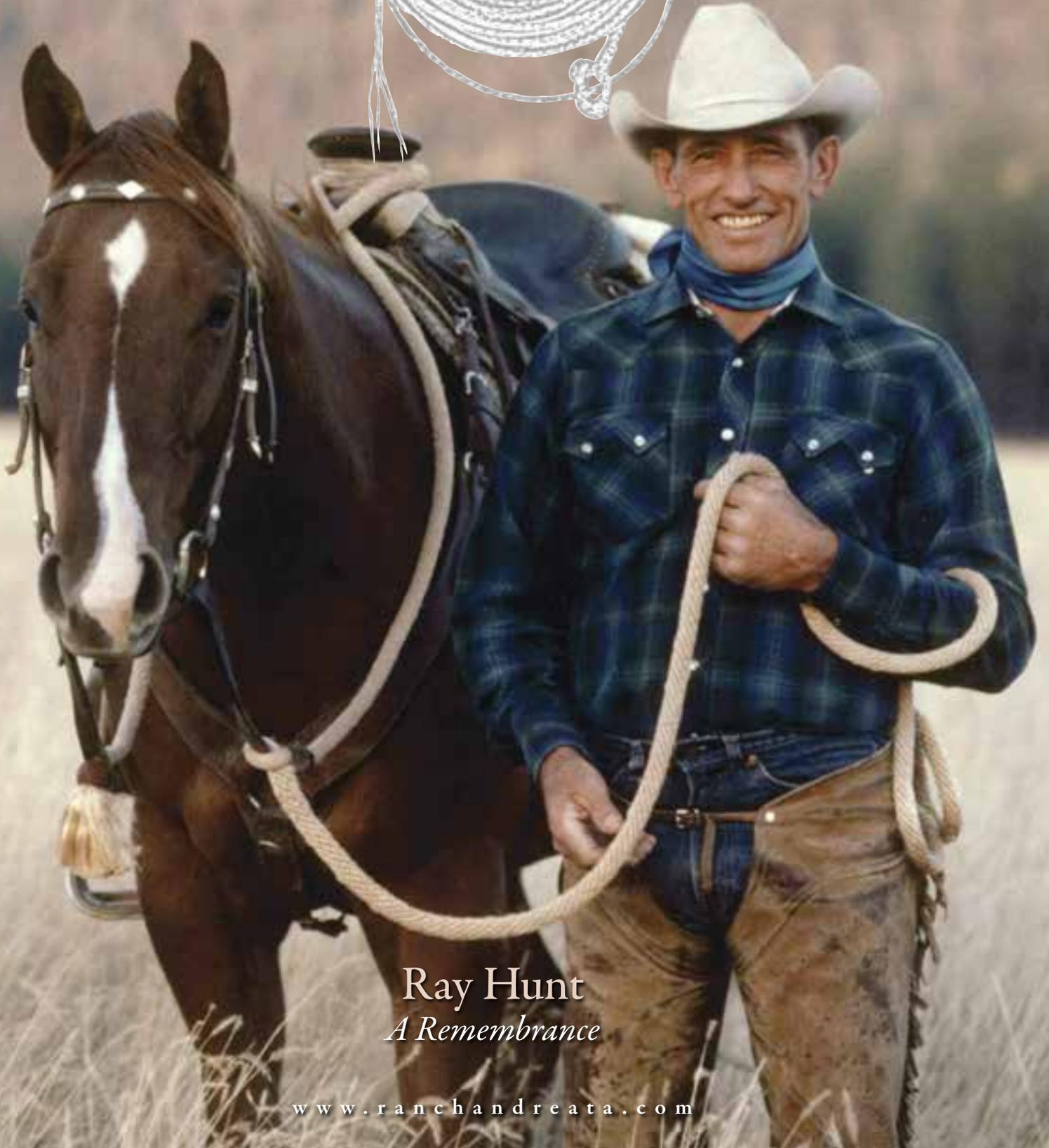


The Journal of the American West

# Ranch & Reata

Volume 4.4 \$14.95



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**FRONT GATE**



*Stewards of the Range, 30" x 40," oil on board. 1992*

J.N. Swanson (1927-2014)

“This is titled *The Walking Head*. I was up on the feed truck, taking in the herd. They looked like an approaching mob of zombie cattle.”

Photo by David Shapiro

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**Cover image:** “I am here for the horse, to help him get a better deal.” Ray Hunt (1929 - 2009) was raised on a farm in Mountain Home, Idaho and grew up with hard work and horses. “We put crops in the ground with horses, and we took them out with horses.” Photo courtesy of Carolyn Hunt [www.rayhunt.com](http://www.rayhunt.com)

# Ranch & Reata



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**PUBLISHER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR**  
Bill Reynolds

**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER**  
Buddy Purel

**EDITOR**  
A.J. Mangum

**CONTRIBUTING STYLE EDITOR**  
Ashley Riggs

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Robin Ireland

**PRODUCTION**  
Curtis Hill

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
Hannah Ballantyne, Buck Brannaman,  
Reata Brannaman, Paul Canada, Hal Cannon,  
Gretel Ehrlich, Elizabeth Claire Flood, Heather  
Hafleigh, Pete Healey, Ceily Rae Highberger,  
Thea Marx, Kathy McCraine, Rod Miller,  
Melissa Mylchreest, Tom Russell, Nevada Watt

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*Ranch & Reata*  
PO Box 714, Santa Ynez, CA 93460  
[www.ranchandreata.com](http://www.ranchandreata.com)

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at 949.234.1281 or [bpurel@gmail.com](mailto:bpurel@gmail.com)

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# The Pedigree

By A.J. Mangum

It's a winter day in 2001, and I'm sitting in the stands in the Watt Arena at Fort Worth's Will Rogers Memorial Center. I've covered a number of equestrian events here, but have never seen the venue as it is today. Every seat is filled, and latecomers stand in the aisles behind the last row. There's an odd vibe in the air, as the chatter one would expect from such a throng is at a respectful minimum.

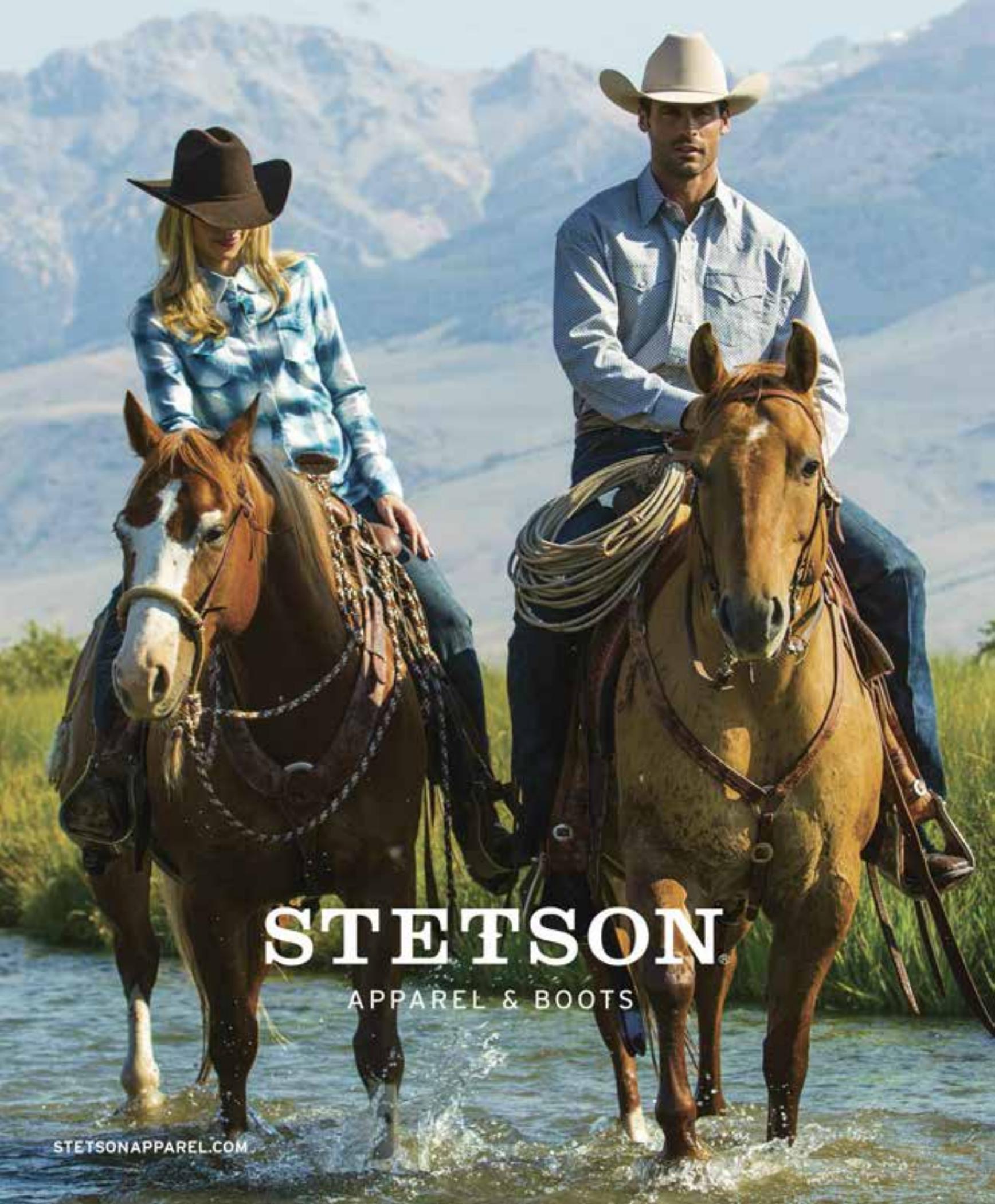
The arena is divided into two halves. At one end, North America's most recognizable horsemen – Brannaman, Neubert, McLaury, Cameron, Pate, Campbell, Wolter, Mahan, dozens more – sit quietly astride their mounts. On any other day, any of them could be the center of this crowd's attention. Despite the riders' celebrity status, and the novelty of seeing them gathered in one place at one time, the audience instead trains its collective attention on the other half of the arena, which belongs to just one rider – Ray Hunt.

Hunt pilots his horse in a slow, quiet arc along the edge of the pen, then reins the animal toward the center of his half of the arena. The already hushed crowd adopts

a reverent silence and the building becomes quiet enough for us to hear Hunt's breathing, courtesy of the wireless mic in place beneath the brim of his trademark silverbelly.

His voice laden with emotion, Hunt spells out the purpose of this weekend's event, a benefit for the ailing Tom Dorrance, Hunt's mentor and, with his brother, Bill Dorrance, the co-patriarch of a horsemanship movement that has taken hold of the equestrian world for at least a generation.

Dorrance has devoted much of his lifetime to revolutionizing contemporary horsemanship, to teaching riders to work with respect for their horses' instincts for self-preservation. Hunt built upon Dorrance's lessons, added his own interpretations and, three decades ago, began taking that insight on the road, in the process inventing the profession of traveling horsemanship clinician. As Hunt's profile rose, so did Dorrance's; their shared influence became a national, even international, phenomenon, and a movement became an industry, with scores of Dorrance- and Hunt-influenced educators – the best of whom are in the arena



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photo courtesy Patrick King

Pennsylvania-based horsemanship clinician Patrick King.

today – teaching clinics all over the world.

Hunt concludes his remarks, the crowd bursts into a round of enthusiastic applause, and the event gets underway, playing out not unlike other Hunt clinics, with students (in this case, a class composed of the aforementioned horse-world celebs) circling the arena perimeter aboard green-broke colts supplied by Hunt, as well as the Four Sixes, Pitchfork and Moorhouse ranches.

Participants have likely been warned to check their egos at the in-gate. One of the great lessons spectators will take away today is the knowledge that even their horsemanship heroes are imperfect. There are riders in this group who appear on the covers of current magazines; others have television shows, best-selling books, global brands built upon their credibility. Regardless, Hunt – famous for his direct brand of criticism and an unapologetic indifference to students' hurt feelings – mercilessly calls out anyone guilty of a misstep or an unforgivable shortcut at a horse's expense. His comments boom over the arena's PA system, seemingly lingering long after he's moved on to new targets.

This benefit is meant to illustrate Dorrance's far-reaching impact. As Hunt directs an arena filled with men and women who've devoted their careers to

teaching riders in the Dorrance tradition, I can't imagine a clearer demonstration of the strength of this lineage. Then I remind myself that Hunt is in his seventies, and that Dorrance is nearly 20 years older, and that lineage begins to feel fragile, precious.

Skip ahead to present day. Tom Dorrance passed away two years after the Fort Worth benefit event. Ray Hunt lost a long battle with COPD in 2009. The population of horsemen who learned directly from Dorrance or Hunt, who can honestly claim a direct connection to either, can now only shrink.

As with horses, clinicians have pedigrees. Dorrance influenced Hunt, who influenced Brannaman, who's influenced the likes of Greg Eliel, Kip Fladland and Ricky Quinn. (In many cases, lines cross, with individuals lucky enough to have spent time in the tutelage of multiple "ancestors," but you get the idea.) As each new generation of horsemanship educators emerges, Dorrance and Hunt shift back on the pedigree, purely as a function of time passing.

This issue includes a profile of Patrick King, a young clinician from Pennsylvania. As one of several horsemen selected to spend the winter of 2007 apprenticing with Hunt, King is among the last to have learned directly from the iconic horseman. The two degrees of separation between King and Dorrance is a reassuring piece of genealogical mathematics but, for King himself, must represent a burden arguably greater than that carried by anyone further back on the "clinician pedigree." King must not only bring forward his own interpretation of Hunt's – and, by extension, Dorrance's – philosophies, but must also share with his generational peers the weighty responsibility of keeping alive the specifics of his mentor's approaches. Without such efforts, legacies tend to fade, and the horse world is far from ready to see the likes of Hunt and Dorrance become abstract figures of history.





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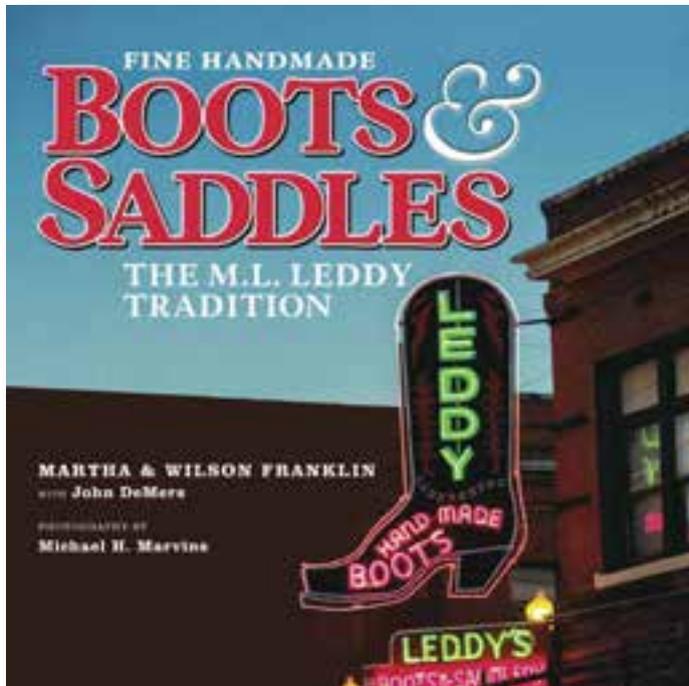


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## Interesting Things and Stories from Out West

### M.L. LEDDY'S TO RELEASE HISTORIC BOOK, SPRING 2015

M.L. Leddy's, the venerable western emporium in the heart of the Ft. Worth stockyards, will be releasing a book in Spring of next year in conjunction with Bright Sky Press ([www.brightskypress.com](http://www.brightskypress.com)) of Houston, Texas. For almost a



century, the finest handmade boots, saddles, and leather goods that can be found have been made by one Texas family. And for just as long, people who pass through M. L. Leddy's doors have been considered part of an extended family with a shared tradition of service and excellence. Now the stories of the products and the people that have kept Texas – and the world – moving in great Western style are collected and paired with historic images from the family's archive and original art photography. Written by Martha and Wilson Franklin, the third generation of Leddys to mind the store, with author and Texas culture critic John DeMers, and richly illustrated with Mike Marvin's museum-quality photography, this history captures the spirit of M. L. Leddy and the essence of Texas: the strength, the style, and the sense of family that keeps it all real.

As for the products they craft, The expert level of detail and skill given to every custom handmade boot, saddle and leather item has and continues to set M.L. Leddy's apart. Leddy's unrivaled level of quality and service is bestowed upon each and every customer. Neighbors, kings and presidents are all treated to the same type of Texas hospitality. A visit to M.L. Leddy's is like a trip back in time, where old-fashioned values are refreshingly new again. Each day, Leddy's invites the next generation of customers to add their own story to the pages of its rich history.

So next time your travels take you to Ft. Worth, stop by and say hello or visit online at [www.leddys.com](http://www.leddys.com)

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## THE SILVER AND GOLDSMITHING OF JAMES STEGMAN

Silver and goldsmith James Stegman has crafted many a fine piece at his bench as he and his family have for multiple generations. Here is an example of his work, that combines a little cowboy with some street cred, that features his interpretation of tribal tattoo design. This buckle and many more unique pieces are available at Axel's in Vail, Colorado. [www.comstockheritage.com](http://www.comstockheritage.com) and [www.axelsltd.com](http://www.axelsltd.com)

## RAND'S FLAT HAT FANDANGO

For over 30 years Montana's favorite hat maker, Ritch Rand, has combined unique design as well as regional style that suits each of his customers. Here are some examples of new hats he is making this fall. [www.randhats.com](http://www.randhats.com)





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miles of private fishing along the enhanced Big Creek, the ranch also offers several other creeks, springs and ponds, abundant wildlife, and a lodge and other facilities reflecting western vernacular.

Lying on the west slope of the Continental Divide and the Park Range, the property winds its way through aspen and fir covered hillsides with majestic views of the ski area, surrounding valley and mountains, down to your own private valley situated along the creek bottom with its lush green meadows, thriving riparian corridor, forests and ranch headquarters. While offering unprecedented seclusion, Big

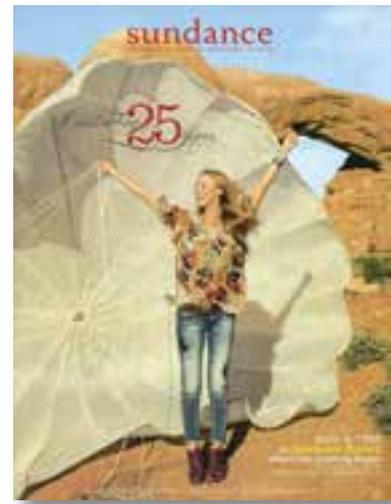
Creek Ranch is easily accessible and only minutes from the Steamboat airport, skiing, rafting, golf, and all of the fine recreational and cultural amenities of Steamboat Springs. Contact Ken Mirr at (877) 623-4545 or visit [www.MirrRanchGroup.com](http://www.MirrRanchGroup.com) for more information.

## CATALOG HEAVEN

This time of year sees our mailbox overflowing with catalogs. We're sure you have your favorites but here are a couple of ours:

### Sundance

Sundance always features attractive people doing attractive things and for over twenty-five years Robert Redford's lifestyle catalog has celebrated the sensitive and responsible western way of living. [www.sundancecatalog.com](http://www.sundancecatalog.com)





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### Filson

We are obsessed with Filson vests – oh, and their other stuff, but there is nothing like riding before dawn and shoving your non-gloved hand into the warmth of a Filson wool vest. They have all sorts of other cool – almost bulletproof apparel. The irony is how much of it is bought by folks who, while they seriously appreciate the quality of the goods – their big adventure is alternating hard drives. No biggy, we love everyone who loves Filson as their products will “stand the gaff” no matter what your choice of poison. [www.filson.com](http://www.filson.com)



### OLDCOWDOGS “SOFT GOODS”

Very Cool Neckties – yes – Ties.

Like the Sundance catalog, little teeny Old Cowdogs – known for very cool saddle silver – has been around for twenty-five years too. Years ago, they made a foray into apparel and “soft goods” and had a couple of insanely cool necktie designs that featured a little hat drawing by legendary cowboy artist, Will James. Some of the very best wore that tie including the late and immensely talented saddle maker, silversmith and all around gentleman, Sheridan, Wyoming’s own – Don Butler. Well, after a long absence, they are coming back. Keep your browser peeled at [www.oldcowdogs.com](http://www.oldcowdogs.com) for the time to buy.



### BELLES AND SIRENS FEDORAS

Here is a hot scoop regarding a line of limited edition fedoras and derbies from Belles and Sirens. It is so wonderful to see the entrepreneurial spirit spread to quality and cool headwear. Check this fetching fedora. [www.bellesandsirens.com](http://www.bellesandsirens.com)

### STRIP HAIR

Everyone that owns horses has to deal with winter shedding and the cleanup that it entails while grooming. Here is a new product that truly is quite revolutionary called “StripHair.”

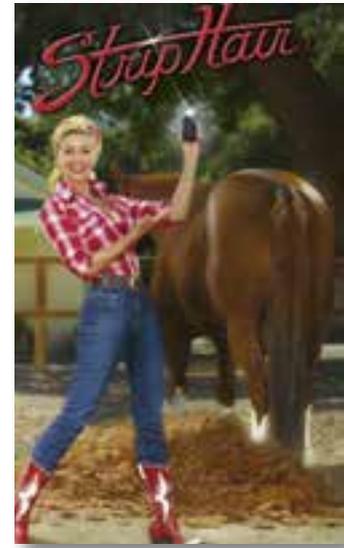
Say goodbye to dirty brushes, rusted currycombs and every other outdated item in your grooming box. StripHair



removes loose hair without damaging the coat or irritating sensitive skin while bringing dust and dander to the surface allowing for easy removal with StripHair's unique polishing cloth and beneficial coat and skin conditioning mist.

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- Removes matted hair from saddle pads, cinches and blankets



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## REATA'S HAT

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## DESTINATIONS

### Valley of the Moon: Glen Ellen, California

By Donna Stegman

To say that I'm a mere fan of the Napa Valley region would be the understatement of the year. My husband and I make this little slice of Heaven our home for several weeks every summer, and have done so for years. I had several emails



from readers asking me for my favorite picks in the Napa, but so much has been written on the area I was hesitant to do an article at all. Then I thought of all the reading material I have seen and brochures I have thumbed through, and I changed my mind. What amazes me is that the magnificent and unique natural beauty of the area is commonly overlooked, or given a single sentence at best in its sales pitch. Before this region was a mecca for wineries to set up tasting

rooms and gift shop stocked with self-promoting soft goods, it was a destination for outdoor enthusiasts to bask in some of Mother Nature's finest work. There is so much more to the Sonoma Valley than just wine.

Napa and its surrounding areas have long been home to famous writers, artists, wine makers, and now it competes with our biggest cities for the who's-who of culinary super stars and Michelin-rated eateries. All of this fabulousness is wrapped up in a picturesque valley of wall-to-wall vineyards in the perfect California climate. Italian and French architecture dot the rolling countryside, some rivaling anything you would see in Europe. As a matter of fact, a handful of castles and estates have been painstakingly transported from their native lands, stone by stone, to the area.

Sonoma County boasts towering redwood forests and miles upon miles of breathtaking rugged Pacific Ocean coastline and hundreds of miles of winding rivers and scenic roads, and yes, winery tasting rooms that range from rustic simplicity to grand estates, so large you could wander the halls and grounds for hours. We've stayed in almost every town up and down the wine trail, extending from the southern valley all the way to the rugged Northern California coast. After spending so much time in this neck of the woods, we almost feel like locals.

The cuisine of this area is, in my opinion, the best you'll ever find for fresh hyper-local fruits, vegetables and seafood paired with innovative chefs who utilize what they have available to them to perfection – it's all about farm to fork.

This year our trip took us to the lush, hillside hide-a-way of Glen Ellen. We love wine country, but in the summer, tourist crowds clog the roads and reservations must be made far in advance for a table at our favorite eateries. We decided this year to forgo the crazy of Napa and head deeper into the valley for an unrushed, laidback trip. Glen Ellen is not much more than a quaint village with perhaps two-dozen charming historical buildings with a bit of bohemianism and a touch of unpolished glamour. It has an easy-going personality that we found refreshing from the stuffier southern valley of Napa.



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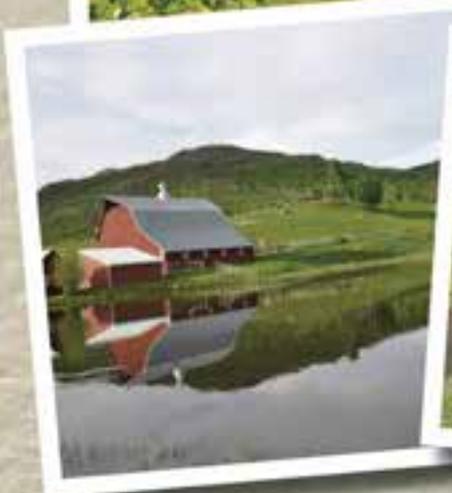
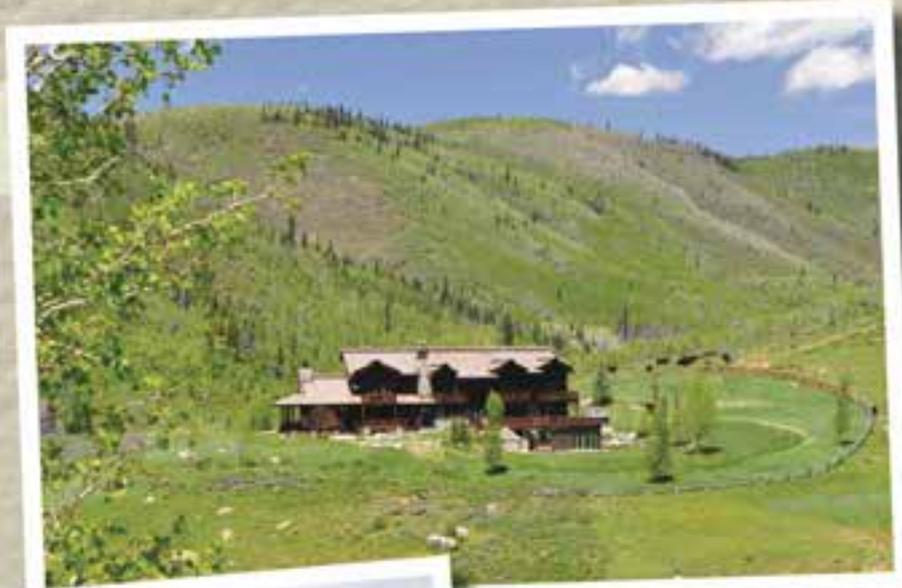


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Our base camp this time around was a 1930s home on Hill Street in town, that at one time was the entrance to Jack London State Park. Yannick, the owner of this whimsical bungalow, who lives just down the lane, met us upon arrival at the front gate to show us around the house and recommended restaurants and day trips, all in her charming French accent. I always say, ask a local if you want an honest opinion.

We rent a house when visiting this area. Sonoma Valley accommodations vary from pricey to the ludicrous, and the lesser-priced motels are nothing more than spruced up 1950s motor lodges. Traveling with family had me booking multiple rooms in these two-star “palaces” for our trips, until I discovered joys of renting a home in the area. Our borrowed abode this year featured a private swimming pool, walking distance to everything and a lovely kitchen of our very own. We were able to bring home leftovers and prepare cheese plates and Bloody Mary’s to enjoy in the afternoon next to the sparkling pool. All of this was less than the price of two sub-par hotel rooms. Truly, it’s the only way to go.



This is ground zero of wine country and one of my favorites. A great center-point for visiting all three Sonoma County regions, yet nothing is more than a scenic hour or so drive away, making day trips easy. Glen Ellen is centered between Sonoma and Kenwood and the once sleepy hamlet is awakening as a foodies’ delight of great restaurants manned by top-flight chefs. Could be that Glen Ellen is becoming a fine dining mecca similar to Yountville. Glen Ellen consists of no more than 15 or so buildings at the crossroads of Sonoma Creek and Jack London State Park. Residence work hard to maintain the area’s historical and quirky feeling of living in a small village and they succeeded. Everything you need for a week’s stay is within walking distance – fabulous eateries and our favorite place in town, Glen Ellen Village

Market. This is what all country stores should be – it has all the basics but it’s the prepared foods that are spectacular. Salad bar, olive bar, cheese bar, homemade sandwiches for picnics and a hot bar with different entrées ready to be taken home. Oh, and don’t forget the homemade desert section complete with local chocolate and salty caramel confections brought in fresh daily. We ate at least one meal here every day of our stay, it was that good.



On the days it was in the 90s, we stayed cool and comfortable poolside at our little house, swimming, reading and playing games. Simply relaxing with my family and being silly is the biggest bonus of vacationing for me, I think it’s when you run out of things you need to do that you really re-discover the simple joy of being with

the ones you love. The weather is made to order in the valley, cool foggy mornings burn off around 11 a.m. and turn into hot, pool ready afternoons. We would shop in the morning and be back for “pool time” after lunch.

Sonoma has long been the mecca for the San Francisco Bay area crowd to fill the hotels and restaurants for a long weekend getaway, so heed warning and avoid going on the weekends. Mid-week returns wine country to what is was before the hype – quiet rolling vineyards and sleepy little towns. See the valley as the locals see it – charming, friendly and full of all the beauty nature could bestow. But most of all, set your own pace so you take it all in, enjoy your family and the food and don’t forget to be silly. Contact Donna at [dstegman@aol.com](mailto:dstegman@aol.com)

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### WHERE TO EAT

**Breakfast:** Glen Ellen Village Market – Daily homemade French breakfast pastries and fresh ground and brewed coffee. Sit



outside with the newspaper and people watch...always a good time. No need for directions, it's the center hub of town.

**Lunch:** Take a picnic to Jack London State Park (See the story in *R&R* 4.3 for more.) Walk the paths worn down by Jack and Charmian; you'll quickly realize what made this famous man settle on this little slice of Heaven. He was more than a brilliant writer; he was a naturalist and a true visionary of things to come with natural and organic land renewal.



**Dinner:** Aventine – The newest illustrious restaurant helmed by the high-profile Chef Adolfo Veronese.



Aventine Glen Ellen opened its doors at the revered 170-year-old Gristmill in Jack London Village. They boast authentic Italian cuisine, with a Napa twist. The inside dinning is still very Old Mill charm but I

thought the outside dinning outshined it all – nothing beats the view of deck side tables hanging over Sonoma Creek with thousands of twinkle light hanging from every branch of 100 year old oaks. I don't use the word often or without care, but the ambiance of Aventine is pure romance. If you get

nothing else, have the Aventino antipasti. Who wouldn't love a giant meatball stuffed with fontina cheese nestled in a bed of soft polenta drizzled with homemade warm pesto? My husband is the pickiest man I know for food quality and service; he asked if we could eat here again for a third time before we went home, now that's a recommendation.

### PLAY TIME

There is so much more to Napa than just wine. This is beautiful and amazing countryside, get off the bar stool and get outside and see what brought writers, artists and poets to this area in the first place.

**Triple Creek Horse Outfit:** Triple Creek Horse Outfit opened in 2003, and since, they have taken thousands of visitors, novice and experienced alike, on horseback through the most beautiful trails and scenery California has to offer. The guided rides start at Jack London Historic

Park, located in the heart of the Sonoma Valley wine country, with over 20 miles of diverse trails and over 1200 acres. Erin Ellis, the owner, says "Almost all of our horses are rescues with varying backgrounds and breeds – from

Arabians to Drafts – but all have one thing in common: they are well-trained, well-mannered, and



much loved." Though the area is lovely year-round – the fall and winter can be exquisite riding conditions. Mornings are the most popular riding time (guests riding before their wine tasting tours is recommended) and be sure to try the 2.5 Hour Lunch Ride! [www.triplecreekhorseoutfit.com](http://www.triplecreekhorseoutfit.com)



**Jack London State Historic Park:** Take a walk, the park offers miles of walking and hiking trails. The views from up top are fabulous, bring a camera. [www.jacklondonpark.com](http://www.jacklondonpark.com)

**WHERE TO PUT YOUR BOOTS UP**

We rent homes when we stay in Sonoma County because we usually stay for a few weeks at a time. Visit [www.VRBO.com](http://www.VRBO.com) or [www.flipkey.com](http://www.flipkey.com) to do the homework and book at least 2 months before you want to go to have the best selection. Napa books up fast!

**GO BIG OR GO HOME**

**The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa:** If you are celebrating something big or if price just doesn't matter, then this is the place to stay. The Fairmont is so fabulous it even sits on its own ancient thermal mineral waters, the only luxury resort in the country to do so. The grounds are magnificent, the rooms are luxurious and the spa is rated in the top ten in the US. Prices don't vary much from season to season; they don't really have a down time. And as they say, if you have to ask how much, then you most likely can't afford it. [www.Fairmont.com/sonoma](http://www.Fairmont.com/sonoma)

**DELIGHTFUL DAY TRIPS**

**St. Helena:** Just over the hill from Glen Ellen, about a 45-minute drive, you'll find the lovely town of St. Helena. Its main street – so charming you'll never want to leave – is crammed with eclectic shops selling everything from artisanal hand-blown glass wine goblets to alpaca throws for your couch. A must stop for me every year is Dean & DeLuca, the spare metal freestanding cases packed with upscale jars of jams and stoneware crocks filled with very



expensive olive oils fills me with joy every time I walk through its doors. My husband just lingers with his nose pressed against the glass at the 14-foot deli case jam-packed with over 53 varieties of salami and 60 cheeses

from around the world. There are few places in this world where you can buy a cake that looks just like the little blue box from Tiffany's, a decadent chocolate babka and so many different styles of salami. I'm a foodie, but this is a gourmet goodie palace that everyone should visit at least once.

**YOU GOTTA SEE THIS**

**Castello di Amorosa:** Just a quick jaunt up the road from St. Helena is Castello di Amorosa. It's a winery and a castle – not a Disneyland castle but a real carved-out-of-the-hills-of-Italy Castle. The creator of this European medieval marvel in the heart of California wine country is Dario Sattui. Dario studied architecture for over 30 years before he took on this heartfelt project. His castle of love took him over 14 years to build, stone by stone. It's over 121,000 square feet of pure brilliance; details are authentic down to the moat and dungeon. It has secret passageways, a church of its own and antiques dating back a thousand years. They create several fabulous wines on this massive property that are not sold in stores or restaurants – just another excuse to see it in person as pictures and words will never do it justice.

