The Journal of the American West

Ranch & Reata

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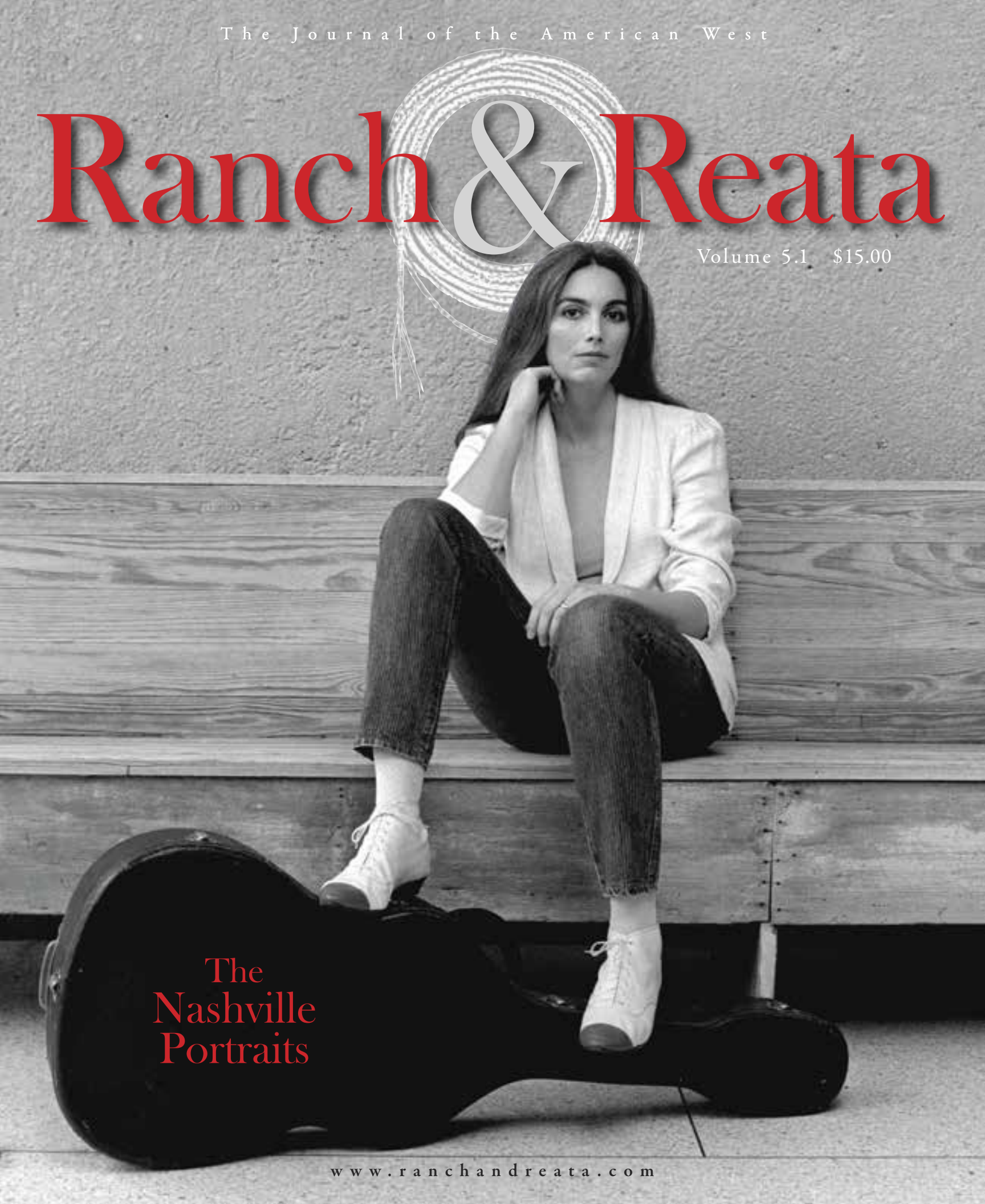

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FRONT GATE

photo by Jim McGuire

"Never go on stage with a dog" is an old showbiz adage. George Strait and photographer Jim McGuire's assistant, Shorty, proving the point. Shot in Nashville, 1983.

The West surprises us all the time.
Native American "grinding bowls."
Photo by William C. Reynolds

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Cover image: Emmylou Harris, 1983. This photograph by Jim McGuire was shot for the cover of her *White Shoes* album on location at the Tennessee Fine Arts Center at Cheekwood (now the Cheekwood Museum of Art) in Nashville.

Ranch & Reata

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In Fear of Quiet Mornings

By A.J. Mangum

I began my journalism career as a reporter for the *Alamosa News*, a daily newspaper in the small town of Alamosa, Colorado, an isolated agricultural community a half-hour or so north of the New Mexico state line. Despite a population under 8,000, Alamosa generated its fair share of news: poverty fueled a high crime rate, as well as passionate debates about social programs and economic development; a local college was at the forefront of education reform in rural communities; and high school sports enjoyed a rabid following, making celebrities of area teenagers. For a reporter, a typical workday could be surprisingly hectic, and might include coverage of an early morning drug bust, a heated county commissioners' meeting, and that night's much-anticipated varsity basketball game.

Still, in small towns, slow news days are inevitable. The *News* staff consisted of myself, a pair of erstwhile freelancers, and our editor, an affable character named Ray James (picture a young Wilford Brimley in bib overalls). We lived in fear of quiet mornings. Compounding our anxiety: the fact the *News* was a fledgling startup in competition with a well-established daily. An acclaimed journalistic venture from its start, the *News* was also a highly questionable business enterprise – a *second* daily newspaper in a town that, arguably, lacked the economic muscle to support one commercial news outlet. Our paper's mere viability depended on differentiation in our coverage. We were expected to do more than simply *report* news; we were expected to find stories and angles the town's bigger paper missed. Respites in public policy debates, empty police blotters, lulls in athletic schedules – they all spelled trouble. A journalist can't unearth a new take on story that doesn't exist.

One afternoon, I was wrapping up a lengthy, daylong effort on some local school board drama – a contentious debate over funding decisions – when Ray began taking inventory of the content that would be

Daniel F. Gerhartz, *From a Boy to a Man*, 24" x 36", Oil

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- Seminars
- Preview Reception

Saturday, June 13
- Seminars
- Show & Sale
- Awards Banquet

Invited Speakers and Panelists

Greg Beecham
Scott Burdick
Steven L. Grafe
Bruce R. Greene
Jeremy Lipking
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available for the next edition. With our freelance contributors MIA, it appeared my school board story was the only news piece on offer, apart from sports coverage and editorial columns. Filling space with Associated Press reporting wasn't an option; as a paper devoted to *local* news, we had an ironclad policy of not running wire stories.

A look of worry came over Ray's face as he contemplated the reaction of the paper's publisher, who would expect a rundown of the next edition's stories in a matter of hours. "He'll yell at me," Ray murmured as he shuffled back to a cluttered corner office, shutting the door behind him. I wondered if he might start crying. Minutes later, though, he reemerged with a hopeful spring in his step.

"Truancy!" he proclaimed. "That's always a problem for schools. That's never *not* a story. Call up the principal at Alamosa High and ask about that." Ray returned to his office, triumphant, confidently muttering strategies for other freshly brainstormed stories.

I phoned the high school's principal, who reported that truancy ... really hadn't been an issue of late. There were kids who missed the occasional school day, of course, but none seemed to make a habit of it. "So, are you saying that truancy numbers have dropped significantly?" I asked, casting hopefully for an angle. "And, if so, to what do you attribute this change?" The principal clarified: truancy numbers hadn't dropped significantly; there hadn't been a truancy "problem" in recent memory; no one expected such a problem to develop. The Gods of Slow News were unrelenting.

As I shared the details of my call with Ray, his expression of hope changed back to one of worry. "Is there *anything* we can make of that?" he asked plaintively.

The next morning's headline, top of the fold: "Truancy Not an Issue for Alamosa High." A story about nothing, positively Seinfeldian in its emptiness.

It filled the page nicely, though.

Years later, I was covering a world championship horse show in Oklahoma City. I sat in the stands as a reining horse completed a phenomenal performance, racking up an impressive winning score to a soundtrack of wild cheers from spectators. The horse's margin of victory was substantial, and his much anticipated run at the end of the final draw had contributed to a nail-biting sense of drama. Covering horse shows, even big ones, can be as dull as watching paint dry, but it appeared a bona fide sports story might've unfolded before me.

I rushed to the out-gate, where the rider and horse were surrounded by a growing entourage. The rider was all smiles, barely able to contain her emotions. As her family, friends and colleagues converged on her, she wrapped her arms around her horse's neck. Tears streamed down her face.

As the commotion began to die and the crowd thinned, I introduced myself and declared my intentions. An interview, we agreed, would commence within a few minutes, once the horse had been returned to his stall and the rider had regained her composure.

Overcoming a challenge is a fundamental human experience, one to which any reader can relate, and a theme that feeds virtually every compelling narrative, fiction or non-fiction. You read (or view, or listen) to learn *what will happen next*; even when you already know a story's endpoint, you invest in the protagonist's journey: how will he or she pull this off?

Logically, any competitive rider who's just won a world title aboard an incredible equine athlete has a story to share: recollections of doubts and the doubters who expressed them; financial stress countered by undying hopes; veterinary worries; training challenges;

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personnel changes. Where athletes – human or equine – are concerned, there's *always* a story there, provided someone's willing to share it.

My interview with the newly minted world champion rider began, and went nowhere fast. As I tried to dig into the journey she'd shared with her horse on their way to a coveted title, walls went up and she spun an impossibly positive tale. According to his rider, the horse had been born of unquestionably perfect genetics, with expectations of greatness in place from the moment of conception. The horse had never been in anything less than perfect health, and apart from getting blood drawn for Coggins tests, had never had occasion to be seen by veterinarians. From halter breaking to starting under saddle and through the process of being prepared for competition, he'd been handled solely by horsemen of the highest caliber, experts who unanimously agreed the horse was the most intelligent and athletically gifted any of them had encountered. No one attached to the horse had ever contemplated an outcome to his story that did *not* involve a world championship. The horse's success had, apparently, been effortless. The sports story I had envisioned – the tale of an athlete's journey – dissolved into a photo and a short caption.

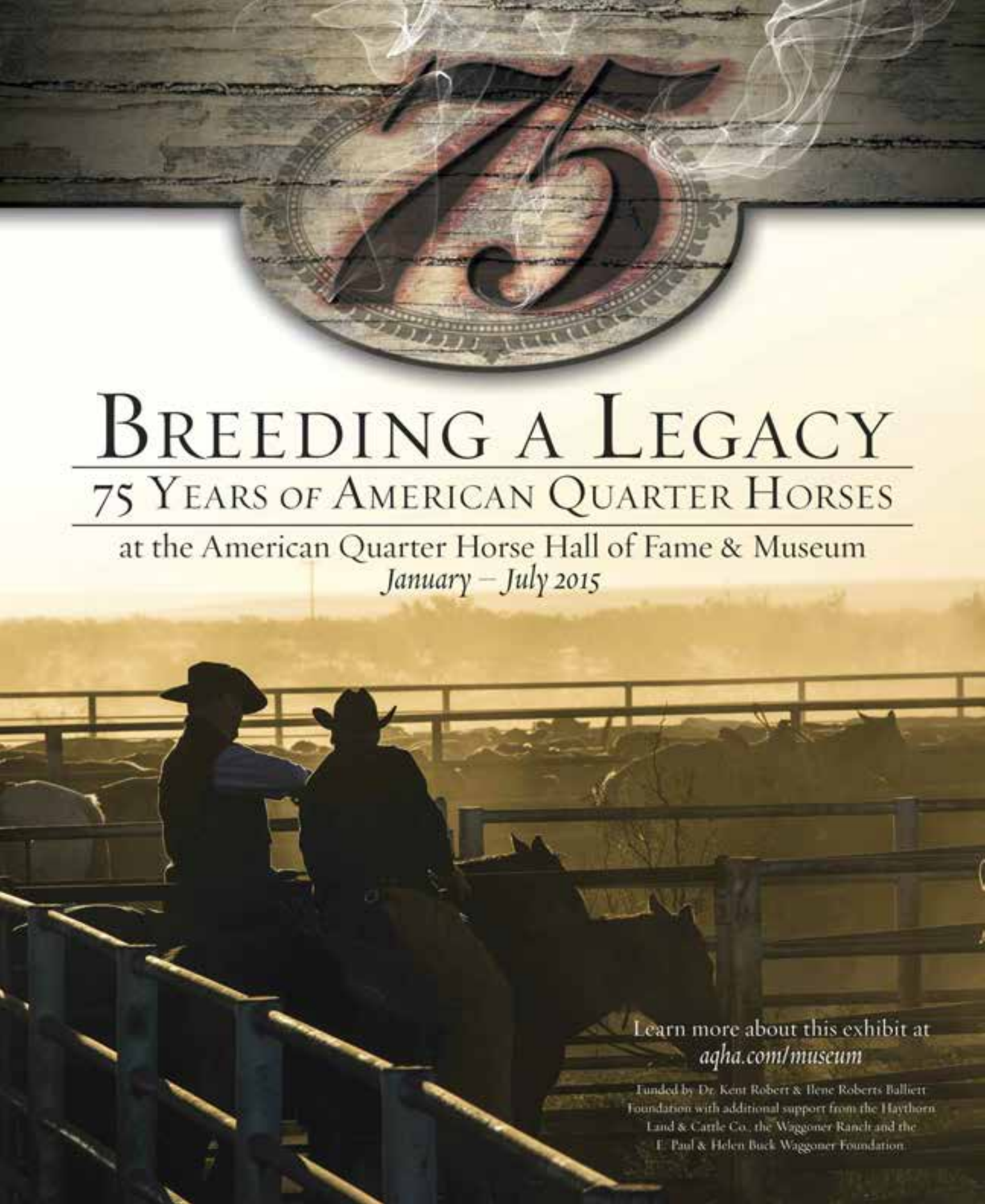
From the rider's perspective, she was protecting her horse by trying to reshape my magazine feature into a fabricated promotional piece. The animal would stand at stud, sire prospects, command a high breeding fee. If it were on record, in print, that the horse had ever had so much as an off day, or exhibited signs of mortality, what might mare owners and buyers of expensive prospects think? Unfortunately, that protective streak left me with an empty notebook and a blank audio tape – as Gertrude Stein (to pull in a somewhat random reference) might have said, there was no *there* there – and robbed the horse and his rider of having their story shared.

This issue includes "Handmade," my story on Montana filmmaker Elliot Lindsey and his online series *The Makers*, about western craftsmen. When I first spoke with Elliot, he mentioned that, since the announcement of the launch of the series – news of which has become something of a social-media phenomenon – he's been inundated with calls from craftsmen hoping to be featured in his effort. It's been a delicate challenge, he admitted, explaining to callers that *The Makers* is about storytelling, and not simply promotion.

The series' subjects – artisans of all stripes, from saddlemakers to blacksmiths – have shared with Elliot their experiences, some deeply personal, in pursuit of their crafts, offering reminders that work isn't always just a means of earning a paycheck; often, it's the only well-lit pathway through life's confusion and chaos.

The honesty of its subjects – their willingness to open up, to be vulnerable, to be *judged* – equips *The Makers* to become perhaps one of the contemporary West's most meaningful journalistic works, a feat that's possible only when there are real stories present, and folks with the courage to share them.

