformations, grittiness and cow sense.

Some Hancocks are known for their buck, big feet and plain heads, but staunch supporters say few foundation bloodlines produce such hardworking horses.

Pedigree: sired by John Wilkens, by Peter McCue, and out of an unregistered range mare.

Descendants: Hancock's Dude, Little Joe The Wrangler, Red Man, Roan Hancock, War Chief, Hesa Eddie Hancock, Figure Four Fritz, Red Hot Hancock.

Ranches that use this bloodline: Bar B Ranch, Broken Bones Cattle Company, Haythorn Land & Cattle Co., Merrill Ranch.



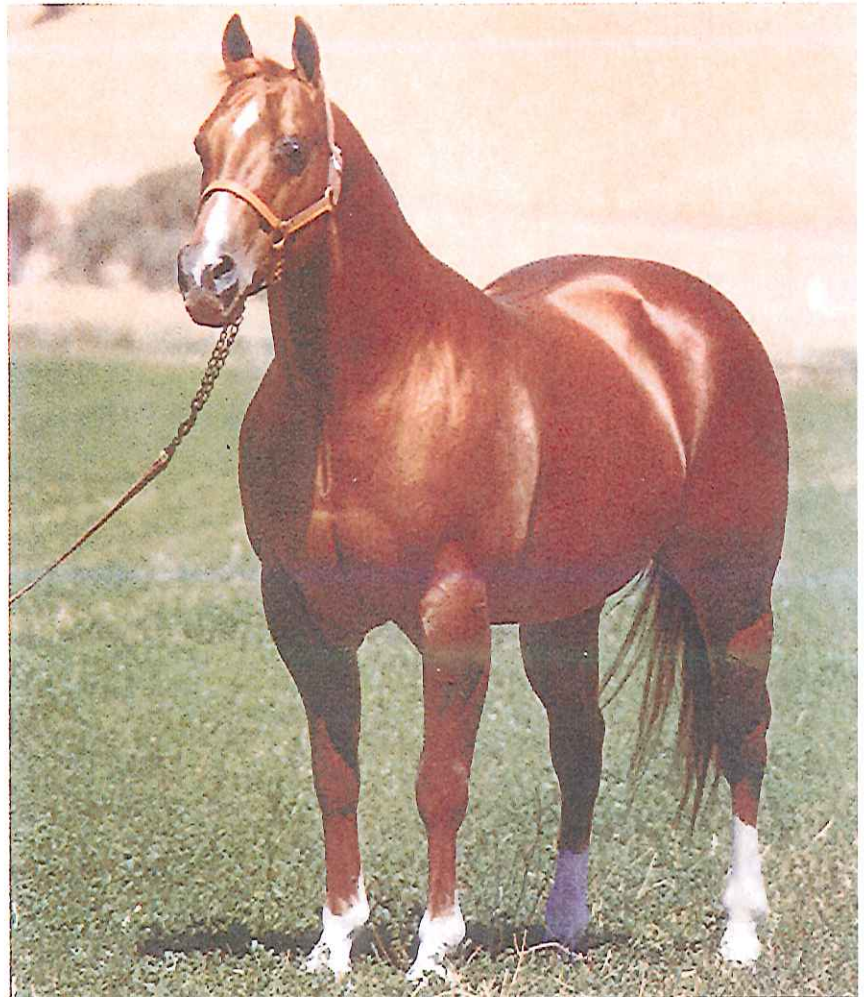
COURTESY AQHA

»» Doc Bar

WHEN TOM AND JACK FINLEY of Gilbert, Arizona, bred AA running horse Dandy Doll to AAA racehorse Lightning Bar, they hoped to produce a sleek speedster. Instead they got Doc Bar. The 14.3-hand, 1,000-pound chestnut stallion won only \$95 in lifetime racing earnings; however, he went on to excel in halter competition and sire a cutting-horse dynasty from 1960 to 1978. His get dominated cutting competition with their cow sense, athleticism and graceful, sweepy moves. These qualities make Doc Bar's blood popular with today's working ranch-horse breeders.

John Lacey, owner of Lacey Livestock in Paso Robles, California, stands two stallions and runs several mares that carry the Doc Bar bloodline. He considers Doc Bar to be the product of a perfect nick between Lightning Bar and Dandy Doll.

"I don't think there's any question that Doc Bar, through his Three Bars influence is one of the greatest cow-horse sires there ever was or will be," says Lacey. "He was a prolific sire, and he was very prepotent; he passed on his cow sense and athletic ability to his offspring."



Pedigree: sired by Lightning Bar and out of Dandy Doll. Traces to Three Bars on his top side and Texas Dandy on the bottom.

Descendants: Doc O'Lena, Doc Quixote, Doc Tari, Doc's Hickory, Doc's Leo Lad, Doc's Lynx, Doc's Marmoset, Docs Prescription, Doc's Starlight, Docs Stylish Oak, Dry Doc, Genuine Doc.

Ranches that use this bloodline: Bell Ranch, JA Ranch, Lacey Livestock, Raymond Sutton Ranch, Singleton Ranches, Spade Ranch, W.T. Waggoner Estate, Wagonhound Ranch, Van Norman Ranches.

Little Peppy

CUTTING HORSE ENTHUSIASTS are all too familiar with Peppy San Badge, better known as "Little Peppy." The 1974 sorrel stallion won the NCHA Futurity in 1977 and has sired the earners of more than \$25 million.

Little Peppy will forever be linked to the legendary King Ranch and famous horseman Buster Welch. Bred by Joe Kirk Fulton of Lubbock, Texas, the sorrel blazed face stallion was purchased by the King Ranch in South Texas as a 3-year-old. He was trained, shown and used on the ranch by Welch.

Even though Little Peppy remains the patriarch of dominant lines in the cutting, reining and reined cow horse industries, some of the best ranch remudas in the country descend from the stallion.

"He was an outstanding ranch horse," recalls Welch. "He had a smooth trot and a smooth lope. He was always attentive, but never fractious. He really studied what you were doing."



Pedigree: sired by Mr San Peppy and out of Sugar Badger. Traces to legendary sires Leo and Grey Badger III.

Descendants: Peptoboonsmal, Paddys Irish Whiskey, Haidas Little Pep, Grays Starlight

Ranches that use this bloodline: King Ranch, Four Sixes Ranch, Douglas Lake Cattle Company, Waggoner Ranch, Lacey Livestock, Bar B Ranch, Pitchfork Ranch.

Jennifer Denison and Ross Hecox are Western Horseman senior editors. Send comments on this story, and your own nominees for today's top ranch-horse bloodlines, to edit@westernhorseman.com.