## CARHARTT WINERY & VINEYARD “WORK HARD, DRINK STRONG.”

One of the great American success stories, Carhartt Clothing started with an entrepreneurial vision and determination. Founder Hamilton Carhartt realized his products had to be different. After talking with many railroad

engineers, he created an overall garment specifically designed for the railroad worker that had never been made before. Hamilton Carhartt established his namesake company in 1889, and began making work-wear with a single goal in mind: Set a standard of excellence to which all others would aspire. It worked. Carhartt has been around for more than 125 years and is the go-to brand for many a working cowboy (and general working-man) who honors the company’s motto, “Work Strong.” Carhartt remains a family-owned business, and that same approach to quality and hard work is being practiced in the heart of the Santa Barbara county wine country by another

branch of the Carhartt family at Carhartt Vineyard and Winery. Sporting the “world’s smallest tasting room,” Chase, Brooke, and Mike Carhartt oversee everything from ‘ground to glass.’ According Chase Carhartt, “We veer away from commercialized wine making in favor of ‘small town, family run, and hand-made wine. Packaged on premise and always poured by family.” The young Carhartt obviously takes great pride in his family’s heritage, saying, “I am trying to do my part to be American-made within a true, hardworking American-made family.”

With only 5,000 cases produced a year, the family takes pride in every bottle. Some of the crowd favorites (along with ours) are their Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Visit [www.carharttvineyard.com](http://www.carharttvineyard.com) for more information on their philosophy, their wine, and how to buy it.



## THE ART OF CARRIE BALLANTYNE By Guy de Galard

For the past thirty years, western artist Carrie Ballantyne has been on a journey portraying the ranching lifestyle with depth and texture through her subjects’ souls – her family, friends, neighbors and ranch people she has met along the way.



*Country Day Dreams*

and character. Next, I determine how I want to portray them.” This way of thinking reflects Carrie’s “keep it simple” approach to art – uncomplicated,

honest and straightforward. “What’s more important than a person’s soul?” asks the artist, best known for her realistic and powerful portraits of ranch people. That’s why 75% of her portraits directly engage the viewer. “The eyes are the doorway to our soul,” states Ballantyne. “My artwork is all about relationships. I predominately know my models fairly well and I rarely paint strangers. Most of them are family, friends or neighbors. It’s the person first, who they are and what they represent. God has given me a passion for the individual person. If I am going to work for weeks on end painting a portrait, it’s important to me that I respect the person I am portraying. I especially look for integrity, honesty



*Soft Hands Come Hard*

and character. Next, I determine how I want to portray them.” This way of thinking reflects Carrie’s “keep it simple” approach to art – uncomplicated, honest and straightforward. Carrie has lived the life she portrays. Being a cowboy’s wife, she was no stranger to isolation and once-a-month trips to the grocery store. Home schooling her two kids, taking on her responsibilities as a wife and mother, and finding time for her art was a constant balancing act. But despite the hardships and the demanding aspects of ranch life, Carrie would not have traded her life for anything else. “When one is involved in a lifestyle of choice, it’s much easier to deal with the difficult aspects. It was a good life,” she says. Also, living intimately within the ranching culture provided the artist with a constant inspiration, an endless supply and a deep understanding of her favorite subject matter. Each of her art pieces exudes authenticity and the flavor of remote ranch life. “People are more savvy today and are looking for honesty and authenticity. That’s why western art is such a draw. But in order to be believable, you need to have a true understanding of your subject matter and when you immerse yourself and become part of the culture, it shows in the work.” Carrie’s work is now being represented by The Legacy Gallery with locations in Scottsdale, Jackson Hole and Bozeman. To see Carrie’s work, visit [www.legacygallery.com/portfolio/carrie-ballantyne](http://www.legacygallery.com/portfolio/carrie-ballantyne).



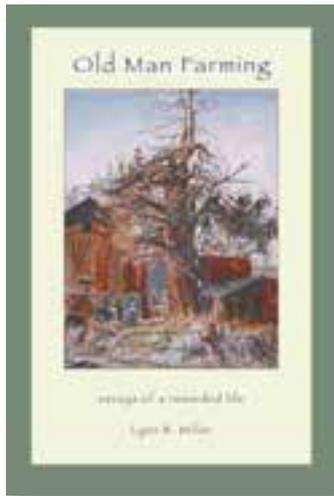
*Young Montana Buckaroo*

and character. Next, I determine how I want to portray them.” This way of thinking reflects Carrie’s “keep it simple” approach to art – uncomplicated, honest and straightforward. Carrie has lived the life she portrays. Being a cowboy’s wife, she was no stranger to isolation and once-a-month trips to the grocery store. Home schooling her two kids, taking on her responsibilities as a wife and mother, and finding time for her art was a constant balancing act. But despite the hardships and the demanding aspects of ranch life, Carrie would not have traded her life for anything else. “When one is involved in a lifestyle of choice, it’s much easier to deal with the difficult aspects. It was a good life,” she says. Also, living intimately within the ranching culture provided the artist with a constant inspiration, an endless supply and a deep understanding of her favorite subject matter. Each of her art pieces exudes authenticity and the flavor of remote ranch life. “People are more savvy today and are looking for honesty and authenticity. That’s why western art is such a draw. But in order to be believable, you need to have a true understanding of your subject matter and when you immerse yourself and become part of the culture, it shows in the work.” Carrie’s work is now being represented by The Legacy Gallery with locations in Scottsdale, Jackson Hole and Bozeman. To see Carrie’s work, visit [www.legacygallery.com/portfolio/carrie-ballantyne](http://www.legacygallery.com/portfolio/carrie-ballantyne).



*Nate Wald*

## BOOKS, BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS



### *Old Man Farming*

Lynn Miller

[www.smallfarmersjournal.com](http://www.smallfarmersjournal.com)

Our friend Lynn Miller is a true renaissance man – farmer, artist, teamster, publisher, musician and long-range thinker. He has written many books on the subject of small family farming and has just released a review of sorts – a group of essays on what he describes as a “rewarded life.” As he describes in the book, just a tidbit of the process he experiences everyday, “We understand the simpler meanings of ‘fertility’ and ‘economics.’

As a farmer, we appreciate

the gift of nature which would allow us to set a seed in the soil, grow the plant it creates, and gather its multiplied bounty.”

Committing to growing food for others is a giving way of living. It is long thinking – the over arching type. This is a glorious read and helps us to remember what living with the seasons is truly like for those who feed a hungry nation.

[www.smallfarmersjournal.com](http://www.smallfarmersjournal.com)

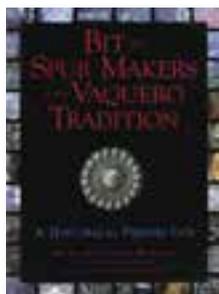


## Carpe Diem Fine Books

24

The next time you find yourself in the seaside village of Carmel, California, unleash the book lover in you and make your way to this wonderful bookshop that offers a discriminating selection of out-of-print, and out of the ordinary books in all fields – with a special emphasis on the history and literature of California and the West. More than a bookshop, they also feature art and collectibles of the Monterey area. Here is just a sampling of some of their books right now.

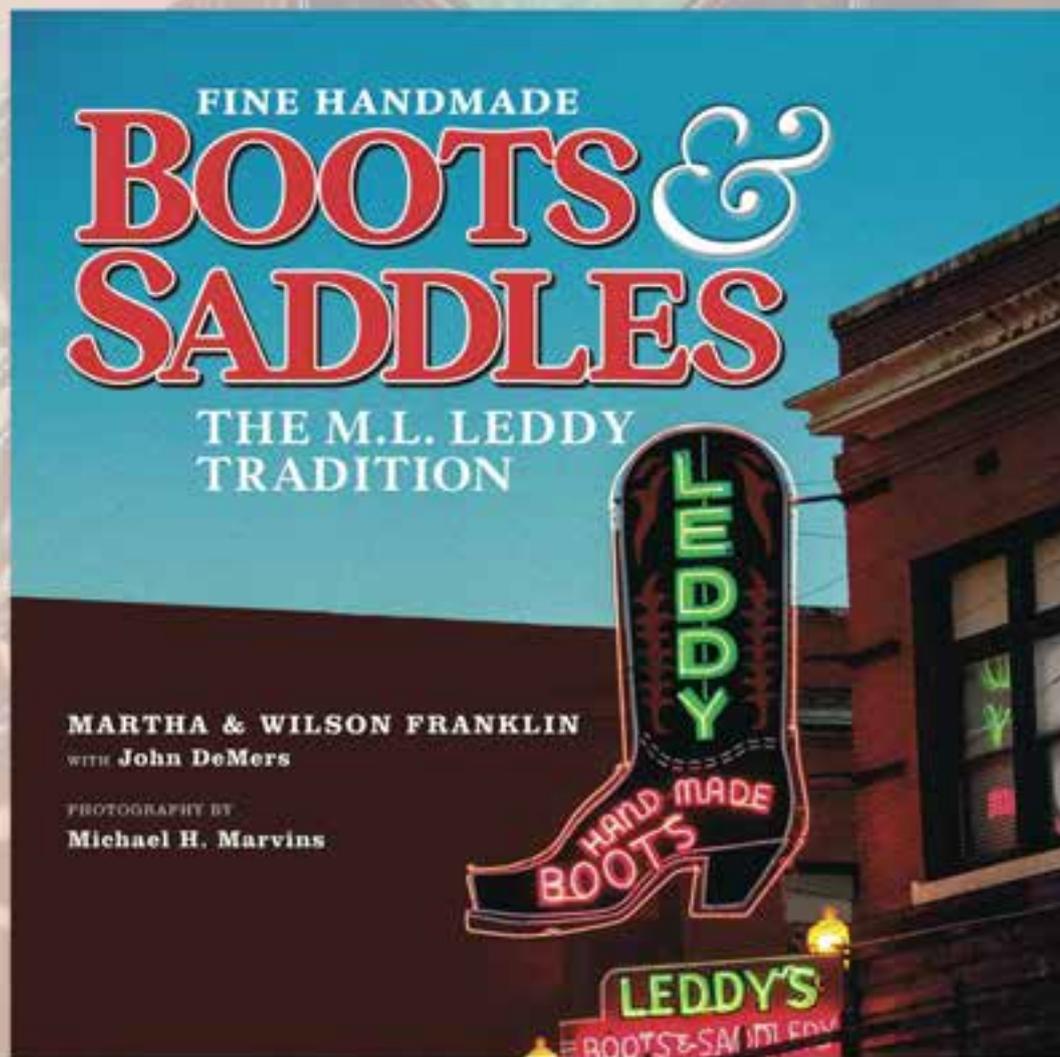
See more at [www.carpediemfinebooks.com](http://www.carpediemfinebooks.com)



### *Bit and Spur Makers in the Vaquero Tradition* – Signed by authors Ned and Jody Martin, 1997

A history of horsemen from Mexico to the Western United States and the various styles and uses of bits and spurs. Chronicles 85 craftsmen who created intricately engraved silver bits and spurs, with biographies. A valuable research tool for anyone interested in cowboy gear. \$350

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**M.L. Leddy's**  
A Handmade Texas Legend

**California Hackamore** – F. Luis Ortega, 1948

Authentic and instructive work on the use of the hackamore. \$450



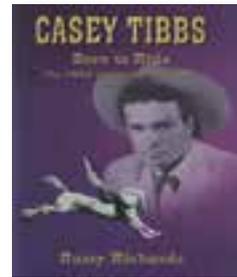
**California Stock Horse** – Signed by author F. Luis Ortega. 1949

Ortega's classic work on caring for, training and riding the stock horse. \$750



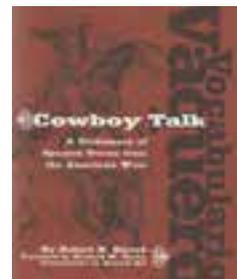
**Casey Tibbs: Born to Ride** – Rusty Richards, 2010

The only authorized biography of the memorable, charismatic rodeo superstar/cowboy from South Dakota. \$30



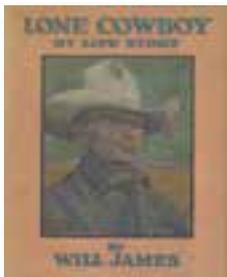
**The Chisholm Trail** – Sam P. Ridings, 1936

A history of the world's greatest cattle trail, together with a description of the persons, a narrative of the events, and the reminiscences associated with the same. J. Frank Dobie calls this a noble book, rich in anecdote and character. \$200



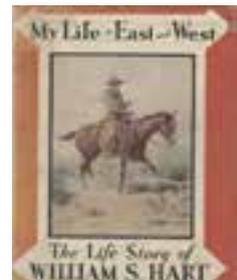
**Cowboy Talk** – Robert Smead, 2004

A dictionary of Spanish terms from the American West. \$60



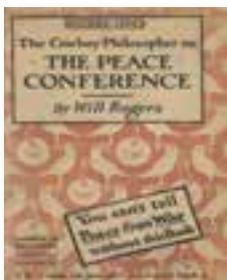
**Lone Cowboy: My Life Story** – Signed by author Will James, 1930

One of the best and most desirable of James' works; gives the most complete and varied idea of how a cowboy lives. \$1200



**My Life East and West** – Signed by author William S. Hart, 1929

The memoirs of the actor and director best known for his popular Western films of the 20s with his final work *Tumbleweeds* being his greatest commercial and critical success. \$325



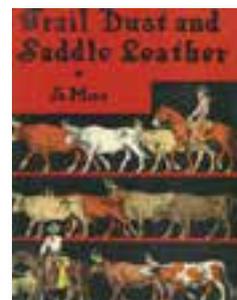
**Rogers-isms: The Cowboy Philosopher on the Peace Conference** –

Will Rogers scarce first book, 1919

“You can't tell Peace from War without this book.” \$350

**Trail Dust and Saddle Leather** – Jo Mora, 1994.

The evolution of the cowboy and the strong role he and the entire cattle industry played in the development of American society. Much on the cowboy's working tools, clothes, manners and customs and his constant companion, the western horse. \$150



2015  
COORS WESTERN ART EXHIBIT & SALE

January 10-25, 2015, Denver, Colorado



*High Noon by Teresa Elliott*

## RED CARPET RECEPTION

Tuesday, January 6, 2015  
5:30 pm - 10:00 pm

National Western Complex Expo Hall, Third Floor  
4655 Humboldt Street, Denver, Colorado

*For more information, tickets, and to preview art, please visit our website [www.coorswesternart.com](http://www.coorswesternart.com).*

### COORS WESTERN ART EXHIBIT & SALE ARTISTS:

Tony Angell  
Duke Beardsley  
Gordon Brown  
Sophy Brown  
George Bumann  
Kenneth Bunn  
G. Russell Case  
Dan Chen  
Len Chmiel  
Neil Clifford  
Don Coen  
Mark Daily  
Glenn Dean

John Demott  
Caroline Douglas  
Teresa Elliott  
Sharron Evans  
Scott Fraser  
Terry Gardner  
Ulrich Gleiter  
Brent Greenwood  
David Griffin  
David Grossmann  
Jenny Gummersall  
William Haskell  
Rocky Hawkins

Quang Ho  
Tony Hochstetler  
T.D. Kelsey  
Steve Kestrel  
Amy Laugesen  
Richard Loffler  
Kim Lordier  
Leon Loughridge  
Michael Lynch  
Jerry Markham  
Walter T. Matia  
William Matthews  
Dean Mitchell

Jim Morgan  
Julia Mulligan  
Arlo Namingha  
Dan Namingha  
Joel Ostlund  
Howard Post  
Susan Raymond  
Karen Roehl  
Brad Rude  
Jo LeMay Rutledge  
Tim Shinabarger  
Preston Singletary  
Jill Soukup

Michael Stano  
Don Stinson  
Karmel Timmons  
Susan Tirrell  
Kent Ullberg  
Barbara VanCleve  
M.W. Skip Whitcomb  
Laura Wilson  
Seth Winegar  
Dinah K. Worman  
Melanie Yazzie  
Dan Young

### GALLERY AT THE NATIONAL WESTERN CLUB ARTISTS:

Allen Birnbach  
Maevé Eichelberger  
Stephanie Hartshorn  
Peggy Judy  
Karen Kelly  
Paula Schuette Kraemer  
Eric Merrell  
Kyle Paliozzo

Cali Roberson  
J.R. Sanders  
Elsa Sroka  
John Taft  
Andy Taylor  
Bryan Mark Taylor  
Carol Till

NATIONAL  
WESTERN  
*Rocky Mountain*

## WESTERN STYLE WITH ASHLEY RIGGS

Decorating ourselves with fringe has been around for centuries, tracing as far back as 3,000 B.C. Mesopotamia. For the fashion world, the 20s Flapper, 70s Hippy, and the American Cowboy are all inspirations for fringe. There are so many variations on the market currently. Being from buckaroo country, I love seeing it!

From beautiful beads, to swiny suede, long and short... It adorns shoes and boots, bags and jackets, to name a few items. Designers such as Valentino, St. Laurent, Gucci, Michael Kors, and Ralph Lauren – all highlight a little or a lot of it in their current collections. It is lively, accentuates movement and something about it makes the wearer feel carefree.

For Cowboys, it roots in both Spanish-Moroccan and Native American as its original source of influence. It has been a traditional embellishment for over



Black Lively in Michael Kors, *Vogue* August 2014



photo by Fryd Frydenlund

150 years, with a heyday during the 1940s and 50s. Like most items in a Cowboy or Cowgirl's wardrobe, it is also functional and identifiable to region. I always get a laugh at a folks here in NYC calling chaps "chaps" pronounced like a British chum.

For ranch kids, their first pair of fringed chaps is a right of passage into adulthood, or at least it was for me. It meant you had stopped growing and were capable enough to have new gear and the responsibilities that come along with it. Mine were a pair of Armitas made of buckskin-colored leather with chocolate fringe. Around the same time I was able to ride my first proper bridle horse. Well, one that wasn't 30 years old and he could GO! Make 1s, spin on a dime, just like Ernie Morris put it on the *Jaquima to Freno* poster hanging on my parent's wall. Now I knew how fun fringe was! Watching it twirl along with us has made me a huge fan ever since. Fond memories flood back every time I don it now...

Follow Ashley's Pinterest boards at [Ashley\\_c\\_riggs](#) and on Tumblr at [nynv-ashleyriggs.tumblr.com](#)

*Some favorites...*



Valentino Clutch,  
Spring-Summer Collection 2014



Pecos Bag from [shopwildblue.com](http://shopwildblue.com)



Vintage Moroccan Bag



RRL Womens denim fringe  
pant [ralphlauren.com](http://ralphlauren.com)



A fun take on the classic  
Chuck Taylor, from  
H.T.C. Los Angeles

## HOMES ON THE RANGE

If you are looking for a new spread or just a place to call home, our friends at Mason & Morse have some great new places to dream about. Learn more at [www.ranchland.com](http://www.ranchland.com)



### Tonahutu Creek Ranch

Grand Lake, Colorado

Located in Grand Lake, Colorado the Tonahutu Creek Ranch encompasses 52 +/- acres adjacent to Rocky Mountain National Park. The ranch includes over 1,000 feet on of both sides of the North Inlet and also has an additional 2,000 feet of both sides of Tonahutu Creek. The ranch consists of two fisheries that contain brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, hofer-harrison trout and the Colorado River cutthroat trout. Conveniently located within five minutes from the beautiful mountain town of Grand Lake, Colorado this ranch offers amazing mountain hiking and fishing.

### Hondo Ranch

Hondo, New Mexico

The Hondo Ranch is 325 +/- acres located approximately 20 miles from Ruidoso Downs Race Track. Situated along two and one-half miles of the Ruidoso River, the facilities include: 188-covered pens, 66-large pens with shelters, office and vet building, 13-stall maternity barn, a 25-stall barn, hay barn, equipment barn, bunk house, and a three-bedroom, one-bath home. Excellent senior water rights include 546 acre feet of water with 1866 priority rights with nine irrigated pastures that are fenced and cross-fenced.



### Muddy Creek Farm & Ranch

Riverton, Wyoming



The Muddy Creek Farm and Ranch is a large irrigated farm operation with a secondary livestock operation comprising 2,530 acres. The principal crops grown are alfalfa hay, corn silage, malting barley and corn for grain. The farm is in an excellent state of cultivation and the improvements are exceptional. The property is well fenced and is capable of handling livestock with facilities in place for handling, feeding and watering cattle. Additionally, the area is rich in wildlife and the property is home to whitetail and mule deer, and pheasants along with a plethora of other wildlife.

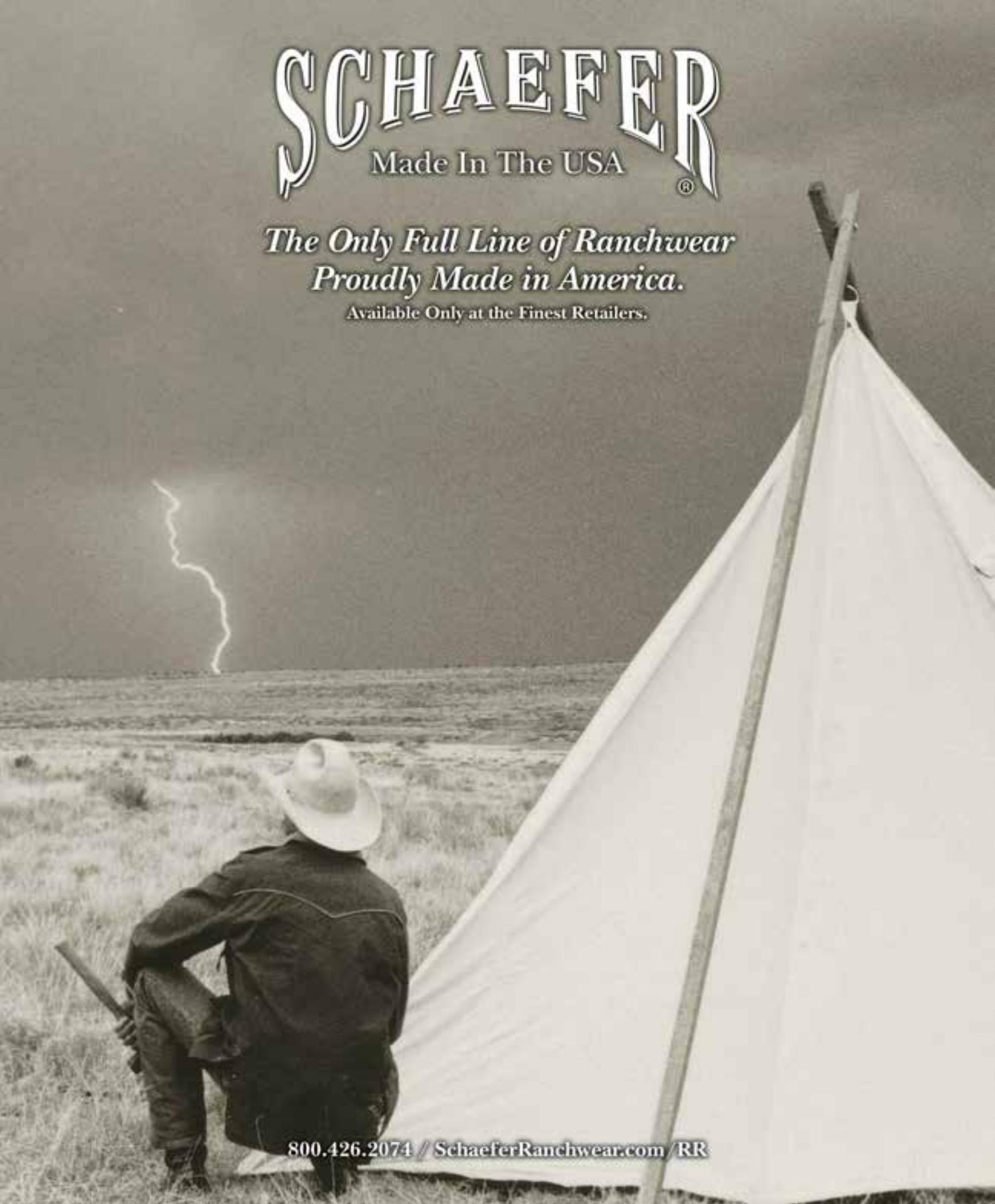


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## TOP FIFTY RANCHES GETAWAYS

If you are looking for a superb ranch vacation – your one-stop is Top 50 Ranches ([top50ranches.com](http://top50ranches.com)). Jody Dahl and her crew have put together an adventure of a website. 50 of the best places set to give you the ultimate western vacation. Each issue we will share some information on one of the ranches recommended by Top 50.



Jody

### The Lodge at Deep Canyon Choteau, Montana



photos by Chuck Blixrud

Here is another grand spot to escape to from Top 50 Ranches. Nestled deep in the heart of Teton Canyon in the Rocky Mountains, 5000 feet above sea level and totaling 1200 acres, the Seven Lazy P, Deep Canyon Guest Ranch offers guests a true taste of what it's like to roam a part of "The Last Best Place." As you wind your way through the prairie towards the

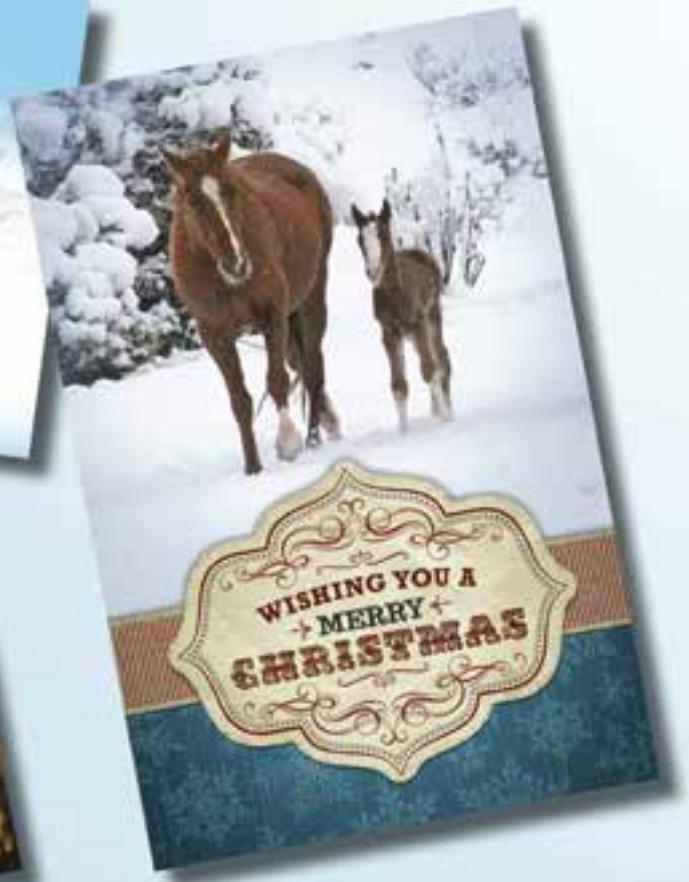


opening of the canyon, where wildflowers spring up in colorful

abundance in the summer months, you can feel the fresh air fill your lungs and breathe your first breaths of a vacation that will offer you utter relaxation and enjoyment in one of the most beautiful parts of the world. Sharon and Chuck Blixrud have owned and operated the ranch since 1958. With room for around 20 guests, you can expect a very family-oriented atmosphere where everyone is made to feel perfectly at home, while just 25 miles from the delightful town of Choteau, Montana.



Lodging comprises modern, high ceiling, roomy log cabins with en-suite bathrooms,



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the season and your love for the

# American Quarter Horse!

Choose from 3 card designs!

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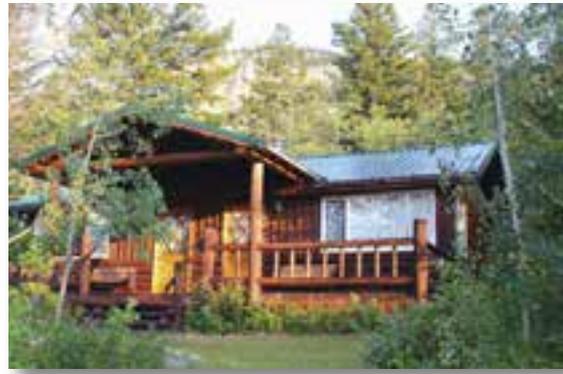
This purchase supports the American Quarter Horse Foundation.

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FOUNDATION

## OF NOTE |

queen and twin sized beds, and tastefully decorated in a western atmosphere. Each cabin has its own wooden deck where guests can sit anytime of day or night to soak in their magical surroundings or marvel at a star studded sky.

The Guest House on Pamburn Creek is a large 3600 square foot home with a wrap-around deck, three bedrooms, three baths, and a large living room. It boasts a picturesque staircase leading to the upstairs bedrooms and an amazing view of the surrounding mountains from the sitting room. This is a popular spot for families, or friends getting together to stay during your time at Deep Canyon.



The lodge at Deep Canyon is a blending of the old and the new. It's where folks gather to enjoy camaraderie around three stone fireplaces, soft chairs and sofas, and a dining room with a view and a beautiful stone water fountain adorning a large part of the room. They also offer an upstairs conference room with a deck available to our ranch guests. Here is where you see and feel the history of Deep Canyon Ranch through stories and photograph albums of times

The main activity is the daily horseback ride. Each one taking you to a wonderfully different area. There are both half-day and all day rides with a tasty lunch packed in your

saddlesbags to eat by a babbling brook or on top of a mountain. Each ride is guided by an expert crew who know the area like the back of their hands and relish sharing it with their guests.

The ranch is surrounded by many trails taking you to some wonderful locations such as Hidden Lake or the top of Mt Wright or Headquarters Pass. It is a great chance to spot some of the wildlife that inhabits this area and the unique vegetation. Visit old Indian camping grounds where the stone rings of teepees are still visible or the old "North Trail," or "Pondera Trail" which Indians traveled with their travois between Canada and points farther south, and later on the Metis as they migrated south out of Canada in their Red River carts to settle in the canyons and foothills here along the "Front."

Do you love wildlife? Montana, and specifically the Rocky Mountain Front, is famed for its diverse species of wildlife, which have roamed the prairies and the mountains for centuries before mankind came. Most famous for the Grizzly Bear, you can also spot black and brown bear, elk, mule and whitetail deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, moose, beaver along the river, and the occasional bobcat, mountain lion or wolf if you're lucky. The Lodge at Deep Canyon Ranch will refresh your soul. Learn more about it at [www.to50ranches.com](http://www.to50ranches.com)





## COORS WESTERN ART EXHIBIT & SALE 2015

Recognized as one of the finest contemporary realist shows in the country, the Coors Western Art Exhibit & Sale proudly supports families from the rural West through generous contributions to the National Western Scholarship Trust. In 2014, the Coors Show raised \$1.14 million



Painter Teresa Elliott is the 2015 featured artist of the 22nd Coors Western Art Exhibit & Sale. Her painting *High Noon* – shown here - will be the signature work for the Art Exhibit & Sale, and thereafter, will reside in the National Western’s permanent collection.

in ticket and art sales, with net proceeds going to the Trust, which provides financial support to more than 70 college students studying agribusiness, veterinary science and rural family medicine. In this way, the Coors Show is literally helping keep the West alive and thriving.

The 22nd Annual Coors Exhibit kicks off with the lunch and lecture, Tuesday, January 6, 2015, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Denver Art Museum with a panel discussion of “The State of Native American Art in the West.” The Red Carpet Reception is on Tuesday, January 6, 2015, starting 5:30 p.m., where more than 900 attendees have first dibs on buying the art for sale in the galleries.

The Coors Western Art Exhibit opens to the public as part of the National Western Stock Show on Saturday, January 10 and runs through Sunday, January 25, 2015 in Denver, Colorado.

The National Western Stock Show also has named Philip F. Anschutz the 2015 Citizen of the West, an award that recognizes a Western pioneer and one who perpetuate the West’s agricultural heritage and ideals. Anschutz, entrepreneur and philanthropist, will receive the award on January 12, 2015 at the National Western Events Center.

For more information on these events can be found [www.coorswesternart.com](http://www.coorswesternart.com) and [www.nationalwestern.com](http://www.nationalwestern.com)

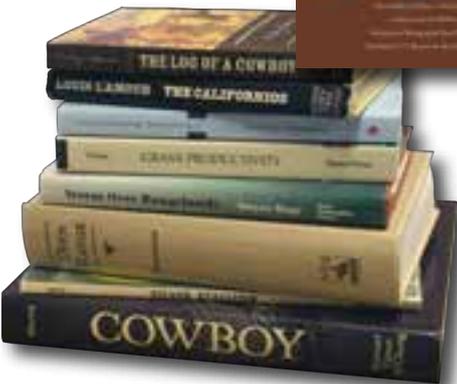
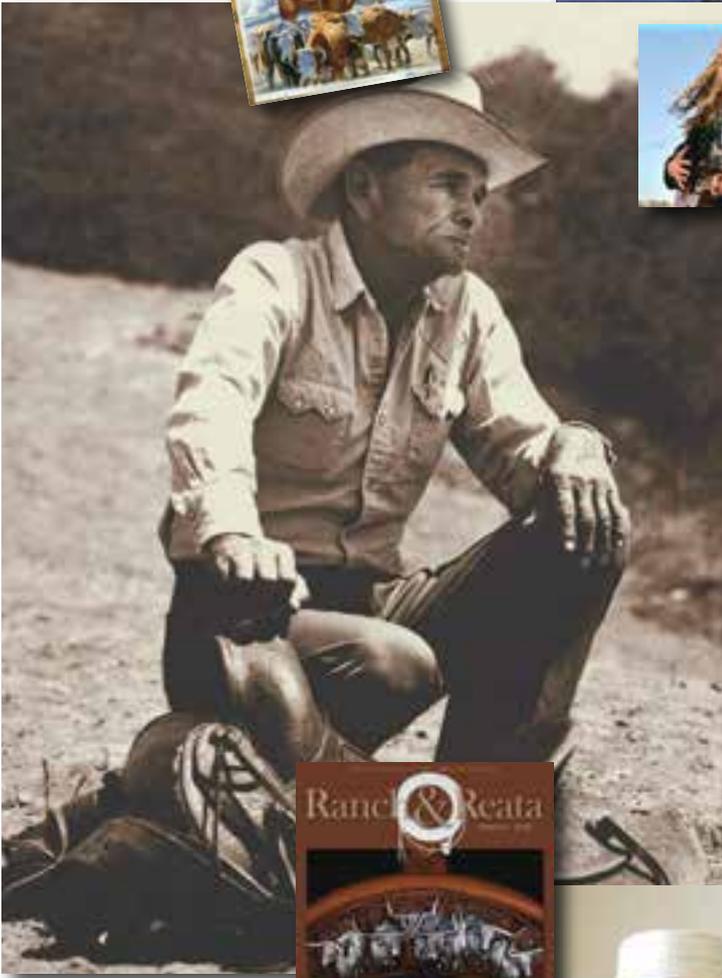
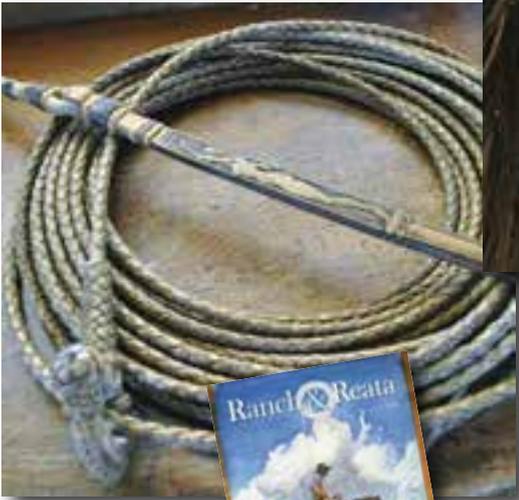
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# GIFT GUIDE



## GIFT GUIDE 2014

Here is our Christmas Wish List with some great gift ideas for the upcoming holiday season – something for every cowboy and cowgirl on your list, whether they’ve been naughty or nice!