Learn more about *The Makers* at www.thehandmademovement.com.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Interesting Things and Stories from Out West

Zen and the Art of Tammy Pate

"A cowgirl is a spirit. It's an inner quality that allows her to do something for no one else's reasons but her own."
— Tammy Pate

The diversely talented, Montana horsewoman and boot maker Tammy Pate is taking natural horsemanship to a new realm with her intriguing and popular yoga and horsemanship clinics. Her next event is a ranch retreat at the Blacktail Ranch in Montana. "The Nature of Dreams, Horses, and Yoga" retreat brings together three of the finest instructors in dream work, yoga, and horsemanship including Tammy Pate along with instructors Janice Baxter and Dr. Kim Colvin.


Tammy Pate

Tammy Pate was born to be on horseback. Born into a ranching family in Montana, she was quite simply raised in the saddle. Her father, Gordon Clark was a rodeo steer wrestler who spent time teaching young Tammy and her sisters all he knew about horsemanship and riding. Her grandmother, Betty, instilled in her the deep values of the ranching life: a reverence for nature and the practical skills ranching families needed for the demands of their rural life – including such skills as sewing which lead to Tammy building superbly crafted boots.


Curt and Tammy Pate at home.

She married stockman and clinician Curt Pate and together they ranch, raise bucking bulls, and train cow dogs on their place near Ryegate – a town literally right in the middle of Montana. Together they have developed innovative, effective and gentle ways of training horses and managing

Detail of Tammy Pate stitching.

livestock. She raised her own children in the saddle as well, carrying them with her on horseback as she worked with Curt on the ranch.

These rich experiences, along with a growing interest in the benefits of yoga on the equestrian body have led Tammy to combine her horsemanship knowledge with her love of yoga. Tammy's clinics are designed to bring deeper awareness of your mental and physical balance and, above all, to improve your horsemanship. Everything you will do at the clinic is designed to gently bring about the inner balance that improves your ability to bond with and communicate with horses.

As she says of her approach, "When you apply yoga principles to horsemanship, and vice versa, you start to see similarities such as balance, physical and mental strength, living in harmony with nature, and being guided by an open heart. The term "natural horsemanship" implies gentle methods that present stimuli to a horse in a way he understands and would naturally do things, which will reduce resistance and build confidence. My entire life revolves around respecting nature; from my holistic lifestyle rooted in yoga principles to the way I handle horses and livestock in a effective, low-stress manner. Horsemanship is about being in harmony with your horse. You must understand how your horse thinks and reacts and then figure out how to accommodate his and your needs. Each time you are with your horse, it's important to be aware of what's happening, live in the moment and be flexible, even if that means letting go of your own agenda. Sometimes slow is fast."

At the maker's bench.

Tammy's approach will be shared at the ranch retreat, July 12 – 18 at the glorious Blacktail Ranch near Wolf Creek – just a short one hour drive from Helena, Montana. The ranch is a true working guest ranch that offers superb amenities and activities on 8,000 acres of spectacular Big Sky country. The Nature of Dreams, Horses and Yoga is a weeklong experience the ranch is offering in its unique and natural setting. To learn more about Tammy's other upcoming clinics (at The Home Ranch in Clark, Colorado) – and her boots – email her at tammypate04@yahoo.com. To find out more about the July retreat, visit www.dreamhorseyoga.com

Watch Tammy's video about the connection of yoga and horsemanship.
https://youtu.be/V-GSpITH1OI

Tough Enough to Wear Twisted X

Twisted X Boot Company has announced an association with Tough Enough to Wear Pink, and its cause. A portion of the sale of each pair of the Tough Enough To Wear Pink Collection will be donated to this organization for research to help fight breast cancer. You can show your support buy purchasing the special Twisted X Boot styles and receive a FREE Twisted X tote bag with purchase. Visit www.twistedxboots.com

Priefert Cattle Containment System

Priefert's Cattle Cage provides a convenient and economical option for the secure containment of cattle. Ideal for use with small herds or show animals, the Cattle Cage can transform from a working chute to a grooming chute in seconds. The cattle cage features a Priefert Headgate, a side-sliding tailgate, and removable sides to provide maximum access to the animal – all for a fraction of the price of a standard squeeze chute. Priefert's Model 64 Headgate features a friction lock that is guaranteed for life and also includes a head chain restraint, perfect for securing the head of any animal to provide safe access to the head and neck area. The single panel tailgate easily opens and closes with a push and pull allowing cattle to enter the cage. Each side of the Priefert Cattle Cage can be opened independently as a gate, or can be completely removed for use as a grooming chute. To prevent cattle from swinging out the side of the chute while the side panel is open, the Cattle Cage features two adjustable vertical poles to keep the cattle in line with the headgate. And yes, you needed to know all this. For more information, visit www.priefert.com or call 1-800-527-8616.

Sisters on the Fly

Our friends at Ryan Michael and BarnFly alerted us of their new designs for "Sisters on the Fly" – the largest outdoor women's group in the United States. Its membership-based community supports women in their journey to get up, get out and become more adventurous! And to join up is pretty simple, as it says on their website, "Sisters on the Fly does not discriminate over race, religion, politics or sexual orientation. A Sister on the Fly does not need to own a trailer, know how

to fish or know anyone else in the group to be included in our adventures. A Sister must be at least 21 years old to become a member. Other than that there aren't too many rules; just one main one for most of our Sisters on the Fly events and outings.... "No Men, No Pets, No Kids and Be Nice!" Pretty easy, huh?" You may not own a little trailer now, but after going through the website at www.sistersonthefly.com – you might not be able to hold out long – some of the coolest trailers we've seen in a long time. They even having a little shop on the site where you can buy anything from decals to vintage home furnishings to incredibly groovy camping trailers. As their slogan says, "We have more fun than anyone."

StripHair Takes Off

Last fall we introduced you to a product we thought had legs. Strip Hair is an amazing horse grooming tool made of recycled rubber material – made here in America. You can say goodbye to dirty brushes, rusted curry combs and every other outdated item in your grooming box. StripHair effectively removes loose hair, dust and dander without damaging the coat or irritating sensitive skin. The flexible nature of StripHair™ allows it to fit comfortably in your hand while contouring to every angle of your horse for an efficient and enjoyable grooming experience for both you and your horse.

There are two sizes for either large or small hands and since we introduced the product, the folks at StripHair say they cannot keep up with demand. These really work – and they are wonderful folks to deal with. See more at www.striphair.com

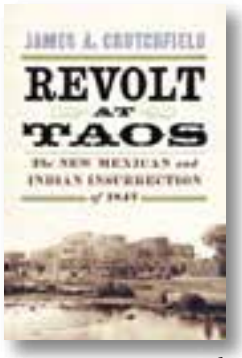
File under: More Things You Should Know

The late President Ronald Reagan had a Liberty Bell showerhead in his shower at *Rancho Del Cielo,* the Reagan's Santa Barbara Ranch. You can too. Visit amazon.com and put in "Speakman S22521776 Shower Head, 6Jet Limited Edition Liberty Bell Anystream FixedMount Chrome."

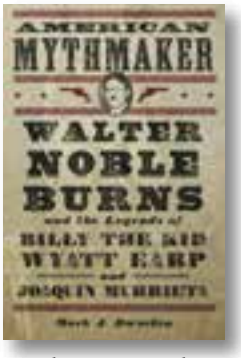
New Books from member authors of the Western Writers of America

This is a grand organization that celebrates and educates about the historic characters and events of the American West. Support reading paper and ink as well as eBooks!

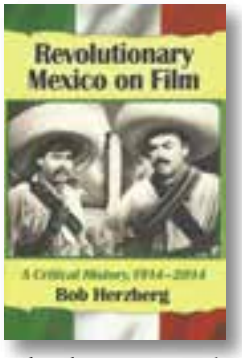
Here's what's on this month's bookshelf.



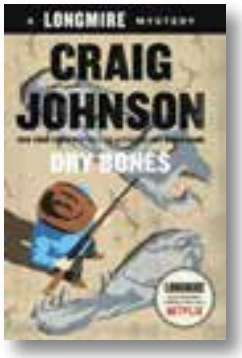
Owen Wister Award recipient **James A. Crutchfield** studies the bloody 1847 uprising in *New Mexico in Revolt at Taos: The New Mexican and Indian Insurrection of 1847* (Westholme Publishing).



Mark J. Dworkin, who died before this book was published, chronicles the life and times of the Chicago newspaperman who turned Western figures into international icons in *American Mythmaker: Walter Noble Burns and the Legends of Billy the Kid, Wyatt Earp and Joaquín Murrieta* (University of Oklahoma Press).



Film historian **Bob Herzberg** examines Hollywood's takes on history south of the border – think *Viva Villa, Vera Cruz* or even *The Wild Bunch* – in *Revolutionary Mexico on Film: A Critical History, 1914-2014* (McFarland).

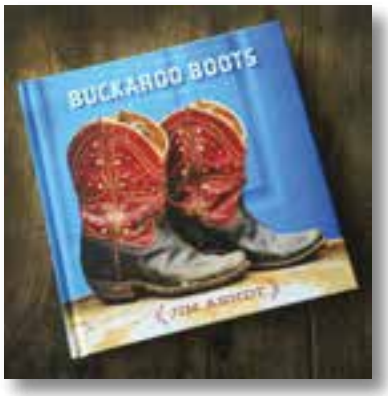


A Tyrannosaurus rex fossil and a dead rancher send Wyoming sheriff Walt Longmire back in action in **Craig Johnson**'s *Dry Bones* (Viking), the 11th installment of the best-selling Western mystery series.

Spur Award-winning historian **Nancy Plain** profiles the founder of modern ornithology in *This Strange Wilderness: The Life and Art of John James Audubon* (University of Nebraska Press), which is aimed at young readers but will likely appeal to older ones, too.

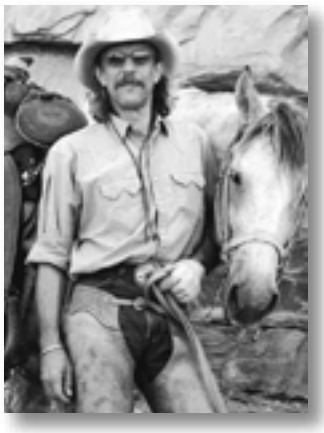
For more visit www.westernwriters.org

Buckaroo Boots



Our friend, photographer Jim Arndt is releasing a new book on one of his and our favorite subjects – cowboy boots. Those of us who fell in love with cowboy boots as children may or may not still have their first pair. The ones we never wanted to take off, especially when we heard that real cowboys 'slept with their boots on.'

Buckaroo Boots is a collection of those boots we loved. Discover here why Ronnie Dunn, Marty Stuart, Teal Blake, Bill Reynolds, Mike Cavender, and



Nathalie Kent all dreamed of growing up cowboy. We wanted to dress as our heroes did. Just like Roy Rogers, Tom Mix, Gene Autry, and the Lone Ranger. Cute-as-can-be, small scale boots are proportioned just like the grown up counterparts, complete with inlaid designs and bright colors. Page after page of the boots we loved. New from Gibbs Smith Publishers – www.gibbs-smith.com

Jim Arndt is a nationally recognized advertising and editorial photographer based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His clients include Wrangler, Marlboro, Harley-Davidson, Ronnie Dunn, Nathalie, and recently Ram trucks in their recent 'Farmer' Super Bowl commercial. He is the recipient of over 500 photography awards and was named Adweek National Photographer of the year. His previous books include *Art of the Boot, The Cowboy Boot Book, Art of Turquoise, Art of the Buckle*, and *How to be a Cowboy*, among others.

Nettles Stirrups and Country Store

Nettles Country Store is a unique western retail store west of Madisonville, Texas, with just the kind of old time friendliness folks are searching for today. The store is owned by Gala and Ronnie Nettles and has an unusual western flair, mixing western décor and western tack, sometimes even integrating the two together. The Nettles are deeply immersed in the equine industry as Gala has written articles, columns and books about the horse business for 20 years while Ronnie, a Hall of Fame cutting horse trainer, has trained horses and given ctting lessons for decades. Twenty-one years ago, he designed the Nettles laminated oak stirrup and that's when Nettles Country Store was really born. Gala Nettles began manning a booth filled with the stirrups made on the Nettles Ranch and the books she had written, at major NCHA competitions.

"As the years passed, I added a few gift items to the booth, things that I enjoyed," explained Gala Nettles. "Then the guys building our stirrups started building a few things such as stirrup clocks, shelves, etc." The merchandise grew and before long, it seemed only natural to build a permanent store. Today, Nettles Country Store is home to Gala's 15 books along with Nettles Stirrups and other high quality tack.

Nettles Stirrups are superbly crafted of red oak – the highest quality available and will not warp over time. The Premier Stirrup line features six pieces of wood rather than just one, eliminating stress and cracks in the bend. Also, the Nettles Stirrup's rollers have a smaller throat diameter, which helps to eliminate shin pressure and a unique stirrup bottom structure, unparalleled in any other product, helps set the riders foot and aids with balance in the saddle. Learn more at www.nettlescountry.com

Ariat Sponsors PBR Bull Rider Luke Collins

Luke Collins, a North Carolina native where he has worked on his family-owned ranch for the majority of his life, has joined the Ariat Athlete Roster. Collins' true passion lies in the sport of bull riding where he has made a career weekend after weekend across the country competing in the PBR's Built Ford Tough Series. He trained from a young age with his late father on their mechanical bull and travels miles to each competition. In a historic and career-defining move, Collins attempted to ride PBR World Champion bull contender, Rango, nearly costing him everything. Although Collins has had some setbacks, injuries and delays, he continued to return to the sport and perform well.

"Luke Collins is the definition of a true PBR champion and we can only imagine where his talent will take him," said PBR Chief Operating Officer Sean Gleason. "Fellow North Carolina native and PBR supporter Nicholas Sparks was the first to discover and hone the raw talent into a champion for the ages. We are forever grateful he is a part of our sport."

According to Susan Alcala, Ariat's vice-president of partnership marketing," We help athletes perform at their best, Luke has been able to reach his goals without ever worrying about his clothes and boots. Luke is one of a kind, his work ethic, never-give-up attitude and honest personality has helped him reach the top."

Collins can be seen in the Twentieth Century Fox Movie *The Longest Ride* portrayed by actor Scott Eastwood. www.ariat.com

1995 – 2015: A Milestone for Nathalie

Former French Vogue fashion editor, Nathalie Kent fulfilled her dream of coming to mystic Santa Fe in 1988. And it wasn't long that fashion/design savvy Kent opened her own western shop – called what else – Nathalie. It was 1995 and her new boutique and gallery on Santa Fe's Canyon Road became a destination for anyone interested in elegant western style – her look, described by many as, "the Hermes of The West.

As a young girl, she dreamed of the American Indian and the American West. Ultimately, she engaged her passion for Native American, Cowboy and Western style to create a collection of custom designed boots and hats; collectable native silver and turquoise and beadwork; bench-made leather bags; clothing; buckles,

buckle sets and belts; along with an array of home furnishings and original western art, including Paris artist Antoine Tzapoff, that is unsurpassed in "the city different."