– Thea Marx

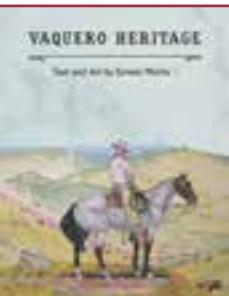


### CONTEMPORARY WESTERN DESIGN BY THEA MARX

Give the gift of daydreams, ideas and future plans with this beautiful coffee table book. Anyone who is drawn to the design world will enjoy this take on the genre in a tour through every room in the house and beyond. Find exquisite hand crafted accessories, one of a kind furniture pieces and inspirational rooms. Amazon.com or 307-272-8432 for your personalized copy.

### MCGINNIS MEADOWS

Ah Bliss! A week just the two of you – you and your horse that is, working on the little things or the big things. It is up to you at McGinnis Meadows. Don’t have a horse? It’s your chance to develop a new equine crush, use one of theirs. Cozy, first-class lodging, fabulous food, gorgeous scenery and, of course, horses. Book your little piece of heaven called Winter Horsemanship Week. Find more information at [www.mmgranch.net](http://www.mmgranch.net), find us under McGinnis Meadows Cattle & Guest Ranch on FB, or email us at [info@mmgranch.net](mailto:info@mmgranch.net).



### ERNIE MORRIS BOOKS

Ernie Morris’ writings and artwork have bridged the gap between memories of the old vaquero ways and the aspirations of a whole new generation interested in getting their horses to operate in the California Vaquero tradition. And now, he has published, *Vaquero Heritage* – a book of his own thoughts about the people and horses that have influenced his artwork and his own life. See this and his other fine books and artwork at [www.elvaquero.com](http://www.elvaquero.com)

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Go to town, grab the kids off the school bus, feed the horses. The ladies wool Big Country Rancher is a perfect ranch overcoat. Warm as all get out with a hefty dose of solid style, and it is long enough to keep your backside warm with that cold wind blows. Made in the USA [www.schaefer-ranchwear.com](http://www.schaefer-ranchwear.com), 800-426-2074

#### Men's Summit Jacket

Refined, functional, classic. Schaefer's Summit Jacket is perfect for the stylish western man in your life. Now make the dinner reservations and show him off in his new coat. [www.schaefer-ranchwear.com](http://www.schaefer-ranchwear.com), 800-426-2074



### PENDLETON WOOLEN MILLS

For 90 years Pendleton has been making men's shirts. This year they are celebrating with a limited edition, hand-numbered labeled outdoorsman shirt in 100% virgin Umatilla wool. Only 1863 of these collectible shirts were made, the inventory commemorates the date that the Pendleton family founder, Thomas Kay, arrived in Oregon from England and started making some of the finest worsted wool west of the Mississippi. [www.pendleton-usa.com](http://www.pendleton-usa.com), 800-649-1512



40



### SEIDEL Holster

Have a 1911 fan on your Christmas list? Choose this Wyoming Wild Rose Design Hand tooled cross-draw holster by Keith Seidel. It keeps your side arm handy, but out of the way – while roping for instance. For any 1911 frame pistol. [www.seidelsaddlery.com](http://www.seidelsaddlery.com), 307-587-1200

### MEREDITH LOCKHART Pendant

Award winning fashion designer Meredith Lockhart tailors the jewelry she makes to accessorize the couture outfits seen on runways from coast to coast. Own a piece of Western history-in-the-making with this Emerald Valley turquoise "Broken Stone" pendant necklace. [www.meredithlockhart.com](http://www.meredithlockhart.com), 913-886-2247





## MTN MAN TOY SHOP

### Tomahawk

Got the urge to answer the call of the wild and hit the wilderness. Then go prepared. Hang one of these hand forged beauties on your belt and know if you don't need it to clear brush, you'll have fun throwing it with your buddies. [Mtnmengifts.com](http://Mtnmengifts.com), 877-258-0100



## FOXXMD EVOLUTIONARY SKIN CARE

What is the sexiest part of a woman? Her beautiful skin. She knows it and Foxy Lady's Fab Four collection is the perfect gift. It will remedy skin that has seen days in the saddle under the sun with natural skillfully blended bio-elements, evolving skin from drab to a healthy, hydrated glow. [www.drfoxxmd.com](http://www.drfoxxmd.com), 844-FoxyMD (844-369-9963)

## TWISTED X

### Ladies Boots

Lending a definitive sleekness to any look, this black caiman gator boot by Twisted X is as necessary to a girls closet as a great pair classic black heels. Available at fine western retailers. [www.twistedxboots.com](http://www.twistedxboots.com)



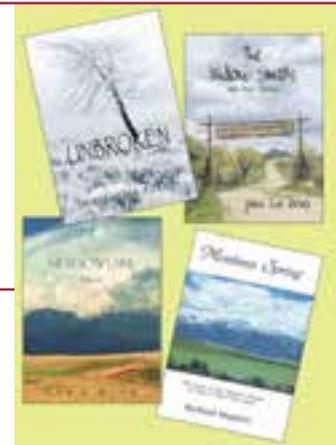
### Men's Boots

Don't be surprised if he pulls up his pant leg to show off the WOW of color on these boot tops. Most likely he'll be in a tux these boots are so fine, so don't choke on your wine, just go with the flow. Men's Black Caiman Gator with 13" glazed orange top. Available at fine western retailers. [www.twistedxboots.com](http://www.twistedxboots.com)



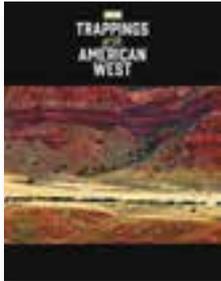
## PRONGHORN PRESS

A book is a gift you can open again and again! Give one or all of these three novels and a short story collection from award winning writers covering a broad range of experiences of life in the West. Available from your favorite booksellers as Trade Paperbacks or eBooks. [PronghornPress.org](http://PronghornPress.org).



### CUSTOM COWBOY

A perfect stocking stuffer for the one who has everything! This cheeky little knife is so unique you'll have everyone on your list asking for one. Available with hand-engraved sterling silver handles or resin with engraved brass caps. [www.customcowboyshop.com](http://www.customcowboyshop.com), 800-487-2692



### DRY CREEK ARTS FELLOWSHIP

Finding yourself drawn to Northern Arizona? It is because Flagstaff is home to the Trappings of the American West show where you will have the chance to immerse yourself in demonstrations, music, poetry and extraordinary western art and craft. September 28-December 7, 2014. Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, AZ. [www.musnaz.org](http://www.musnaz.org), 928-774-8861

### MONTANA SILVERSMITHS

A bolo with his brand? Really? What a great gift! Montana Silversmiths has created the perfect one for the gentleman in your life. Give him a one-of-a-kind, American-made personalized bolo with a hand-cut brand. Call 855-358-5002, visit your local western retailer or go to [www.montanasilversmiths.com](http://www.montanasilversmiths.com).



### WRANGLER

#### Rock 47 Jeans for Him and Her

Rock 'N Roll in the new Rock 47 jeans by Wrangler for him and her. A pair in your wardrobe means a notch on your style chart. [www.wrangler.com](http://www.wrangler.com)

### GRAND CHAMPION TRUNKS

Grand Champion Designs focuses on quality craftsmanship and caters to an equestrian crowd providing elegant storage options for both the stable and the home. See all their designs or come up with one of your own – you don't need to own a horse to own a great trunk! [www.grandchampiondesigns.com](http://www.grandchampiondesigns.com)



### JM CAPRIOLA

#### Garcia Bit

Forty six years ago, JM Capriola's brought one of Elko's original companies back to the fold: the Garcia Bit and Spur Company. This bit is made by craftsmen trained in the Garcia tradition. With a mouth piece made of "sweet iron," JM Capriola's offers the only bits in the world to carry the Garcia name. [www.capriolas.com](http://www.capriolas.com), 775-738-5816



### PENDLETON WOOLEN MILLS

#### Oversized Jacquard Towels

These luxuriously soft, oversized towels channel those beautiful Pendleton blankets that have kept you and yours warm for generations. A fantastic gift for anyone who has a penchant for the West or just loves fine, colorful things. 800-649-1512, [www.pendleton-usa.com](http://www.pendleton-usa.com)

### RESISTOL RANCH

Resist the urge to go to back in black. Opt instead for the Kansas City in chocolate brown from Resistol Ranch. [www.resistol.com](http://www.resistol.com)



### ML LEDDY'S HAND TOOLED LEATHER COLLECTION.

Nothing says the American West like hand-tooled leather. Choose from M.L. Leddy's Collection for the aficionado of fine leather goods in your life, then take a bow. They will love it! [www.leddys.com](http://www.leddys.com) 817-624-3149

### WILD RAGS BY LOIS

Black and White and all the rage Wild Rags. Suave, stylish, conversation startin' you will be when you don one of these charmers. [www.wildragsbylois.com](http://www.wildragsbylois.com) 406-252-6767 or 406-698-1640



### RED BRAND STORE

#### The Plammer

Are you a fence fixing fool? Then you need the Plammer! It is a Claw Hammer/Fence Plier-in-one. It drives stakes and nails, stretches wire, pulls staples, cuts wire and more. Crafted in the USA of heavy-duty steel with zinc coating – in other words it will last forever! [RedBrandStore.com](http://RedBrandStore.com)

### ARIAT

Fringe is all the rage this season so why not put it under the tree for your favorite fashionista? She'll love the flirtatious styling and the fabulous comfort of ATS technology in Ariat's Gold Rush boot. Expect a big hug from her when she opens this one! [www.ariat.com](http://www.ariat.com), 877-702-7428



### BRIGHTON FEED

What western guy or gal wouldn't want a fine, sturdy handmade knife to use. They are so handy for those little tasks and tough enough for the big ones. These dandys come with custom shaped leather sheaths. 800-237-0721, [www.brightonsaddlery.com](http://www.brightonsaddlery.com)



### ELI BARSİ

Love great western music? Eli Barsi's new album, *Portrait of a Cowgirl*, will make your toe tap and yearn for the dance floor! She is a masterful storyteller and musician all in one. Get several, they are perfect stocking stuffers! [www.elibarsi.com](http://www.elibarsi.com)

### ONE GRAND DUFFLE

Ryan Barr makes some incredible leather items. From guitar cases to messenger bags – everyone you want to hold! Here is his interpretation of his father's military duffel. "When my Dad came home from Vietnam, he held on to his old canvas military duffel bag. We used it for years and even as a kid I had a fascination with the top-load style. We've recreated this bag, but sized it down to make it more appropriate for a few days away, rather than a military deployment." Vegetable tanned leather and the perfect size. [www.whippingpost.com](http://www.whippingpost.com)



### HAYDEN RANCHES SADDLE BLANKETS

Linda Hayden creates wool saddle blankets that are of the earth. She spins her own wool, hand dyes it with colors derived from natural elements such as walnut hulls and lichen. She then weaves her one-of-a-kind saddle blankets on large floor looms. What are you waiting for? [www.lindahaydensaddleblankets.com](http://www.lindahaydensaddleblankets.com)



### AQHA

#### Sending Christmas

When you care to send the best, send stunning images of beautiful American Quarter Horses for your holiday greeting. The AQHA makes it easy. Choose from 3 designs in boxes of 25 each. Purchase yours today at [www.quarterhorseoutfitters.com](http://www.quarterhorseoutfitters.com)!





## NATIONAL COWGIRL HALL OF FAME

Aaah, just what a girl needs at the end of a long day when the boots must come off in style. Handcrafted Vintage Sculpture bootjacks will fit right into your life and boot collection. [www.cowgirl.net](http://www.cowgirl.net), 817-509-8662

## AMERICAN HAT CO

Color him in style and be spot on with the Steel hue trend, but don't break the bank in this 10X fur felt blend from American Hat Co. Available at select western retailers.



## WESTERN GRACE

Elegant fashion with a twist of beautifully wrought western accents is the signature look of Jesse Call's line, Western Grace. Each dress is one of a kind with hand-tooled yoke made by John Blair Saddlery in Wyoming. [www.westerngrace.com](http://www.westerngrace.com), 614-507-5859

## NRS

### Children's Chinks

Start 'em early and outfit them right in NRS chinks that are just the ticket for smaller sizes. Now your little one doesn't have to pretend anymore, he is the real deal, he's got the duds. What a happy smile you'll see when these are unwrapped this Christmas. [www.nrsworld.com](http://www.nrsworld.com), 800-467-6746



## MAVERICK FISH BOOTS

These boots are as unique as he is handsome. Handmade for Maverick by Black Jack Boots, these Cognac Pirarucu boots show off the texture of the largest fresh water fish in South America with panache. Perfect for the man who loves his cowboy boots! [www.maverickwesternwear.com](http://www.maverickwesternwear.com), 800-282-1315

## PENDLETON WOOLEN MILLS

### 2014 Father Winter

What says Winter more than this cute little guy cheerfully cloaked in Pendleton's Fire Red Chimayo fabric with natural fur and feather trims. He's a collector's dream with his own Native American-inspired baskets and little tree. 800-649-1512, [www.pendleton-usa.com](http://www.pendleton-usa.com)





### CURT MATTSON

For the one in your life that loves the Californio way of life or for that matter, simply loves great western art. A Curt Mattson that not only has an original watercolor, but several pen and ink sketches. He calls them Buckaroo Sketches, we call them a necessary part of gift giving. [www.curtmattson.com](http://www.curtmattson.com), 480-488-7850



### ML LEDDY'S

Don't be afraid to show some leg with these classic women's beauties that have a retro twist. ML Leddy's have paired beautiful exotics with colorful inlaid tops for a divine combination. Put your favorite on the list for Christmas day. [www.leddys.com](http://www.leddys.com), 817-624-3149



### PATRICIA WOLF

#### Bracelet

A little funk and a lot Old West in this bracelet by Patricia Wolf that sports a 12 gauge shotgun concho on a tooled leather strap. Pick up one for anyone who has a penchant for the West or has an eye for the unique. [www.PatriciaWolf.com](http://www.PatriciaWolf.com), 512-237-3388



#### Shawl

Avant Garde western that is what Patricia Wolf is and what she does. Her Gorgeous fringed and hand painted shawl is no exception. \$230.00.

### CLAIR KEHRBERG

All that a girl needs can be rounded up and kept in this lovely wallet from Clair Kehrberg. Measures 7½" x 4" x 1" when closed. Inside are 15 credit card slots, 3 money slots, a zippered change pocket and one large pocket that will hold most styles of smart phones. [www.kehrbergleatherart.com](http://www.kehrbergleatherart.com), 541-620-1634



### MONTECHRISTIE

Turn their heads with this gorgeous, decidedly feminine Silver Mist 100% Beaver hat from MonteChristie. No wonder they call it the Whistle Tecate. This hat will garner a few of those for you. Add the colorful heishi and finely braided kangaroo hat band and make them swoon. [www.montecristihats.com](http://www.montecristihats.com), [hats@montecristihats.com](mailto:hats@montecristihats.com), 505-983-9598



### FILSON

Just like Filson to create a bag as tough and as rugged as your favorite jacket that has survived your outdoor pursuits in style for years. This rolling bag is just the ticket to stand up to being thrown in the back of a truck, drug behind the horse trailer and knocked around in baggage on an international flight. Bring on the abuse, Filson can take it. See you in Timbuktu. Made at Filson, USA. \$635. 866-860-8906, [www.filson.com](http://www.filson.com)

### MARILYN STIX CONCHOS

Copper, silver, bling. You want sparkle? You want tradition conchos? You got it. Marilyn can create custom conchos or you can choose from her large selection for belts, purses, headstalls and more. Everything is handmade and can be made in any size. [www.burntsilverspur.com](http://www.burntsilverspur.com), 888-983-9040



### LLANO WESTERN TRAPPINGS

Make *Sold!* happen for this gorgeous bronze, *The Guardian*, by HR Kaiser, juried into the Western Trappings on The Llano Exhibition at the Llano County Historical Museum, Llano, Texas. Exhibit and Sale October 17, 2014-January 4, 2015. [www.westerntappings.com](http://www.westerntappings.com), 325-247-3026



### RYAN MICHAEL

#### Ryan Michael 2

Always unique, always so GQ. Ryan Michael shirt for him in the softest of cotton with an ultra cool copper star snap [www.ryanmichael.com](http://www.ryanmichael.com)



#### Ryan Michael Shawl

Wrap her up like the beautiful gift she is in the Ryan Michael shawl with western touches. [www.ryanmichael.com](http://www.ryanmichael.com)



### A CUT ABOVE BUCKLES

Give the gift of a treasure with this A Cut Above Buckles, Gold & Morenci Turquoise Buckle. It is a handmade and hand-engraved original by Andy Andrews featuring an antiqued background, sterling overlay, red and yellow 10K gold fill, and genuine Morenci turquoise. This one-of-a-kind original includes the authentic concept sketch and certificate signed by Andy Andrews. Visit [www.acutabovebuckles.com](http://www.acutabovebuckles.com) or call 951-600-0444

### AMERICAN WEST

American West's zip top shoulder bag is from their popular Dream Catcher collection. Soft buttery leather with southwestern motifs makes a statement while giving you all the room you need for on the go. [www.AmericanWest.cc](http://www.AmericanWest.cc), 888-367-2383



### GREELEY HAT WORKS

#### The Reata Hat

Trent Johnson of Greeley Hat Works in conjunction with Wyoming horsewoman, Reata Brannaman have created the Reata Hat designed with everything an active rider could want – along with very cool style. [www.greeleyhatworks.com](http://www.greeleyhatworks.com)

### WESTERN TRAPPINGS ON THE LLANO CREDENZA

A credenza with Lou Quallenberg's signature style is to a beautiful home what stunning silverwork is to a custom saddle: the perfect finishing touch. Made of mesquite with a sculpted live-edge style and floating top along with two drawers, this piece is so smooth it will beg for your touch. Your home will be overjoyed with this addition. [www.westerntrappings.com](http://www.westerntrappings.com), 325-247-3026



### NRS BIT

The Cow Puncher Bit from NRS is for the cowboy that puts miles and miles on his horse checking heavies or windmills or just riding the fence. [www.nrsworld.com](http://www.nrsworld.com), 800-467-6746

### MILLER INTERNATIONAL

This handsome wool riding coat is a welcome addition to any man's wardrobe that defines style with a western twist. It will keep him warm and stylish when the winter wind howls. Available at select retailers or online at [www.millerranch1918.com](http://www.millerranch1918.com).



### MAVERICK BRACELET

Wear it big, wear it proud. This one-of-a-kind cuff bracelet by Richard Smith will bring you all the luck and looks you deserve. 1" wide. [www.maverickwesternwear.com](http://www.maverickwesternwear.com), 817-626-1129.





### BALDWIN HATS

Buckaroo it with this fabulous topper by Baldwin Hats. There will be no mistaking your affinity for the western way of life.

[www.baldwinhats.com](http://www.baldwinhats.com), 541-610-9978



### CLAIR KEHRBERG

Have the most unique mount of any of your friends over your fireplace with this handsome fellow named Maxamillion. The plaque behind Maxamillion is hand carved in richly colored leather that features a herd of cattle and a few renegades (if you can find them). [www.kehrbergleatherart.com](http://www.kehrbergleatherart.com), 541-620-1634

### BUCKAROO BUSINESSES

Do you enjoy the beauty and functionality of handcrafted bosals, hangers and mecates? The perfect hackamore outfit awaits from Buckaroo Businesses.

[www.buckaroorbusinesses.com](http://www.buckaroorbusinesses.com), 406-252-5000



### SILVER KING

Layer them. No girl can have too many beautiful silver bracelets. Perfect day or night, one or 5 deep and you are on the style train. All made in the USA – Chatsworth, California to be specific. [www.silverkingusa.com/retailers](http://www.silverkingusa.com/retailers), 818-700-1999

### TWO GIRLS AND A MULE

Classic, beautiful, tailored. Perfect western shirts to top off your cleaned-up cowgirl look by Two Girls and a Mule. Made in the USA. [www.twogirlsandamule.com](http://www.twogirlsandamule.com)



### CHARLIE 1 HORSE HATS

Wear this Wild Horse felt fedora to step outside the box and show 'em you don't need anyone's approval for your style. It's yours. [www.charlie1horsehats.com](http://www.charlie1horsehats.com)

### PENDLETON WHISKY

Your Christmas list will grow by leaps and bounds when your friends find out that you are giving (and enjoying) Pendleton's uncommonly smooth, oak barrel aged taste. Perfect to stuff stockings, wrap a ribbon around or hide under the tree. "Let'er Buck"! [www.pendletonwhisky.com](http://www.pendletonwhisky.com)



### GIST

Traditional? No, Contemporary? They can't agree? That is ok. Gist Silversmiths can do either or create a delightful mix of both to satisfy the discerning tastes of those in your life who love silver and gold. Made in the USA. [www.gistsilversmiths.com](http://www.gistsilversmiths.com), 530-644-8000.



### STETSON/KARMAN

#### Men's Vest and Women's Poncho

For him a vest of fine brown lamb suede, for her a pretty Aztec design sweater poncho. Winter, we dare you. Stetson. [www.stetsonapparel.com](http://www.stetsonapparel.com)

### BILL YANKEE

#### Glass Vase

Seemingly ethereal is the horse that rises from the clear in a mist on this handmade vase by Bill Yankee. He hand-drew and cut the running steed before etching in three layers of depth. A delightful gift that gives back all year. [www.billyyankee.com](http://www.billyyankee.com), 307-332-6305



### ML LEDDY'S

#### Cutter Saddle

Need to stay stuck in your seat in style on that horse that has tons of cow sense and when he is hooked you will be in for a thrilling ride? Then this is the saddle for you. [www.leddys.com](http://www.leddys.com), 817-624-3149



### NATHALIE'S

#### Silver Barret

More than a pretty bauble, this silver and turquoise barrette from Nathalie's of Santa Fe is a piece of art for the hair. [www.nathaliesantafe.com](http://www.nathaliesantafe.com), 505-982-1021



### SKYTOP LEATHER

The Classic Pullman Briefcase by Skytop Leather is Craftsmanship defined in ultimate style and function. Handmade in Colorado with saddle leather molded into shapes with wood molds. Slide in your laptop and papers and you'll remember why your grandfather had a binocular "case" instead of a "bag." [www.skytopleather.com](http://www.skytopleather.com), 970-577-0892





## WESTERN TRADING POST

Collector are you? Then you see the uniqueness in this Old Pawn (circa 1950s-60s) boots squash blossom set. Not yet felt the bug of Old Pawn? Start with this One-of-a-kind, very unique design. Comes with necklace, ring, earrings and bracelet. Western Trading Post, Casa Grande, AZ. [www.TotallyWestern.com](http://www.TotallyWestern.com), 520-426-7702



## NEW WEST KNIFEWORKS

Someone in your life loves and appreciates perfectly balanced, precision instruments of steel in the kitchen. Then they must have at least one, if not a whole set, of fine knives from New West KnifeWorks. Not only are they nice to look at, they are all the rage with the who's-who of chefs. Thank me later for the hint... [www.newwestknifeworks.com](http://www.newwestknifeworks.com), 307-733-4193



## MAIDA'S

A trophy buckle from Maida's created with melancholy vintage styling can be customized for any occasion. Buckle shown on Chocolate Brown American Bison Belt. [www.maidasbelts.com](http://www.maidasbelts.com)

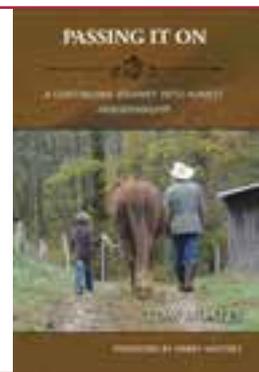


## A.J.'s LIST

We couldn't leave our Editor out of the gift list search so here are some items A.J. Mangum figured would be pretty nice to give (or get!)

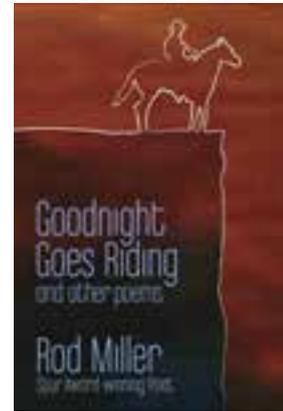
### *PASSING IT ON*

Virginia author Tom Moates has carved out for himself some unique journalistic turf: a long-term documentation of his own discovery of horsemanship insight, much of it under the tutelage of clinician Harry Whitney. Moates has chronicled his path in a series of several acclaimed books, the latest of which is *Passing It On*, available for \$18 from Amazon.com, and at [www.tommoates.com](http://www.tommoates.com).

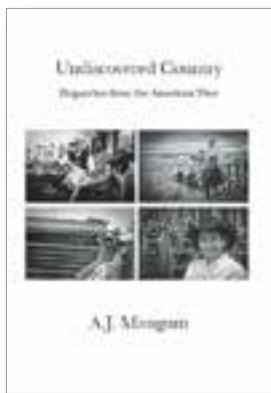


**GOODNIGHT GOES RIDING**

From thoughtful to frivolous, the poetry in *Goodnight Goes Riding and Other Poems* covers the range like a herd of hungry horses. In verse inspired by ranch and rodeo arena, trail drive and dance hall and more, Spur Award-winning poet Rod Miller provides variety in both subject and style in this new collection. The foreword by *Ranch & Reata* editor A.J. Mangum opens the gate on a ride that will keep you riveted to the written word until you draw rein on the final line of the last poem. *Goodnight Goes Riding and Other Poems*, from Pen-L Publishing, offers insight and laughter through poems crafted with artistry and attention to the realities of the American West. Available at [www.Pen-L.com](http://www.Pen-L.com), online booksellers, and through your local bookstore.



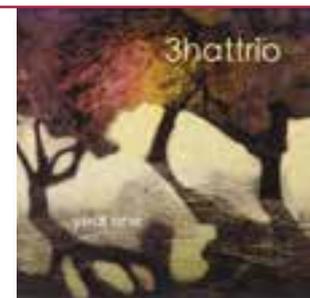
**UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY**



*Ranch & Reata* editor A.J. Mangum has written about the contemporary North American West for more than 20 years. His work has documented the lives of the horsemen, artists and craftsmen who define the modern cowboy culture. Produced over a four-year period (2010 through 2013), the essays and written portraits comprising *Undiscovered Country* offer an authentic, unromanticized look inside a way of life much of the world assumes disappeared generations ago. “The West has always been a destination for individualists chasing big ambitions on their own terms,” Mangum says. “That hasn’t changed. The modern West is still populated with independent spirits seeking one brand or another of freedom, be it creative freedom or the chance to live and work as they please. The real-life drama of the West, first scripted long ago, still plays out against the backdrop of the 21st century.” Available \$24.95 from Amazon.com.

**3HATTRIO: YEAR ONE**

*Ranch & Reata* contributor Hal Cannon is one-third of the band 3hattrio. Cannon plays banjo and guitar, sharing vocal duties with bassist and percussionist Greg Istock and violinist Eli Wrangle. Apart from a blues-ballad rendition of “Old Paint,” the group’s debut CD features a lineup of original songs the trio categorizes as “western folk magic realism.” Available for \$9 from Amazon.com or at [www.3hattrio.com](http://www.3hattrio.com).



**ALYESKA**



Montana native Alaska Reid (featured in this issue) fronts the band Alyeska, a Los Angeles alt-rock outfit anchored by Reid’s country-folk roots. Influences present on the band’s debut range from Joni Mitchell to the progenitors of the early ’90s grunge scene, making for an intriguing and original offering. Available digitally for \$7 or on vinyl for \$15 at [alYESKAband.bandcamp.com](http://alYESKAband.bandcamp.com).



### RAWHIDE-HANDLE KNIFE BY ENRIQUE CAPONE

Texas artisan Capone is the author of *Rawhide and Leather Braiding*, an insightful instructional guide to his craft. In addition to creating hobbles, reatas and all manner of rawhide horse gear, Capone builds rawhide-handled knives in the Argentine tradition. The above knife has a 4.5-inch carbon-steel blade and a two-tone handle of goat rawhide. The sheath is made of cow rawhide, softened. Prices vary; as shown, \$400; [www.leather-braiding.com](http://www.leather-braiding.com).

### HANDMADE WATCH WITH CARY SCHWARZ BAND

Montana Watch Co.'s Model 1915R Limited Edition series commemorates the company's 15th anniversary. The sterling Argentium silver case is embellished with western single-point hand-engraving in deep relief; hand-sculpted 18-karat gold overlays set with rubies at 12, 3, 6 and 9; an 18-karat gold winding crown set with a ruby; and an exhibition display caseback hand-engraved with "Special 15th Anniversary Edition." The watch features a Grand Feu baked-enamel dial with hand-painted Super LumiNova numerals, and a hand-painted serial number, all protected by a scratch-resistant sapphire crystal. The custom saddle-leather strap – hand-cut, -stitched, and -tooled by Idaho saddlemaker Cary Schwarz – is finished with a hand-engraved sterling silver buckle. \$15,000; [www.montanawatch.com](http://www.montanawatch.com).

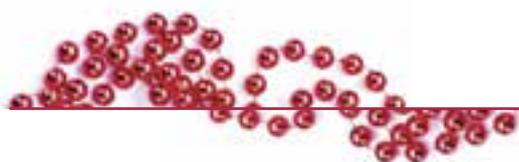


### CHILD'S SILVER SET

Inspired by Tiffany's silver sets from the early 1900s, Alberta silversmith Scott Hardy designed and created this child's set, which includes a bowl, plate, cup, spoon, napkin ring and rattle, all made from heavy-gauge sterling silver. The set is decorated with a lariat trim and hand-sculpted bucking horses and riders. \$33,000; [www.scotthardy.com](http://www.scotthardy.com).

### LAUGHING LAB SCOTTISH ALE

Colorado Springs' Bristol Brewing Company is the maker of the award-winning Laughing Lab Scottish Ale. The brewer produces a range of beers, including staples like pale ale and wheat, as well as seasonal offerings like Venetucci Pumpkin Ale, Winter Warlock, Red Baron Oktoberfest and Bristol's Christmas Ale. Available throughout Colorado; plan your visit to the ski slopes or the National Western Stock Show accordingly.





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## BY HAND AND HEART

# An Artist at Work

Get a glimpse of the creative process behind  
a one-of-a-kind custom saddle.



By Cary Schwarz

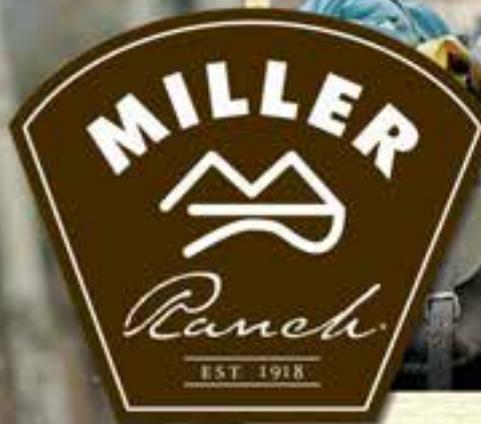
*Editor's Note: Each year, Idaho saddlemaker Cary Schwarz, a founding member of the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association, builds a saddle for the group's annual exhibition at Oklahoma City's National Cowboy Museum. Even lifelong horsemen tend to have an unhealthy amount of ignorance when it comes to imagining the hours, steps and creative challenges that go into such a project. For his 2014 effort, Schwarz documented his process in a series of photographs and detailed notes, offering neophytes and longtime cowboys alike a rare glimpse into what goes into creating a one-of-a-kind saddle.*

In planning my 2014 TCAA saddle, I wanted to build on a traditional slick-fork tree. The front of this type of tree is simple and elegant. The smaller horn on a slick fork also lends itself to a refined, straightforward look that's easy on the eyes.

Over the years, I've become fond of the round cantle shape I chose for this saddle. The round cantle has no pauses in its top line, making it compatible with the lines of a horse, particularly the hips of a fine

Quarter Horse. When designing a saddle, it's important to remember the context is always the back of the horse.

I chose square skirts with rounded corners so I could have a larger canvas for floral decoration. I also wanted the skirts to be deep enough that their back halves would "drape" down each side of the horse's back. If these skirts get too abbreviated, from the center line down to the bottom line, the back corners tend to stick out, especially on a thick horse. I consider the



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skirts to be the architectural and visual foundation of the saddle.

This saddle would be single-rigged at about a  $\frac{3}{4}$  position, with an uncluttered look and feel; there would be no distracting back billets. It would feature an inlaid cushion seat, something I've done often on ranch saddles and pleasure saddles. The Scott Hardy silver would feature string conchos, each with a single slot where the string exits the concho. Keeping with the



Paper is the inexpensive media on which it all starts. I work out my more complex designs on paper and often sketch the lines of a saddle. I designed this floral arrangement to have large medallions in the corners of the skirts, with smaller flowers, leaves and stems than in the larger field of decoration.

theme of simple elegance, I decided to use stainless steel-bound stirrups made by Keith Wilson of Alberta, Canada. I then made half covers for these stirrups with a laced-on tread. The stirrup leathers would be trimmed down to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the ordinary 3 inches, also in an effort to present a lighter, elegant design. I imagined the floral carving to be intricate and elaborate, framed by the simple, elegant, and straightforward architectural lines of the saddle.



The skirt plates are ready to glue to the skirts. I've added color to the tiny flowers in the corner medallions. To tie the two floral designs together, I sprinkled the same tiny flowers in with the bolder flowers and leaves in the rest of the design. After coloring the border with an alcohol-based dye, I knew I was in for a risky, slow process. This type of dye tends to bleed into areas you don't want colored. The skirts are slightly longer front to back. This gives the skirts a firm visual foundation. In our world of gravity, having a wider base gives stability to the skirt design. I've installed the ground seat, horn cover and fork cover, and the cantle back is shaped and carved as well.



Detail of the back corner of the skirt. I diluted the pure red color of the alcohol-based dye with isopropyl alcohol to create the muted wash for the petal color. I didn't want these flowers to appear garish. I then used another wash to darken the flower centers. The roundness of the stemwork in the design is what I like to see in my floral carving, and I like a variety of flowers sprinkled throughout the composition. My objective is to create enough interest in my floral designs that each time someone looks closely, there's a new discovery.



The rigging hardware has been installed using rivets with Scott Hardy silver heads. I'm ready to cut out the seat leather. It's important to have the skirts on during this process because the skirts are the foundation the rest of the parts are cut and built upon. The skirts are the base form that needs to be respected in all the other cuts of the saddle. The leather is very wet and moldable at this point.



I've drawn the leather down into the seat in order to help mold it into place. I then mark out with an awl the lines for the seat cut. Here, it's especially important to respect the shape of the fork and the shape of the front of the skirts. I never cut this with a template or pattern, as I'm trying to get the right cut to fit the particular shapes the tree and skirts are showing me. The marks made at this point could be called "game time" decisions, guided by what I see in each saddle. This type of leather, vegetable tanned, is highly moldable and could be likened to working with clay.



The cuts have been made on the saddle seat. The seat leather is then placed back on the tree in order to allow it to dry in preparation for carving. You can see how the front cut on the front jockey has followed the front line of the skirt.



I'm looking ahead to where the cuts on the back jockeys will be. We like to see an imaginary straight line along the bottom cut of the front jockey and the back jockey. I have in mind placing floral carved medallions in the corners of the front jockeys. These carved medallions need to be compatible in size with the skirt medallions. I used a mathematical equation – a 7:5 ratio – that I find creates attractive results in a variety of applications. The larger medallions on the skirts are 3½ inches in diameter; the smaller medallions on the jockeys are 2½ inches.



The seat has been carved and colored. I've cut out the hole where the inlaid cushion seat is to be installed. The drawdown strap is used often in this process to build shape into the seat leather and to hold it in place. You can see the smaller medallion on the front jockey, above the larger one on the skirt.



Note the relationship between the two sizes of corner medallions. Imagine if the top one were larger than the smaller one. This would be a violation of a rule regarding balance. I like to overlap elements in a way that links them together and creates a three-dimensional effect.



The inlaid cushion has been installed and I'm ready to design the floral carving for the dish of the cantle.



Here's the stage at which I spend many hours floral carving. I've applied color to the seat flowers and border, and am beginning to carve the dish of the cantle.



During a 2009 visit to France, I learned to hot-wax edges of leather. A specially designed heated iron locates beeswax into the pores of the leather edges. I've oiled the edges of the seat so the wax will co-mingle with the neatsfoot oil, creating a durable, attractive edge.



The cantle binding has been glued on and is ready to sew. This binding has a rolled front edge I put on all my museum-grade saddles. The edge of the binding is carefully skived down to a feather edge, then folded and glued in order to create a clean edge at the stitch line.



The cantle dish has been carved and the seat is glued in to stay. Here, I'm cutting filler pieces for a narrow Cheyenne roll.

I'm working on barn swallow designs that will be cut into the cantle binding. Once again, it starts on paper and is worked out thoroughly before leather is cut.





The cantle binding has been sewn by hand. One of the marks of an accomplished saddler is how parts and pieces fit together – for example, working hard for a nice, clean fit of the seat leather as it draws around the Cheyenne roll. Technically clean work will give the whole project an attractive aesthetic.



The cantle binding has been sewn. Note the nice, even reveal of the Cheyenne roll as it travels from one side to the other. Color has yet to be added to the decoration. The floral carving design must respect the shape of the cantle. Here we see the largest element (the medallion) in the center, with a graduating sequence of smaller elements as the area tapers off to the corners.



The color has been applied, a nerve-wracking job with much at stake since the seat has been completed and cantle binding sewn. One miscue and the whole seat is in jeopardy.



The skirts are placed back on to stay. The skirt edges have been oiled a bit, then hot-waxed. I'm on the downhill side of the project at this point. Note how the bottom line of the front jockey is parallel with the bottom line of the skirt. If these are not parallel, even a novice can pick up that something's amiss.



Now the back jockeys are cut out. As noted earlier, the bottom line of the back jockey needs to correspond with the bottom line of the front jockey. We're after compatible architectural lines.



The fork is ready to carve; it's a challenging job to carve something on a hillside, rather than on the flat surface of a granite carving bench.

The near-side fork cover decoration has been cut with a swivel knife. Note the cut of the seat as it travels around the hand hole, then transitions into the low cut above the fork screw. This cut needs to respect the shape of the fork.



The maker's concho, made by Scott Hardy, will be located on the "frog," the piece that will join the two back jockeys together behind the cantle. Small area, small carving.



I use a small, sable-type brush to apply alcohol dye to the flowers on the fork – not a fun job with so much at stake.



The back jockeys are carved and colored. Latigo is chosen for the string leather. I wanted dark brown latigo for the strings to complement the dark brown of the American bison inlaid seat leather.



And now for some decoration on the saddle horn. You can see the 7:5 ratio at work with each set of medallions on the back jockey/skirt and front jockey/skirt. The slight overlap of the back jockey onto the skirt medallion ties the two together.



The fork cover/seat, with Scott Hardy's fork screw. Again, you see a 7:5 ratio in the stemwork of the two flowers flanked by the small red flower.



An aerial view. We strive for symmetry in the lines of a saddle. Rigging hardware demands symmetry, otherwise the saddle will "rack" on a horse's back. I don't place as much emphasis on exact symmetry with the decoration. I believe a bit of *asymmetry* can create interest.



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3QWD9yTTUY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3QWD9yTTUY)  
*Saddlemakers in Saumur*, filmed by Adam Jahiel, documents an educational sojourn to France by saddlemakers Cary Schwarz and Pedro Pedrini.



As I critique this saddle, I see I've met the ideals I had in mind. Some additional observations:

The ground seat rises from the deepest place of the seat; the top line has a gradual slope that blends nicely with the fork. This line is important to the architecture of the saddle, just as a horse's top line is key to his conformation. This line should be compatible with the rest of the saddle. The shape of the seat should blend well with its surroundings and invite someone to have a seat.

The small cantle binding is even and clean, with no wobbles, flat spots or bulges. This could be said of every line on the saddle. When the influential Wyoming saddlemaker Don King complimented someone on his or her work, he would almost always include the word "smooth."

The front string concho is even with the back concho. This presents a balance pleasing to the eye.

There is a slight upkick in the top line of the back of the skirt. From the back of the base of the cantle to the very back edge of the skirt, there should be some relief for the area above the horse's kidneys. This also gives depth to the seat. The skirt length in this area should be no more than about seven inches from the back of the cantle to the back edge of the skirts. The skirts should appear longer in back and more abbreviated in front. About 65 percent of a horse's weight is on his front end, so this is where he can carry weight most easily. The shape of the saddle needs to respect this fact.

The cut on the back part of the side jockey is compatible with the line of the face of the cantle. Your eye travels down the rim of the cantle and continues into the cut on the jockey.

Your eye should be able to follow the curve of the seat at the hand hole and swoop down to cradle the fork in a natural way that respects the shape of the fork. If the top of the skirt disappears behind the fork at too low a point,



this could create an incompatible line for the eye to follow.

With regard to the shape of the skirt, I see the results of my planning on the final outcome. The base or bottom line of the skirt is longer than the top. This gives the saddle a firm foundation. The corner medallions accentuate this dynamic – larger ones at the bottom, smaller ones above and slightly inset from the bottom, with the 7:5 ratio working for us. The dark-dyed beaded border accentuates almost every profile line on the saddle. This is risky if your lines aren't correct – you'll emphasize the wrong lines.

The primary focal point of most saddles is the fork/horn. The front line of the skirt leads your eye directly to this area, as does the top line of the front of the ground seat. These lines converge on the fork/horn in a natural way.

The fenders are cut to an 8¼-inch width that's proportionate with the length of the seat.

As you can see, good architecture on a saddle is never an accident. Saddles can be considered three-dimensional art, like woodcarving, sculpture and the like. I'd make the case that a saddle bears a fourth dimension – function – and that the best saddles are a successful blend of function and art, with both held in high regard.



Learn more about Cary Schwarz at [www.caryschwarz.com](http://www.caryschwarz.com).

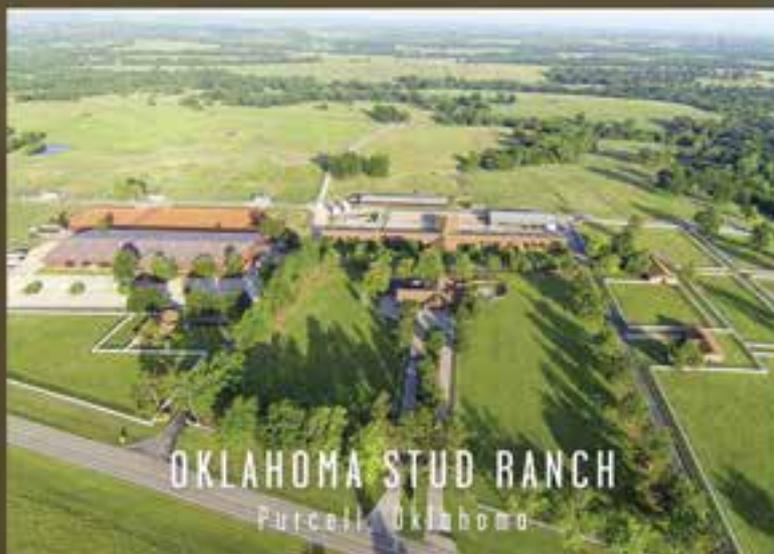
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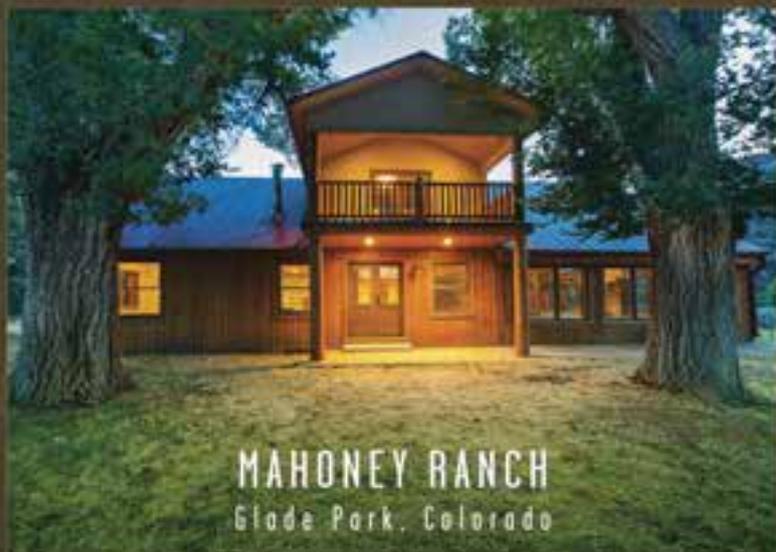
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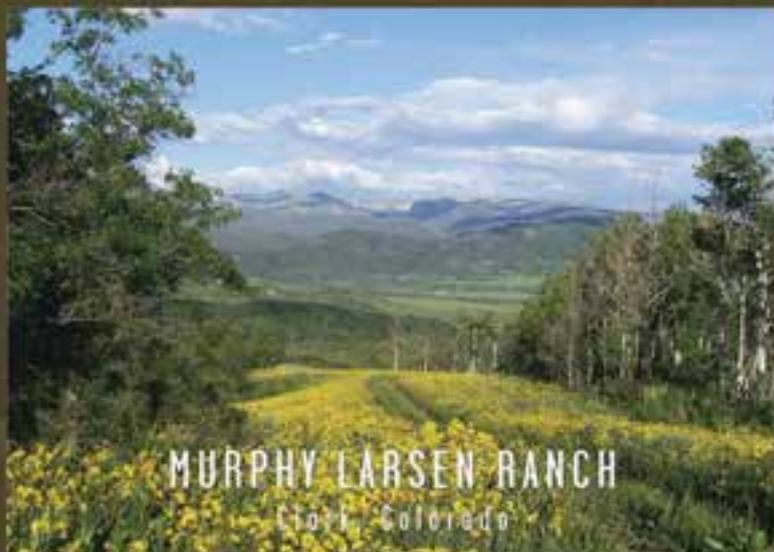
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MURPHY LARSEN RANCH  
Clark, Colorado

1,500 acres of spectacular alpine scenery nestled in the quaint community of Clark, Colorado, shares a border with the Routt National Forest. The 11 home sites each have views, central water system, rustic cabin and a meeting/recreation facility. Priced from \$900,000. Christy Belton, 970.734.7885

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## BOOKS TO FIND

# 24 Great Books for a Classic Cowboy Christmas

In his recent book, *Some Horses*, author Tom McGuane, describes – in his always illuminating and graceful manner – westerners’ admiration for horses. “Those who love horses, are impelled by an ever-receding vision, some enchanted transformation through which the horse and the rider become a third, much greater thing.” In McGuane’s hands, horses and words merge like a melody and his books deliver us to a world we would like to be a part of.

There are scores of great books about the cowboy world and the quiet, practiced ways of the *vaquero*. And in this era of digital downloads, Kindles and wireless delivery; there are still places where bookshelves are calling, with dusty volumes that remember how we as westerners got here. How we saddled that first horse and how we celebrated those who came before. What follows is our list of twenty-four significant books that have changed lives and influenced generations – books that have entertained and enlightened and inspired. Are these the best cowboy and *vaquero* books ever written? We would never even attempt to make that judgment, but each of these books holds an important place in the

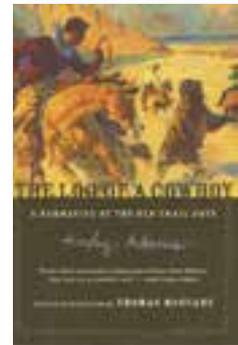
hearts – and bookshelves – of people who love the West, cowboys and the ways of the *vaquero*.

### Log of A Cowboy

1903

Andy Adams

A classic chronicle of the life of the cowboy who lived before the wire during the era of the range cattle industry. Adams’ description of cowboying and of ranching life is a lasting contribution to the vernacular of time past.



### Some Horses

1999

Thomas McGuane

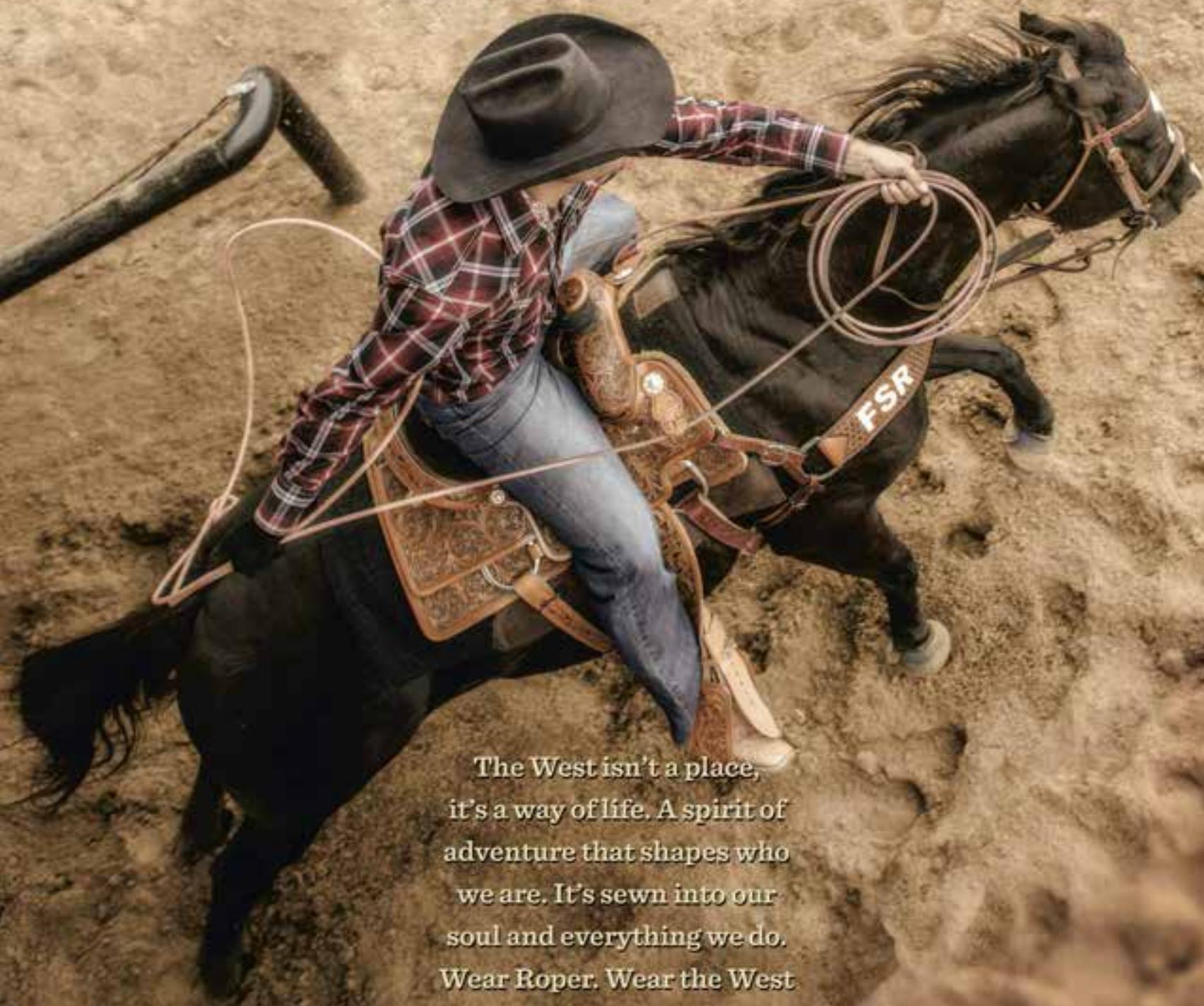
One of the finest collections of stories ever written about horses and the people





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who love them; McGuane’s deep and contagious passion for his subject touches even those who wouldn’t know which end of a horse to feed.

**Last Buckaroo**

1995

Mackey Hedges

The real deal, Mackey is still out there working for cowboy wages, living the words of his own book’s dedication, as one that knows the only future life holds for men like him is a dirty bedroll and a worn-out saddle – a life and way he loves to the core.

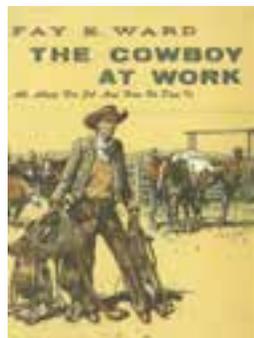


**The Cowboy At Work:  
All About His Job and  
How He Does It**

1958

Fay Ward

Ward’s ode to the cowboy’s work ethic could possibly be the best book ever written on the working cowboy. Ward worked the grub line for over forty years on ranches from Canada to Mexico and the book is so complete and simply written, many a young cowpuncher still consider it *de rigueur* for their proper training.

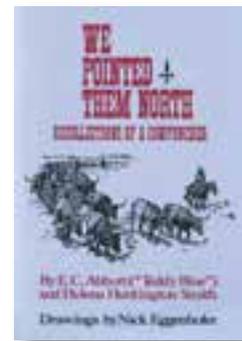


**We Pointed Them North**

1939

E.C. (Teddy Blue) Abbott and Helene Huntington Smith

Teddy Blue Abbott’s own story is a window on the 1880s world of a “wild and happy cowboy who knew ‘em all – the harlots and the high-rollers, the Cheyenne and the Sioux, the cussin’ and the cattle.” Of the book, his co-author said, “I just kept out of the way of his words.”

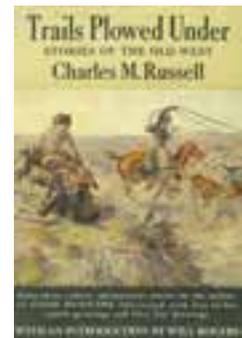


**Trails Plowed Under**

1927

Charles M. Russell

As author J. Frank Dobie wrote of the authenticity of this watershed Russell work, “He savvied the cow, the grass, the blizzard, the drought, the wolf, the young puncher in love with his own shadow, the old waddie remembering rides and thirsts of far away and long ago.” A classic of the Russell era.

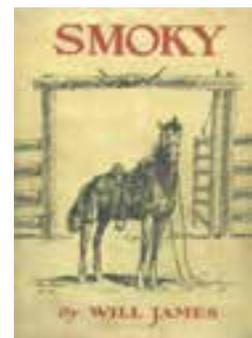


**Smoky The Cow Horse**

1926

Will James

James’ first book is the story of a horse’s life in the heart of cowboy country. This book was one of the earliest winners of a Newberry Award and really started Will James’ career as one of the world’s most beloved western writers and artists. The book was ultimately made into several motion pictures.



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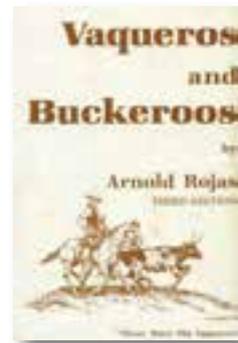
[www.americanhat.net](http://www.americanhat.net)

- California Vaquero (1953)
- Lore of the California Vaquero (1958)
- Last of the Vaqueros (1960)
- The Vaquero (1964)
- Bits, Biting and Spanish Horses (1970)
- These Were The Vaqueros (1974)
- Vaqueros and Buckaroos (1979)
- Arnold Rojas



One cannot separate any of the individual titles that ultimately made up “Vaqueros and Buckaroos,” the 1979 compilation of the writings of Arnold “Chief” Rojas.

Rojas is, unquestionably, the most important chronicler of the life and lore of California’s *vaquero* and his books tell the tales like no others. A voracious reader, he never progressed past the third grade in formal education, yet in Rojas, the *vaquero* found his champion.



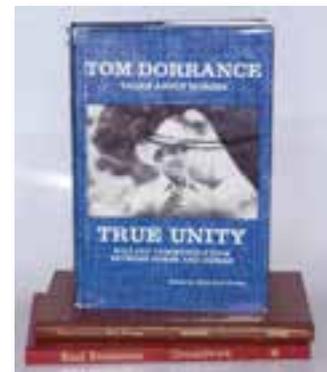
- Cowboy Poetry: A Gathering 1985
- Hal Cannon (Editor)

The little book that jump started a cultural movement, celebrated the first Cowboy Poetry Gathering held in Elko, Nevada in 1985. It was an event that created a yearly pilgrimage of the faithful who value the artistic traditions of the region. Started by the Elko, Nevada-based Western Folklife Center, the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering celebrated its 30th Anniversary this year.



- Think Harmony With Horses 1978
- Ray Hunt
- True Unity 1987
- Tom Dorrance
- Groundwork 1997
- Buck Brannaman

Three little books that started a revolution in horsemanship – that is still





evolving today – all for the betterment of the horse. The enlightened lineage handed down from Tom Dorrance to Ray Hunt to Buck Brannaman continues to inspire horseman and women around the world. They are our Yoda, Obi-Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker.

**They Saddle The West**

Lee Rice and Glenn Vernam  
1975

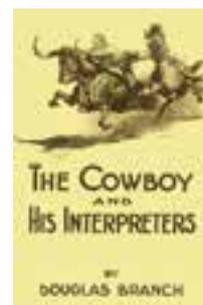


Probably the most quoted and revered book dealing with the cornerstone saddle makers who saddled and influenced the West. This precise and elegant work contains some of the most useful information about

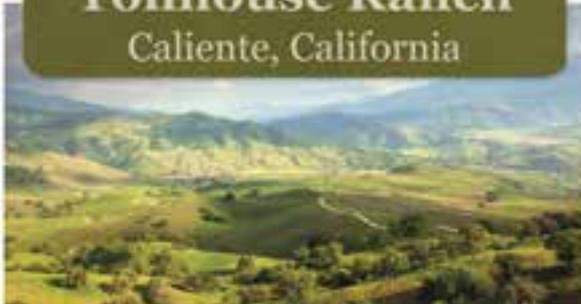
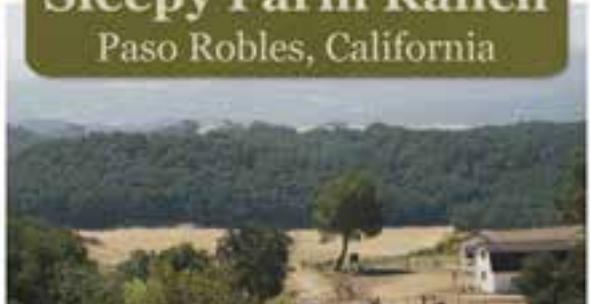
saddlery and makers you never knew you needed to know. Quite rare but worth the search.

**The Cowboy and His Interpreters**

1926  
Douglas Branch



This book took the cowboy seriously during an era of pulp novels and one-reel motion pictures. Illustrated by three of the best – Will James, Charles M. Russell and Joe De Yong, the author showed the real life of the cowboy set against “the golden and romantic haze of the cowboy in fiction, on the stage and in the cinema.”

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**North American Cowboy:  
An Album**

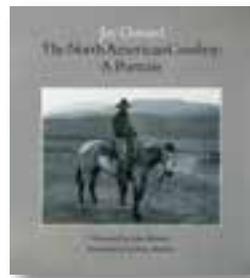
1983

Jay Dusard

**After Barbed Wire**

1985

Kurt Markus



These two works by Kurt Markus and Jay Dusard helped create a stylistic renaissance in cowboy photography. Both rode with their subjects and participated in the work. Theirs is a timeless, pictorial contribution based on the respect and friendship they felt for the cowboys and buckaroos that rode out ahead of them.

**Trail Dust and Saddle Leather**

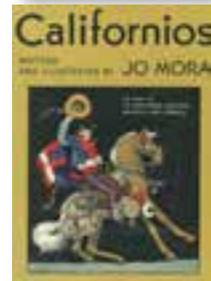
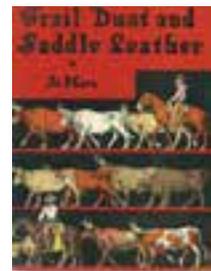
1946

Jo Mora

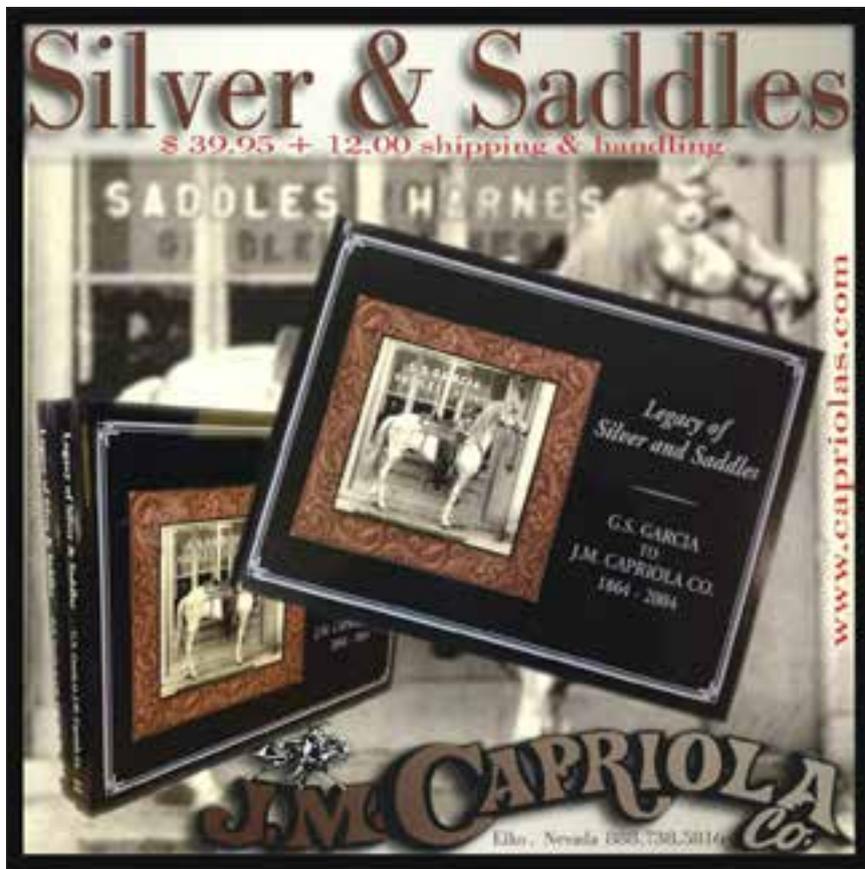
**Californios**

1949

Jo Mora



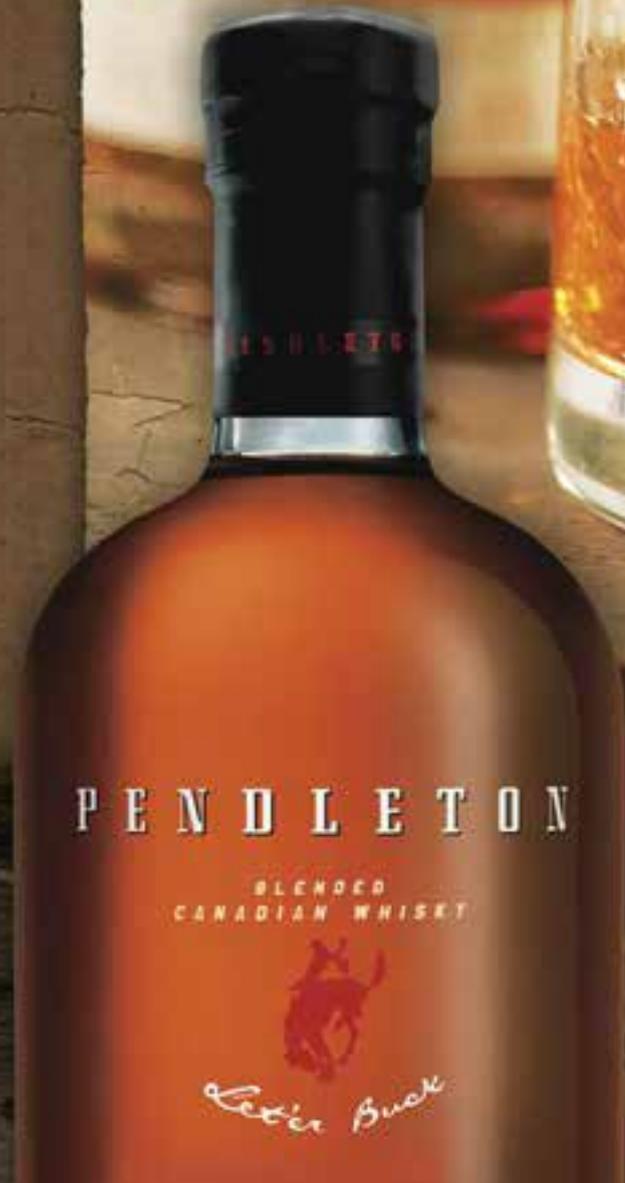
In Ed Ainsworth's classic, *The Cowboy in Art*, Jo Mora is described as "an American original, just like the cowboys he depicts in his two masterpieces *Trail Dust and Saddle Leather* and *Californios*. *Californios* was published in 1949 by his son after Mora's death in 1947, but Mora's words and artwork live on today as the benchmark they were when he first created them.



Many of these books, as you can see by the date of their first publication, are out of print, while some are current and readily available – some even available as eBooks. With a little searching most can be found and the search will be worth the adventure. These books are the foundation for many who live and ride today and the enduring value these books continue to give is truly a gift that can be passed on to new generations – whether they read them on a kindle or pull them from a book shelf.



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## THE COOK HOUSE

# Cooking with Mescal Leaves



By Kathy McCraine

74

If you like tequila, you're going to love this dish. Years ago, when I was in Guadalajara, I ran across an old Mexican cookbook with a recipe for roasting meat in a pit lined with the leaves of the pulque maguery or agave plant. Since a variety of agave grows in northern Arizona, I couldn't wait to get home and try it.

There's a common misconception that agaves are cacti. They're not. The plant, native to Mexico and the southwestern United States, is a succulent with a large rosette of tough, gray-green leaves with spiny edges and sharp points. Man has been harvesting agaves for about 9,000 years. It was a dietary staple of desert-dwelling Native Americans, who roasted the stalks, buds and



Cutting leaves from the mescal plant.

hearts of the plant for food, and made alcoholic drinks from its sweet juice. The core of the *agave azul* (blue

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agave) cultivated in the mountains surrounding Guadalajara is used to make tequila today.

There are numerous species of agave, but the one that grows in northern Arizona is the smaller variety best known as the century plant, due to the fact that it's very slow to mature, then dies after flowering. On ranches it's more commonly called mescal and is considered an invasive species. Each plant propagates profusely by the offsets at the base of the stem, and those stiff little daggers can easily cripple a horse.

The *barbacoa* style of cooking, roasting over an open fire or in a pit, is believed to have originated centuries ago in Barbados. Eventually it traveled to Mexico, where the Spaniards introduced cattle, goats and sheep in the 16th century and prepared the meat of these animals in the indigenous style.

My husband, Swayze, and I started doing pit barbecues for friends when we had the Horner Mountain Ranch at Dugas, Arizona, years ago, but we devised a way to do it with our smaller mescal leaves, wrapping the meat rather than lining the pit. Later we realized we could do the same thing with a large roasting pan in the oven when cooking for fewer people. It doesn't really taste like tequila, but the juices from the mescal leaves do tenderize and give the meat a delicious flavor.

First, you have to lay your hands on a good-sized mescal plant, one with leaves 12 to 14 inches long. (No problem on our 7 Up Ranch, north of Prescott, Arizona.) Be sure to wear gloves because those little spines along the edges of the leaves and the long needle at the end can really hurt you, even cause an infection if they break off in your skin. You can use a long knife or a saw to cut the leaves at their base, but we prefer the catch rope-pickup method.

Recently, when we cooked for a small gathering, we found the perfect mescal just waiting for us on the

side of a back road. Swayze backed the pickup up to it, placed the loop of his rope securely around the base of the plant, just above the roots, and tied it to his bumper. Then he pulled forward slowly, tightening the rope almost to the point of breaking – those mescal roots are tough. It sounded like a gun going off when the bulb of the plant finally broke loose from the roots, flew in the air, and snapped back to hit the tailgate of the truck. Just like a roper when his rope breaks with a 700-pound steer on the end.



Mescal roast.

The next step is to remove the spines. Wearing leather gloves, and using a sharp knife or small handsaw, slice the spines off the edges of each leaf and cut the tip off the end. You will need about six to eight whole leaves to roast a 10-pound roast in a large roasting pan or Dutch oven.

Finally, roast the leaves on both sides on a barbecue grill until they soften, are slightly browned, and start to release juices on the cut side. Make a slit horizontally across the blunt base of each leaf, then peel the two halves apart to make two thinner, more pliable leaves. Now you're ready to cook.

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### Mescal Roast

6-8 12-inch long mescal leaves, roasted and split  
 1 10-pound beef shoulder clod or chuck roast  
 Salt, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper and red pepper

Season the meat heavily. Place a rack in a large roasting pan and line it with as many mescal leaves, cut side up, as will fit. Lay the roast, fat side up, on top and

cover the top and sides with the rest of the leaves, cut side facing the meat. Pour about two cups of water in the pan. Cover and roast in the oven all night at 250 degrees. If not done in the morning, continue cooking until the meat is tender enough to shred. If you have time, refrigerate the meat and reheat at serving time, after skimming the congealed fat off the juice.

Allow a half-pound of raw meat per person, and serve with the juice, tortillas and salsa.