Nathalie brought her French sense of style and taste to Santa Fe and created a remarkable fashion fusion of Parisian sophistication and the American West – along with her passion for helping her customers to look their best in an original way while protecting their own unique personality. This year marks Nathalie's twentieth anniversary of continuing to fulfill her passion and we congratulate Nathalie, as she is truly a unique creative force in western culture. www.nathalie.com

Time Passes

In 1969, Judy Collins recorded "Someday Soon," the classic rodeo song by Canadian singer/songwriter, Ian Tyson. The song was first recorded in 1964 – over 50 years ago – by Ian and his then wife Sylvia as the duo, Ian & Sylvia. In 1965, the Kingston Trio recorded it – the first album with John Stewart replacing Dave Guard who had left the group. But it was Judy Collins' version that, released in 1969, spent six weeks on the *Billboard* Hot 100 list. Ms. Collins was the subject of Stephen Stills song "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," performed by CSN at Woodstock in 1969. Just thought you should know.

Here's Judy Collins performing "Someday Soon" on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* in 1969 on CBS. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w70-1b9SCj0

Big Bend Saddlery – Great Leather, Great People

Big Bend Saddlery has been serving the ranching community from west Texas since 1905. They have focused on delivering top-quality merchandise using the best materials they can find.

From their shop, their growing mail-order business and online catalog (very cool) were developed after hearing many customers tell them repeatedly "Wish we had a store like this back home."

The shop was named after the Big Bend Region of Texas that got its name from the bend, or turn of the Rio Grande River. They are located in the Davis Mountains of Southwest Texas – are a small saddle shop that features friendly, personalized service. Kinda of a throw back but very worthy of your business. Great folks. www.bigbendsaddlery.com

Western Style with Ashley Riggs

Buckaroo Baby

photo by Fryd Frydendahl

I just had my first child, William, here in New York City this past December. I'm from Nevada and I married a Texan, so I know you can sympathize with me over dressing my new little Cowboy. Buckaroo or Texas style? Actually, both! A pair of tiny handmade buckaroo chinks from Grandpa Riggs. A little straw hat from Grandma. Blankets and pjs with Western-themed prints from Texas...We love them all. When I was pregnant, I searched for a denim-clad stroller to rollout into the City pavement with. I know it is vain to put such emphasis on baby gear, but I hail from Buckaroo country and we like it shiny. Jingle bobs and all...

For little cowboys and cowgirls nothing is cuter than a wee pair of Levis or Wrangler jeans and a western shirt. There is just something about those tiny snaps and teeny pockets. Denim jackets, cowboy boots and chunky sweaters are essentials too. My favorite pieces for the nursery are the classic "Westward Ho" china set for tots and Pendleton's colorful crib-sized blankets. Vintage bracelets, spoons and cups in Navajo stamped silver with bits of Turquoise make special keepsakes.

Preparing for the day.

Although my little cowboy won't be lucky enough to grow up full-time in ranching, I look forward to him spending his summers immersed in it. Get a few blisters working the end of a shovel. Get a farmer's tan. Learn about animals and the outdoors. Soak up all the Western sensibilities of his grandparents; the last of the true ranching generation. Then, when he is my age, I hope he appreciates those summer blisters and looks back with many fond memories, as I do. For now though he will have to be content to live in our one room cabin on the Soho frontier, dreaming of his time to come out west. Follow Ashley on Pintrest at Ashley_e_Riggs and on Tumblr at nynv-ashleyriggs.tumblr.com

Some favorites...

Vintage boots

Westward Ho Little Buckaroo plate

Pendleton perfect.

RRL Mini-Trucker Jacket

Southwest
"silver spoon"

Every body needs armitas

Stetson New Women's Boot Line

With a diverse mix of traditional and fashion-forward boots, Stetson's new women's boot line is ready to buy – now! Stetson has revamped their women's boot line with over forty new styles to be more in tune with its women's fashion apparel line. Traditional square toes encompassing conservative colored leathers, moderate shaft heights and subtle details appeal to the more traditional cowgirl. A variety of toes combining fringe, zippers, studs, unique embroideries and vintage inspired looks cater to the more fashion-forward consumer. Shorty boots with their own unique set of details appeal to the more urban customer. Overall the new line features chic and classy designs, combined with old school manufacturing techniques including welted stitching, leather soles, all leather linings and cushioned comfort insoles. With both practical and fashion-forward boots ranging from square, to snip, to round toe, there is sure to be a pair for every cowgirl! Take a look at www.stetsonapparel.com

Cisco's Custer Collection

Cisco's Gallery deals in the rare, exceptional, and one-of-a-kind pieces that define the history of America and the Old West. Their pieces range from American Indian to Cowboy Western and include original items of everyday life, commerce, art, and warfare that tamed America's frontier. They also display fine art and help support many contemporary artists that have a classic or western style including painters, bronze sculptors, silversmiths, carvers, and furniture makers. Frankly, if you can't find it at Cisco's – you probably won't.

For the past ten years, Cisco's has had the unique, Trevilian collection of General George Armstrong Custer's personal belongings – available for public display. Now, The Trevillian collection in its entirety, including authentications, succession of ownership, photos, publications – will be offered for sale at private treaty.

Ask almost anyone when recalling the "Opening of the West or the Indian War Period" who the first figure is that comes to mind – for most – General Armstrong Custer. Although there are mixed feelings about Custer in the Western field, during the Civil War he played an important role for the North, and was idolized and loved by his men.

The collection includes:

- Custer's full dress uniform, which was worn at his wedding, including chapeau hat, long frock style dress coat, dress trousers – double striped, woven belt sash and dress gloves

- His field writing desk, still having the original blotters.
- A black leather valise that held the above
- Most important, a presentation sword made by Tiffany's, and presented in 1863 from the 5th of Michigan, still in its original inscribed rosewood box complete with sword belt and knot.


George Armstrong Custer

The only known copy of General William Blackmar's diary, with detailed entries covering Lee's surrender, his acquisition of Grant's Chair, Custer's farewell to his men, a later year's meeting with Mrs. Custer, a copy of Blackmar's letter to Mrs. Custer explaining the retrieval of their love letters, and the original thank you letter by Libbie to Blackmar.

Of less importance, but of interest in letters exchanged between the Custers (husband and wife) in 1864, Libbie asks George to save his hair from the barber "that I may have a wig made." In the writing desk there remained a lock of Custer's hair, in a Civil War era envelope – not yet sent.

The Trevillian collection has been on public display with the National Park Service at the Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument, Crow Agency, Montana, the Monroe County Historical Commission Museum, Monroe, Michigan, and the National Civil War Museum at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

For more information, www.ciscosgallery.com

World's Premier Western Art Show Set for June 12-13 at The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

By A Nose by Tim Cherry

The good folks at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum announced the 2015 Prix de West Invitational Art Exhibition and Sale will be held this June 12 -13. Featuring more than 100 artists, and introducing three new guest artists, C. Michael Dudash, Scott Tallman Powers and Charles Timothy Prutzer, the exhibition and sale includes more than 300 Western paintings and sculptures by the finest contemporary Western artists in the nation. Works range from historical pieces reflecting the early days of the West, to more contemporary and impressionist works of art. Stunning landscapes, wildlife and illustrative scenes are always represented in the exhibition. The annual event begins with two days of art-related seminars and demonstrations, a sale featuring all works on Saturday, concluding with the Prix de West Awards Banquet and its special live auction.

And there's action all weekend. On Friday, June 12, the first presentation is by the renowned B. Byron Price, Director of the Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of Art of the American West at the University of Oklahoma. Steven L. Grafe, Curator of Art at Maryhill Museum of Art, Goldendale, Washington, will present "Beneath a Gibbous Moon: Eanger Irving Couse on the Columbia River." Additional speakers include noted author W.E. (Bill) Mueller on "End of

As the Sun Fades by Tim Cox

the Trail 1915-2015: Centennial of an American Icon" and Gaylord Torrence, Fred and Virginia Merrill senior curator of American Indian Art, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Mo. During the lunch break (noon – 1 p.m.), authors and artists will participate in a book signing. The preview and reception begins at 6 p.m. in the Prix de West galleries.

On Saturday, June 13, the morning starts with a Western artist panel discussion "Take a Walk on the Wildlife Side" with Prix de West artists Greg Beecham, Ralph Oberg and Sandy Scott, moderated by Walter T. Matia. Jeremy Lipking, last year's Prix de West Purchase Award winner, will give a talk following the panel. At noon the much anticipated Prix de West Purchase Award winner will be announced. After lunch, Prix de West artists Bruce R. Greene and Scott Burdick will conduct concurrent art demonstrations.

The Zia Pot by Sherrie McGraw

Saturday evening events include the traditional fixed-price drawing for art sales. Any patron with a registered ballot book may participate in art purchases.

Package or à la carte pricing is available for the opening weekend, which includes substantial discounts for Museum members. For information about Prix de West opening weekend, to make reservations, order an art catalog or make arrangements for proxy bidding call (405) 478-2250 or visit www.nationalcowboymuseum.org.

DESTINATIONS

Bars, Pubs and Speakeasies That Have IT

By Donna Stegman

You know what makes a restaurant great, fantastic food and a warm welcoming ambiance. What makes a bar great – people.

I've bellied up to the bar at some of the most acclaimed, Top 10 listed booze joints in America, and you know where I've had the best time and the most fun? Bars and pubs that have found the right mix of atmosphere and a warm knowledgeable staff will always get my vote. Any drinking establishment worth its liquor license can have a decent top shelf line-up or ice-cold beer on tap, but if you don't drag along the right combination of friends and find a good hospitality-driven bartender, the experience just falls flat. Bars are all about friendship and community; it's about relaxing and connecting with our fellow human beings face to face. I saw a very old saying written on a wall of a British pub, which still stands as truth today. "The function of the pub is company, human nearness and snugness not smugness."

Bars, Pubs and Speakeasies have always been our nation's destination of choice when it comes to getting to know one another and to wind down from whatever it is that winds us up. Now we even have a new genre setting up shop in the boozy hospitality industry- craft spirit bars. They're spreading like wildfire all across the country. Now that I'm quickly approaching middle age, I'm beginning to suspect that I may have exceeded the age limit to hang out in the new craft bar scene. If you need a teenager to program your electronic devices or if you require a pair of "readers" to scan the

menu, you too may fall into this category.

The craft craze for small batch spirits was re-born in the Pacific Northwest about 8 years ago. Inspired by the craft beer movement, these modern day booze alchemists pulled out old recipes from Scotland, Britain and Ireland and set forth to create a new gold standard for today's drink aficionados. But they didn't stop there. They can cite where all the ingredients came from in the glass in front of your face. Some are even refusing to make the ever-popular Cosmo. Why, because you can't make fresh squeezed cranberry juice in house. When did a relaxing evening out with friends become so exhausting? Innovation is to be applauded but I feel a few are beginning to walk the thin line of taking all the fun out of our sacred R&R establishments. So, just maybe, Mr. Hipster bartender with the shaggy beard and the snappy sweater vest, could you just let us have our day-glow maraschino cherries and our bottled cranberry juice without it being served with a lesson? I will then excuse the 25-minute wait for my cocktail as your fellow bearded bartender painstakingly whittles a toothpick for me out of repurposed wood. Just sayin'.

So, to my bar stool buddies in this age of never enough free time, I have compiled and sorted my list of the best bars, pubs and the ever-so-fun speakeasy revivals. Yes, it's a dirty job, but someone had to do it. I hope this saves you time so you can spend it where it belongs, with the people who make up your life.

Bottoms up!

Bar-/baar/.n1. A counter inside an enclosure in which alcoholic drinks are sold and consumed on premise.

The Trick Dog – San Francisco, California

This is one funky hangout and the staff it fantastic. The food menu is an array of eclectic small plates that range from traditional Chinese to hamburgers that are hotdog shaped and served in a special seeded bun. The drink list is simply brilliant. But, just go with the flow here and don't be scared off by the strange ingredients. Case in point, when we were kids I'm pretty sure we would have been better off not being told what escargot really was. Sometimes it's best to not look before you leap, you're just going to have to have trust and faith in the bartender. Try the Sutro Baths if you like rum, lots and lots of rum. www.Trickdogbar.com

Louis' Basque Corner – Reno, Nevada

This 46-year-old Nevada institution is perched on a grimy corner of a sketchy downtown intersection. Just park your car in the dark alley and make your way to the front door. Once inside you'll quickly realize it was all worth the trip. A charming western Nevada/Basque motif bar with exposed brick and authentic old photos hang casually on the wall of this ancient building. You'll be instantly greeted with big smiles and warm Basque hospitality from one of the wonderful barkeeps. Before you get both butt cheeks planted on the bar stool you'll be set up with the reason for coming, the Picon Punch. Served in a funny little glass, this Basque delicacy is a touch of Picon liquor (bitter orange) a dash of pomegranate syrup a splash of soda and a shot of Brandy all dressed up with a lemon twist. But beware, one is not enough and three

will have you singing Basque songs like you knew the language. To soak it all up, you gotta try the lamb dip sandwich it's one of a kind in a fabulous mouth watering kinda way. And I'm not the only one who loves this strange little bar, it's been featured on The Food Network and just named one of the Best Bars in America by *Travel & Leisure* magazine. www.Louisbasquecorner.com

Ginny's Little Longhorn Saloon – Austin Texas

O.K. this is a dive bar, but an awesome dive bar. It's a small, ram-shackled hovel that's most likely a fire hazard. But the staff is good people, big-hearted and all Texan, it's not about the drinks at Ginny's but about the friends you're gonna make. For over 20 years the Little Longhorn has been the epicenter for Austin's Honky-Tonk live music scene, toss in some swing dancing and you got yourself a party. It throws off a vibe of a big family gathering more than a bar. But the biggest draw for this whole-in-the-wall dive is on Sundays, the line stretches out the door with people waiting to play a few rounds of Chicken-Shit Bingo. I'm assuming no detailed explanation is needed. www.thelittlelonghornsaloon.com

Barrel Proof – New Orleans, Louisiana

Liam Deegan

This is without a doubt a gentleman's bar, down to the skull and crossbones wallpaper in the powder room. Everything about this fabulous establishment has been well designed. The walls and floors are decorated with heads of animals or animal hides and they certainly don't cater to the white wine spritzer clientele. Located in the lower garden district on the trendy Magazine Street, Barrel Proof has not only a impressive best-of-the-best selection of all things whiskey and bourbon, but here it's about the bartenders, they understand that bartenders are still in the hospitality business. Liam Deegan is not only bartender/owner but also damn near perfect, highly knowledgeable and refreshingly unpretentious. In the NOLA Sea of crazy, this bar is a little oasis of sanity. Go for broke and sip a glass of 18 year Yamazaki, it may be $200 dollars a bottle, but you only live once. www.barrelproofnola.com

Woody's Brewing Company – Redding California

So three Polish guys walk into a bar, stop me if you've heard this one....

Woody's is owned and operated by the fun loving Wlodarczyk family, two brothers and a nephew that are making some of the best craft beer around. Pat Wlodarczyk started brewing beer in his garage in the mid 80s and has slaved over his recipes since, working to perfect the ultimate experience in craft beers. They opened Woody's to service the ever-increasing demand for high quality unique tastes. This is a family friendly bar, not some dark tavern with sticky floors and a creepy guy in the corner wearing a trench coat, so bring grandma and the kids. Woody's is bright and California smooth with a creative food menu. The homemade tater tots are a huge hit and sit alongside the Polish po'boy and if you're really lucky you'll show up on Pierogi day. Being half Polish myself, I'd walk a mile for these amazing potato and cheese filled noodle dumplings. You gotta try the Nutty Woody or the Northern English Brown Ale, they toss finishing hops into the boil for a bittering effect that's just perfect. www.woodysbrewing.com

William and Graham – Denver, Colorado

This may very well have been one of my favorite bar experiences, ever. W&G is a modern day speakeasy stashed away in an urban neighborhood of Denver. Speakeasies find themselves back in Vogue in the ever-changing fashion world of bars. I've visited a few around the country, some hit the mark, and most are cheap wannabes. The speakeasy isn't a new concept; it was the only choice for libations after the dark days that followed the Volstead Act, but now what was once old is new and shiny again. No longer peddling rotgut hooch, but an impressive bar back and food to match. There's just something exhilarating to walking down a dark alley late at night, searching for the unmarked

door of the speakeasy, it's just too appealing. William and Graham is hidden in plain sight, just find the old fashion magazine shop on the corner, give her your name and wait in your car for a call. I'm not going to tell you what happens next, nor will I tell you how you're going to get into this well hidden establishment. There's something exciting about not knowing what's coming, something that makes your heart beat just a little faster. www.williamsandgraham.com

HONORABLE MENTION:

Crown and Anchor British Pub – Monterey, California

Fun to hang out with people actually from the UK, we were the only ones without an accent. Try the toad-in-the-hole.