## Pit Barbecuing the Mexican Way

Mexican cooks have cooked in the pit with agave leaves for centuries. You can barbecue a whole beef if you dig a big enough pit. The one pictured here is the pit Mexican cowboy Elidio Alcantara dug in his backyard several years ago for family barbecues.

Elidio dug a pit about four feet deep and three feet in diameter. He was good at masonry work, so he laid a perfect brick lining. Lord knows where he got the big agave leaves in this part of Arizona, but they were big enough to line his pit.

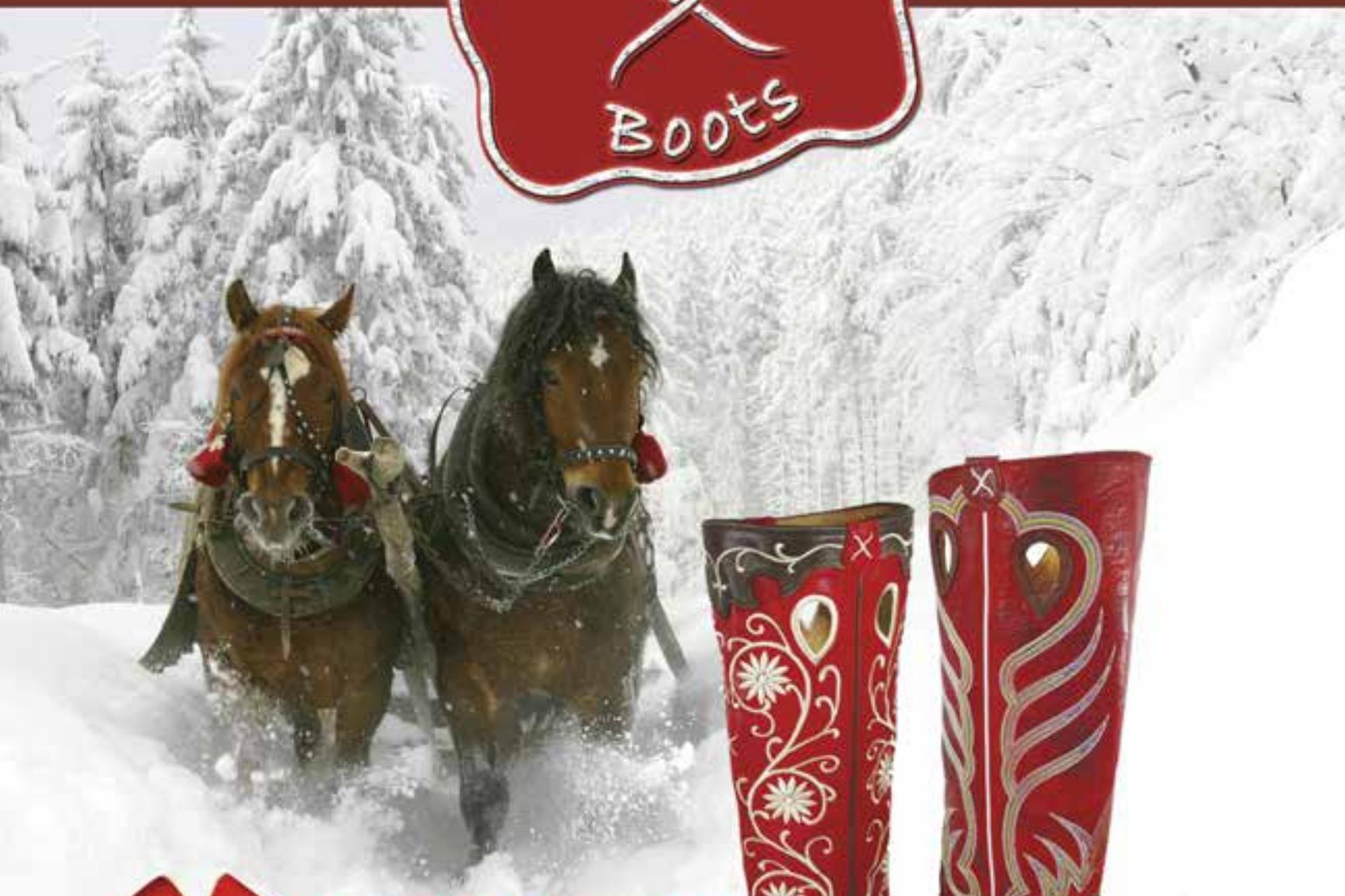
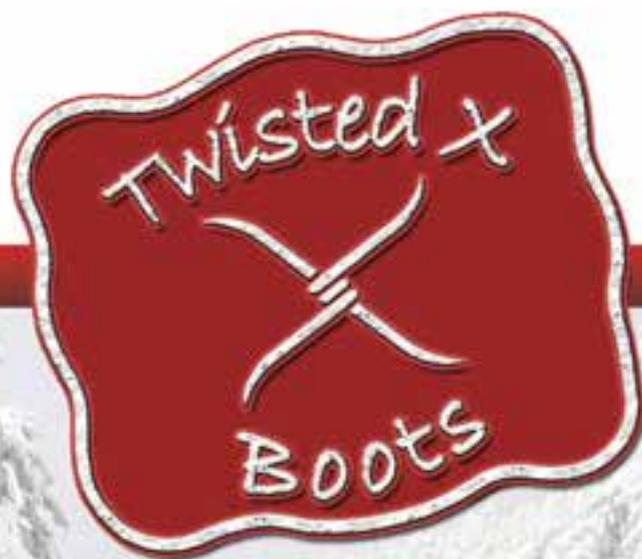
Since our northern Arizona mescal are considerably smaller than the desert variety, we do things a little different. You can cook in an unlined dirt pit, whatever size you need to hold your meat and the coals. Start the fire at least five hours before cooking, using a hardwood such as mesquite or oak, and burn it down, a little at a time, until you have 10 to 12 inches of hot coals. Then shovel four to six inches of dirt over the coals.

Season your roasts, which can be 15 to 20 pounds, wrap them in the mescal leaves, then in tin foil, and then wet burlap sacks tied with baling wire. Leave a loop on top that you can reach down and grab with a hay hook when the meat is ready to bring out.



Elidio lines his pit with agave leaves.

Kathy McCraine is the author of the award-winning cookbook, *Cow Country Cooking: Recipes and Tales from Northern Arizona's Historic Ranches*. Visit her web site at [www.kathymccraine.com](http://www.kathymccraine.com).



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# The Cowboy Sage

## Remembering Ray Hunt

By Gretel Ehrlich

Ray Hunt (1929-2009) changed the relationship between rider and horse from a battle of dominance to a dance of gentleness, communication and mutual trust. In 1998, **Gretel Ehrlich** profiled the late American sage, a cowboy who taught working with horses as a path for both human and animal to realize their true nature. Now, five years after his passing, we are pleased to re-print Ms. Ehrlich's story that originally appeared in the Buddhist journal *Shambhala Sun*. BR

*"Truth is 'one': clear water has no front or back."*

Yosa Buson

They are all young horses, two- and three-year-olds, untouched, unjaded, incomparably strong and innocent as they mill around a high-sided round pen on a ranch made of big fleshy hills with morning frost on the grass and a breeze strong enough to life the sun up over the ridge. There's a blue roan, a bay, and two sorrels – all quarter horses – and they're snorting, sniffing, flicking their ears, trying to understand what is going to happen to them.

"They're a little troubled, see, and when their minds are troubled then it shows in the body," Ray Hunt says as he rides into a pen. "A horse will tell you what he understands and what he thinks about it. He's telling you all the time, but you just don't see it, you're just not willing to go that far in his direction. That's okay, but you're not going to get too much back. To have a willing communication with a horse, you'll find that first, you have to develop awareness and discipline within yourself

so that you can have it with your horse later."

Tall, raw-boned, leathery, Ray was raised on an Idaho farm with a father who used draft horses to plow, plant, and cut hay. He grew up the hard way and at various times, he picked fruit, hoed beets, and drove heavy equipment - anything to make money. But the work he was born to was cowboying: he rode the rough stock – the wild, untrained horses – on big outfits in northern Nevada where it was common to ride fifty miles a day. Now sixty-eight years old, he was given up the dream of owning his own ranch and devotes his days to teaching humans how to handle a horse – what used to be called "breaking colts."

At some point in the year you can find a Ray Hunt clinic in Montana, California, Alberta, Texas, or on a remote cattle station in Australia. A clinic lasts five days. Mornings are for green colts – young, unriden horses; afternoons are called horsemanship classes, for people





photo by Bill Reynolds

First day of school, 1985

with horses that have been ridden fifteen or twenty times or so. Within a very short period of time an untouched colt will accept being caught, haltered, led, saddled, and bridled (snaffle bits only) and ridden, and will learn the rudiments of backing smoothly, sliding to a stop, turning on a dime, and changing leads – in an atmosphere so quiet and unhurried it’s hard to believe anything has happened at all. When I asked Ray how he made this happen he smiled and said, “Oh, I just work with the mind.”

What Ray teaches has nothing to do with breaking, riding styles, horseshow events, or communing with nature. He’s so self-effacing, he’ll hardly admit that the

best-selling book, *The Horse Whisperer*, and also the movie of that name, were based on Ray’s work with horses, as well as his student, Buck Brannaman, and the elder statesman of horse training, Tom Dorrance.

You only have to look at Ray to see that he doesn’t suffer fools gladly. “This isn’t just some commercial thing,” Ray says. “I wouldn’t do it. This is life. This is reality. There’s no rulebook on this and it’s damned hard to grasp because it comes from deep down inside. I’ve been trying my whole life and I’m still working at it. But when you do get it, pretty soon it starts coming back to you directly from the horse, and from then on it’s a continuous thing. There’s no end to what you can learn.”

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Ray leans over and strokes a colt's face with a big, gentle hand, then does the same to another horse – every gesture soft, but never sentimental. He moves easily between the animals, neither slow nor fast but with an even keenness that tells you everything about Ray and what he thinks a proper relationship between humans and animals should be. A toothpick rolls from one side of his mouth to the other. “To understand the horse you’ll find that you’re going to have to work on yourself,” he says matter of factly, in the same voice he might tell someone to pick up a bale of hay.

At the heart of Ray's teaching are lessons about giving, discipline, awareness, compassion, stillness, concentration, and intelligence – the Buddhist *paramitas* spoken in a western dialect. But how did a rough-hewn cowboy learn these things? Ray answers: “It didn't come easy. I didn't just scrape off the top and there it was. I dug and dug and tore my hair out. But I owe it to the horse to work this hard, because I used to do things the true grit way. Not out of meanness. Just ignorance. I guess I saw too many Charlie Russell paintings. I didn't know there was another way.”

The true grit way looked like this: a green horse was roped out of the remuda, led struggling into a round corral, and tied hard and fast to a snubbing post from which he struggled to get free. Then his front feet were hobbled, and a cowboy would come at him with two or three gunny sacks, waving them in his face. More terror and struggling, then a saddle was thrown on, cinched up tight. The line to the snubbing post was cut loose and the rider climbed on fast. Around and around they went, bucking and snorting, the cowboy pulling hard on the halter rope which only made the horse buck more. “That word ‘break’ wasn't used innocently. To

break the wild, snotty, swift, flamboyant spirit of the horse – that was the whole idea.” Domination and submission was the horseman's goal.

A horse named Hondo made it necessary for Ray to change his ways. Hondo made it clear that Ray could be broken, but he, the horse, could not.

“Everything I know now started with that horse,” Ray said. “Hondo was a sticking, biting, kicking, bucking tough colt who might have killed me.

Hondo would tell me, ‘Come on and try to break me, and I'll break in YOU again.’ And he would have. But I had all winter to work on him. He was my only horse; without him, I was afoot. It was just him and me and I tried to put myself in his place. How did he get so afraid? What could I do to make him trust me? A horse that's had trouble can't believe a human will quit hurting them. I felt sorry for that horse who had to hold up his defense. You can't blame him. I worked on him some and we got so I could get near him, then get on him. I'm not saying it was all love and kisses. You better believe it. Things could get pretty physical, pretty western. I'd go to bed at night and think about that horse, dream about him, then go back to work with him the next day.”

In the middle of the winter of 1960-61, Ray took Hondo to Tom Dorrance. “He's a little old bow-legged cowboy, he's the brain of it all. He can fix a horse so fast you never knew what happened. And who taught Tom? He says it was the horse. As soon as Tom came around me, Hondo would act like a lamb. And as soon as he left, I'd be riding a tiger again. I couldn't understand. Something was going on but I couldn't find it.

“See, I was too forceful. The timing was good but the mental feel of how it could be wasn't there. I couldn't visualize it and the yielding wasn't there. The horse was

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“YOU SEE, A HORSE IS MUCH STRONGER THAN I AM, BUT IF I PREPARE HER FOR DANCING – NOT FIGHTING – I MAY SURVIVE.”

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afraid of me. I thought I had to hurt him to get him rideable.” Ray runs his wide hand down the neck of the horse he’s riding. “I knew it wasn’t right. And pretty soon, I learned that to get respect, I had to give respect.

Sometimes it’s hard to figure out because a horse is so big and strong, but there’s a difference between firm and forceful. And there’s a spot in there, inside the horse, an opening where there is no fear or resistance, and that’s what I began looking for.” By the end of the year Hondo was gentle, smooth, athletic, and kind to be around, a horse the grandkids could ride.

“You see,” Ray says, sorting through horses until just one remains in the pen. “You’re not working with just a machine, you’re working with a mind. The horse is a thinking, feeling, decision-making animal, and each one has a distinct personality. But the human always acts superior. He thinks he’s smarter; he always wants to have things his way and right now. He wants to be boss. If trouble comes up, he turns it into a contest with the horse. But if you do that, watch out. You just may lose,” Ray says, his horse moving so nimbly through the pen, it looks like he’s floating.

“What I’m talking about developing with the horse is not dominating with fear, but more like dancing with a partner. It’s all balance, timing, rhythm, the kind of dancing where your body and his body become one.”

### Day One, Ray Hunt Clinic.

Early morning. Steam floats off the creek that runs by as Ray works a young colt in the round pen. She is loose – no bridle, no saddle, no halter. Never tied up or restrained, she moves smoothly, trotting first one way, then the other. He wants her to loosen up first, to travel freely. Then he’ll get the mare to turn off the rail, stop, face the middle, look, and come to him.

“I’m doing some things now that will let the horse accept being caught. It’s awful hard to ride them if you can’t catch them first,” he says, grinning. The filly breaks into a lope, stops, tries to turn the other way, as a way of escaping, but Ray insists she keep going to the right. “See, I’m making the wrong

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“YOU HAVE TO BE ON THE SPOT EVERY MOMENT BECAUSE THAT’S WHERE THE HORSE IS.”

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photo by Bill Reynolds

Spectators at San Luis Obispo, California clinic, 1985

thing hard and the right thing easy,” he says, watching her. “A horse gets sure and unsure, scared and bold; she says maybe, all right, I don’t know... But I’m going to show her that things can be all right.” Terror increases. The horse pokes her head over the top rail of the round pen, trying to jump out. Again, Ray urges her to keep moving. “All I do is operate the life in the body – through the legs to the feet – through the mind,” he says, never taking his eyes off her.

“Pretty soon she’ll come off that rail, she’ll turn loose and stop trying to escape.” As soon as he speaks, the horse stops, moves her hindquarters around and points her ears at Ray. “There’s a change,” he says,

meaning she’s beginning to relax with things as they are.

The filly resumes trotting for a few minutes, and again she stops, turns, and looks. Ray walks toward her. “I’ll see if she’ll let me pet her.” She stands as he strokes her head once, then she leaves. “That’s okay. I’m not going to make her stay. She’s still afraid I might hurt her and she needs to know she can escape. She’s telling me that she’s not quite ready for anything more.”

The filly moves off, traveling in the other direction. Her muscles are more relaxed and she has a calmer look on her face. “Pretty soon she’ll find out that things are going to be all right with me in here,” he says, and, as if by magic, the horse stops, pricks her ears, and walks



calmly to Ray: sanctuary.

Ray doesn't talk to horses – he makes each action count. He says, "It helps some people to talk to the horse but it doesn't help the horse. The horse is already whoa, and easy, that's a boy, so why talk about it? She feels it. It's all feel." When she gets frightened of his lariat as he puts a loop over her neck, Ray rubs her neck. Though he doesn't talk to them, he does talk for them: "She's saying, 'I'm a little unsure about you touching my ears,' so I'll do it a few more times just so she'll know nothing bad comes of it."

Then she's out on the rail again and trots around the pen, obviously bothered by the rope hanging around her neck: "She was born with her mane and tail, so she's not afraid of it, but she's afraid of this rope," Ray says. Holding onto the coils, he slowly pulls on the rope to bring the colt to him. "It's not a fighting pull, but a steady one." She lunges at Ray and strikes at him with her front feet. Ray faces her and steps back quietly, keeping the pressure on the rope firm. "I'm teaching her to yield to pressure," Ray explains. Not the brutal kind, but more like a telegraph that's saying, Hey, come over here. The rope is taut, then she gives in. Her neck and shoulder muscles relax and, as she steps toward him, Ray throws slack in the loop. "Now she'll see that it's easier to walk over to me." He strokes her head and her nose drops down onto his arm. Ray smiles.

For the next half hour he places the rope on different parts of her body, the rump, under the tail, around one front leg, around a back leg. She kicks, bucks, and squirms. "She can't find any good thing about the human right now," he says, patiently. "She's allowing these things to happen, but she's still not sure and I don't blame her." Very quickly the mare accepts the rope.

With the loop loosely around her neck, Ray bends her neck around, strokes her head, bends it the other way, pets her, moves her hindquarters until her front feet follow through, backs her a few steps, leads her forward. "This is so she'll yield and be flexible and I'll move with

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her. You see, a horse is much stronger than I am, but if I prepare her for dancing, not fighting, I may survive.”

He gets off his horse and gets a saddle blanket. He lets the horse see it, sniff it; he rubs her neck with it, under her belly, then puts it on her back. Next comes the saddle, not thrown on, but laid quietly on the horse’s back. “I don’t sneak my outfit on the horse, I put it on respectfully,” he says, tightening the cinch smoothly. The horse is turned loose in the pen. “It might take her a few minutes to get used to that saddle,” Ray says, his face and bearing unruffled when she lets out a few bucks, then lunges, strikes, bucks again, snorting each time. Ray watches calmly. “There’s a change,” he says, as she walks toward him working her mouth, a sign of relaxation in the horse.

“I give them a place where they can come to me. They see it in my body. But if they don’t, I let them go by, because they’re not ready for it yet.” The horse stops, thinks about leaving. Ray watches her. “That’s good with the mind, now here come the feet,” he says, and she “turns loose,” coming to him and standing quietly. He turns to the students watching him. “See, she had to check out a lot of things first. That doesn’t make her wrong. You wouldn’t punish a child for being afraid. She’s a thinking, feeling, decision-making animal. She knows my mind and I try to understand her and she knows I’m her friend.”

All morning he works in this way with six colts. Some are hard and resisting, spooky and fearful; others are quick

to accept the rope, the human hands, the blanket and saddle, but have a more dulled sensibility. Ray picks up their feet, runs his hands over and under their bellies, moves them this way and that. Watching them, you begin to see that there is no “good or bad” behavior, and Ray is never critical. “I just keep trying to fix it up for them so they can find their way,” Ray says.

By the end of the first day Ray has worked with each colt. He has taught them something about trust by getting them to accept what is being offered to them; about how to be caught by making it uncomfortable to run away; about yielding to pressure, which means surrendering pride; about how to find sanctuary with the human.

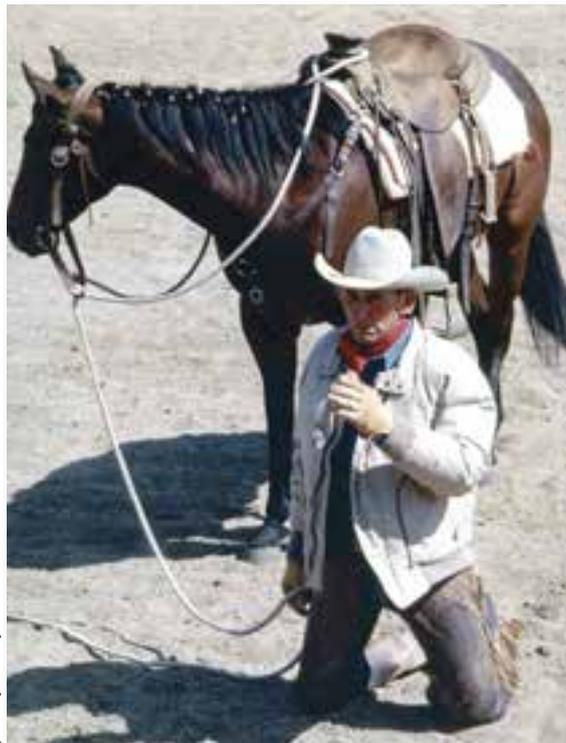


photo by Bill Reynolds

### Day Two.

Boisterous thunder in the morning and smoke-like clouds streaming off mountain peaks: it’s the scary day, the day to get on the colts and ride. Ray comes into the round pen on his gray mare and gathers his students around for a pep talk. His voice is deep, gravelly, slow.

“The horse knows. He knows the human twenty to one. It’s amazing how much he’ll get out of things, how he’ll fill in for as little as the human knows about him. How that horse can handle it has always been a mystery to me. Put yourself in his shoes to live your whole life where no one knows who you really are. Well, I haven’t met a human yet who compares to a horse,” Ray says. “A human couldn’t take it. See, you can get a horse to do



something if you're tough enough, just like you can with a human. But a willing communication is a different matter. You fix it so the horse can try, then you allow him to work it out. You have to give him that dignity. You make your idea his idea.

"I believe these colts, I trust them. I always trust they can buck too. Don't think they won't.... Just keep fixing it up and let them find it. Don't try to make it happen. Prepare to position for the transition. The transition is the last thing that happens. And don't try to be boss."

Ray works with each colt much as he did the day before, bending them, showing them how to turn loose by applying a firm pressure and holding them there until he releases. The horses are calmer in his presence. He ropes a sorrel colt by the hind foot; the horse kicks and kicks. "Pretty soon, he'll stay put," Ray says, and the horse stops and pricks his ears. Ray throws slack in the

rope. Releases him to go both ways. Where Ray finds resistance, he works with the colt until the body becomes untroubled.

"I don't have a time limit on this. It might take a minute, it might take five years. Sometimes you have to keep offering different things. You don't want to drag it out of them and kill their desire and grit; you just turn it around, you turn it into life," he says as the young sorrel stops bracing against Ray and turns smoothly. "There he goes," Ray says, making sure the students see the change.

Now he lays the rope over the horse's rump. The horse kicks again. "He can live with that – he doesn't think so, but he can, because it's not hurting him." Ray makes the horse go, then stops him. "Let him explore the end of the rope for a second, it's part of the dance, and I'm leading." Again he throws the rope

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on the sorrel's rump; this time, no kicking.

Soon the colt is ready to ride. What makes Ray Hunt Clinics exciting is that the first day, the colts are ridden with no bridle. "It keeps you humble to ride a colt with nothing on their head," Ray says. "It forbids you to try to control the horse and the horse feels that, boy does he feel it, and that's the beginning of trust."

The owner of the sorrel gelding, Jim, comes into the pen, catches halters, and saddles the horse. He stands in the stirrup. "If the horse can't take it yet, step off, then step on, and pet him on the neck. He likes that, he wants to know everything is all right and I'll bet you do too," Ray says, grinning.

Jim finally throws his leg all the way over. Ray advises him: "You can pull that mane and tail out but don't pick up on that halter rope..." The horse stands with his front legs apart, bewildered by the man on his back. "There you go, good luck," Ray says, laughing. Then the colt blows up, jumping and snorting. The halter rein is flopping loose.

"If you pull on that rein, you've got a contest going," Ray says, "and boy, you'll be teaching that young innocent horse how to buck every time you get on. This way, he'll get tired in a minute and find out it's easier to be quiet." Suddenly, the horse stops, trots for a moment, then hangs his head. Ray smiles.

The others start to get on their horses. "He says he's ready," Ray says, speaking for the horse, and hands a young woman the halter rope. A few crowhops, a half-hearted buck, then a slow trot over to the other horses. They stand placidly. "Is everyone fixed okay?" Ray asks. Everyone nods tentatively. He smiles, then turns them out into a

big arena. The same rule applies: no using the halter rope for control. A few buck once, others hop, one runs to the end and trots back, others won't move at all. "That's looking good," Ray says. Discipline, trust, tolerance, and respect have been put into practice. "Get them used to you, and they'll accept you on their backs. You want to be just like the mane and tail."

He rides down to the far end of the arena where the colts have congregated and begins to work on giving and vitality, the *dana* and *virya* paramitas – asking the riders to pick up the halter rope, bend the head one way, pet them, then bend the head the other way, and pet them again.

"That softness is in there, it goes through the body, down the legs, to the feet, and back into the mind. It's there and you just have to bring it out," he says. "Get your colts to move now," Ray instructs them. "Have a lively feel in your body and they'll get one in theirs too." The colts trot, lope, walk, then stop, as amazed as what has happened to them as the riders are. "That's enough for one day. You want to stop in a good frame of mind, not after they've failed."

At the end of the morning Ray gathers everyone around to tell a story: "A guy said, 'There's no use going to those Ray Hunt clinics, all he does is work with the mind.' Well what the hell else is there? I like to think it's 80% mind. You might have to do quite a bit physically, but once the mind is in tune, it takes almost nothing at all.

"What we're doing with these horses isn't a miracle. It's just there and you have to bring it out. I don't know how you are in your heart and your guts and your mind – but that's where this comes from. Some of these colts

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"THE HUMAN IS SO GOOD AT WAR.  
HE KNOWS HOW TO FIGHT. BUT  
MAKING PEACE, BOY, THAT'S THE  
HARDEST THING FOR A HUMAN.  
BUT ONCE YOU START GIVING,  
YOU WON'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH  
YOU GET BACK."

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had quite a bit of resistance in them. They had some hard spots and it was probably the human who put them there. You have to be patient. Do you know what that means? Respect and understanding. And sometimes you have to look deep inside the animal to see where the harmony is.

### Day Three.

On this day the colts are ridden with snaffle bits. As Ray watches the students put the bridles on, he gives help here and there. “Here, warm that bit up a little, it’s like an ice cube,” he says, grasping the snaffle in his wide hand. He reminds them that although they now have a bridle on the horse’s head, it is not meant for control, only to send messages. “You’ve got to be precise. You have to have something in mind before you pick up on those bridle reins,” he warns them. The horses move out around the arena, first at a walk, then

a trot with the bridle reins flopping. “Feel of the horse and for the horse,” he says as the riders whiz by. Develop compassion.

Then he begins working on *dhyana and upaya* – concentration and skillful means: “The reins should feel like silk in your hands,” he says. “There should be a float in them. You should feel weightless.” Horses and riders go around and around. He asks them to walk, trot, lope, stop, back, turn, do a snake, weaving in and out. “See how little you can do,” he keeps saying. “Bring the horse to a walk without using the reins. It should be in your body. See how slow and soft life can be without letting things die,” he says.

Horses trot by. “Now pick up a feel and speed them up. Don’t sit there like a gut shot bird,” he says to one rider. Laughter. “Your legs are more important than your hands,” he says, moving his own horse into a trot to

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demonstrate. He hardly moves in the saddle, yet the horse turns one way, then another, slows down, speeds up, stops. “When I’m on this horse he becomes my body, feet and legs. The reins are really hooked onto my feet and the horse is between my legs, arms, and hands. Don’t brace in the stirrups or he’ll brace back, and there’s a buck in his brace ....”

He continues to watch intently. “When I move my horse the impulsion comes from behind. Try to understand how important it is to know what is going on behind you, as well as what is going on in front of you. Ride the horse all the way through!” He lopes his horse forward, then around in a circle. The horse clamps her tail down as if she’s ready to buck. Ray grabs some mane – never the reins – and gives her something to do: ten figure eights, one way, then the other way, horse and man moving like a powerful engine. He stops her in the middle of the arena and she stands. “See she had something else on her mind so I took those ideas and turned them into something else without punishing her.”

Things in the arena get slightly chaotic but Ray has eyes in the back of his head. He knows where everyone is and what each horse is thinking. He asks the riders to count cadence – to tell him where each foot is as they trot by—and the dance begins. “It’s one mind and one body,” Ray yells out. A horse and rider pass behind him: “That’s right,” he says. But how could he have seen that horse and rider suddenly feel in harmony? She comes around in front of him: each rein seems to lift a foot and the horse’s legs drive through the center of the rider’s body like pistons, pumping up and down. They move as one.

### Last Day.

Ray gives us a farewell talk. He is stolid and straight in the saddle and his voice is raspy from dust and fatigue. He speaks pointedly, passionately, looking at every horse and every rider: “The horse is a mirror. It goes deep into the body. When I see your horse I see you too. It shows me everything you are, everything about the horse. I try to face life for what it is. There’s heartache, but it’s a good thing. I’m trying to save the horse’s life and your life too. The human is so good at war. He knows how to fight. But making peace, boy, that’s the hardest thing for a human. But once you start giving, you won’t believe how much you get back.”

He looks down, wipes dust from his eye. Giving, discipline, generosity, patience, compassion, skillful means, wisdom, harmony – that’s what Ray has been teaching. He continues:

“Don’t present things that are too hard to learn – don’t be arrogant. Allow the horse to learn in his own way. This takes discipline and maybe that will be the hardest thing for you. When you’re riding, try to do more by doing less and less. You have to be on the spot every moment because that’s where the horse is. Don’t worry, he’ll teach you if you let him. Fix it up and let it work. Turning loose means that when you reach for him, he softens. That goes for you too. It should be like silk all the way,” he says, then turns his horse to go. He pauses. “It’s hard to teach what I’ve been talking about all week because the first thing you need to know is the last thing you’ll learn. But I can tell you this: when you get to square ten, all of square one will be in it.”



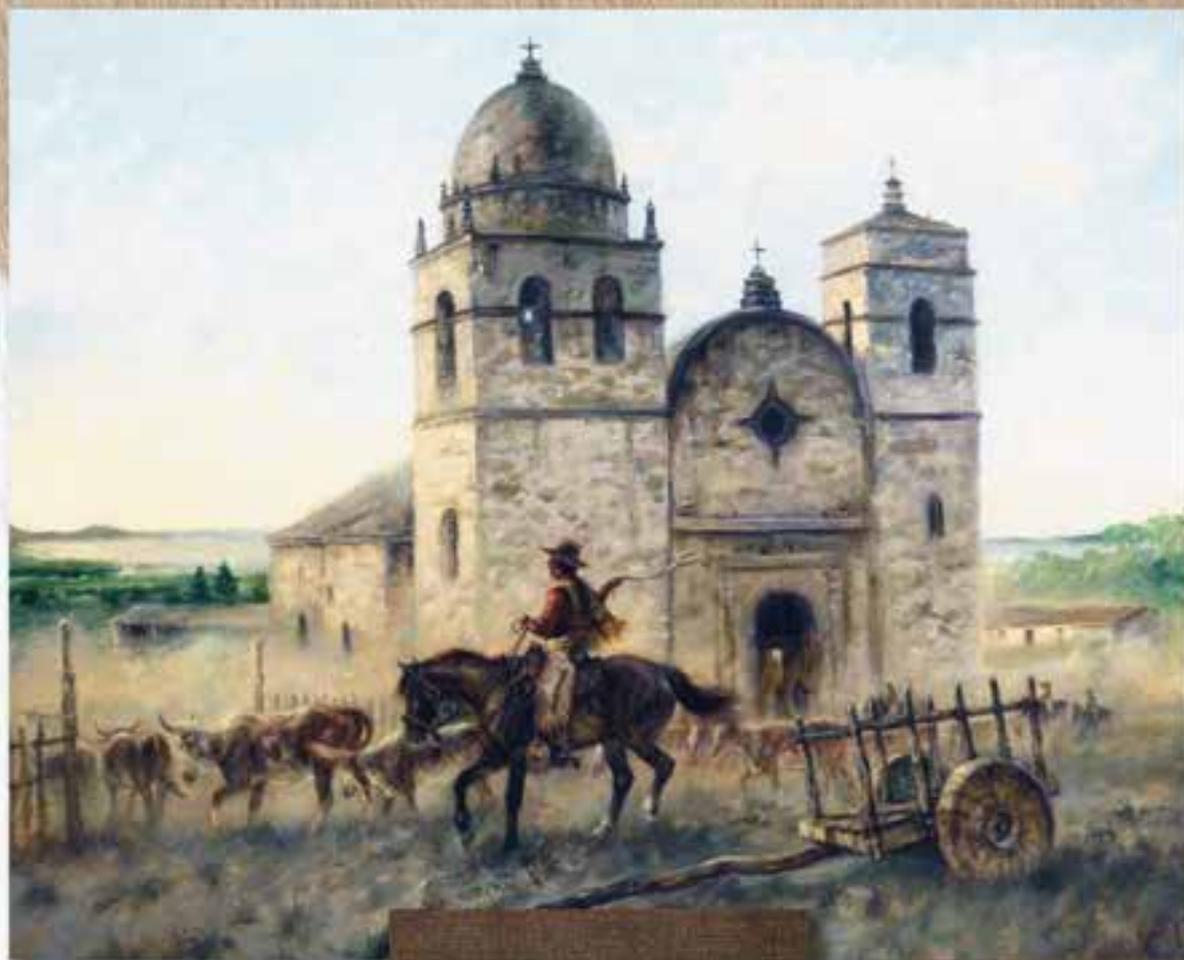
Gretel Ehrlich is a novelist, poet and essayist. She has authored numerous books including, *The Solace of Open Spaces*; *John Muir: Nature’s Visionary* and *Match to the Heart – One Woman’s Story of Being Struck by Lightning* among many others. Her 1998 story, “The Cowboy Sage” is presented here with the kind permission of the author. See all of Ms. Ehrlich’s book at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

L i m i t e d E d i t i o n

# The Life & Times of a Western Artist

J. N. Swanson

(1927 - 2014)



*Mission Cattle, 30 x 40, oil*

*J.N. Swanson*

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# Life, Energy, Guts and Heart

The artwork of Sophy Brown.

I had this horse once and he was hardwired to run. He was delivered from the racetrack strung taught as fiddle strings. I could hear him kicking at the trailer from half a mile away. When he stepped out that snow-muffled evening, a quick dark shape, trembling muscles bunched, damp with sweat, head high, eyes bright and alert, straining to scan all he could in the last of the daylight, I felt a tight and complicated knot of empathy form in my chest. I felt his anxiety. I felt his readiness to move. It came off him in waves and I'll never forget it because I recognized it. I knew it in my bones.

His name was Ikey and over the course of his life he showed me the truly dazzling range of his expressive capabilities. He revealed his inner life from his place in the natural world through eloquent physicality. With something that could be as slight and subtle as a relaxing ear, a tightening chin or a shifting of weight, he telegraphed it to anyone bearing witness.