Bathtub Gin – Seattle, Washington

Another speakeasy, found down a dark and scary alley that boasts over 30 different makes of

Gin. It's underground and not for the claustrophobic, the drinks are served up authentic style with little to no ice. But if you like Gin, this is your joint.

The Ritz-Carlton – Half Moon Bay, California

The best bar view from one of the most beautiful hotels in the world. Have a luxurious lunch and a few cocktails on a bright sunny day at the Ocean Terrace. Not a bad seat in the house, leave your phone and watch in the car and have the most relaxing day ever.

Elway's – Denver International Airport

If you gotta be in an airport, make the best of it I say. Trent Johnson of Greeley Hat Works swears this is the best. He should know, the man is a true road warrior. From breakfast to booze, the attentive and friendly staff serves up the best.

Remember, bars are about the people. Enjoy yourself.

Brian Lebel's Old West Auction – now in Fort Worth

For the first time ever in Texas, Brian Lebel's annual Old West Show & Auction will be held June 6-7, 2015 at the Amon G. Carter Jr. Exhibits Hall at Will Rogers Memorial Center in Fort Worth. The event features a weekend vendor show with over 200 exhibitors in authentic cowboy, Indian and western arts and antiques; and an exciting, live Saturday night auction of approximately 400 lots of authentic Western art and artifacts, with pre-sale estimates totaling over $2 million.

This year's auction highlights pieces from a variety of different collecting categories. Fine art offerings include works by such noted artists as Frank McCarthy, Will James, Bill Owen, Scott Rogers, Richard Friese, Donna Howell-Sickles, Howard Post, Buck McCain, Dave Powell, Eric Michaels, Mehl Lawson, Joe Beeler, Robert Winter, L.A. Huffman, Frank Sauerwein, Dale Ford, Sidney Harry Riesenberg and other deceased and contemporary artists. Three pieces by noted Indian portrait painter, E. A. Burbank will be offered, including a pastel portrait of Virgil Earp (estimate: $60,000-80,000).

The Old West is well-represented with fine artifacts such as Annie Oakley's Remington rifle, trophy and photos (estimate: $300,000-325,000); Frank Stillwell's Colt Single Action revolver, believed to be the gun with which he shot Morgan Earp; Wyatt Earp's walking stick; Cherokee Bill's Winchester; and Pawnee Bill's personal saddle. Several early Wyoming Territory saddles and accessories will be offered by makers such as Meanea and Gallatin.

Cowboy trappings from spurs to saddles are always well-represented at Lebel's

Annie Oakley photo

auctions, and this sale boasts a number of rare and impressive pieces. There are several sterling parade saddles, including Bohlin examples, as well as a stunning Loomis Saddlery saddle that belonged to the famous Santa Barbara rancher, Dixie W. Thompson. The custom saddle, originally crafted in 1889 and displayed at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, is ornately decorated in fine silverwork by the Tiffany-trained master, Edwin Field (estimate: $60,000-80,000). The saddle has been in the collection of San Francisco's de Young Museum for almost ninety years, and its sale will benefit the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco's acquisition funds. Auction owner Brian Lebel states, "This is a rare opportunity to purchase a custom masterwork with extensive California and American history as well as museum provenance. I'm honored to offer it."

Dixie Thompson saddle

This is the first year in Texas for Lebel's venerable event, which began in Cody, Wyoming, 26 years ago. Of the move to the Lone Star State, Lebel says, "Fort Worth is a city that embraces its rich western history while still celebrating its contemporary culture." He adds, "It's a perfect fit for us, and I'm not sure why we didn't make the move sooner."

Admission to the Auction and Auction Preview are free and open to the public. Bidder registration is free, and bidding is available live, online, by telephone or absentee. Catalogs are available for purchase. Details can be found at www.oldwestevents.com or by calling 480-779-9378.

From Way Out There: The Most Important Photograph Ever Taken

photograph by NASA/Apollo 8 astronaut William A. Anders

The American West is a glorious part of our world. Key word: our. Cowboy, Stockmen or not, we are all in this together and this NASA photograph should bring home to all of us, the need to take care of what we have and each other.

When Apollo 8 was deployed in 1968, its sole photographic mission was to capture high-resolution images of the moon's surface, but when the orbiting spacecraft emerged from a photo session on the far side of the moon, the crew snapped this, the most famous shot of the mission. Dubbed "Earthrise," this view of the Earth rising from the horizon of the moon has hopefully helped humans realize the fragility of their home. To learn more about this image, and for a free wallpaper for your computer, visit http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photos/milestones-space-photography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Artistic Drive

Whether he's braiding rawhide, playing music or training horses, Alan Bell is an artist at work.

By Carter G. Walker
Photographs by Adam Jahiel

Alan Bell is a Texas cowboy. He favors big hats, faded jeans, and western shirts, and wears his mustache, peppered with gray, like a horseshoe hanging from his mouth. He is a storyteller and a rawhide braider, a saddlemaker and a horse trainer, a father, a husband and a damn fine musician. When you add up everything he does, and then take it all away, what's left is the artist.

Take the cowboy off his ranch in Greenville, Texas, an hour northeast of Dallas, where leathery-leafed live oaks reach for the ground and the sky at the same time; take away his drums, his workshop and all his scattered tools; take away his family and the Spanish Barb horses he trains and feeds every day once the sun rises and again before it sets. Take it all away and this man, Alan Bell, big and strong and kind, is still an artist. It's not his work, or his product, or even the way he chooses to spend his time. Being an artist, for Alan Bell, is simply who he is, how he thinks, and the way he approaches every moment of his time on earth.

"It's the conscious choice to be good at all the steps of everything you're doing," he says, letting each word come out and line up properly without crowding each other. For Bell, the "everything you're doing" is a list as long as the tangled piles of rawhide string that coil like earthen licorice around his unruly workshop.

But before we see art, we need to understand Alan's artistic drive. And to get there, the only place to start is


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photos by Adam Jabiel

Alan Bell is a horseman, craftsman and musician.

at the beginning.

In 1959, Alan Bell was the first of his family to be born in Texas. He grew up a self-described army brat and troublemaker on a base in El Paso. His dad was an officer, his mom a teacher. Alan was one of five kids in a family that not only appreciated art, but made it. His father painted and drew. Everyone played music. But Alan had another passion no one in his family shared.

"I always had an affinity for horses," he says.

The Bell family didn't have horses, nor did any of Alan's friends. The youngster's fascination with the animal kept him inside, on the couch, watching every western the rabbit ears on his family's black-and-white TV could summon. He spent hours in his room, reading about cowboys and their trusty steeds. Sometimes the movie theater on the base showed western matinees. Alan went.

"I'm just odd man out," he says.

Although his family didn't share his obsession, no one discouraged it.

He remembers borrowing the car in high school to drive 45 miles to Las Cruces, where he would sit on a fence and watch horsemanship classes at New Mexico State University.

"I just always wanted to ride," he says.

That opportunity came his senior year in high school, when Alan and a group of friends went camping in Ruidoso for a weekend. The boys splurged to rent horses for a day from a one-hour-ride outfit.

"There were 11 horses and one mule," Alan says. "I got the mule."

Precisely one hour in, when Alan says the mule's "internal alarm clock" went off, the animal turned around and made for the barn. All the horses, their unhappy riders atop, followed behind.

"That mule ran me through trees and did whatever he could to scratch me off," Alan says, laughing like he was watching a film reel of the spectacle play out on his garage wall some 40 years later.

Eventually the mule sat down and Alan slid off, then walked around for a face-to-face with the animal.

"I looked him in the eye...and slapped him in the face," he says.

The mule got up. Alan climbed back aboard, and all the other horses followed him back onto the trail for every penny's worth of their full-day ride.

Throughout his twenties, Alan toured the Southwest as a musician, a drummer in one of Texas' first reggae bands, the International Raft Band. Half the group was American, the other half Jamaican. Dreadlocks hung to his elbows at one point, but Alan's Texas twang hinted at the cowboy underneath the hair.

Alan tells the story of one tour that took the band to both the Hopi and Havasu reservations. They were piled in a van, covering big swaths of hot, Arizona nothing on their way to the Grand Canyon and the people of the blue-green water. They were supposed to meet an emissary from the tribe at some point, but plans were less than specific. They hit a tiny town, not big enough for a stop sign, and Alan demanded a stop.

"I knew that if you miss the post office, you've


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missed the whole town," he says. When there was no one in the post office and no one on the road, Alan didn't have to think about what to do. He climbed a hill behind the post office and "made an Indian call" – part yodel, part shriek. He's not sure if the sound came from watching all those westerns or listening to the Havasu war cry on Bob Marley's "Crazy Baldheads."

"But it worked," he says, laughing like a kid who took apart a clock and then managed to put it back together again.

When Alan was 30 and had traded life as a touring musician for life as a touring long-haul truck driver, all in the name of a slight and beautiful woman named Judy whom he still calls "Judy the Great" 25 years on, he finally learned how to ride. After one of his riding lessons, Judy's brother loaned Alan a magazine with a story about Spanish Barb horses. When Alan read about the mounts of the *conquistadores*, his vision of the kind of horse he knew he'd have someday was narrowed down to one.

His first horse appeared in Alan's life in 1991. Her name was Pepita and she had heaves, an equine version of asthma. She came from a family in Iowa who couldn't keep her healthy when the banks of the Missouri couldn't hold the river, and everyone breathed floodwater for weeks. Alan had done his research through the Spanish Barb registry and was looking to buy a horse when Pepita's family found him and gave her away. Pepita was a descendant of San Domingo, Alan says, a Medicine Hat stallion immortalized in a Marguerite Henry novel and a made-for-TV movie that Alan had watched in high school.

Becoming a horse owner made Alan realize that he needed to be a horse trainer. He had to find a way to do it well.

Spanish Barbs are filled with the blood of agile Moorish war horses and their rugged Spanish equivalents. In the lore of the breed, they were favored on this side of the Atlantic by Spanish explorers and, eventually, by Native Americans, so much so that the U.S. Cavalry tried, and nearly succeeded, at exterminating the animals.

Short and deep-bodied, with Roman noses and an A-shape, rather than a U-shape, where the front legs join the chest, the breed was traditionally trained with a soft leather or rawhide *jaquima,* or hackamore, which includes a braided *bosal*. A noseband that acts upon the horse's nose and jaw, the bosal is used in place of a bit and encourages flexion and softness in the animal.

For Alan, this was the way to train his horses. And so Alan, mule slapper and Indian caller, set out to learn how to braid such gear. He started by reaching out to braider Leland Hensley, a fellow Texan. Alan read books and visited Web sites, and made a list of rawhide legends, artists like Luis Ortega, Bill Dorrance and Bryan Neubert. He learned that if you couldn't use it, it wasn't worth making.

Since Alan was going to ride horses he was training – Pepita gave Alan and Judy their "first baby," a foal the couple named Mariah – he also made lists of saddlemakers, men like Duff Severe, Cliff Wade and the Dorrance brothers. He figured he'd need to learn how to make saddles, as well.

As Alan's trucking gig took him around the country, he made phone calls, and plans, to meet with the master craftsmen on his list. He would watch the men at work, notice the delicate precision of their weathered cowboy fingers on every loop, and then ask the same question over and over again. Why?

"I never really wanted to know the what without knowing the why," Alan says. "I'd either find out why or I'd let go of what they told me."

So Alan learned about making rawhide from cattle, and from deer and horses. He learned about cutting

rawhide strings, about beveling and braiding, and building saddles that could make roping easier. He not only made his own gear – which he used to train Pepita, Mariah and a string of other Spanish Barbs he brought into his herd – but he started to sell gear too.

When he wasn't on the road, Alan was in his garage, choosing to get good at everything he was doing. In 2001, 10 years after he'd started, he landed an opportunity to study under braider Nate Wald.

Nate grew up working cattle on a ranch in Montana, near the eastern edge of the Crow Indian Reservation, where grassy hills roll like ocean waves to meet the sky. An accomplished horseman and former bull rider, Nate laid eyes on braided rawhide for the first time at a saddlery in Three Forks, Montana, near Bozeman, where he was in college. It was the beauty that got him.

"I fooled with it for a few years," he says. "And I just never stopped doing it."

Nate too studied under some of the greats – the likes of Bill Dorrance, Bryan Neubert, Vince Donley – and made braiding a part of his daily routine. By lunchtime most days, when the cows were checked and the horses fed, Nate was in his workshop. One needs only to look at any single piece of his work – the knife handle on his work table, for example, made with rawhide strings that measure less than 1/32 of an inch, and incorporating four pattern changes in less than five inches – to know that Nate has put in his hours.

Alan went to stay with Nate on the ranch and study his work. The men braided California vaquero-style reins and bosals, headstalls and quirts. They worked on making hides, slipping the hair and then pulling the skin taut to dry on big, round frames, like drums that might be heard, a heartbeat from the ground, a hundred miles away.

"Alan is always willing to learn," says Nate, stirring a vat of lye that smells like the goodness of wet earth. "And he rides, so he knows how gear should work."

But before you think Nate's words aren't enough of a compliment, remember that these men are cowboys, not talkers.

Instead, both men tell about the roof they put on Nate's garage during the internship, and the time they spent playing music. Their kinship is obvious. Their families – Alan and Judy and their two girls, Ahnaliese and Alyssa; Nate and T.J. and their son,

Alan Bell at work with Nate Wald in Wald's Montana shop.

Jackson – are close.

In his own workshop, a thousand miles, as the crow flies, south and east from Nate's, Alan fingers a rawhide knot on his fid, a well-worn wood and metal tool he uses to open braidwork for another string to pass through. Sometimes the strings are the color of sand, or the gold of grass in the fall. Other times, they are red or brown, dyed with black walnuts, coffee or onion skins. The fid, and the braided knot, came as a gift from Nate.

"I see it every time I braid," says Alan. "And it's absolutely perfect. He will always be an inspiration to me."

If Nate's goal is to produce "straight, clean work" that is always getting better, Alan's is to create gear that "holds up to use and close scrutiny." When he talks about what he learned from Nate, Alan pauses. One can't be sure whether he is holding back a laugh or trying to ditch the lump in his throat. When he starts talking again, he calls the experiences humbling.

"It's almost so humbling that you're not sure you can continue," he says, now clearly laughing.

But Alan has continued. He was able to give up trucking five years ago to focus on braiding and saddlemaking and horse training. He started playing music again, in a blues band with his brother on guitar, after a 20-year hiatus when the focus had been on "driving the truck, buying the ranch and paying bills." On top of that, Alan and Judy managed to raise two remarkable and accomplished daughters; one earned entry into the National Honor Society and the other is in her first year at the Honors College at Texas A&M.

There's one thing about Alan that we haven't paid much attention to. Alan happens to be black. Which is not out of the norm, historically speaking, for a Texas cowboy. But there aren't many African-Americans in the western gear-making crowd.

"Race is a part of it and it's not a part of it. It shouldn't be a part of it," he says. Alan puts things in context by telling how Ruby Bridges, the first black child to attend an all-white elementary school in the South, is just five years older than he is.

There are unpleasant moments, he says, and he tells the story of someone picking up his braidwork at a show.

"The first thing they asked was 'You did that?'" he recalls. "And I said 'yes.' The second thing they asked was 'Are you telling a lie?' They didn't think I was capable of doing that work. The fact of it is race. They look at me different."

In his workshop, which smells like the holy trinity of leather, earth and saddle soap, Alan's red Yamaha drum set is at the ready, tucked between sawhorses for saddles and the ruler-edged table where he cuts and braids string. There is always a click-click-click in his shop, like a metronome, which means the fences are charged, and the horses and dogs are where they need to be. Just like Alan. And there is often reggae music filling the space with slow, offbeat rhythms.

Carter G. Walker is the editor of *Western Art & Architecture* and the author of *Moon Montana & Wyoming* (Moon Books, 2014). She lives in Montana.




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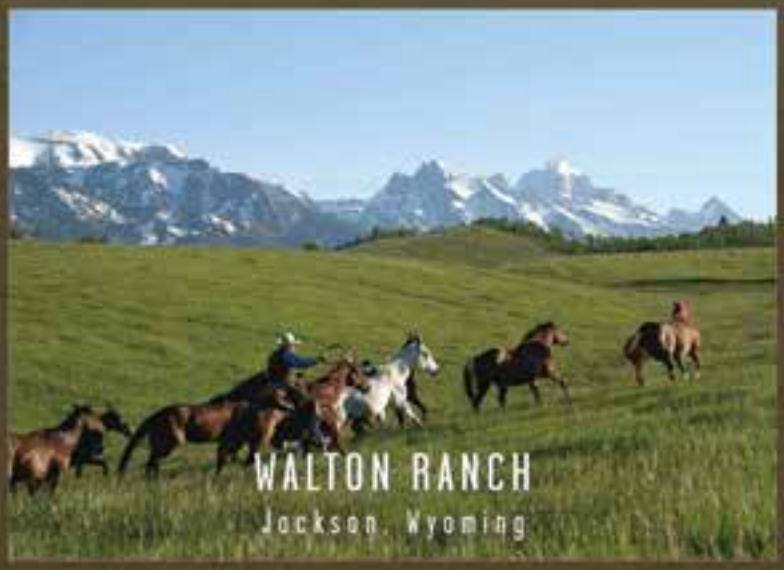

An exceptional property in an extraordinary setting, the 1,848-acre legacy ranch abuts three miles of the legendary Snake River, is surrounded by Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and is just ten minutes from the renowned Jackson Hole. $48,700,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881 and Billy Long, 970.948.1333

This 12,505 total acre cattle and hay production ranch is rimmed by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and located just 1.5 hours from Colorado Springs. Well watered with over 18 CFS of water rights, streams, ponds and wells irrigating 700 acres putting up 1,200 tons of premium hay. Runs 900-1,000 yearling cattle. $8,500,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881

Operating as a working cattle ranch, this rare development opportunity borders the city limits of Redding. 375-acres with end-of-the-road privacy, old growth trees, a private reservoir, seasonal stream and abundant recreational opportunities in the area. Supports 30-35 cattle and irrigates 30 acres of pasture. $1,980,000. Billy Long, 970.948.1333

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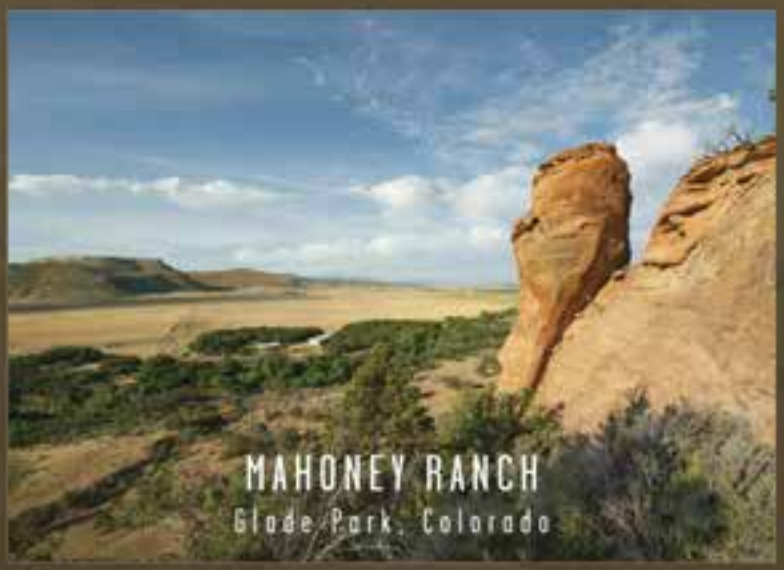
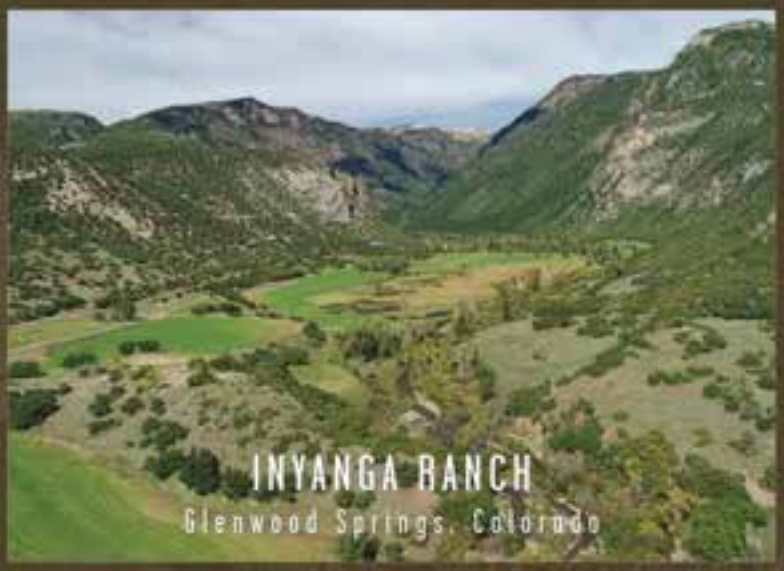


Located in the Glade Park area high above Grand Junction, the 588-acre ranch is surrounded by natural beauty. Situated in a spectacular and predominately private hunting area known for trophy bull elk, the ranch is a big game hunter's paradise with a renovated 3,900 sq.ft. log home. $1,495,000. Billy Long, 970.948.1333 and Mike Deer, 970.618.3081

The 55,486 deeded acre legacy ranch has natural resources, production capabilities, magnificent scenery and is a potential revenue-generating hunting operation. Operating as bison-cattle-horse ranch, it has first-class improvements, 3,370+ acres of irrigable water rights, and is under two hours to Colorado Springs. $54,700,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881

The perfect setup for horses or a small herd of cattle, the 160-acre ranch includes a nice 2,784 sq.ft. home, horse barn, Quonset barn, loafing shed and corrals. Four pastures, forty hayable acres on most years plus additional 172 acres of grazing and hunting pasture also available. $899,000. Duane Daskam, 719.942.3734 and Ron Morris, 970.535.0881



Pristine. Private. Perfect. Over 530 acres of beautiful river frontage, ponds, meadows and historic cabins at the end of a box canyon bordered on three sides by national forest and BLM, Inyanga Ranch epitomizes the pursuit of perfection - the ultimate gentleman's recreation ranch in one of the most stunning locations in the west. $29,000,000. Billy Long, 970.948.1333

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BOOKS TO FIND

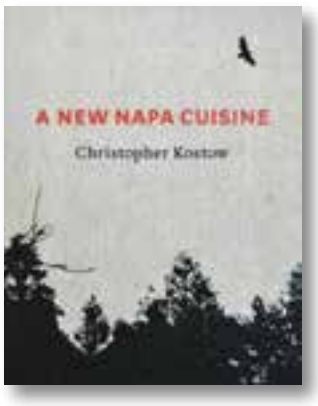
Napa Cuisine, Coyote Howls and American Ballads

"Without extraordinary ideas there can be no extraordinary results."

— Kitaoji Rosanjin, 1883-1959

A New Napa Cuisine
Christopher Koskow
Random House

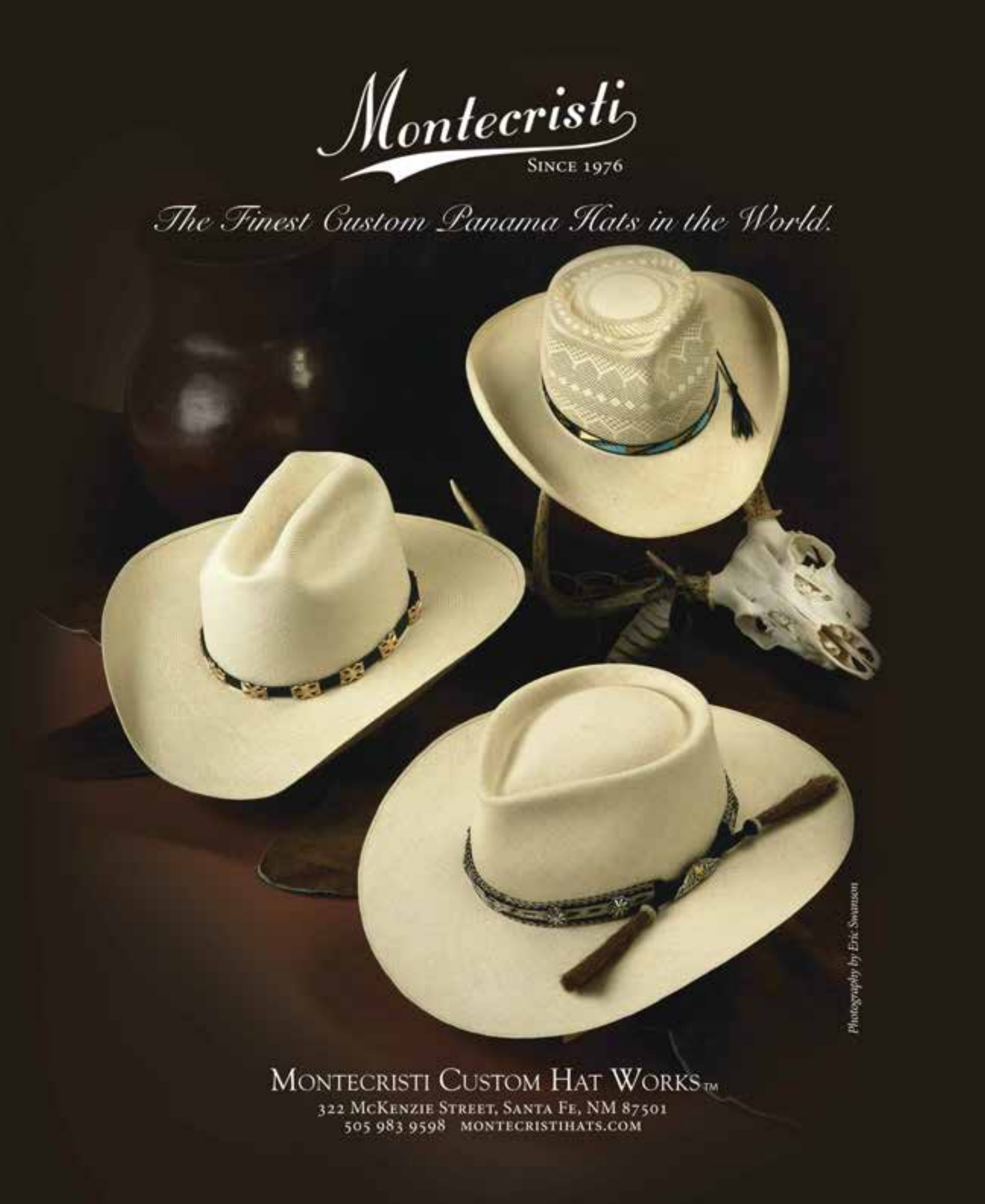
The west is a place of many tastes and the increasingly fervent farm-to-table approach has offered the opportunity for many creative chefs to expand the vision to include local-only ingredients with servings placed on artisan/craftsman produced table and serving ware.



In chef Christopher Kostow's new book *A New Napa Cuisine* (Random House), we follow his journey from a young line cook in a seaside town to the storied Restaurant at Meadowood – the Napa Valley mainstay that has earned three Michelin stars and James Beard Awards for best chef and outstanding service under Kostow's leadership – an amazing feat for someone so young.

The oversize book, printed on matte stock is filled with photos of the wild and wonderful of the region including the work of potters such as Richard Carter who the author describes as "the Obi-Wan of high-temperature wood firing." Kostow's desire to share the unique through his presentation is a wonderful respite from the usual "white ware" table settings that contemporary restaurants rely on for simplicity and as the ultimate "blank palette."

Through about a hundred artfully constructed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recipes and stunning photography, Kostow details the transformative effect this small American valley has had on his life and work through the artisans, products, growers, and wild ingredients that inspire his approach to dishes.

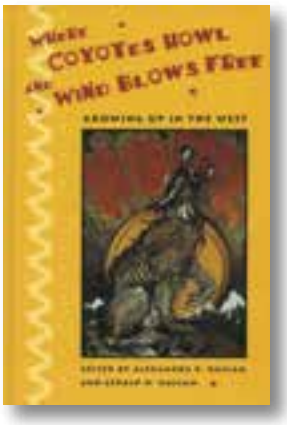
Wild Miner's Lettuce

He shares stories of discovering wild plums and radishes growing along the creek behind his home or of firing pottery with local ceramic artisans. Kostow presents – not only a new Napa cuisine – but also a new Napa. One that is rooted in a place that's rich in beauty and community.

Where Coyotes Howl and Wind Blows Free
Edited by Alexandra Haslam and Gerald Haslam
University of Nevada Press

In this collection of regional stories, the father-daughter Haslam team carefully balance gender and ethnicity to provide readers with the first anthology to truly reflect the heterogeneity – people from lots of different backgrounds – of the West. There are thirty-five selections from 32 important writers that represent a wide variety of ethnic groups – their experiences and stories. In the eleven states generally considered to comprise the West, there is great diversity – diversity of culture, locale, race, experience, and attitude. All of these are reflected in the traditional myths and legends, bittersweet stories, and humorous points of view encompassed in this book.

Just some of the writers included in this collection are: Wilma Elizabeth McDaniel, Gerald W. Haslam, Alexandra R. Haslam, Okanogan, Jo Bender, Skye Mitchell, Darryl Babe Wilson, Zilpha Keatley Snyder, Robert Laxalt, Rudolfo Anaya, Wallace Stegner, Levi Peterson, and Robert Franklin Gish among others, as well as the important Latino writer Arnold Rojas.



The catch line for this book – as the cover says – "Growing up fast in the West." This is probably the best description as the number of forces pushing westward created in time helped self-create the sections in the book from "Deepest Roots" to Rural Lives" to "Urban Encounters" that includes a story by the late Richard Brautigan.

Gerald Haslam is an author who has focused on rural and small towns in California and its Central valley region including stories on its poor and working class people of all colors.