It was years after Ikey's arrival that I was painting a large mural showing dressage movements and I knew I had found my subject. I set aside the previous abstract work, looked at my horses and surveyed my surroundings. Without planning to, I was painting horses in the modern American West, a place where attachment to the horse remains such a deep part of contemporary culture that it goes well beyond its

practical past. The horse was there through it all and will remain so because it is through the horse that so many of us keep vital our connection to nature, balance and that which grounds us. From the herds of wild horses and those who preserve the traditions, to the Marlboro man and Wyoming plates, the imagery is rich, plentiful and full of grit.

I obviously have no firsthand knowledge what it's like to be a bucking horse mounted, for what might be the first time, on a hot dusty afternoon in a loud and unfamiliar environment. Neither have I knowingly stepped onto a horse bound to buck. But I can relate to the high-stakes mental state. I'd like to say I also can't know what it is to be an animal accustomed to the freedom of wide open country then corralled – to know the feeling of being pressed in upon, from all sides, with not enough space to feel any ease – but actually I do. The feeling is mine, theirs, perhaps all of ours, and the thing I draw upon when painting. The painting is the record of a search to make real in parallel some of the life, energy, guts and heart of the subject. I'll try anything in the painters' box of tricks I can think of; I'll empty a painting of any distractions to the point where there's nothing left or I'll lose the driving vision – and occasionally myself – in the effort of trying to show it.

— *Sophy Brown*



*An Untitled Chase*



*Close Quarters*



*Color Like Fire*



*Moving Air*



*Kicking Up Dust*



*Peeling Off*



*Sundown*



*Standing Start*



*Extra Mile*



*Working Pickup*



*Shades of Gray*



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*Roll with It*



*Self Portrait as a Roping Horse*



*Work Ethic*



*Untitled Buckskin*

See Ms. Brown's art at The Legacy Gallery – [www.legacygallery.com/portfolio/sophy-brown](http://www.legacygallery.com/portfolio/sophy-brown)



## YOUR HORSE'S FEET, A SERIES

# Bare Able

By Pete Healey, APF

In the last issue I talked about how important the vertical depth of the foot is and the “Barefoot Trim.” When is barefoot right and when is shoeing appropriate?

Jamie Jackson is the father of the barefoot movement and the author of the book *The Natural Trim*. Jackson is a reformed farrier who promotes natural horse care and he adamantly believes that shoes should never be used on horses and he says so several times in his book. Jackson’s research on wild horses and its application to the hooves of domestic horses was conducted from 1982 through 1986 in the U.S. Great Basin, mostly in Nevada, California and Oregon. This is actually a well put-together book with good photographs of the inner anatomy of the foot and an in-depth description of trimming the hoof. Jackson believes that the wild horse represents the model for the perfect foot as dictated by its equilibrium with nature. Let’s explore.

The foot that Jackson promotes is from a model that is in a constant state of equilibrium, meaning it grows as it wears. The feet on these horses have probably never been distorted by growth from the time the horse was a foal. If you looked at a cross section of a foot it would have a deep robust frog and digital cushion, the sole at the apex of the bone would be the same thickness as the hoof wall which is smooth and shows no signs of compression, the break-over of the hoof capsule is at the apex of the bone and the hoof-pastern axis has a slight contour that would come into a straight alignment when the foot is loaded. This mechanical formula is what keeps this organ healthy. The deal is these horses are genetically adapted to their environment through generations of natural selection, the ones that couldn’t make it didn’t.

The domestic horse needs the same mechanical formula for organ health but most don’t live in an environment where the equilibrium of their feet must meet the demands of the environment like the wild horse to stay alive. The domestic foot is in a constant state of distortion which is compounded by the needs of the human activity placed on the horse. Breeding practices have also replaced natural selection and the subsequent conformation imperfections that follow are managed by human intervention. So if we just trim all these feet to look like wild horse feet will that solve all our problems? No.

The genetics and the environment of most domestic horses are too adverse to sustain equilibrium without an artificial appliance; the shoe. There are a lot of domestic horses that do fine with a barefoot trim. I have one mare in my practice that is 24 years old that I have taken care of her entire life. This mare has been a trail horse and has never had shoes on. I will recommend a horse go barefoot in a lay-up situation to allow the feet to regain equilibrium by using the weight bearing properties of the natural frog as long as there is ample volume to the back of the foot. Most of my practice consists of rehabilitating bad feet. The goal on a lot of these horses is to get the foot healthy enough so it can go barefoot. I can do this with a shoe but the shoeing has to match the mechanical needs of the foot. The industry standard of a flat horseshoe is the demise of a lot of feet because it doesn’t address the mechanical need.

Like everything in life there is a good middle ground, I wouldn’t get too hung-up on one paradigm but use what the horse needs, no more, no less. [www.balancedbreakover.com](http://www.balancedbreakover.com)



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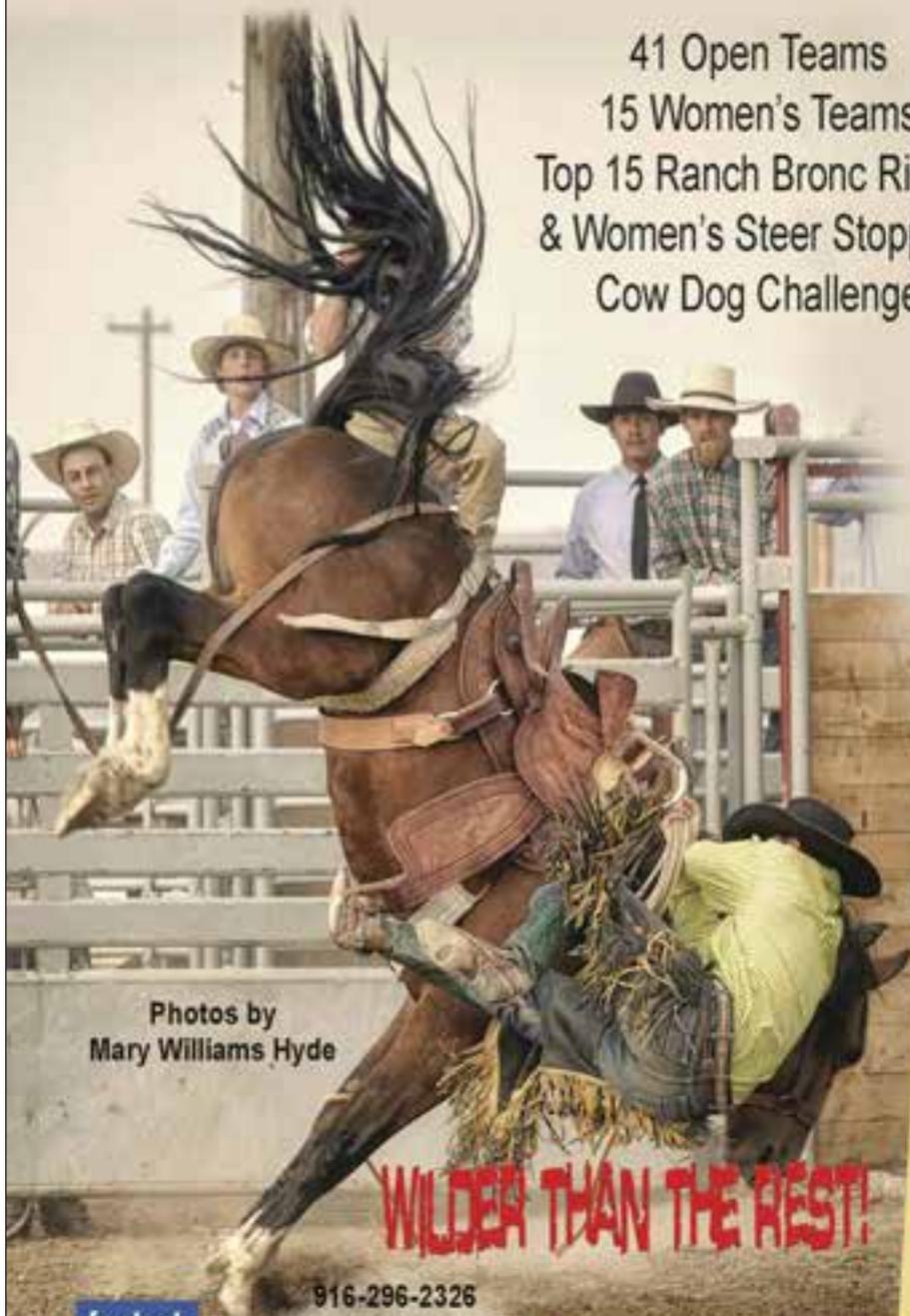
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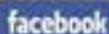


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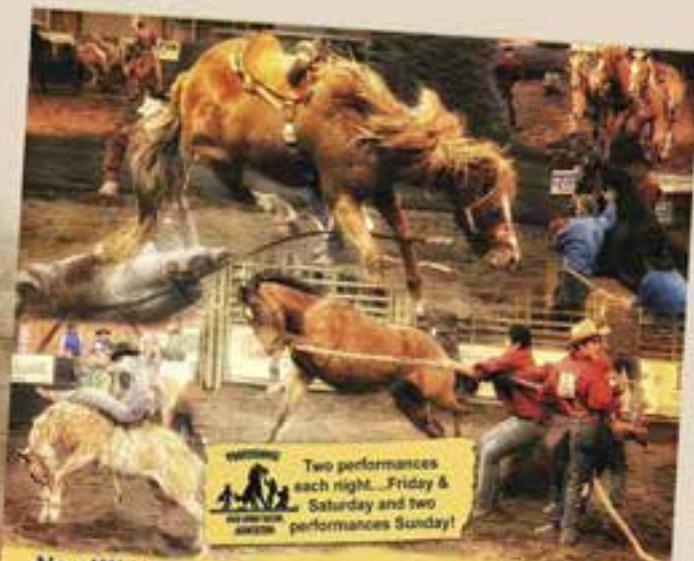


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# Roots Music

Five years after Alaska Reid's departure, Montana still inspires the Los Angeles musician.

By A.J. Mangum

Alaska Reid's 2012 CD *Powerlines* includes "Livingston," a mellow, acoustic ode to the Los Angeles-based musician's Montana hometown. She sings, "This place wouldn't be as special if I were here to stay, and had never gone away." Much is packed into that single line: homesickness and nostalgia balanced against the acknowledgement that progression, almost by definition, means putting that which is familiar in the rear-view mirror.

Five years after her move to southern California, Reid, now 18, still owes much to Big Sky Country. She developed a love of music listening to her father's eclectic collection of CDs during drives to town from their rural home in Paradise Valley. Reid's roots as a singer and guitarist trace to vocal lessons in Livingston and jam sessions with the town's "community of older musicians," who taught her to play. And, it's her separation from Montana that's inspired songs on the heavy themes of being out of place

and between identities.

"It's weird when you move from someplace," Reid says. "You have roots in one place and start putting down roots somewhere else. You don't know whether you're totally in one place at all."

Los Angeles, though, has been good to Reid. With her new band, Alyeska (an Aleut word for "mainland," and the term from which the 50th state takes its name), she's released an EP that represents a bold creative progression, courtesy of a sound decidedly more aggressive ("louder and electric," Reid says) than that found on the tranquil, dream-like *Powerlines* – think "Joni Mitchell joins Nirvana." In addition to performing frequent gigs throughout

southern California with Alyeska, Reid still maintains a solo identity, and spent this past summer opening for Lyle Lovett on his 2014 tour.

"Over the course of the past few months, I've played constantly," she says. "That's the name of the



photos courtesy Alaska Reid

Los Angeles musician Alaska Reid originally hails from Livingston, Montana. Big Sky Country remains an inspiration.



Reid spent the summer of 2014 opening for Lyle Lovett.

game, though. It keeps you on your toes. You battle through it, and the payoff is there.”

Reid grew up in Montana ranch country, but her identity was forged by Livingston’s art and literary scene. She spent more time around writers than around cowboys. By middle school, she was a guitar-obsessed budding poet joining her first band. Her earliest gigs included performances at “shitty bars” in southwestern Montana. Her family’s move to Los Angeles was painful, but she admits relocation was likely her big break.

“I was completely scared,” she says. “Montana was my home, and I’d grown up with a particular group of kids.” Still, music provided a constant for the transplanted Reid. “My involvement in the L.A. music scene was gradual, but it’s progressed.”

*Powerlines* has a contemporary country-folk sound, but Reid’s take is unabashedly literary and experimental, leaving her material free of any clichés of the genre. Sweeping, dramatic vocals carry lyrics rich with imagery of lonely, beautiful moments in small towns, and laden with the emotions of protagonists heading into uncertain futures. The material could be interpreted as a bridge between chapters in Reid’s life: the song “Livingston” follows “California,” a plugged-in road-trip number that – even with another title – would fit comfortably in the “California sound” catalog, beside the defining works of artists like Jackson Browne, Neil Young and Gram Parsons.

The *Alyeska* EP occupies different turf, expanding the universe in which Reid works as a songwriter, and



the influences from which she draws. Joni Mitchell and Neil Young and Cowboy Junkies are there, but so are nearly forgotten progenitors of the Seattle grunge scene, bands that early '90s alternative acts brought back onto the mainstream radar. Gentle, understated verses rise to explosive crescendos, and beautifully raw rhythm guitars are accented by delicate, ethereal keyboards. The record's energy propels it far outside the country-folk territory of *Powerlines*, and comfortably into the realm of alt-rock.

Recorded in just two afternoons, with a lineup of musicians that included backing vocalist Kimberly Rose, keyboardist Arlan Oscar, bass player Will Henley Dias, and drummer Ben Spear, the EP possesses the character of a live performance.

"All the instrumentation is live, with no studio tricks," Reid explains. "It's an honest EP, very raw, organic."

Such sincerity in a performance is important to Reid. She cites a wide range of influences, from Peggy Lee to Kurt Cobain; the common thread, she says, is a brand of unapologetic originality. "And," she adds, "some people are just cool."

Since the formation of Alyeska, Reid has returned to Montana to play familiar haunts with her new band. A highlight of this past summer: a marathon three-and-a-half-hour gig at Livingston's Murray Bar.

"There were a ton of people there," she says, "people I've been friends with since I was a kid, and they got to hear the 'electric band' sound for the first time. We only had maybe two hours of material, so I switched with the bass player and he began playing guitar – this blues thing – and we just made it up on the fly. This drunk guy in the audience kept offering to buy me a drink, and the bassist was sort of 'courted' by this older woman. Livingston is amazing, but also very bizarre that time of

year. We got the full dose."

Such a full-circle experience could be mistaken for the closing of a chapter – a last hurrah in Big Sky Country – but Reid actually returns to the Northern Rockies frequently to perform at benefits, festivals and other venues. Even after five years in California, and a lengthy list of new experiences and collaborations that have reshaped her sound, it's likely her Montana roots will always be present in her music.

Still, she's at a stage in her career, and at a stage of life, in which the unwritten future is an overwhelmingly dominant theme. Reid says she wants to "loosen up," and get more comfortable on stage. She's changed up her songwriting process, writing lyrics and music simultaneously, rather than locking her lyrical phrasing to the music.

And, she's content to move forward without the burden of labeling her work as part of any one genre. Such fearless explorations of identity – musings one could expect from a Montanan transitioning into a Californian, or from a country-folk solo performer doubling as an alt-rock band's lead singer – could make Reid one of Montana's most intriguing exports.



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkNI7nPaUDE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkNI7nPaUDE)  
Alaska Reid's video for "Summer Wind,"  
filmed on location in Montana.

A.J. Mangum is the editor of *Ranch & Reata* and the author of the non-fiction collection *Undiscovered Country: Dispatches from the American West*, available on Amazon.com.

Learn more about Alaska Reid's music at [www.alyeskaband.com](http://www.alyeskaband.com).



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## THE WESTERN HORSE

# A Meaningful Conversation

Ray Hunt protégé Patrick King shares the gospel of Ray Hunt.



By Paul A. Cañada

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When horseman Patrick King was young, his father purchased a seven-year-old gelding. The horse had been spoiled as a youngster and gelded late, and had an aggressive streak that proved dangerous.

“Come dinner time, if he thought you were late, you’d hear about it,” King recalls. “He liked to bang things around, bite and kick at you. I still carry scars from his teeth on my knuckles.”

King’s parents advised him to keep a whip handy for self-defense, but more often than not, encounters with the horse ended



photos courtesy Patrick King

Pennsylvania horseman and Ray Hunt protégé Patrick King.

with King retreating on the run.

During one evening feeding, the gelding caught King off guard, whirling and kicking the feed bucket from his hand. Before King could collect himself, the horse got between him and the stall door, and began kicking at him, his hooves connecting with the young boy’s ears.

“I crawled out of the stall,” King says. “Sitting outside the stall door, I made the decision it was time to look elsewhere for advice.”

Soon afterward, King discovered books by horsemanship pioneer Tom Dorrance and his protégé, Ray Hunt. The books



awakened in King a new understanding of horsemanship, one rooted in communication.

Unlike his horsemanship influences, Dorrance and Hunt, King wasn't a westerner. He lived in Pennsylvania, the son of a Pittsburgh coal miner, and hadn't been introduced to horses until the age of nine, when he learned to ride aboard his stepmother's Arabian. He began showing horses as a youngster, competing in western and hunt-seat events aboard Arabians, Quarter Horses and Paints.

"I showed in everything I could enter," he says. "I was always keen to jump on someone else's horses if they needed them warmed up or cooled out. Pretty quick, I was getting paid to do it."

Throughout his youth, King longed to ride with Dorrance and Hunt. Dorrance's passing in 2003 prompted King to sponsor a clinic with Hunt in western Pennsylvania. The experience led to King participating in an apprenticeship workshop with Hunt in Texas.

"I thought I had a good understanding of *feel* with a horse, but when I rode with Ray and Carolyn [Ray's wife], I found there was more to it," King says. "I'd had too much going on cerebrally, too much in my head and not enough feel."

During King's first day on the Hunts' ranch, Carolyn introduced him to some of their horses. A seemingly curious horse approached the fenceline and



Classical dressage is a dominant theme in King's repertoire.

when King offered his hand, the horse spooked.

"Carolyn explained how I hadn't offered myself to the horse in the right way in that moment," King says. "I hadn't thought about whether or not he was ready. She helped me realize I needed to work on myself more than I'd thought."

King and his four fellow apprentices began each day of the two-month workshop with coffee in Hunt's office, get-togethers Hunt called "how to be a man" meetings. They'd then ride all morning under the



King's clinics bring a Hunt-inspired brand of horsemanship to riders of all disciplines.

Hunts' supervision, talk horsemanship over lunch at a local cafe, then return to the ranch to ride all afternoon.

"Every day was spent working on gaining feel," King says. "Having the cerebral side in place helped me, but was just a base to build on. Once I put those mechanics in place with the 'feel' we talk about so often, working with horses went much smoother."

King explains Hunt's approach to horsemanship as being about preparing the horse for an upcoming signal or action, and recognizing when a horse is ready to move forward. The concept, he says, formed his foundation as a horseman, informing the concepts he shares with clients and clinic students today.

"Today, I work a lot with classical dressage ideas," King says. "I try to come at them from this mindset of

keeping the horse and his mind in the front of the equation. I work the horse's mind and body *together*."

The Dorrance and Hunt approaches to horsemanship have long been prevalent on the East Coast, but the evangelism of King and other horsemen has kept the concept of "communicative horsemanship" relevant in the East, long after the deaths of the two pioneers. Still, the ranks of the uninitiated, King finds, prove an ongoing challenge. Frequently, King finds himself on the receiving ends of phone calls from owners weighing putting a horse down against trying new strategies.

"I can't help but wonder how much better those horses would have gotten along from the start," King says, "if the owners had had a better understanding of



how to work with them.”

Whether they’re western or hunt-seat riders, King finds that a fundamental challenge his students face is recognizing the individuality of each horse, in particular the emotional limits of a horse in a given moment. Many riders, he says, are in too much of a rush for such realizations to occur. King counters this by working to improve students’ awareness of their horses’ movements, emotions and expressions, and how those signals relate to their actions in the saddle. Once a rider understands these relationships, a horse becomes a sounding board, offering feedback on the effectiveness of that rider’s approach.

“It’s like having a conversation with someone you just met,” King explains. “You don’t want to come across too strong or rude, yet you want to get your point across.

Good horsemanship is the art of having a meaningful conversation.”



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHgg1IQHj4#t=126](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHgg1IQHj4#t=126)

Patrick King demonstrates how the *garrocha*, a traditional Spanish stock-handling tool, can be useful in developing a horse.

Paul A. Cañada is a writer living in Texas. Learn more about Patrick King at [www.pkhorsemanship.com](http://www.pkhorsemanship.com).

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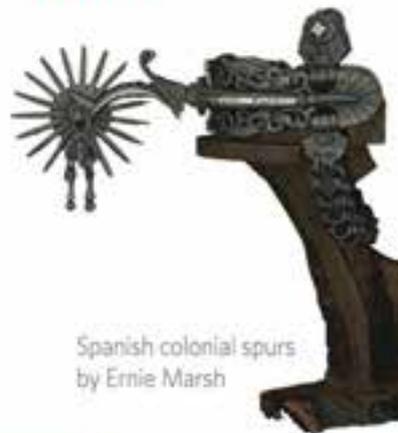
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# Hemingway in the West

By Tom Russell

*Before I was 16 I bucked out anything there that was in the shoots (chutes) with a bear trap saddle when I needed 100 dollars...*

**Ernest Hemingway**

Letter to Charles Scribner

I was sitting in my writing office in El Paso across from Ian Tyson. We were engaged in the thorny business of attempting to co-write a modern cowboy song. What's left to say? At some point in our bantering back and forth Ian changed the subject and stated, out of the blue: *You know Hemingway met Will James once. In the basement of a ranch in Montana. They hated each other. I think they were both drunk on their asses.*

End of anecdote. No more information.

I asked Ian where he'd heard that, but he couldn't recollect. A Montana rancher might have told him. And maybe somebody had told the Montana rancher. A modern Western rumor.

I thought about it for a few months, but couldn't track or trace



Hemingway fishing in Wyoming, 1928

that Hemingway-Will James meeting down. Ian's remark placed Hemingway in cowboy country, meeting a well-known Western writer and artist, and I was interested in seeing if I could essay up something called *Hemingway in the West*. So what was this Will James deal?

We don't normally connect Hemingway with the West. Or the cowboy lifestyle. Hemingway *died* in the West, of course. At the wrong end of a Boss shotgun balanced in his own hands. That was Ketchum, Idaho, 1961, where he'd lived his last few years.

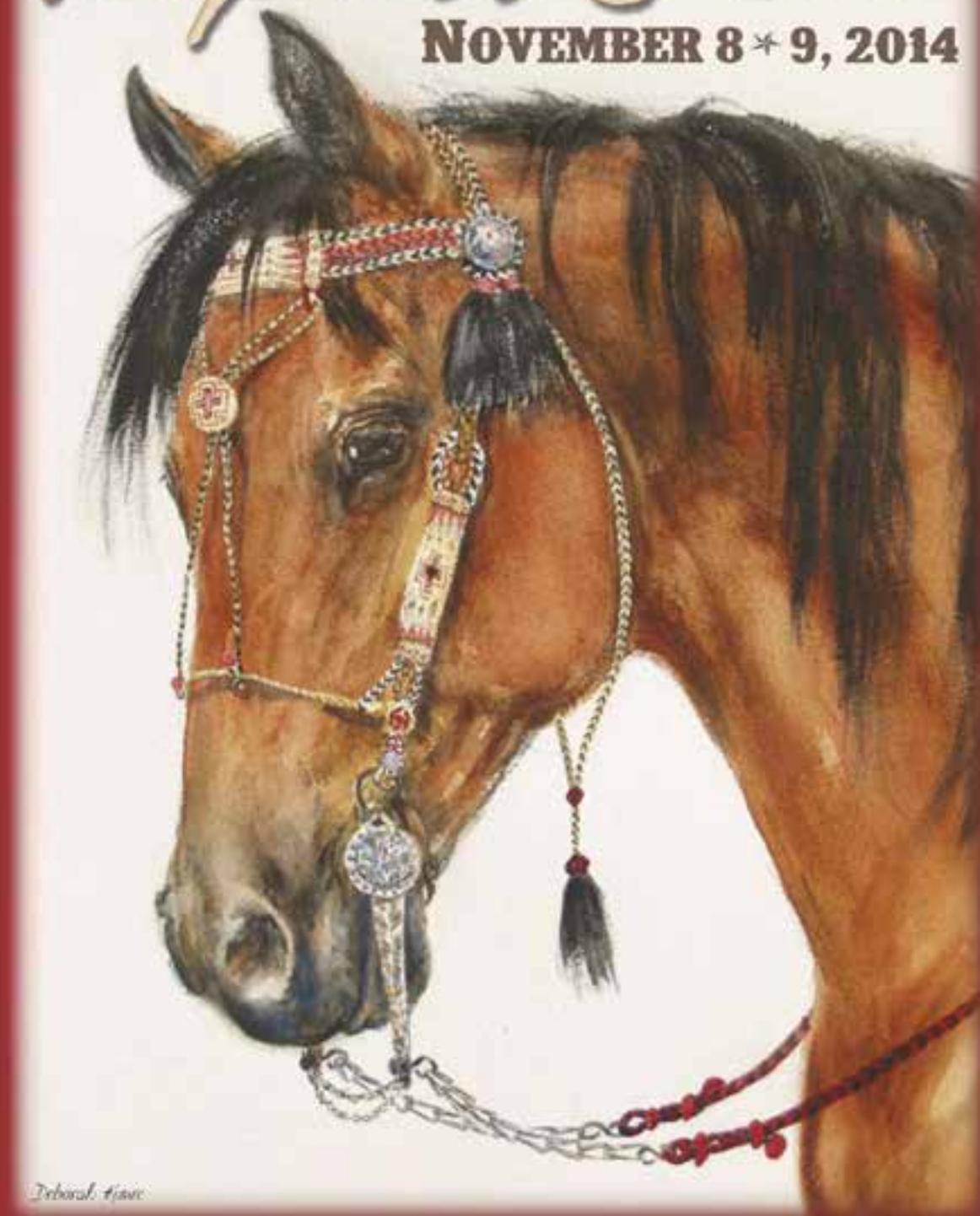
We tend to associate Hemingway with the locations of his best known stories, novels, non fiction books and essays: the boyhood summers in upper Michigan, the European front

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in WWI, Bohemian Paris in the 20s, skiing in the Austrian Alps, bulls and the Civil War in Spain, African safaris, and big game fishing in Key West and Cuba. And finally Idaho.

In my mind he invented his own *semi-fictional West*, where the hunting and fishing were always good, the country was wild and beautiful and ever changing, and there was a Spanish bullfight every Sunday within driving distance. He possessed a western *spirit*. He performed his writing chores with strict discipline (in the good years), and the rest of his days were given to outdoor sport, food, travel, camaraderie, wine, hard spirits, and love or war, whichever one was in the cards that particular season.

But what of this meeting with Will James? Was it *apocryphal*? What would they have talked about? Will James was a curious, self-made character who'd

reinvented himself in the West. He became a writer and visual artist who inspired thousands of boys (including Ian Tyson and Ramblin' Jack Elliott) to follow the cowboy trail.

I have a few pieces of Will James *memorabilia* – a letter he sent from the Algonquin Hotel in New York, and a cancelled check made out by Will to the Triangle Drug Company of Hollywood, for two dollars, on January 14, 1941. A pint of bourbon? A box of pencils? His legend is an enduring one in the world of Western writers and artists. I also have a lifetime interest in selected pieces of Hemingway's writing, so this Hemingway-Will James conflict interested me.

I wrote my friend Allen Josephs, a Hemingway scholar who teaches in Florida, and has published many fine books and essays on Hemingway, Spain, and bullfighting. Allen pointed me towards the published collection of Hemingway letters gathered by Carlos Baker. There were two references to Will James in the index.

We were on the trail.

## I Will James and Ernest Hemingway: The True Gen

*I have met Will James...and he is a sort of Dog-eared, moth-eaten, shifty eyed, fake imitation of old C.W. (sic) Russell, who was a real cowboy artist...*

**Ernest Hemingway,**

Letter to Archibald MacLeish

1930, From Billings Montana

Hemingway didn't meet Will James in Montana. He met James in publisher Charlie Scribner's office in New York, probably in the late 1920s. Both men were



published by Scribners. James had written his first six books, which included the classic, award winning, *Smoky the Cow Horse* (1927). Hemingway at that time had published the novella *The Torrents of Spring* (some considered it a weak, nasty parody of Sherwood Anderson's writing), collections of poetry and short stories, the Pamplona novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and the WW1 novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). These last two were triumphs. He was on his way.

A chance meeting in Scribner's office was probably

the only time the two men met. It would not be unusual for Hemingway to take a dislike for someone he figured

might be trespassing in his own literary territory – outdoor life, male adventure, the *last good country*, etc. And Will James sold a *helluva* lot of books. Maybe competitive tempers flared up. Too many cocktails for lunch? The boys were both world-class drinkers.

Hemingway would later be involved in a punch-out with Max Eastman in Scribner's office, so he was territorial there. Maybe Hemingway smelled a rat,



Hemingway (waving) enjoyed his time horseback.

was territorial there. Maybe Hemingway smelled a rat,

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or found out the “true gen” on Will James – that James wasn’t born on a ranch in cowboy country. James was born Joseph Ernest Nephtali Dufault, in 1892, in Quebec, Canada. He’d learned to cowboy from a



“Wing shooter”

French-Canadian wrangler and was later arrested and did jail time, twice, for cattle rustling. Later he’d do a turn as a horse wrangler in a prison in Nevada.

This French Canadian kid, Dufault, changed his name and taught himself to cowboy, draw horses, and write Western yarns. And steal cattle. He then fictionalized his cowboy roots. But, hell, almost every cowboy in the West had re-invented himself. A lot were Easterners, or Europeans, who were headed West, *out where the bullets fly, to follow the cowherds ’til the day I die*. To quote the old song: “The Hills of Mexico.”

What about that James-Hemingway *Montana* connection? The answer is in the Hemingway letters. Hemingway was in the hospital in Billings, in 1930, recovering from a fractured arm acquired in a car wreck. He welcomed visitors, but was tired of the locals continually name-dropping Will James. James was well known in Montana, and owned property in Pryor Creek and Billings.

Hemingway wrote from his hospital bed to Archibald MacLeish:

*This is Will James country out here. Anybody who comes into see you...talks about Will James... the next time anybody comes in, I'm going to claim to be Will James himself, and present them with an autographed copy of **Smoky**, that classic for boys.*

Papa Hemingway apparently never got over his competitive grudge against Will James. It kept simmering on the back burner for thirty years. In July of 1950 Hemingway was getting shelled by the critics for the novel *Across the River and Into the Trees* and he fired off a letter to publisher Charles Scribner from *The Finca Vigia*, his home in Cuba.

Hemingway was irate at the tidal wave of critical reviews of his novel, and the continual backhanded shots at his manhood. He raged on and on in the letter. At one point he proclaims his expertise as a cowboy, and this boast flies out of nowhere:

*Before I was sixteen I bucked out anything there that was in the shoots (chutes) with a Bear Trap saddle when I needed 100 dollars...you probably know what a Bear Trap saddle is from having that phony Will James work for you...on the second buck the horse throws you because of the twist he makes. In a bear trap saddle he can't throw you. You are with him for keeps. But it's 20 to 1 he breaks your back.*

There isn't evidence that Hemingway rode broncs for wages. But what the hell. He was trying to best Will James at his own game. But why? Apparently Charles



Scribner was fond of Will James, and Hemingway demanded full attention and reverence from Scribner. How could Hemingway out-cowboy a man who'd gone to prison twice for cattle rustling?

By 1950 Hemingway was starting a slow, downward mental spiral and swinging wildly at old shadows. The aged heavyweight champ defending his reputation in round fifteen, trying to last until the final bell. And then, two years later, he fooled the naysayers and came back with one last knockout punch: *The Old Man and the Sea*. It won the Pulitzer Prize.

The critics were hyenas circling the meat, waiting to move in on a wounded lion. You can't blame the old man's defensive stance. Ernest Hemingway was, and remains, a big target. Because he was a *big writer*. He re-invented the American sentence and wrote at least four monumental novels, dozens of classic short stories, and well-crafted essays and magazine pieces. And then there's *that lifestyle*, which writers from all corners of the globe have made unwise attempts to emulate or lampoon. Hemingway's work stands above the fracas.

We may never solve the final riddle of his passionate dislike for Will James. I've gone down that trail. It's only a rope trick to look at the Hemingway's Western years. Let's move further West in the game. Hollywood.

## II Hemingway in Hollywood

*The best way for a writer to deal with Hollywood is to meet the producers at the California state line: You throw them your book, they throw you the money. Then you jump into your car and drive like hell back the way you came...*

**Ernest Hemingway**

Will James died from the effects of alcohol in Hollywood, 1942. James was working with scriptwriters and producers who were adapting his stories. Script collaboration was often frustrating, demeaning work for writers use to working alone. Will would flee Hollywood and hide out on a dude ranch in Apple Valley, or in a bar on the high desert. He

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died in the Presbyterian Hospital in Hollywood. No comment from Mr. Hemingway.

Hemingway only visited Hollywood one time, in 1937, when he gave a speech to collect money in support of the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Eight Hemingway novels and several of his short stories were made into films, including: *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *To Have and Have Not*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*

Hemingway didn't care for the manner in which Hollywood handled his stories – most serious writers do not. But he liked the money. The other literary lion of that era, William Faulkner, had a sour taste for California after working for the film studios. He insisted on transporting his daughter's pregnant riding mare back to Mississippi, so the horse wouldn't foal on California soil.

Hemingway's old Paris cohort, F. Scott Fitzgerald, lost what remained of his soul by working for the movies. Scott drank. Deeply. What Fitzgerald called *going on the wagon* was a case of beer a day. He gave up the booze finally, but died in Hollywood, aged 44.

Hemingway wasn't made for script adapting. He

left that to others. He was given \$80,000 for the rights to *A Farewell to Arms* (1932), a large amount for the adaptation of a novel back then. In 1958 Warner Brothers gave him \$150,000 for the rights to *The Old Man and the Sea*. In the 40s and 50s, Hollywood put Hemingway's name up on the marquee, since he was the most famous *living* writer in the world. He received equal billing to the star actors.

Hemingway had many friends among those famous actors and actresses: Gary Cooper, Ingrid Bergman, and Marlene Dietrich, were a few of the *names*, and they traveled to Key West, Havana, New York, or Idaho to hang

out with him. He didn't care for the Hollywood social scene, or in fact *any* scene that did not revolve around himself, hunting, fishing, the bulls, betting sports, and drinking bouts in his favored haunts.

From 1939 on, Hemingway split his time between Cuba and the fall hunting season in Sun Valley, Idaho. Idaho was *the last good country*. The story of his final move out West begins in Cuba, where I once had the opportunity to step inside the Hemingway house. I climbed through the living room window and felt the ghosts rising above the half-empty gin bottles.