He is a scholar on the life of Arnold Rojas and contributed the story "Arnold Rojas, a Remembrance" in Issue 4.1. This is a thoughtful and realistic look at the West and its true diversity. Published in 1995, it is still available and important to own and share.

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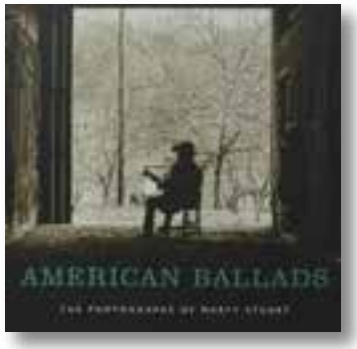
American Ballads: The Photography of Marty Stuart
Marty Stuart with Essay by Susan Edwards
Vanderbilt University Press

Marty Stuart is a master storyteller not only through his songs, but also through his revealing and compelling photographs. Known primarily as a country music star with that "great hair," Stuart has been taking photographs of the people and places surrounding him since he first went on tour with bluegrass performer Lester Flatt at age twelve. (See Jim McGuire's youthful shot of Stuart in his photo section of this issue) Stuart had many inspirations in his life – starting with his mother, Hilda Stuart, whom he watched document their family's everyday life in Mississippi, bassist Milt Hinton's photographs of fellow jazz artists, and Edward Curtis' well-known images of Native Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. Stuart's photographic work ranges from intimate and often candid behind-the-scenes depictions of legendary musicians, to images that capture the eccentricities of characters from the back roads of America, to dignified portraits of members of the impoverished Lakota tribe in South Dakota, a people he was introduced to through his former father-in-law, Johnny Cash. Whatever the subject, Stuart is able to sensitively tease out something unexpected or hidden beneath the surface of his subject. There is a playfulness in his photos that comes from a sensational awareness of timing – frankly not surprising for a musician of his capability and longevity – you gotta be good to keep packin' 'em in. And he does, and has since the early 1970s.




Chet Atkins and Carl Perkins, 1994, Nashville.


Pine Ridge, South Dakota, 2006


Loretta Lynn, 1994, Ryman Auditorium, Nashville

This book reflects the people and places of his career and much of it explores rural America. As Stuart explains, "The back roads are where you'll find some of the people that I admire, respect, and always keep an eye out for...They are renegades...As Roger Miller once said, 'These people flush to the beat of a different plumber.'"

This is a superb book by a superb artist.

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07/14

Stephanie Arnaud's Chicken á la Moutarde

By Kathy McCraine

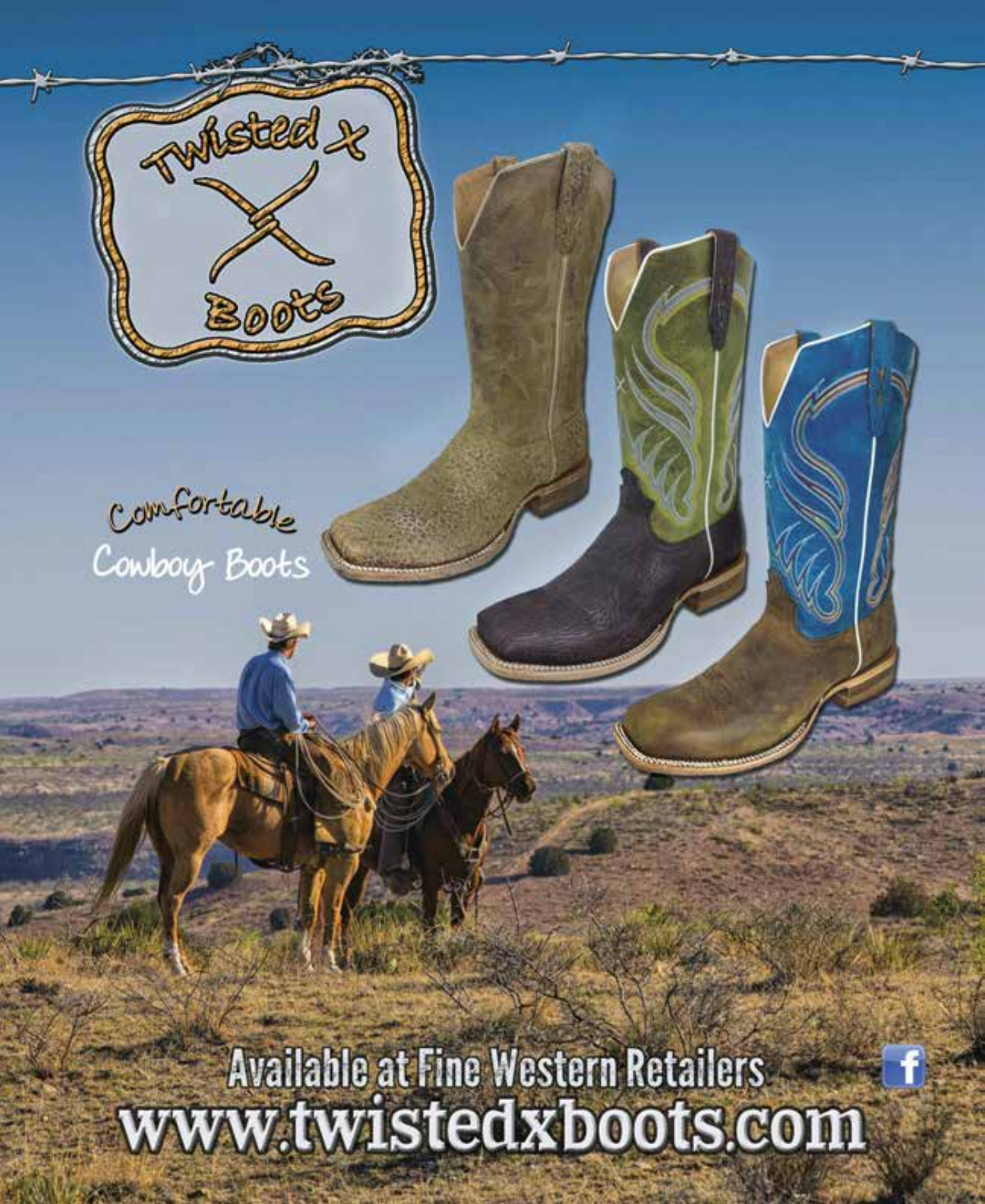
When neighboring ranchers get together to visit and share a meal, you can just about count on eating a big, juicy hunk of ranch-raised beef. But when Gail and Amy Steiger of the Spider Ranch west of Prescott, Arizona, invited us for dinner shortly before Christmas, they told us to be prepared for an unusual treat. Their friends, Gilbert and Stephanie Arnaud, along with their 15-year-old daughter, Carla, from the south of France, were visiting, and Stephanie had insisted on cooking a classic French meal for us.

After a 40-minute drive on a winding dirt road, my husband, Swayze, and I arrived at the Steiger's cozy ranch house in time to find Stephanie at the stove, stirring sauces and checking the roasting chicken for her classic *chicken á la moutarde*.

Amy's daughter, Lily Auker, was home from college for the holidays, and everyone was in a party mood. Gilbert (pronounced jeel-BARE) is the quiet one, while Stephanie, tall and slender, with long auburn hair,

photos by Kathy McCraine

Stephanie Arnaud, of the ranching operation Mas Lou Rayas, in the Camargue region of southern France.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bubbles over in vivacious conversation, her English flavored by a lilting German/French accent.

Gilbert and Stephanie are ranchers from the Camargue, the marshy river delta that lies between the Mediterranean Sea and the two branches of the Rhône River in the south of France. Their ranching operation, Manade Gilbert Arnaud, where they raise Camargue cattle, lies 10 minutes from the small town of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer on the Mediterranean coast. They call their ranch Mas Lou Rayas. (*Manade* refers to the breeding herd, *mas* to the actual ranch.) Gilbert's family has lived in the Camargue for generations, while Stephanie is a native of Germany.

"I came in 1993 and didn't know anything about cattle or horses," she says, "but I realized very soon this was something I really liked. Gilbert took me everywhere with him, and I learned fast."

With Gilbert's expertise in the livestock business and Stephanie's degree in economics and marketing, they built an operation where, in addition to raising about 100 cattle, they do some 200 group tours each year, introducing city folks to the centuries old tradition of cattle raising in this unique part of the world.

Camargue cattle are native to the region, thriving in marshes, where they live in a semi-wild state. The bulls are used in the *course de camarguaise*, a French bullfighting sport which differs from Spanish bullfighting in that bulls aren't killed at the end of the fight. Rather than flourishing a cape, the *razeteur* (bullfighter), in traditional white costume, relies on speed and agility to strip off bands of twine and pieces of cloth wrapped around and between the charging bull's horns.

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On ranch tours, the Arnauds and their *gardians* (cowboys), mounted on Camargue horses, gather cattle from the marshes and demonstrate *triage* (cutting) and *ferrade* (branding). The white Camargue horse is an ancient breed, one of the oldest in the world, and is indigenous to the area, living wild in the marshes. Because of their stamina, hardiness and agility, these small, sturdy horses are the traditional mount of the *gardians.*

Gilbert and Stephanie met Gail Steiger about 10 years ago when he came to France to film one of many documentary films he's made on cowboys around the world. Soon after, the Arnauds, who spend part of their winters in Scottsdale, Arizona, started coming to the Spider Ranch to ride with Gail (and later Amy after they were married). Though the whole family enjoys helping out with cattle work there, Stephanie is the one who is most passionate about it. Now she comes to America about three weeks earlier than the rest of the family to ride in December.

"I love it here," Stephanie says, "because Gail and Amy think the same way Gilbert does [about handling cattle]. I get lost in this big country, but Amy has taught me how to orient myself. This year when I called, she said, 'We are right in the middle of cleaning off Smith Mesa. It's fine if you come, but we are sleeping in a tent.' I said, 'What, six days with no shower?'"

She did come, and with Amy's advice to buy wool undergarments and "layer, layer, layer" for the cold, she did fine.

The Spider Ranch runs about 300 head on some of the brushiest, rockiest country in northern Arizona. "Gail and I are running this whole ranch by ourselves,"

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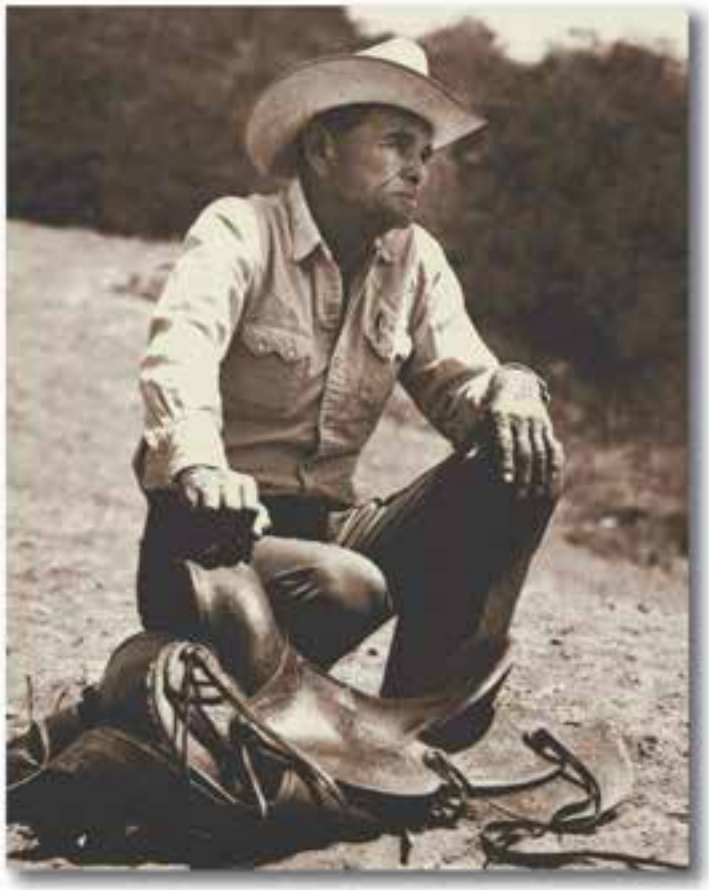

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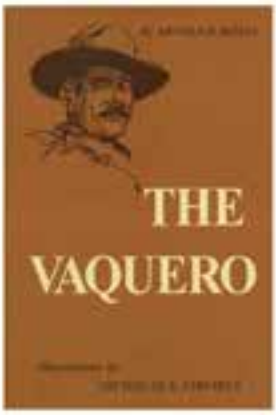

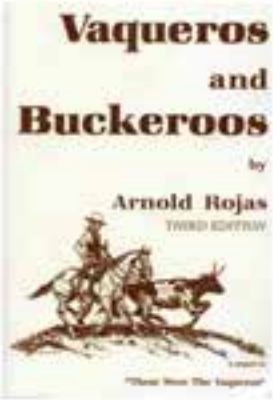

Amy says, "so sometimes having a third person helps. Stephanie is already a good horseman, and she understands cows too, so we can give her a good horse to ride, and we don't have to worry."

Besides being Gail's top hand on the ranch, Amy is an award-winning author, writing under the name Amy Hale Auker. Her third book, *The Story is the Thing*, has just been published.

According to Amy, Gail is partial to women cowhands because he says they listen and use their heads over their muscle. "They don't come with all these 'punchier than thou' ideas," Amy says.

Despite the effort Stephanie puts into dinner at the Steigers – an onion appetizer, tomato tart salad, the chicken, and *tarte tatin* (the classic French upside-down apple tart) for dessert – she would rather be horseback than working in the kitchen.

"I don't like everyday cooking," she says. "It's not my passion, I have to confess. Until the age of 30, I had never cooked because I lived by myself. We hire people to cook for the groups – which number sometimes as many as 140 – but it is important when you are the boss that you can do everything your employees do. So Gilbert and I can both cook if we get organized and prepare. Sometimes I have to cook for our *gardians*, for instance, when we are branding, and I have to be on my horse too, so I prepare something a day ahead."

At home, Stephanie usually prepares the *moutarde* with rabbit instead of chicken because of the abundance of wild game in the Camargue. "The main thing I have learned," she says, "is that everything needs time to come together. Cooking is always a matter of time."

Chicken á la Moutarde

6 pieces chicken or rabbit
Butter for browning
Salt, pepper and thyme to taste
1 onion, chopped
1½ cups white wine
1½ cups chicken bouillon
Dijon mustard to coat chicken
1-2 tablespoons sour cream

Season chicken with salt, pepper and dried thyme. Sauté in the butter, browning on both sides, about 1-2 minutes per side. Remove from the pan and put in a baking dish. In the same pot, sauté the onion in more butter until wilted. Add the wine to the pan to deglaze and cook down to about half. Coat the chicken pieces with dijon mustard and cover with the onions, pouring extra sauce around the edge. Pour the bouillon around the sides of the pan, put in the oven, and bake at 350 degrees about an hour and 15 minutes, or until done. Remove the chicken to a platter and keep warm. Pour the sauce in a small pot, bring to a boil, adding a little flour if the sauce is too thin. Take off the heat and stir in the sour cream. Serve the sauce over the chicken. Serves 6.

Kathy McCraine is the author of *Cow Country Cooking: Recipes and Tales from Northern Arizona's Historic Ranches*. Visit her web site at www.kathymccraine.com. For more information on Manade Gilbert Arnaud, visit www.manade-arnaud.com.

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Poetic Pictures

The western art of Josh Elliott.

I paint the West because it's what I know. Having lived only in the West, I feel a deep connection with its land and people, and feel I know it well enough to convey what is unique about it.

My work often depicts elements of man's presence in the landscape. I paint these elements not as statements about the environment, but because they exist – they're the truth. I've always felt a connection to art possessing such truth, and I aim to fill my own work with that same truth, albeit as an expressive translation and not necessarily a literal depiction. A good painting, to me, is nature's truth filtered through the artist. Without such expression, it's hard to call it art.

It's my hope that my work transcends subject matter. While the subject of a painting is important, I'm motivated more by artistic elements: color harmonies, pleasing arrangements of shapes and close-knit values, characteristics that make for a poetic picture. A ranch house, for example, isn't necessarily poetic, but enveloped in fog on a winter day, it becomes an image that's harmonious and ethereal, an example of how the everyday can be transformed into profound beauty.

It's an artist's job to point out beauty that's not easily observed. My paintings tend to be "quiet," a trait that contributes to a deeper reflection of such beauty. That's what I hope resonates with the viewer. – *Josh Elliott*

Man vs. Desert II. I like to play with formats, and this long, narrow ratio allowed me to depict a dilapidated ranch intimately, while showing the vastness of the valley in which it sits. The title is a nod to the hardworking people that scratch out a living in less than ideal conditions.

White Whisper. This is a ranch house in Idaho's Palouse region. The fog turned everything harmonious, brought color values into a closer range, and made everything soft. Painting the junction of land and sky was particularly enjoyable.

Harvest Moon. There are a lot of these haystacks west of where I live in Montana. The wooden structure is called a beaver slide. This painting began as an idea, then I went in search of reference material. I had an image of a red-tailed hawk sitting on top of the slide, waiting for dinner.

Hillsong. I was attracted to the harmony of this hillside of aspens in the fall.

Verdant. Greens can be tough to paint. Willow leaves and pine needles are both green, for example, but very different shades. I was up for the challenge after encountering this scene in Colorado's high country. Green paintings are always helped by a spot of red, which I found in the shallow creek bottom.

Morning Blue. Montana is called Big Sky Country and this scene just outside of Augusta lets you know how it came by that name.

Floating Gold. This creek is not far from my house. The deep, dark and calm water played nicely against the more active and vibrant cottonwoods. The fallen, floating leaves give the painting a sense of movement, and its title.

Into Midnight. Color in nocturnes presents a special challenge, as nighttime colors are elusive and open to interpretation. I see night in blues and purples, and not as green, as is often depicted.

High Above, Tsegi. This is on the rim of Canyon de Chelly. The roads, car tracks and cultivated fields are not only truthful, but offer great assistance in composition and keeping the viewer's eye moving through the painting.

Past Knowledge. When I travel around Montana, I am often struck by what is still standing from the past. This old schoolhouse near the Little Belt Mountains made me reflect on what life in Montana would have been like when the school was being used. It may not have been a whole lot different from today, in this area of the state.

In Like a Lion. A March painting trip to Glacier offered tremendous beauty, along with powerful gusts of wind. Fortunately, there were rocks to weight my easel so it wouldn't blow away.

Echoes of the Sun. This is Echo Lake, in northwestern Montana. I enjoy watching the transformation of the landscape from late afternoon to evening. The low, filtered sunlight shining on nature, and nature reflecting that beauty back to us, is a gift.

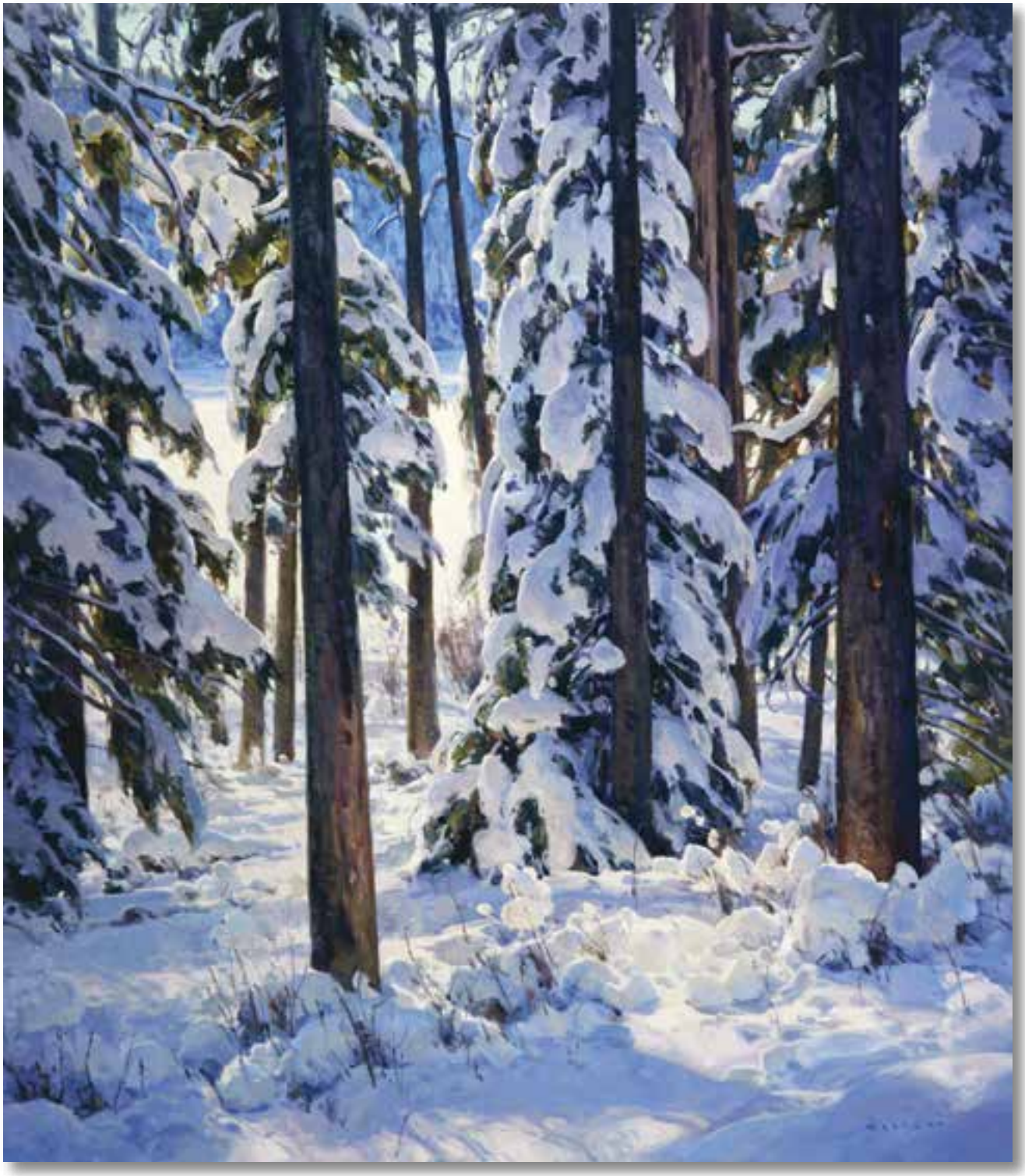
Mule Deer Crossing. This is a wildlife painting without wildlife.
It invites closer inspection, and the viewer is rewarded with a story.

Shifting Seasons. The saying in Montana goes something like this: If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes. An October snowstorm isn't unusual, but it's rarely appreciated. In this case, the storm provided inspiration, which I did appreciate.

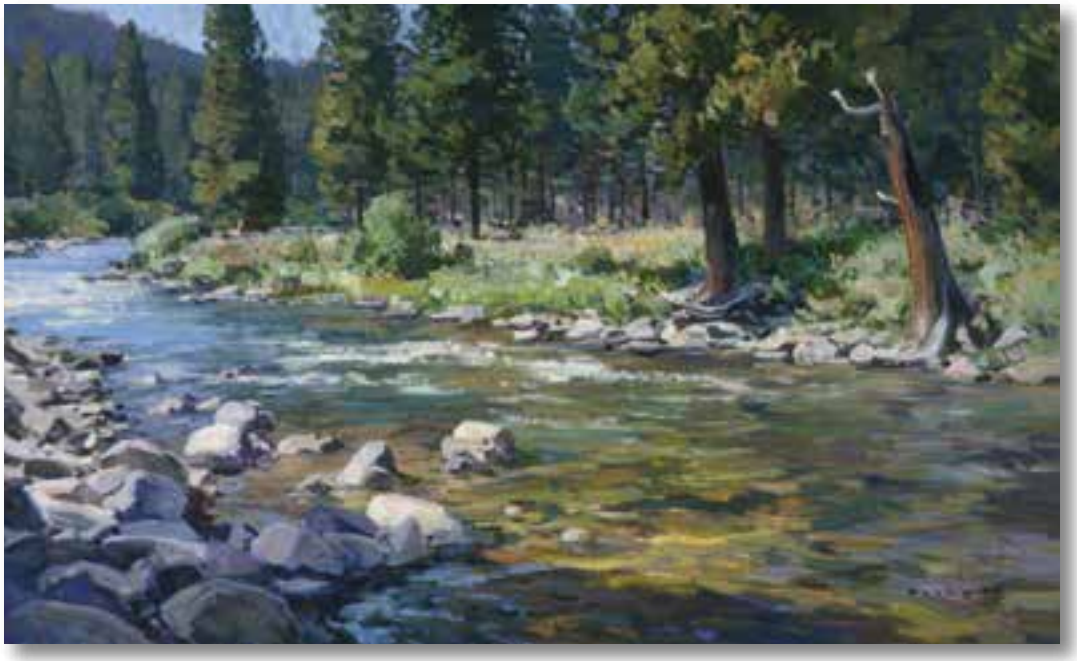
Desert Winds. I was intrigued by these color combinations, and the idea of the wind pushing clouds and rain over the thirsty desert.

Order and Freedom. As the title of this painting implies, I was trying to convey our desire to organize and harness nature. We can arrange the layout of a field, but we can't do much about the weather.

Sunset Moonrise. This scene is on the Utah-Arizona border. I wanted to depict the "desert varnish" on the cliffs, and the late light highlighted it in a poetic manner – ripe conditions for a painting.



Halcyon Days. The term "Halcyon Days" is defined as a period of peace and happiness, or a period of calm weather during the winter solstice. This sunny day in December, after a few days of heavy snow, seemed to fit the definition perfectly.



Hot Spot. The Taylor Fork in Montana is a great place to fish. Combine this with the spot of light hitting the rocks under the water and you have the reason for the title.

Into October. This is the North Fork of Montana's Blackfoot River putting on a beautiful display at the end of September.

Learn more about Josh Elliott's work at www.joshelliott.fineartstudioonline.com.

Justice, for the Horses

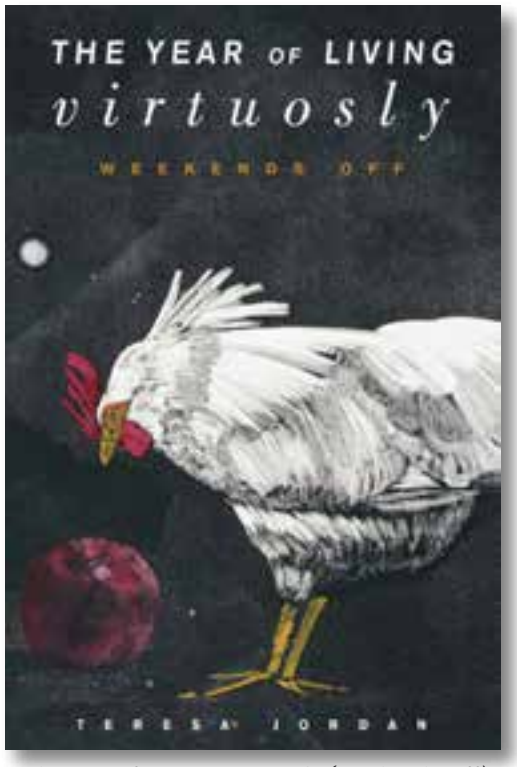
Examining violence, cowardice, regret and action.

By Teresa Jordan

A grave injustice or cruelty witnessed firsthand marks you forever, especially if you have been powerless to stop it. Even reading about such a thing can be indelible. But perhaps it's out of such anguish that lasting justice is born.

I was 22 or 23 years old when I spent a week in the archives at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, researching women who worked on the land for my first book. Archives are among my favorite places on this earth; it's hard to describe the intimacy of reading real-time accounts of people who lived generations earlier. But such work can be surprisingly painful: more than once I've been reduced to tears at the shock of a sudden loss or calamity recounted in a letter or diary.

During my days in Laramie, I pored over letters, journals, diaries, old newspaper clippings – anything that would give me a sense of the day-to-day lives of women who worked outside in the 19th and early 20th centuries. I was delighted to come across Owen Wister's notebooks from his travels in Wyoming in the 1890s. Wister was a Harvard graduate who originally came west on doctor's orders and became so fascinated by the region and its people that he went on to write *The Virginian*, one of the most popular westerns of all time. He was an acute observer, and I hoped I might find descriptions of ranch women he met along the way. Instead I found something quite different that affects me to this day.

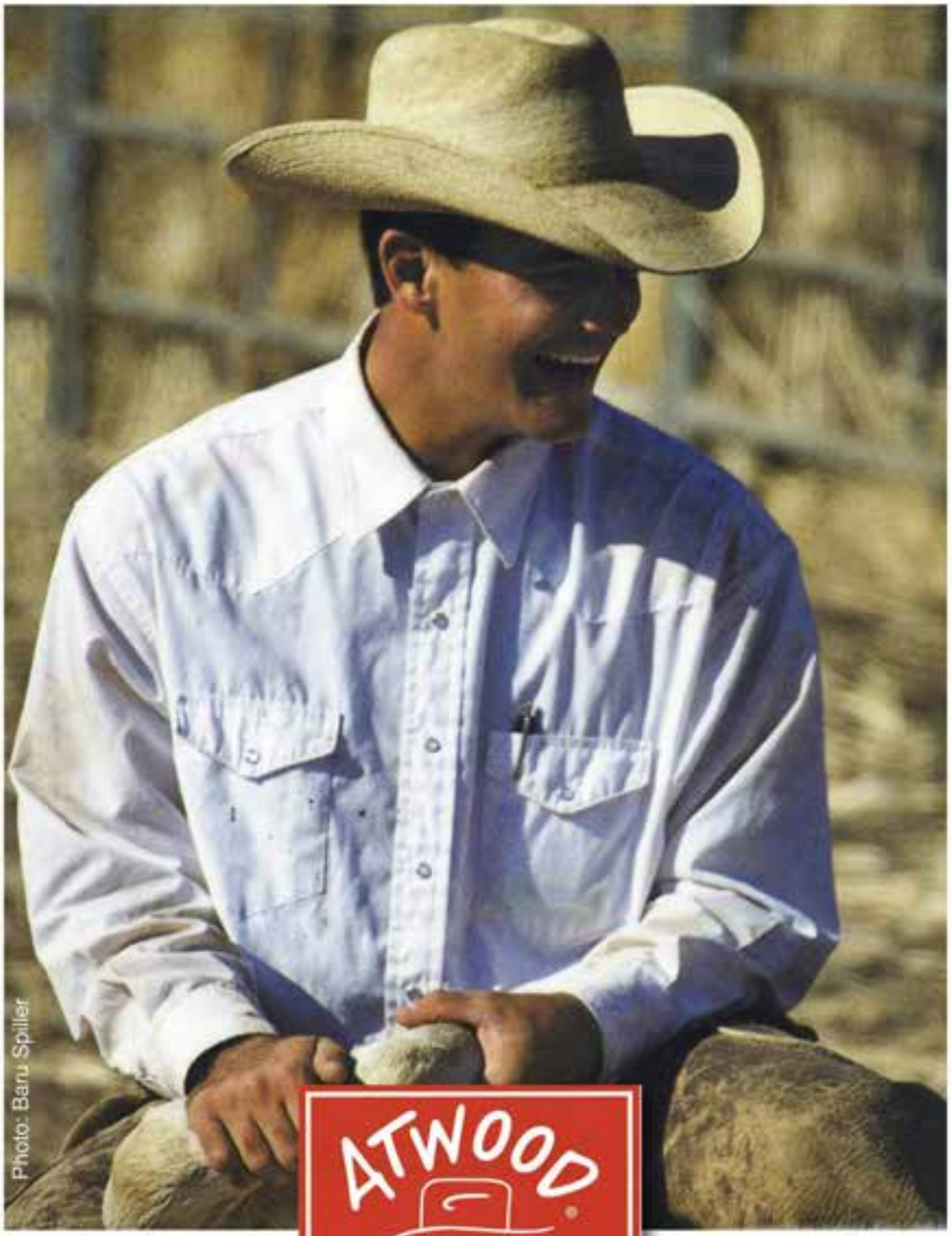


courtesy Counterpaint Press

The Year of Living Virtuously (Weekends Off) includes 45 essays on human virtue.