### III Cowboy Nights in Cuba

*The branches of the mango trees shook  
and snapped in the wind and its heat burned  
the mango flowers until they were brown  
and dusty and their stems dried...the winds came in  
Lent...there was a local name for them, and bad writers  
always became literary about them. He had  
resisted this...*

#### **Great News From the Mainland**

(A Short Story set in Cuba)

Ernest Hemingway

In 1932 Hemingway bought a vintage colonial house in Key West, Florida, and lived there with his second wife Pauline, on and off, until 1939. The house featured the first indoor plumbing on Key West. Here he wrote *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, *To Have and to Have Not* and *The Green Hills of Africa*. Cuba was across the Straits of Florida and he began to retreat there to write and fish.

Hemingway enjoyed the old Cuba, before Castro. The wild, corrupt, mafia-controlled Havana of bars and sporting clubs. There was cockfighting, Jai Alai, sports fishing, bird hunting – all of it within a short drive. His third wife-to-be, journalist and war correspondent Martha Gellhorn, found the property called *Finca Vigia* (Outlook Farm) in a village a few miles from Havana. A farmhouse and fifteen acres of flowers and fruit trees.

Hemingway eventually bought the place and they moved in with 5000 books, phonograph records, art, bullfight posters, and wild game trophies. Gellhorn went off to work as a war correspondent, and the marriage went on the rocks. Hemingway stuck around Cuba and later lived in *The Finca Vigia* with his fourth wife Mary. The guests arrived on a regular basis.

An average night might begin with the absinthe ritual, or a martini or two, a bottle of red wine with dinner, cognac, and then a chauffeured drive into Havana for the *pelota* matches (*Jai Alai*) and sojourns to the preferred bars. They watched the matches in a fronton called *Horno Verde*, the green oven. Hemingway's favorite



bars were *La Bodequita* and *El Floridita*. He wrote a declaration on a piece of butcher paper, framed on the wall in La Bodequita:

*My Mojito in La Bodequita.*

*My Daiquiri in El Floridita.*

He still holds the record in *El Floridita* for imbibing 16 straight double rum Daiquiris. Don't attempt this. The world record for writers goes to Dylan Thomas. Dylan's last coherent statement, after drinking at The White Horse Tavern in New York, was:

*I've had 18 straight whiskeys –*

*I believe that's the record.*

Good night, sweet ladies. He went into coma and died shortly after.

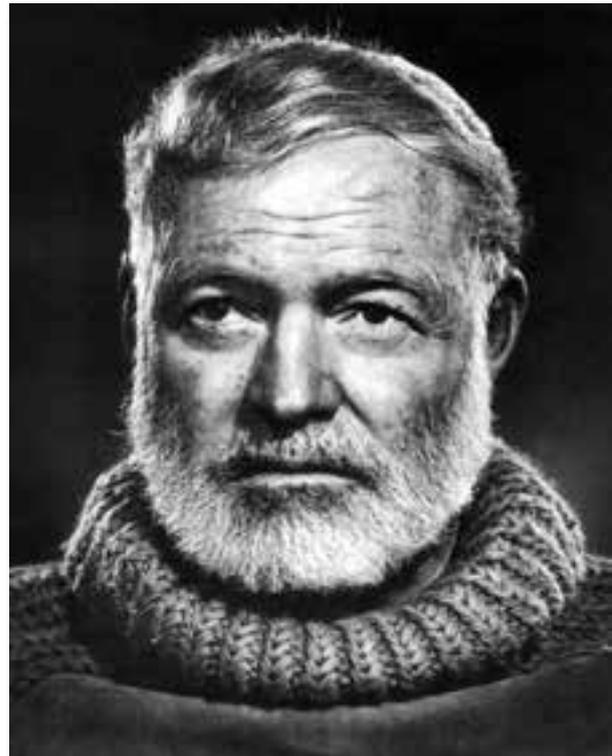
Hemingway's spirit endures in Havana. His drinking stool stands in *El Floridita*, inside a velvet rope which keeps the tourists off. In the corner is a full size bronze of Hemingway standing at the bar. Monuments to a man and a lifestyle.

In 1999 I visited Havana under the auspices of doing folk music research for a record I was working on. In truth I also wanted to visit the Hemingway house, and I accomplished this. The day after the visit I wrote out a summary of my visit on five pages of stationary at the old *Hotel Nacional* in Havana. Excerpts from those notes:

*We took a taxi to the edge of Havana, about five miles out, into a little village called San Francisco de Paula. Street vendors sold canned soup and cheap cigars and gaunt, skeletal dogs yapped and whined as they limped*

*away down dead-end alleys. Somewhere up the road was the Old Man's house, Finca Vigia.*

*Around a dusty corner there it was – a large tropical bungalow hidden in the overgrowth of palm trees, orchids, jasmine, avocados, hibiscus and bougainvilleas – 26 varieties bougainvilleas. Lush and decadent. The old farm. Decaying in the wet heat.*



*Castro allowed Finca Vigia to stay much as it was when the Old Man handed over the keys and walked away. The valuable paintings are gone, including a Miró (which Hemingway took), two by Juan Gris, a Klee, and a Braque. Miro's painting, "The Farm," now hangs in The National Gallery in Washington D.C.*

*Once we exited the taxi I noticed the empty swimming pool, where he swam laps every afternoon after writing. His fishing boat, The Pilar, was dry-docked poolside, next to four little graves for his dogs: "Negrita," "Blackdog,"*



*“Linda,” and “Neron.” Blackdog was his favorite, killed by Batista’s troops. The Black Dog,” was also the term he used for the deep depression which would eventually choke him. You weren’t allowed inside the house, but a woman guard approached and offered to let me go in for a five-dollar bribe. No one else was around. She pocketed the money and held her finger up in warning: “Three minutes. You no touch nothing. I watch.”*

*I climbed in a window and walked around. Eerie it was. The half-empty gin and whiskey bottles on a small table next to his reading chair. The ten-foot high bullfight posters. His bedroom with the typewriter where he stood to write every morning at first light. The books and magazines. Frozen in tropical time. The pencil marks in the bathroom where he marked his blood pressure.*

*There were hundreds of books and, unlike the libraries in most people’s homes, these volumes looked like they’d all been devoured. Chewed-on. The covers were tattered, rotting in the wet heat. They matched the feel of the place.*

*It was the house of a writer. He’d been gone for fifty years. Yet he wasn’t gone. There was enough gin left in one of the bottles, and I felt he could whirl out of there at any moment and throw a few jabs.*

*I climbed back out of a living room window. As we drove out through the bougainvilleas, we had the taxi take us to Cojimar, where he used to dock his boat, Pilar. We ordered rum and lime Mojitos and they tasted perfect that afternoon. Sweet and sour, like the Old Man’s life.*

#### IV Last Stand in the West: Idaho & The Vanishing Frontier

*The critics waited for him to write a bad one. Then they clobbered him. But when the Old Man couldn’t throw the fast ball, he threw his heart.*

**Raymond Chandler** (on Hemingway)

*I think he was in search of the vanishing frontier...a place where he could have some anonymity, where the hunting and fishing were still good. And he found that in Central Idaho.*

**Marty Petersen,**  
(The University of Idaho)

Ernest Hemingway made his final stand in Idaho,

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where he'd been hunting and enjoying the outdoor life for several decades. In 1958 he and Mary Hemingway purchased a chalet on a hill with a view of the Big Wood River and the Sawtooth Mountains.

Hemingway's time in Idaho dated back to 1939,



when Union Pacific Railroad chairman Averill Harriman invited Hemingway and other celebrities to Sun Valley. Hemingway hunted, fished, and drank in the local bars with Ingrid Bergman and Gary Cooper. In the fall of 1939, he worked on his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in suite 206 at the Sun Valley Lodge.

Photos of Hemingway's last years in Idaho reveal a man who has aged rapidly. Confusion, paranoia, and doubt drew him inward. He'd survived two plane crashes in the African bush, but the concussions and internal injuries left a deep mark on his health. Those who wrote about him in his last years sway between two tacts: *papa was my good hunting pal* types, and the

sycophants who charted his mental downfall.

I came across one noteworthy article written by the young Hunter S. Thompson for *The National Observer* in May, 1964. The title: *What Lured Hemingway to Ketchum?* Hunter would go on to write the outrageous drug and drink addled American classic: *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. He later killed himself in the manner of Hemingway.

Thompson was influenced by Hemingway, both the writing and the lifestyle, and Hunter understood the pressures of worldwide fame on an American writer. Hunter might also have been the only writer who could have matched the old man drink for drink.

Hunter Thompson wondered why Hemingway had moved to Ketchum, and Hunter concluded that Idaho was the only place (in contrast to Spain, Cuba, Paris, Africa etc.), which had not changed since *the good years*. A place where the old man had come since 1939 to hunt, fish, and drink in the bars with the locals. The past was used up and written. All the *good country* was ruined and the shadows were closing in on Papa Hemingway. He was in retreat.

## V The Bottom Line: Seeing it Clear and As a Whole

*If you ride and if your memory is good  
you may ride still through the forest of  
the Irati with trees like drawings in a child's  
fairy book. They cut those down. They ran  
logs down to the river and they killed the fish...*

Ernest Hemingway

**Death in the Afternoon**

Final Chapter

We've placed the old man in the West where he



clawed out his last days. In the end, why should we give a damn about Hemingway? Let's get to the core of the deal. *The writing itself.* The poet Charles Bukowski, with whom I shared a correspondence for twenty years, once wrote me: *Hemingway is better when you're young.* The truth is that Bukowski *is better when you're young.* Much of Hemingway can be revisited with pleasure.

To get to the heart of Hemingway, proceed to the last chapter of *Death in the Afternoon*, his 1932 non-fiction treatise on Spanish Bullfighting. Trust me. Forget the rest of the book, for now. It's a bit outdated, and chances are you aren't interested in the history of the bulls or the art of *torero*, or your wife, husband, kid, or girlfriend might run up your nose at such politically in-correct fare. Ignore them.

Follow me. Go to the last chapter, in which he talks about everything which was left out of the book. There, succinctly in nine pages, you'll find the writer Hemingway and his ability to summon up the country, *any country*, and make you feel it, and enable you to carry it away with you.

He was a master at landscapes, at the changes in the country, and how the seasons revolve and work. Against this backdrop were the local characters and Hemingway's affinity and practiced eye for painting their faces, gestures, and manner of dialogue: bootblacks, bartenders, hotel keepers, whores, bullfighters, chauffeurs, and wine merchants. He possessed an ear and an eye, and a writer's heart.

Here he speaks of the things he's left out, and finishes with the hard earned wisdom that we cannot achieve it all in one book.

He begins this way:

*If I could have made this enough of a book  
it would have had everything in it. The Prado,  
looking like some big American college building  
with sprinklers watering the grass early in the  
bright Madrid summer morning..*

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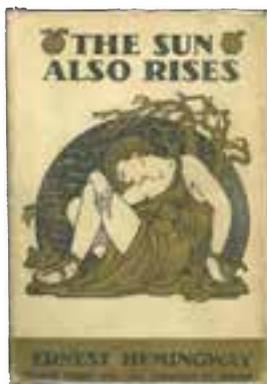
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And then he moves on to the miniature scenes left out of the main body of the book. In this chapter we find Hemingway. The well-hewn, matchless force of his writing. Forget the critics, and the putdowns and parodies. Forgive him his petty jealousies and drunken rants.

Here, in scattered settings, we are with him: on a Spanish train, with the closed window blinds blocking the sun, as the breeze blows against the blinds. The boy with the wicker basket of wine samples who shares the wine with everyone on the train, as the country rolls by, and the whole train, including Guardia Civil officers, becomes drunk.

A high mountain turn on a back road in Spain, where pine trees and blackberries come into focus by the roadside. And then Pamplona, which is already changing in 1932, as he writes:

*They have built new apartment buildings  
out over the sweep of plain that runs  
to the edge of the plateau, so that now  
you cannot see the mountains.*



What would the old man now think of a Pamplona that has been ruined for a good fifty years, partly due to Hemingway imitators and their fixation with the running of the bulls in *The Sun Also Rises*, and the ruination of culture

brought on by the Euro and European Union?

The scenes roll on and on in this chapter: swimming in the Irati river, and the gradual coldness of the water at different depths, and how the water felt as

you sunk down into it. The shadow of leaves on the side of a horse. Clouds coming fast, moving in shadows over



a wheat field. The loops of twisted garlic, the smell of olive oil, and the pitchforks made of natural wood, *the tines were branches*. The earthen jars of wine, twelve feet high, set side by side in a dark room.

He possessed the eye of a painter. He'd worked at it. He wrote, in *A Moveable Feast*, that when he was starving in Paris, he learned to write by visiting the Louvre Museum, standing in front of the Cezanne paintings for hours. He wrote in a painterly way. He *saw* and felt the country and distilled it down into a poetic language which makes us feel and see as well. But his language is never obtuse, or hard to decipher.

There's damn good reason why there have been more books written about Hemingway (and Jack Kerouac for that matter) than Twain, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, and all...because of the overall effect Hemingway (and Kerouac in his own way) have had on American culture, the American lingo, and the American creative mind.

In this final chapter of an early bullfight treatise, you understand the honed-force of Hemingway's writing and his ability to carve out poetry from small scenes he experienced and then forged into his writer's



memory. In this he is matchless. We read lines that roll out like folkloric verse.

Lets steal a short paragraph, refigure it, and create a poem called *In the Cafes*:

*In the cafes where the boys are never wrong  
 In the cafes where they are all brave  
 In the cafes where the saucers pile up and  
 the drinks are figured in pencil  
 on the marble tops among the shucked shrimp  
 In the cafes of seasons lost and feeling good and  
 Everyman a success by eight o'clock  
 If someone can pay the scores in cafes*

Yes, indeed. *If someone can pay the scores*. Ending this final chapter, he leaves us with the job of a writer:

*We've seen it all go and we'll watch it go again.  
 The great thing is to last and get your work done  
 and see and hear and learn and understand; and  
 write when there is something to write that you know;  
 and not before; and not too damned much after.  
 Let those who want to save the world if you can  
 get to see it clear and as a whole. Then any part  
 you make will represent the whole if it's made truly.*

There lies the goal. The heart of the creative task. *To see it clear and as a whole...*And that's what the old man did. Lived it. Drank it up. Wrote it. When he was on his game. And when he couldn't do it anymore he checked out. He died in the West. He remains a *Western* writer, because of his love of *country*: the trees, rivers, mountains, wild game, and an affinity for the everyday folk within these landscapes.

And the bulls. OK, the bulls. The bulls are missing from American history books. Fighting cattle came over on the first Spanish ships with the beef cattle, horses,

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conquistadores, wine, distilled spirits, and priests. The bulls were fought in the old ranch rings of Mexico, Texas, and California. They fought grizzly bears at *fiestas*.

This is our West, and Hemingway's West, and it winds back through Mexico, to those Spanish ships, and then Andalucía and back further to the Moors. Bulls in the pastures. Wine in the barrels. Men horseback. Death in the afternoon.

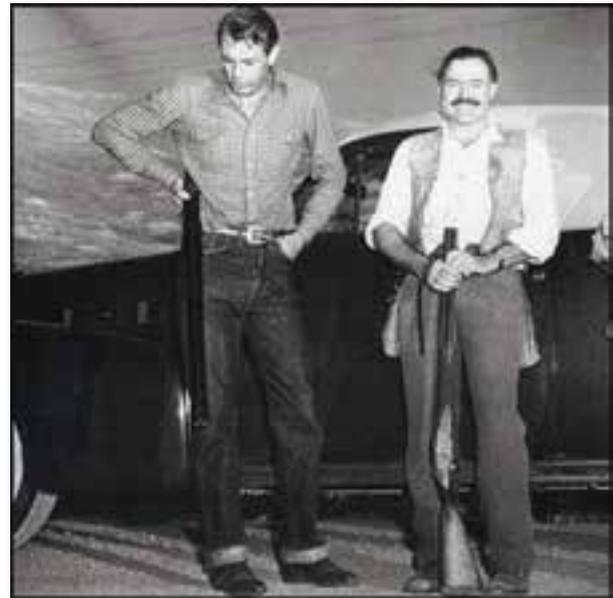
Hemingway knew all that. And bulls are still being fought in ritual, bloodless festivals in Texas and California. It rolls on.

**Coda: Far out Past Where We Can Go:  
Facing Eternity**

Ernest Hemingway won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. After the two African plane crashes he wasn't in shape to travel to Europe, but he recorded a short speech and sent it in. Here's a part:

*Writing, at its best, is a lonely life. Organizations for writers palliate the writer's loneliness but I doubt if they improve his writing. He grows in public stature as he sheds his loneliness and often his work deteriorates. For he does his work alone and if he is a good enough writer he must face eternity, or the lack of it, each day...It is because we have had such great writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him.*

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Shooting with Gary Cooper

Hemingway took the writing *far out past where he could go*, far past where anyone could help him. Throughout his lifetime he didn't join writer's clubs, teach writing classes, or move to Hollywood to write scripts. It wasn't his style. He was an outdoorsman who rose up to write at first light every morning of his working life. As long as he was able.

No matter, now, the Will James conflict, the bear trap saddle, and the inconsistent opinions of wormy detractors. The writing holds up, for all eternity, and his grave lies out West.

*In the last good country.*



Tom Russell will be performing at the Durango, Monterrey, and Elko Cowboy Gatherings in coming months.

His records, books, and art may be accessed via: [www.tomrussell.com](http://www.tomrussell.com) and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

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# California: Gateway to Nevada?

Thoughts on the boundary-challenged Golden State.

By Hal Cannon

If California were its own nation, it would annex Nevada as its outback. Californians already consider the Silver State as such, with its bargain-basement laws allowing the masses to drive a short distance for gambling, prostitution and tax-free living an inch over the state line. Nevada's even part of the Pacific Time Zone, even though Idaho, to the north, is on Mountain time.

And yet, one might argue, it should be just the opposite. Someone entering the United States from the west could consider California the gateway to Nevada and the rest of the inland West.

Westerners often debate the definition of the "true West," usually as copious amounts of alcohol fuel the conversation. How many drunks have I heard proclaim their citizenship in the *real* West, pointedly excluding California from qualification? Likewise, Californians enjoy their apartness from the rest of the geographic West.

It was after one such intellectual conversation that I came up with a theory: California has boundary issues. (It's great that we can explain the world in such simple terms after we've had enough to drink.) Nevertheless, my theory is the subject at hand.

Before I begin, I have to admit to some envy of California – the shoreline, beaches, good weather, fantastic ranch country and beautiful women. I still

maintain, though, that the state is confused when it comes to borders. Take the subject of state lines.

Splitting California into multiple states comes up time and again in Sacramento. The subject was first raised at the inaugural Constitutional Convention of 1849, in the former Mexican regional capital of Monterey, where a delegation of *Californios*, American settlers and miners met to establish the new state's boundaries. (Just a year later, Utah Territory was established, basically containing today's Utah and Nevada. The Mormons, conspicuously not present at California's Constitutional Convention, had ideas of their own. They wanted a state called Deseret, which would've included much of the Great Basin, and even a little tail jutting over to the sparse beaches of California and taking in Los Angeles. That didn't fly.)

With the Pacific on one side and the Sierra Nevadas on the other, California borders are logical, yet it's strange that a state with such straightforward geographic definition would come to challenge so often its borders – physical, political and cultural.

Besides the usual urban-rural divide, southern and northern California possess distinct cultures. I remember traveling in 1967 to Haight-Ashbury, where I encountered a profound questioning of boundaries, startling to a boy venturing out from Utah, replete with my own cultural limits. I'd been taught that you don't



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An early 19th century map of California and the North American West, long before contemporary state and international borders, much less subsequent political and social boundaries, had been imagined. Drawn and engraved by J. Rapkin.

take drugs, you don't grow your hair long, you don't challenge authority. And yet, there was something appealing about the power the youth of the time seemed to possess. And the music was pretty exciting. The movement was international, but California was undeniably in the lead.

Things have changed in the Bay Area since those counterculture days. Today, there's yet another shift underway. I recently visited my daughter in the East Bay, and was struck by the inability of a young family

to buy a home. Salaries are good, but the region's real estate market is out of sight, with a small bungalow in a decent neighborhood costing upward of \$1 million. Overachievers fueling the latest dot-com bubble have put their savings on the line, with little memory of the last dot-com burst. This isn't much different than California's first big boom, the Gold Rush, which inspired a song called "The Fools of '49," which could've been written for today's boom: "The people were all crazy then/They didn't know what to

do/They sold off their farms for just enough/To pay their passage through.”

California has always been a place where cultures converge and, in keeping with my theory, that’s contributed to its confused sense of boundaries. Nowhere is that more evident than in California’s musical history. Here is the earliest account I can find.

In 1834, Richard Henry Dana interrupted his studies at Harvard and shipped out as an ordinary seaman on board a trading vessel bound for California. His observations about life at sea and pre-Gold Rush California have become rare historical treasures.

Dana’s ship brought assorted goods around the horn to sell at California ports in exchange for cow hides. Dana observed Spanish California’s ranching, horsemanship and mission traditions before Mexico relinquished the territory. A visit to San Pedro, on Easter in 1835, yielded an observation about music and the mixing of cultures.

In anticipation of a cockfight, Dana wrote, “a great crowd collected in the square before the principal *pulperia* [general store]... We found the violin and guitar screaming and twanging away under the piazza, where they had been all day. As it was now sundown, there began to be some dancing. The Italian sailors danced and one of our crew exhibited himself in a sort of West Indian shuffle, much to the amusement of the bystanders, who cried out, ‘Bravo!’” Even in 1835, Californians weren’t strict about the purity of their own traditions, and the mixing of cultures was something to be cheered.

It’s curious that, in early California, music accompanied not only cockfights, but other poultry-related activities. A fun fact about California: there was once a healthy musical tradition centered around chicken-plucking. (And, who knows? This may still exist in the hidden canyons of Marin County.) Here’s

an 1897 account from the *San Francisco Call* titled “Picking Chickens to Music – Queer Customs of the Italian Poultry Dealers of San Francisco”:

“Who ever heard or saw a gang of Italian chicken-pickers sing and denude fowls to the tune of the music, asks the *San Francisco Call*. Such a scene can be witnessed any Friday evening in season at the Clay Street market, while the employees of the big poultry houses, that have their places of business there, are preparing for sale the chickens that the housewife buys for the Sunday dinner. The men seat themselves in a half circle and each takes a fowl. One stroke of a sharp knife across the throat puts the unfortunate squawking broiler out of its misery and then the foreman of the gang starts his song... [I]n time the others chime in and in an instant the plucking begins... [T]he nimble fingers grasp the feathers and pull them out during all the time of the song. Feathers fly in all directions but the song goes on until the last pinfeathers are removed and the carcasses are tossed into a pile. The song they sing is remarkably lively and sweet and much resembles the song of the fishermen as they row their boats, though the time is much faster.”

At this point you might be asking, what does this have to do with ranches or reatas? Precious little. However, I’d say that ranching and farming have been California’s ballast in a tempestuous cultural sea. Back in the day, many occupations had singing traditions – even chicken plucking. When it comes to the music of California’s horsemen, Arnold Rojas, in his book *Vaqueros and Buckeroos*, says, “I never heard a vaquero or buckeroo sing one of the so-called ‘western’ songs. He sang the current popular song, though he may have learned only a paragraph of it.”

I’m sure there was more to it than that but, as in most places, it took traveling songsters to develop the art of music and that’s where we see California cowboy music going places with few boundaries. Cowboy



harmony and the singing-cowboy movement in movies were pretty much developed in southern California, not particularly by working cowboys, but by entertainers who might or might not have had horseback skills. Again, it was an attitude of creating music out of the box that built popular cowboy music in the golden years of Hollywood filmmaking. Again, blurred boundaries.

Our family traveled to California for vacations and to visit family. My great-grandfather was sent to California by Brigham Young in 1849 to mine gold; then in 1856 he established a newspaper in San Francisco. My impression of California as a kid of the '50s was that, outside of San Francisco, which seemed to be the most sophisticated place on earth, California actually seemed a little backwards. Stopping at little

bergs on our way to Long Beach in the south, or in the Bay Area in the north, everything seemed retro by 10 years, an eternity at the time. Nowadays, one has to make a big drive from any major California city to get a rural vibe. The exception, of course, is getting out on ranches. I drove around a ranch on Mount Diablo, just outside Walnut Creek, and it was hard to believe Oakland was just a few miles away.

I admit it freely. It's hard not to love California for its history, for what it is today, and for what it has always been – an incredible landscape. Like many, I just wish not so many people loved it so much they have to live and drive there. I even love boundary-challenged California. The state has made America a richer place.



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# Botas Cowboy

Inspired by the American West, a Mediterranean company creates stylish cowboy boots for the European market.

By Elizabeth Clair Flood

As his plane begins its descent toward the Spanish island of Mallorca, in the Mediterranean Sea, beads of sweat form on Jürgen Weidenhaupt's forehead, triggered not by a fear of flying or the spring heat, but by a quiet, persistent chant by the German's wife, Lubica.

"Tony Mora. Tony Mora. Tony Mora."

Once on the ground, the couple immediately make the half-hour drive to Alaró, a small mountain village surrounded by olive groves. The *playas* and *paella* can wait. Jürgen and Lubica want to spend euros on high-end cowboy boots. Here, at bootmaker Tony Mora's shop, Tony Mora Apache Cowboy SL, they'll get their chance to add to their already sizable collection.

"Tony Mora is a special product," Jürgen says as he sips a *cortado*. He switches between German and English as Lubica tries on boots. Jürgen pulls from his wife's foot a boot decorated with

delicate magenta roses, then hands her a white pair with elaborate stitching. "They're not like other factory-made boots. When we have the money, we like to buy them."

Few Americans have heard of Tony Mora, but the company is nearly a century old and sells nearly 40,000 pairs of boots each year, making it one of Europe's leading brands of boots. The business began as the Mora family's shoe factory, and is now owned by Tolo Cardell, a native of Mallorca, who's been with Tony Mora since 1988. Ninety percent of the company's boots are cowboy boots; the remainder are made for upscale retailers like Gucci and Prada.

Cardell, bearing a grin and dressed in a pink-plaid Tommy Hilfiger shirt, jeans and white tennis shoes, tells me how he always looks forward to the

sound of his factory machines in production.

"Most of my life has been about cowboy boots," he says. As a teenager, Cardell worked in a Mallorcan



photos by Noelia Hernandez Adover

Finely crafted footwear is a Mallorcan tradition going back generations.



Tony Mora offers its boots in many exotic leathers.

factory that produced boots for the American company Acme. Later, he joined Tony Mora, overseeing its cowboy boot production. Cardell designs boots, sells them, wears them. But he's never used them for riding or kicking up dust. In fact, Cardell has never set foot in the American West. Instead, he explains, North America's cowboy country serves as the inspiration for a European style statement.

"Cowboy boots in America are for work," Cardell says. "In Europe, the cowboy boot is about elegance and people buy cowboy boots *por la pasión*." Tony Mora boots range in price from around \$280 up to \$3,000 for a top-of-the line pair sporting crocodile hide.

The Tony Mora shop, a small white building located on a country road, can be a surprising discovery for tourists roaming the Mallorcan countryside – an experience akin to finding lobster *paella* at a Wyoming general store. Mora's *botas cowboy*, though, are a hot item, and making cowboy boots has been business as usual here for generations.

Shoemaking has been a Mallorcan tradition since the late 1800s. Fifty years ago, there were nearly 200 shoe factories on the island, located off Spain's east coast. Locals say the "toc, toc, toc" of the shoemakers'

hammers could be heard all day, except when workers stopped for lunch.

Tony Mora produced boots for Acme for 15 years, until the American company shifted production elsewhere. Tony Mora, though, opted to continue producing cowboy boots, creating its own designs for the European market.

Today, customers purchase Tony Mora boots in shops throughout Europe, order them online, or buy them in person at the shop in Alaró, the company's only retail shop. Forty-three percent of Tony Mora boots are custom orders, often with exotic leathers, and are sent to buyers within five weeks. Penelope Cruz wears Tony Mora. Bruce Springsteen owns a pair. So does Anthony Hopkins.

In Cardell's small showroom, where the



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Weidenhaupts try on boots, several shelves sport handmade boots for men and women. Some are plain, some sport floral patterns or designs featuring steer heads, thunderbirds or pythons. A door leads to the factory, where the Mediterranean light falls on machinery and bootmakers, some of whom have been with the company for more than 25 years.

Despite Spain's economic downturn, which wiped out most Mallorcan shoe factories, Cardell says he'll never have his boots made elsewhere. He employs 27 craftsmen; for each, bootmaking is both an art form and a family tradition.

The Weidenhaupts decide on two pairs of boots, negotiate the price, and head out the door. In keeping with the shop's mom-and-pop Mediterranean style, the clerk, Silvia, gives Lubica a handmade leather belt as a gesture of appreciation for their business. The couple's purchase isn't the result of a whim, but rather the expression of a passion.

"Buying these boots is a lifestyle choice," Jürgen says. "The boots show that you can live free. The boots are associated with horses, the outdoors, outlaws. If you wear the boots, you are different."



Satisfied customers visiting from Germany. Designed for aesthetics rather than ranch work, Tony Mora boots are a popular choice for Europeans intrigued by the symbolism of the cowboy.



Elizabeth Clair Flood is the author of *Cowgirls: Women of the Wild West* and *Cowboy High Style: Thomas Molesworth to the New West*.



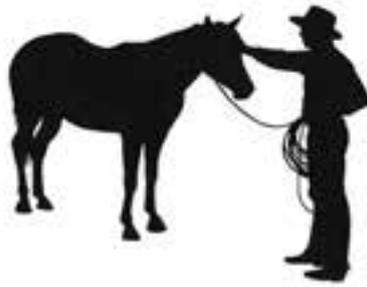
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## A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

# Ray Hunt

**T**he cover story of this issue brings back some wonderful memories for me. I believe that without the blessing of having Ray Hunt in my life; I don't where I would have ended up. The horse had no better friend than in that man and I think of him everyday.

When I first started to hang around Ray, on several occasions he would be asked to recite a certain poem. "The Guy in the Glass" is a poem that Ray found inspirational, as did many of his students and he would recite it at many of his horsemanship clinics.

I'll share it with you, in his memory – he was a significant man.

May he rest forever in God's hands.



photo of Ray Hunt courtesy of Carolyn Hunt. [www.rayhunt.com](http://www.rayhunt.com)

# A Legacy of Legends

2015 Gathering

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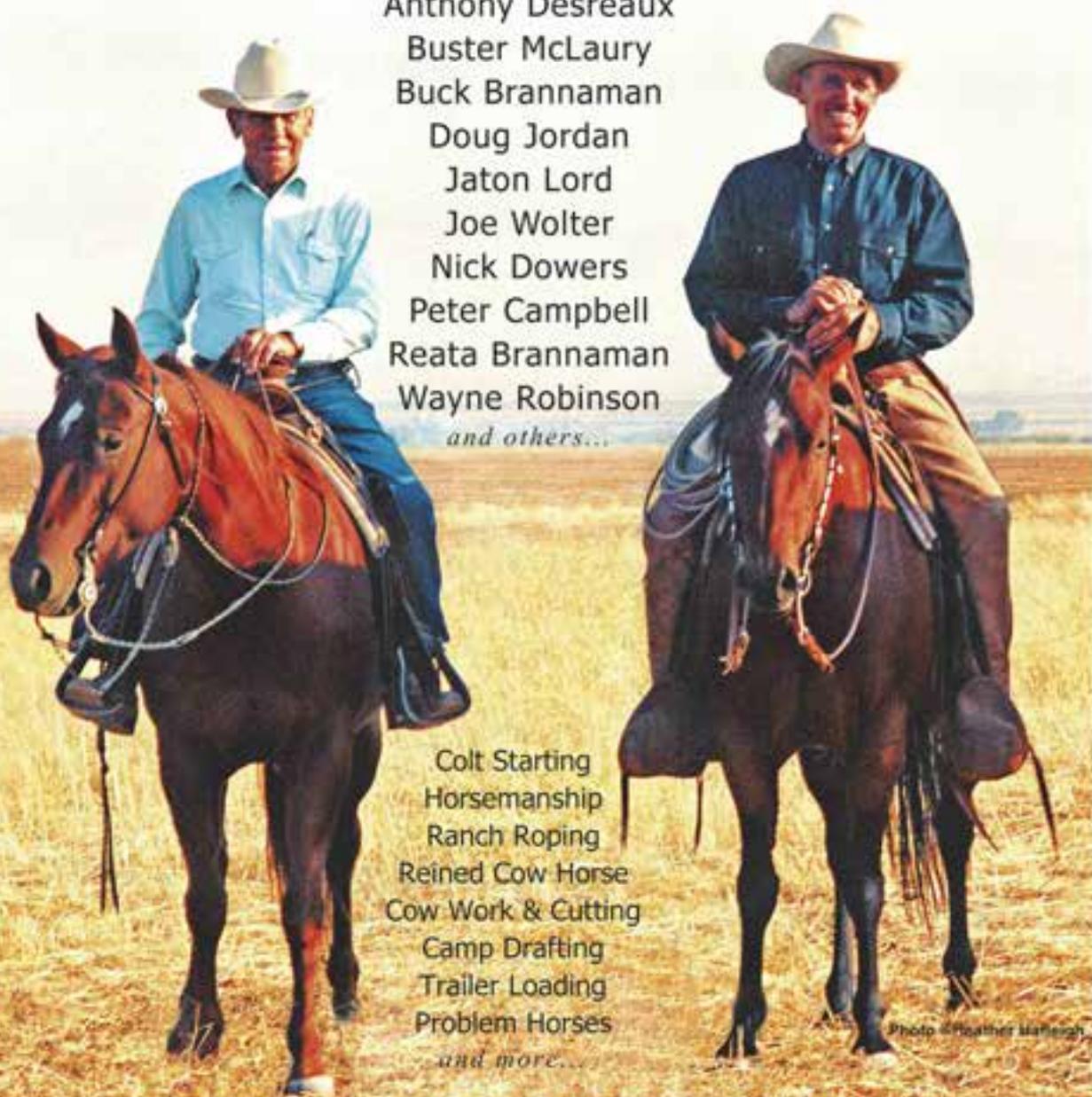
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photo by Bill Reynolds

## The Guy in the Glass

By Peter "Dale" Wimbrow Sr.,  
1895-1954

When you get what you want in your struggle for pelf,  
And the world makes you King for a day,  
Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,  
And see what that guy has to say.

For it isn't your Father, or Mother, or Wife,  
Who judgment upon you must pass.  
The feller whose verdict counts most in your life  
Is the guy staring back from the glass.

He's the feller to please, never mind all the rest,  
For he's with you clear up to the end,  
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test  
If the guy in the glass is your friend.

You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" a plum,  
And think you're a wonderful guy,  
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway of years,  
And get pats on the back as you pass,  
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears  
If you've cheated the guy in the glass.



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## THE HEN HOUSE

# The Little Things



By Reata Brannaman, Nevada Watt, Ceily Rae Highberger and Hannah Ballantyne

**Y**our alarm didn't go off. You're late. There's no coffee. You can't for the life of you get your darn trailer hooked up, and your oh-so-broke horses have picked this morning to decide, that even though you have caught them everyday this week...Today they decide that you're the anti-Christ and it's a must that they snort sideways and avoid being caught like the plague. You're standing hopeless and



Ceily

decaffeinated in the middle of the catch pen, halters hung solemnly by your side as you whimper softly to yourself "today is gonna be a long one."

It's at this moment, dear readers, that you have two options: you can either continue down the spiral of frustration, or you can take a moment, pull your head out, pull your hat down and enjoy the little things... and maaaaybe pick up a cup of coffee on the way.

We know it's inevitable that everybody has bad days, but why not recognize the little wins along the way.

- Unexpectedly finding money in your pocket – it's like Christmas.
- Having the perfect amount of blankets in your bedroll – showing up somewhere unaware of the weather, and managing to be unexpectedly prepared.
- Having a hair tie with the perfect amount of stretchiness – when you have a lot of hair to contain like we do, this is a simple joy.
- The first frost when the flies all die-Summer is awesome, except for the flies. Despite winter looming this event makes the cold mornings a wee bit more bearable.



Reata

pasture after a fresh snow – the crunch of the snow with no tracks on it is pretty blissful.

- Finding the “other sock” – dang that sock monster, he’s everywhere!
- Backing up the pickup to the trailer perfectly the first time – gosh it feels good to be awesome.
- Finding jeans that are long enough – this rarely happens, but who doesn’t like stacks... be better than high-waters.
- Finding parking on campus – 15,000 and us others like this too.
- When you get your hat shaped perfectly – this brings out the OCD in all of us.



Hannah

- The smell of earth during the first few drops of rain – Trotting out during the first drops of rain – nothing quite like that smell.
- When you flip an egg and you don’t break the yoke – like a boss.
- When your roommate knows how to put out an oven fire – don’t worry... In the midst of this article we had a little incident... but no worries, salt does the trick.
- Cold side of the pillow – enough said.
- When your dog listens to you in public – not only makes you look good, but you don’t have to follow an ignored command with a “never mind.”
- Hitting all the green lights – is this how superman feels?
- Being the first to ride across a



Nevada

- When saran wrap cooperates perfectly – when it doesn’t stick to everything else in the kitchen and actually sticks to what it’s supposed to.
- When your horse sticks his butt in the ground – At some level deep deep down you want to expect this every time you ask your horse to stop, but then again when it actually happens, you just want to throw your arms in the air and sing hallelujah.
- When your touchy colt that has bucked the last 30 days when you’ve cinched her up, decides she might not try it today – colt-30 me-1.
- The first scoop out of a fresh jar of jelly or peanut butter – nothing like being the first in uncharted territory.
- Feel free to fill in the little things that you find joy in



# The Beauty of Where They've Been

Students from photographer Adam Jahiel's annual Willow Creek Ranch workshop share some of their best images of Wyoming ranch life.

Wyoming photographer Adam Jahiel's portfolio includes celebrity portraits, photojournalistic images from destinations such as Cuba and Kyrgyzstan, documentary photos from the 1987 RMS *Titanic* recovery expedition, and some of the most iconic shots depicting the West's contemporary cowboy culture.

In recent years, Jahiel has taught photography workshops at central Wyoming's 57,000-acre Willow Creek Ranch, drawing students from across North America and Europe for a weeklong immersion in photographing the landscapes, action and personalities that define ranching life.

The spring and fall workshops (held, most recently, in June and September 2014) offer a variety of shooting conditions, from bright sunlight to snowfall. Subject matter revolves around Willow Creek cowboys' work schedules, and includes cattle roundups, landscapes, horses, livestock and the cowboys themselves. The ranch's shooting locations include the legendary Hole-in-the-Wall camp, once a hideout for Butch Cassidy and other notorious outlaws, as well as various petroglyph sites on the ranch.

Students meet and share their work in a conference room inside the ranch's renovated airplane hangar, camp in cowboy teepees, and enjoy meals prepared at a chuckwagon. Evening entertainment has included musical performances and insight from a cowboy historian on the famed Johnson County War, the area's colorful outlaw history, and the Sioux Trail, which cuts through the ranch. On the final evening, tradition has held that students, hosts and guests gather for a presentation of the week's best work.

Here, students present some of their favorite images from the 2014 workshops. Learn more about Jahiel's upcoming workshops at [www.adamjahiel.com](http://www.adamjahiel.com).



“I followed this horse for a good hour. I wasn’t as appealing to him, so he avoided me. I grabbed this shot while he tried to get away. He succeeded. I love this shot, from the back light to the composition. This photo is actually a bit overexposed, which in turn made it the perfect black-and-white conversion.” – photographer Carrie Heitman



“Cattle had just come down from the mountain, and the cowboys were in the process of doctoring calves. Instead of concentrating on the action, I wandered to the calmer parts of the winter pasture, and found these longhorns. I love the velvet grass and iron-dense hills in the background, giving this photograph a sense of life. If only cattle could appreciate their surroundings. Or maybe they do?” – photographer Carrie Heitman



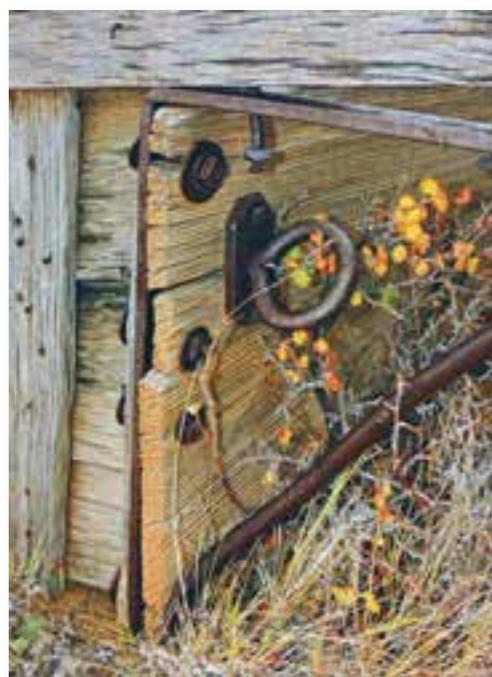
“A rider and his dogs just finished pushing the horses into the corral in the early morning. This shot was all about the silhouette, with no details necessary.” – photographer Diana Metz



“Photography is often about waiting for the shot. Here, a group of longhorns reluctant to move into the next pasture finally make their grand entrance against the backdrop of the road and beautiful country.” – photographer Diana Metz



“Clint Black checks his tack and prepares to mount his horse. He and other cowboys will gather and move cattle to pastures closer to ranch headquarters.” – photographer Jeff Miller



“Photo opportunities abound on the Willow Creek Ranch. Dry yellow flowers adorn the side of this knee-high corner of a decaying wooden shelter.” – photographer Jeff Miller



“During a side trip to photograph petroglyphs, this dog caught my eye. He’d never taken a break, but this day had gotten himself in the back of the truck. I guess he was ready to go. I’m not sure what ‘Mickey’ was looking at, but I was glad he gave me a good profile. His speckled coat, and the white lines of an otherwise filthy pickup, made a moment.” – photographer David Shapiro

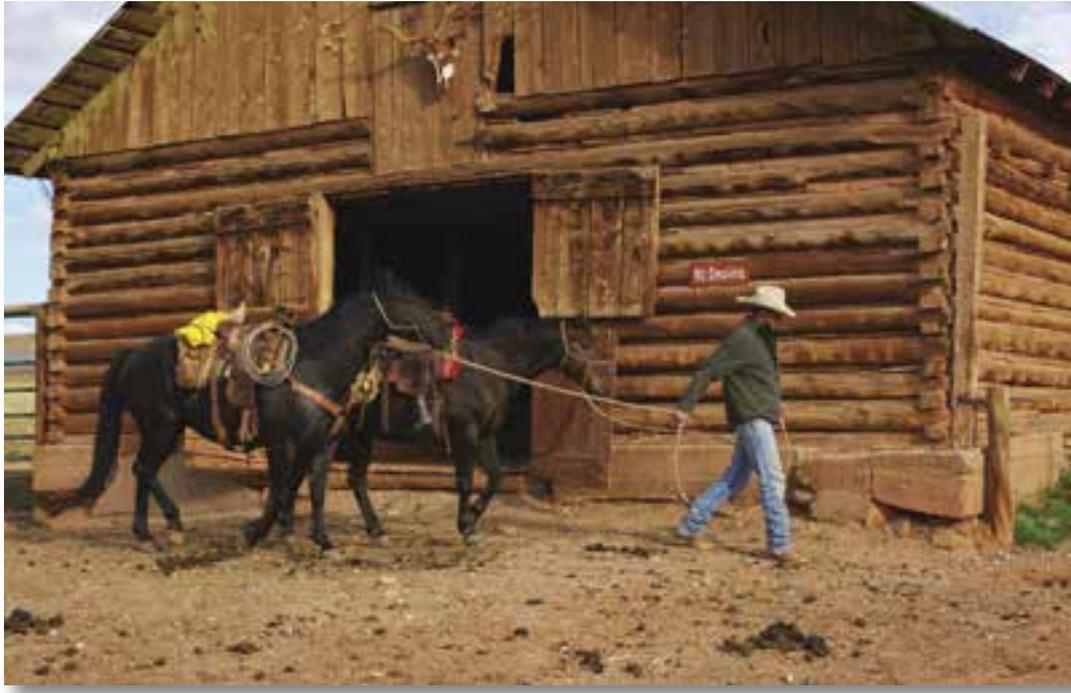


“After camping overnight at the Hole in the Wall, the next day was spent photographing riders bringing cattle down from summer pasture. This shot reflects the toll of a hard day’s work.” – photographer Debbie Metz



“Willow Creek’s horse barn is a hub for the ranch, and an excellent focal point for photography. On this particular morning, a snowstorm coated the rustic walls and drifted around the doors.”

– photographer Debbie Metz



“Being a newbie to ranch life, I found myself holding my camera and looking around. Adam said, ‘the open door of the barn makes a great frame for the cowboys leading their horses to the trailer.’ Taking that cue, I shot this image of the beginning of the ranch day.”  
– photographer Ellen Horan

“This image captures the connected peace of a cowboy and his horse. The distant storm clouds provide a dramatic backdrop for a prairie scene.”  
– photographer Ellen Horan





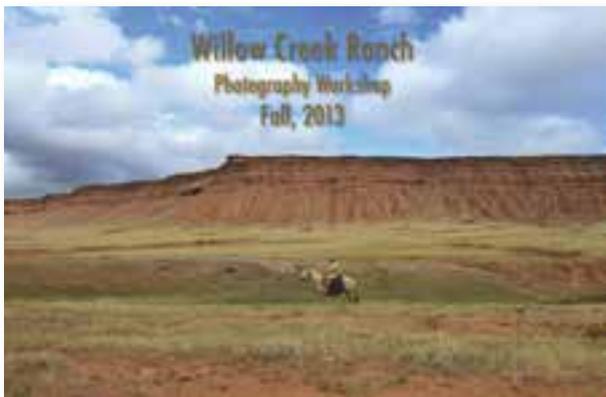
“Shooting photographs in a barn has its own challenges. You’re shooting in low light, making it necessary to use long shutter speeds and, if you want depth of field, a tripod. Add dust that can wreak havoc on your camera, horses that might spook at your equipment, and the odd rusty spike lost long ago by the farrier. These disadvantages are outweighed by the magic light you’re likely to find. In certain areas of the barn, light becomes diffused, giving a soft glow to a subject. A ranch photo workshop wouldn’t be complete without a visit to the barn, even if all you shoot is a set of slickers.”  
– commentary by Adam Jahiel;  
photos by Jan Vreys



“Whether it’s a fleeting cloud or shadow, vanishing light draws me to a frame. I find looking back at photos helps me appreciate times in my life and the beauty of where I’ve been and hope to be again.” – photographer Rebecca Helvey

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Open



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqyCUMxorBI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqyCUMxorBI)  
This video features some of the best imagery from Adam Jahiel’s 2013 Willow Creek Ranch workshop.



# Second Lives

Architects and designers preserve the West's heritage by repurposing historic ranch buildings.

By Melissa Mylchreest

Imagine, if you will, a bird's-eye view of southern Montana. Zoom in on the Paradise Valley, the cradle of the Yellowstone River, bounded by the Gallatin Range on the west and the wild Absaroka Range on the east. Dive closer, narrowing in on the river like an osprey after a trout. Fly along the banks, passing cattle, elk, maybe a bear, cottonwoods and hay. In the distance, you see a small structure, a building snuggled right down by the riverbank, unassuming and unpretentious. As it passes beyond your wingtip and out of sight, you pay it little mind; it sits on the landscape as though it belongs there. Which, in fact, is what makes it so special.

As the demographics and economics of the American West change, so too do the uses of the land. For better or worse, ranch properties are changing hands, and often the needs of new owners are not the same as those who came before. Cattle operations make way for golf courses, or prime agricultural land is plowed up for subdivisions. Sometimes, gaudy homes spring up with little respect for their surroundings. But on occasion, a new owner works to preserve not just the landscape, but also the heritage and architectural history of a place.

Legacy Ranch, located deep in the Paradise Valley, is one such place, and its unassuming cabin on the Yellowstone's banks is one example of a changing mindset in architecture, design, building and land use in the West.



photos by Heidi Long

Architects and designers repurposed the Legacy Ranch's bunkhouses and outbuildings. Vintage ranch bunkhouses became guest quarters, playrooms and a home theater.

The property had previously been home to a show-horse facility, complete with a large arena and many



Contemporary western design is often about clean, modern lines, reclaimed materials, and understatement.

outbuildings. While the land remains a working cattle ranch, its new owners had no need for the arena; they moved it off the property and donated it to the community. They put the land in a conservation easement, and began the process of restoring the landscape. But what to do with all the small outbuildings? Architect Janet Jarvis knew just what to do.

“The client often has all her kids and grandkids here at the ranch, and they wanted everyone to have their own place to stay,” Jarvis explains. “So, there were lots of little buildings scattered around the site, and we moved them into better locations.”

Remodeled, refurbished and repurposed, buildings that would otherwise have been torn down became guest quarters, a home theater, a bunkhouse, a playroom. Even the large, main home makes use of reclaimed materials. Jarvis has made this tactic her

specialty, and has given many ranch buildings throughout the West the opportunity to be reincarnated into new lives, rather than left to deteriorate.

And what of the little building by the river? It had been used as a veterinary building, with a few stalls for horses and not much else. But, even though all of the other outbuildings had been moved away from the river in an effort to restore the landscape and establish a more pristine view, the little building seemed to belong there.

“The client thought it was such a great location, they didn’t want to tear down the building,” Jarvis says. “So we decided to convert it into a two-bedroom guest house.”

Secluded and quiet, Clark’s Cabin, as it is called, encapsulates so much of what defines an emerging vision for western design: It’s simple and understated, and allows the location and landscape to shine. The building’s original cement slab provides the footprint for the structure, and, while only the bones of the original building could be salvaged, the rebuild is the same size and shape.

“It doesn’t seem at all like a barn,” says photographer Heidi Long, who stayed in Clark’s Cabin while photographing the ranch. “But you can tell it was remodeled from something, just from subtle cues. For instance, the fact that it’s a perfect rectangle says it was a practical ranch building at one time. And it’s neat to imagine how many horses were tended to in that space.”

While the building’s past life may only come through subtly – no horseshoe-worn floors, no *eau de corral* odor lingering – interior designer Elizabeth Schultz says she’s very cognizant of a building’s provenance when she creates a redesign for it.

“I think about a building’s history – to a point,” she says. “I think you’d mess up the value if you completely wiped it out, and you have to be conscious of what you’re starting with.” But, she adds, just because a building is old doesn’t mean that the design can’t be contemporary.



“I’ve never been a huge fan of the super-western design, which feels more passé now anyway,” Schultz says. Gone, she contends, are the days of hides and antler chandeliers, ponderous furnishings and cluttered spaces. Instead, at places like Legacy Ranch and elsewhere, she focuses on clean, modern lines, reclaimed materials, and subtle uses of color that highlight the landscape. In Clark’s Cabin, Schultz chose knotty pine paneling, neutral colors, simple furnishings, and a few select pieces of artwork, all for good reason:

“Everything in our world is so fast now, and I think modern, more contemporary design is cleaner, with less clutter,” Shultz explains. “It’s easier to be in and be around. It definitely feels like people are going simpler, out of need for things to slow down a little bit, to be more comfortable.”

And this gets to the heart of the matter: These days, more than anything, people want their dwelling spaces to be comfortable, inviting and unencumbered. And, people are cognizant of how quickly valuable parts of the West – landscape, heritage, an unhurried pace, and a rustic, wild ethos – are becoming threatened.

Artists like Schultz and Jarvis are finding creative ways to address these needs and concerns right in our own homes, the places most important to us. Schultz’s interiors offer a soothing respite from a hectic, crazy world, while Jarvis’ architecture salvages priceless pieces of history and allows them to live on. Places like Clark’s Cabin and the whole of the Legacy Ranch do something to put us at ease, and it isn’t just the Yellowstone laughing past the door, or the Absarokas stunning us from afar. Places like this reassure us that we’re paying attention to what’s important – past, present and future.



Clark’s Cabin’s rectangular footprint suggests its former utility as a ranch building, but its interior offers modern comfort.

And maybe that’s all we need to remind us of what really matters: A small, quiet cabin alongside the water, with some mountains towering above and a few fine horses grazing nearby. A place we can sit in as though we belong there. And what more could we really want?

“My favorite spot on the whole ranch was in that building, right there on the river, very private, peaceful, and cozy,” says Long. “I felt like Goldilocks. It was just right.”



Melissa Mylchreest is a writer living in Montana.

# The Fine Art of Rough Stock

Through a new monumental work, sculptor Jeff Wolf pays tribute to the sport of rodeo.

By Rod Miller

Nothing gives you an intimate understanding of the form and motion of rough stock like crawling down into a bucking chute, cinching up a bareback rigging, bronc saddle or bull rope, and nodding for the gate. Jeff Wolf earned that understanding as a going-down-the-road rodeo cowboy. As an artist and sculptor, that intimate knowledge fuels his head, hands and heart.

That's why, when the Gooding Pro Rodeo launched a search for an artist to create a monumental sculpture for the arena at the Gooding, Idaho, County Fairgrounds, the job went to Wolf.

The sculpture, *Rodeo*, is a trilogy of arena action, featuring a bareback bronc and rider, saddle bronc and rider, and bull and rider. Wolf says of creating the work, "Massing three full figures together to make one piece, yet displaying each figure as an individual, is much like creating visual music."

The finished bronze, plus a pedestal of local lava rock, was unveiled in a ceremony at the Gooding County Fairgrounds August 13 to kick off the annual PRCA rodeo. Don Gill, chairman of the Gooding County Fair and Rodeo, said the monument came about to fulfill the wish of a local family.

"Jack Rice, an older gentleman who walks the fairgrounds every day, wanted to donate a sculpture to

memorialize his late parents, Leo and May Rice," Gill says. "The Rice family has always supported rodeo, and he asked us to look into the possibility."



Utah artist Jeff Wolf, framed by the bareback bronc featured in his sculpture, *Rodeo*.

An artist and illustrator himself, Gill knew of Jeff Wolf, and when a sculptor friend from Montana recommended Wolf for the job, Gill tracked him down. The result is *Rodeo*.

At the dedication ceremony, Rice declared the sculpture "absolutely beautiful. It's more than I ever thought it would be." Walt Nelson, Gooding's mayor, talked about the man the sculpture memorializes. "If you lived in Gooding, you knew Leo," he said. "He was a supporter of the rodeo, he was a supporter of Gooding."



Beyond the personal tribute, Nelson sees *Rodeo* as a community asset. “We’ve got the best rodeo in the state,” he says. “And this is a piece of art that people are going to come and look at. It shows there’s a lot of support in the community for the rodeo.” Of Wolf, he says, “You know he had to be a cowboy by the things he put in there, the way the riders have their spurs, the way they’re hanging on. He knew what he was doing.”

So, how does one go about capturing the speed and action of rodeo in cold, immobile bronze? For Wolf, it starts with that intimate knowledge of the sport.

“What I’ve taken from my rodeo career is knowing what it’s like to feel the rush of adrenalin, the power, agility, determination, skill, drama and motion,” Wolf says. “There’s nothing like feeling that instant power exploding under you, and what goes through your mind as you match wits and movement with the animal under you.”

Of course that’s only half the battle, if that. There’s no shortage of people who have that experience but lack the ability – the talent and training – to capture rodeo in a work of art. Wolf’s preparation can be traced to his early childhood on the Triangle Ranch, near Goshen, Utah. From an early age, he molded and carved animals. His earliest recognition of note came at age eight, when a buffalo whittled out of a bar of soap was featured in a prominent national magazine for westerners. Wolf has

pursued sculpting, with some drawing and painting thrown in for good measure, ever since. For years, art took a back seat to ranch work and rodeo, but the hobby evolved into a career that’s spanned some two and a half decades and earned the artist widespread recognition,

awards, commissions and other honors. His work can be seen at the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, the National Mule Museum, and numerous other museums, galleries and other venues.

But, back to *Rodeo*.

“It’s pretty impressive,” Don Gill says. “The whole sculpture shows movement and action, action from so many angles.”

To capture that action, Wolf started from the ground up.

“The most difficult aspect of sculpting rough stock is suspending them in air, and giving a stationary figure the illusion of life,” he says. “To achieve this, I worked the mass of the ground, or base, into the piece in a way that adds excitement to the overall design and composition, but doesn’t distract from the main figures.”

Creating those main figures – three wildly bucking animals with cowboys aboard – was no small challenge. Wolf spent three months on the design and that much more perfecting the sculpture. “Textures play a big part in the artistic presentation,” he says. “I wanted to create a true work of art, rather than a mere picture-perfect depiction with photographic realism. Nothing is smooth or slick. Each aspect has texture that will trick



The 17-inch original clay sculpture for *Rodeo*.

the eye into the illusion of motion.”

The challenge of such a complex work was a risk, but Wolf relished the test. “Subject matter is the excuse to create a great artistic design,” he explains. “Any work of art should be visual music, engulfing viewers and pulling them into the life of the piece. There’s a lot going on in this piece and it will undoubtedly take the viewer some time to take it all in, which is the goal.”

All those months of design and sculpting were but a prelude to the bronze sculpture that graces the Gooding County Fairgrounds. Wolf began by creating a 17-inch tall model, sculpted in clay. Casting the work in monumental

size started with a “point-up” process, using a camera that photographed the model from all angles. The sculpture was then taken apart and its pieces likewise photographed from every direction. Through a series of complex calculations, computers created a digital model scaled to the size of the final piece, then drove a machine that milled foam blocks into component parts. Those

blocks were pieced together to create an armature, or framework, for the full-size sculpture.

Wolf applied coat upon coat of clay to the armature and essentially re-sculpted the entire piece at what

would be its finished size. “The only real shortcut to this process,” he says, “is not having to create the armature from scratch, and all that goes along with scaling and proportions.”

Once the full-size model of *Rodeo* was sculpted, a Montana foundry took the reins. Again, the model was cut into pieces. A liquefied rubber was applied to the parts, first in thin coats to capture detail, then in additional coats for strength and stability. Then the

whole work was stabilized with baked-on plaster, which, when dry, was halved, allowing removal of the original clay model, which left a finely detailed impression of itself in the rubber. That detail was next transferred to wax, which was poured into the mold as a liquid and allowed to solidify. Those molded wax pieces of *Rodeo* were then touched up to remove seam lines, air bubbles,



Sculptor Jeff Wolf with his monumental sculpture, *Rodeo*, installed at the Gooding, Idaho, County Fairgrounds.



and any imperfections that crept in along the way.

Again, the sculpture – now in wax – was bathed in a plaster-like slurry solution that first solidified, then was baked to a durable, ceramic-like hardness. As it cooked, the wax model inside melted away and the space it occupied was later filled with bronze, heated to a molten state at about 2,100 degrees Fahrenheit. The bronze cooled and hardened, the ceramic molds were broken away, and *Rodeo* came to life in bronze. Almost.

Foundry experts welded together pieces, re-creating the original model's texture at the joints, and rendering seams and welds invisible. Sandblasting, chemicals, heat, wax and polish gave the work its desired tint and patina. Finally, the bareback bronc, saddle bronc and bull were loaded onto a trailer for a trip to the rodeo, where Wolf saw to the work's proper installation atop a pedestal.

Jeff Wolf's *Rodeo* will, for years beyond reckoning, greet visitors to the Gooding County Fairgrounds and rodeo arena. Many will stop and study the sculpture, likely hearing the sound of slapping leather, jangling bells, rolling rowels and pounding hooves captured in the artist's imagination and frozen forever in cold metal.



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=00jxJNzND1U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00jxJNzND1U)  
Sculptor Jeff Wolf discusses art criticism.

Utah writer Rod Miller's latest book is *Goodnight Goes Riding and Other Poems*. He is a member of Western Writers of America and can be found online at [www.writerRodMiller.com](http://www.writerRodMiller.com).

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# Road Trip List

## GS, CSNY and Shovels & Rope



**George Strait**  
*The Cowboy Rides Away*  
MCA

This could be considered pandering or maybe just a moment of sentimental sighing but George Strait deserves it because he is different. I know he is Texas' favorite son – one of the most favorite at least – but he also belongs to the rest of us. There is no one and I mean no one who is more consistent in satisfying fans at a live concert, as he knows why they have come. He knows his records make up the soundtracks of many, many of his fans lives, so when they routinely plop down real money to come and try to hear him over the loving screams at some seemingly 300,000 plus-attendance amphi-dome – he has to deliver the songs they have come to hear. And he never disappoints. Appropriately, when it came

to the last performance of his self-described last tour – “The Cowboy Rides Away Tour” – he not only blew the roof off the Arlington AT&T stadium, he made sure the live album was worth the wait. No surprise, it is.

George Strait has been performing live shows and concerts with his Ace in the Hole Band since October 1975. The band deserves supreme credit making it all look so easy – the sign of true pros – Terry Hale (bass), Mike Daily (steel guitar), Ron Huckaby (piano), Rick McRae (electric guitar, fiddle), Benny McArthur (electric guitar, fiddle), Mike Kennedy (drums), Gene Elders (fiddle), Joe Manuel (acoustic guitar), John Michael Whitby (keyboards), Marty Slayton (background vocals), and Thom Flora (background vocals). On September 26, 2012, Strait announced that he was retiring from touring, and that his upcoming tour, The Cowboy Rides Away Tour, would be his last. The whole deal started in Lubbock, Texas in January 2013 and 47 concerts later, George Strait took the stage in Arlington, Texas for the last time. And at the end, the cowboy rode away.

The album, like his show, is filled with the songs people came to see. It has twenty of your favorites but not all of the 33 songs he performed at each gig. And he didn't do it alone as Strait generously





shared the stage with pals who obviously were very glad to be there with him on this last night. Artists who performed with him and who are on the album included Kenny Chesney, Eric Church, Vince Gill, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson, Miranda Lambert, Lee Ann Womack, Asleep at the Wheel, Sheryl Crow, Jason Aldean, Eric Church, and his opening act, Martina McBride. Not Bad.

If you love George Strait, you've heard all these songs before. But it doesn't matter, you should buy it. The cowboy rode away but he left this album behind for us, just to remember how great "GS Live" made us feel. [www.georgestrait.com](http://www.georgestrait.com)



#### CSNY 1974

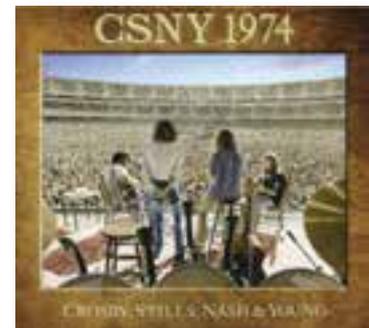
*Crosby Stills Nash & Young*

Rhino Records

This is an insanely cool package – of forty-year old performances. It's not really a boxed set as it sort of folds over itself. It is very well designed and one can see the design sensitivity of Graham Nash all over this. Not just in the package but in the masterful way he and Joel Bernstein produced this four CD set of songs from the CSNY archives, taken from recordings at ten live concerts in 1974 dubbed as a quasi reunion tour. Making this box set was anything but easy as Graham Nash told *Rolling Stone's* Andy Greene, "This was the

most difficult project I've ever done in my recording life,

largely because of other people's agendas and trying to please four people at the same time. It only took us a year to actually do the physical work, but it took three or four years



to get that work together." Like they say, it ain't as easy as it looks. Nash went on, "It was one of our most ambitious tours up until that point, 30 shows at American arenas and stadiums as well as one gig at Wembley Stadium in London, playing upwards of 40 songs over a four-hour period during some shows. We tried to keep our spirits up and keep ourselves focused as a band, but with all the chaos going on and the distractions and the drugs, I'm amazed we got away with what we did, quite frankly."



But that goodness or whatever we should thank because it is a superb experience, was made even more audibly experiential with Neil Young's intense concern for true and great sound. "God bless his cotton sox,"

Nash reportedly said of Young's persistence.

The set comes with an amazing little/big book that fits into the back of the CD package. It is filled with images and notes about the tour and the song list that reflect the unique experience of the live moments of the group performances of *Wooden Ships*, *Ohio*, *Long Time Gone*, *Déjà Vu* and *Carry On*, among others.

It is not an inexpensive purchase – \$40 bucks at Amazon and even \$28 and change for the MP3. But it is truly more than a CD collection or of forty-year old performances. CSNY helped define a turbulent time in our country's evolution with their music. A great deal was put on them by the culture back then, lots of pressure, frankly the fact that they made it out alive surprises me more than Graham Nash's wonder that they just got away with it. Buy this and CSNY's other breathtaking live performance album, *4 Way Street*, and you'll own important pieces to the puzzle of just how some of us did get out alive.

[www.csny.com](http://www.csny.com)



### Shovels & Rope

*Shovels & Rope*

Shrimp Records, LP and CD

Released in 2008, Shovels & Rope's self-titled



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1n7FAsiezo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1n7FAsiezo)

Shovels & Rope – “The Devil Is All Around”

The first track from Shovels & Rope's new album, *Swimmin' Time*, out August 26, 2014.

freshman effort launched them like a rocket amongst the burgeoning folk/wooden/electric music re-evolution. You can't really call it a revival – the honesty and the angst are there but there is some truly new music and stylistic things happening with Shovels & Rope – aka Cary Ann Hearst and Michael Trent are making some of the best – a sound they describe as “rockandrollandcountryandfolkandgospelandblues.” With America seeking more Americana-type music, the album hatched hits amongst its ten offerings. *Gasoline* and *Magdalena* and the slightly frightening *Can't Hardly Stand It* – a song that could have in its scenes from this past spring's cable hit *True Detective*.

To see the real deal, see Shovels & Rope live – they swap instruments, have free-wheeling play lists and are in a word – spontaneous on stage. One gets a sense they love what they are doing but would be just fine if they suddenly decided to do something else. It's the charm of being young and talented – beginnings are everywhere. [www.shovelsandrope.com](http://www.shovelsandrope.com)



# A Western Moment

Artist Edward Borein sketching  
somewhere in the West, mid-1930s





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## TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

# For the Love of a Concho

It's the simple things that can truly make a difference – like a set of nicely engraved silver conchos on a saddle. The great western painter and storyteller, Charles M. Russell, summed up the effect of those shiny saddle ornaments in his book, *Trails Plowed Under*. Upon sighting an early *Californio*-type, Russell described a proud horseman riding a center-fire, fully stamped saddle with twenty-eight inch tapaderos – silver on his pistol handles and saddle, “When the sun hits him with all his silver on, he blazes up like some big piece of jewelry. You can see him for miles when he’s ridin’ the high country.” And that, of course, was the point. Saddle silver and saddle conchos are by their nature a surface and tonal contrast to the earthy colors of bridle and saddle leather. The Spanish *vaqueros* prided themselves on the elegant and individual look of their gear. Earlier on coin silver was the material of choice, as coins were available in both the U.S. and in Mexico. This availability was taken

advantage of by both Spanish and Native American craftsmen – especially the Navajo. Coins were either altered by hammering and piercing or by melting them down into ingots. During the mid-1800’s gold discovery in California – along with the Nevada Comstock silver strike of 1873 – the added availability of these precious metals helped fire the “metal-fever” of the era.

The growth of saddle and harness shops and the evolving atelier system – that of hiring skilled workers to work under the shop’s name rather than their own – spread west to fill the demand of the Nation’s western migration. By the late 1800s and early 1900s many established shops were

crafting saddles for a broad demographic of customers. And while today, many of the shops are gone, a number are still in existence, either through family ownership or by acquisition, and these shops had distinctive styles in the silver they created. In many cases, silver craftsmen worked for a number of shops during their careers and



Concho by Arne Esp



in so doing enabled similar silver styles to filter onto many different saddle companies' products. For that reason, saddle silver conchos took on "heritages" associated with the shop name, more often, than of a specific maker – a function of the system in place. It wouldn't be until later in the 1900s when individual craftsmen would again return to prominence as the shop system started to give way to individuals after World War II. The post-war movement to modernize and leave the past had a huge effect on the saddle "shop" business. People wanted to move into the future and forget the "horse and buggy" days of the past. But the romance of the West would not leave quietly and while a saddle and harness shop would not find broad success in the second half of the 1900s, craftsmen and woman who came from that system found they could continue their craft on an individual, "cottage industry" basis.

Today, many significant craftsman and women, with ties of direct – or indirect – lineage back to the

great shops of the past, continue to work in the style and manner from whence they were either trained or inspired. The conchos and saddle silver that came from such great saddle maker and silver shops as Visalia,

Hamleys, Heiser, Bohlin, Schaezlein, Irvine and Jachins, McCabe, Olsen-Nolte, Loomis, Sunset Trails, and Garcia – just to name of few – in many cases continue to be available today. In addition newer makers are enjoying success as well, in large part due to the increased interest in the West internationally as well as the renaissance of the bridle horse culture – a direct handshake back in time with the romance of the *vaquero*. Contemporary makers have taken the craft past the replica stage into broad, new design territory, combining a reverence for

tradition while embracing new ideas and uses. The growing popularity of new designs and patterns is enabling western silver – including the humble saddle concho – to have a bright future. BR



Concho by Mark Drain



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## FARE THEE WELL



photo by William Reynolds

“It naturally occurred to me that if I wanted a house, I had to build it. If I wanted water, I had to dig my own well – and that you waste a lot of time waiting for anyone to help you.  
You roll up your sleeves and ride your own broncs.”

“In my eventual career as an artist, I never followed the crowd, and my advice to anyone even in this day and age is to follow your dreams and forget about the crowd.”

— J.N. Swanson (1927 – 2014)

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