In 1891, Wister visited the ranch of a man named Tisdale, about 65 miles from Casper. He was supposed to meet a friend there, but the friend had not arrived, and Tisdale offered Wister a place to stay. Two days later, the friend still had not shown up, and Tisdale invited Wister to ride with him to the far side of the ranch. They took along two extra horses, which Tisdale tied together.

Cowboy Tough Hats



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One of the horses was an outlaw, and several miles into the trip he broke away, towing the other horse behind him. The escape enraged Tisdale, and he pursued the runaways through a series of steep ravines until he exhausted his own mount, which angered him further:

At length the runaways got far ahead of us and I left Tisdale kicking and cursing his horse, who was now able to walk only. I took the high ground, pretty level and free of holes, to keep the sorrel in sight and Tisdale kept in the trail below in the valley, his horse being too done up to go up the hill. I stopped and he at last came up with me. . . . Tisdale dismounted and kicked his poor quiet beast who stood quite patient. He kicked its ribs, its legs, its jaw, and I saw that red foam was guttering down from the bit. I saw Tisdale was insane with rage.

Then Tisdale gouged out the horse's eye, an act of cruelty that haunted Wister for the rest of his life, especially because he felt powerless at the time to stop it. Tisdale would have easily bested Wister in a fight; it's not clear that Wister even considered accosting him. Instead, Wister wrote in his journal, "I watched him, dazed with disgust and horror. . . . I was utterly stunned and sickened at this atrocious cruelty, and walked back to my own horse and sat down, not knowing very well what I was doing."

The injured horse was eventually able to stand again, and Tisdale mounted him. They headed back to the ranch headquarters, 20 miles distant, Tisdale dismounting and leading the horse across the roughest ground, Wister following at some distance:

I never spoke to him, nor he to me. . . . I tried to think of other matters, but this damnable thing I had seen done kept burning like a blister through every thought that came to me. Moreover, my own conduct in making no effort to prevent or stop this treatment of the horse has grown more and more discreditable to me. . . . I found myself once or twice hoping the horse would fall and kill him. And I remain the moral craven who did not lift a finger or speak a word.

As Wister tried to make sense of his cowardice, he reasoned that "the situation was a hard one." Even once they got back to the ranch, he was still 65 miles from town with no transportation of his own. He had accepted Tisdale's hospitality; the abused horse, after all, was Tisdale's property. But he found his rationalizations weak: "I think this is all a low argument."

Over the next few days, as Wister waited for his friend, he and Tisdale hardly spoke. Wister learned that he had not witnessed an isolated incident; Otto, the cook, told him that "no one in the territory had such a name for cruelty. That the 200 or so men who had worked for Tisdale at various times, all spoke of it." Several had even witnessed the particular atrocity that shook Wister to his core. Yet the easterner took no solace from the fact that hardened westerners had been no more successful at stopping the cruelty than he. Instead, he wrote:

Nothing disgraceful an acquaintance of mine has ever done has nauseated my soul like this. The man who cheated at cards; the man who pretended to be my sincere friend and came to my room every day and left it to blacken my character; the man who treated the Cambridge waitress in that way; none of those people's acts have had the sickening effect that the sight of that wretched fainting horse having his eye gouged out has had.

The journal entry is full of despair, and then Wister has a revelation: *Did I believe in the efficacy of prayer I*

LEGENDS OF THE WEST

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should petition to be the hand that once and for all chronicled and laid bare the virtues and the vices of this extraordinary phase of American social progress. Nobody has done it. Nobody has touched anywhere near it. . . . The fact is, it is quite worthy of Tolstoy or George Elliot, or Dickens.

Owen Wister, the writer, was born that day. He already knew he wanted to write – he was keeping the journal in the first place to record "all the things that are peculiar to this life and country," and he had started a short story he called "Chalkeye." But now, in his disgust and humiliation over his own helplessness and that of the dozens of others who had failed to confront Tisdale's brutality, he had found his subject.

Nick Adams/courtesy Counterpoint Press

Author Teresa Jordan

Wister included the incident, with all its gory details, in the short story "Balaam and Pedro," which was published in 1894 in *Harper's Magazine*. In 1902 he included a slightly less violent version of it in *The Virginian*. In both works, the brutal Tisdale was renamed Balaam, and this time his companion on the ride was not an ineffectual dude like Wister himself but a man from Virginia, "in whose brawn and sinew the might of justice was at work." The Virginian beat Balaam to a pulp but did not kill him, and it is clear in both the short story and the novel that Balaam was chastened but not reformed; once the enforcer was out of sight, he would resume his cruel ways.

Balaam is just a side character in the novel; the central drama takes place between the Virginian and Trampas, a cow thief and murderer, and the climax comes when the Virginian reluctantly guns Trampas down. He stands up to the bully when no one else will. It is a role he despises but accepts until, in the words of a cohort, "civilization can reach us." After the villain is vanquished, the Virginian marries his sweetheart and takes his place in society as "an important man, with a strong grip on many various enterprises," one of which, we can assume, is helping to establish a justice system that will take care of thieves and abusers and murderers so that moral men won't have to choose between cowardice and becoming killers themselves. *The Virginian* is an evolutionary tale, the prototype for thousands of Westerns that recount the course from anarchy to frontier justice to the rule of law.

Although the western genre has fallen out of favor, its essential drama continues to play out in popular culture, recast in drug wars or a post-apocalyptic future. In these action dramas, the costumes and technology have changed, but the essential nature of violence has not.

In the real world, though, something quite different has happened. Although the 24-7 news cycle leaves us with the impression that we are devolving into chaos, the reality is that violence has substantially decreased all over the world.

In his recent book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, Steven Pinker, a renowned cognitive scientist, reviews a wealth of research that indicates that "violence has declined over long stretches of time." Even today – notwithstanding two world wars, the Holocaust, and the Rwandan genocide in the last century

and Darfur, Afghanistan, and Iraq in this one – "we may be living in the most peaceful era in our species' existence."

Pinker cites many examples. In war, for instance, the number of battle deaths has fallen from 65,000 per conflict per year prior to 1945 to less than 2,000 per year today.

Or consider the fact that today an execution by lethal injection after a 15-year appeal process garners substantial protest; 200 years ago, "a person could be burned at the stake for criticizing the king after a trial that lasted 10 minutes." Even the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust had a more brutal precedent, when the Mongol invaders massacred some 40 million people out of a world population one-seventh the size as that during the Nazi era.

Pinker summarizes several theories about why this has occurred. Philosopher Peter Singer, for instance, suggests that our "moral circles" have expanded as networks have grown under the influence of trade, technology, and other interdependencies. At one point, our allegiance was only to the clan, but it gradually expanded to the tribe, then to the nation, then to other races and even to animals. This broadening of concern is enhanced by "the inexorable logic of the Golden Rule: the more one knows and thinks about other living things, the harder it is to privilege one's own interests over theirs." Terrorism challenges this trend but has not reversed it.

I can trace the evolution of compassion toward horses through stories passed down in my own family. I grew up as part of the fourth generation on a ranch in

southeast Wyoming fewer than a hundred miles from the Medicine Bow area that was the Virginian's stomping ground. My great-grandfather, J.L. Jordan, was born in 1861, just a year after Owen Wister. J.L's daughter, my great-aunt Marie, told me stories from her childhood about a distant neighbor who was nearly as brutal to horses as Tisdale. By the time I heard these stories, the neighbor had been dead for 50 years, but Marie was still haunted by the fact that no one had stopped him.

In contrast, by the time I came along, a similar violence would have initiated a call to the sheriff, and the perpetrator would have been jailed. Even so, the predominant method of horse breaking was still to "buck 'em out and ride 'em hard"; I was told to "show a horse who's boss." Today, the entire vocabulary has changed: we talk about "making" a horse rather than "breaking" one, and a respected horseperson will work to the ideal of using no more than two pounds of pressure to signal a command.

Wister would have liked such an evolution. In fact, he anticipated it. "There was a time, not so very long ago," he wrote in his 1894 short story, "when most enlightened potentates extracted secrets and obedience by slowly cracking the bones or twisting off the thumbs of those who had the misfortune to differ from them in matters politic and religious. This is not thought well of to-day; and there are signs that cruelty to anything, even to a horse, will come to be generally discountenanced."

When I was growing up, I don't remember a house that didn't have a copy of *The Virginian* on its shelves, and the book's popularity extended far beyond the ranching community and the West. Over time, as I've discussed the novel with friends, I've come to know that its readers may be hazy about the details of the final shootout, but they usually remember the book's most famous line – "When you call me that, smile" – and the scene where Balaam brutalizes his horse.

As I sat in the archives and read the real-life experience that inspired that scene, I came to understand how anguish can give rise to a work of art. I don't think Wister ever forgave himself for failing to stop Tisdale, but from the distance of years, it's clear that his powerful descriptions wrought a justice of their own. The novel is not responsible for all the improvement in the way horses are treated, but it surely had an effect. The Virginian fought with his fists and his gun; his creator, Owen Wister, fought with the only weapon he handled with skill: his pen.

https://youtu.be/SAwTO6pq7EA
Teresa Jordan shares a story in this video by Hal Cannon.

Excerpted from *The Year of Living Virtuously (Weekends Off): A Meditation on the Search for Meaning in an Ordinary Life*, by Teresa Jordan, and published by Counterpoint Press. Learn more at www.teresajordan.com.

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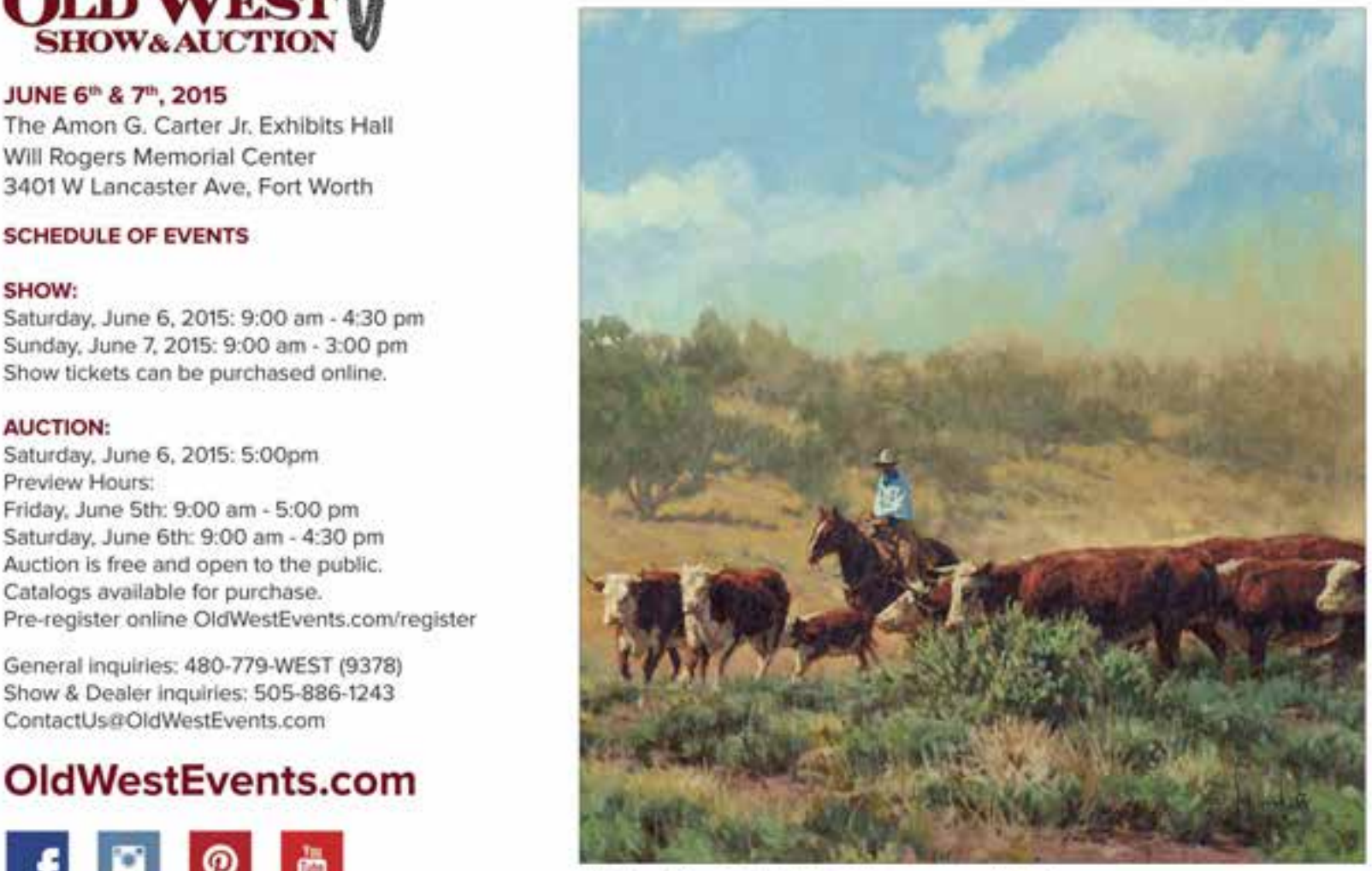


Bill Owen, "Bending the Herd", oil on canvas, 18" x 24.
Auction estimate: $8,000-12,000

The Start of Something

Excerpted from *The Horse Lover: A Cowboy's Quest to Save the Wild Mustangs.*

By H. Alan Day

They were out there somewhere. I scanned the horizon through the pickup's bug-spattered windshield. To the right, sunlight reflected off a small stream trickling in and out of view down the mountainside and meandering near this stretch of back road. Maybe they had been here. I pulled off the gravel, dragging a plume of dust, set the parking brake, and grabbed my binoculars from the front passenger seat. Hot wind whistled past me and bumped against the brown hills. I scouted for tracks in the soft, wet soil next to the stream. Not finding a one, I dredged up more patience and focused the binoculars on a distant ridge. This was the fifth time I had gone through this exercise since leaving Reno at sunrise. Sooner or later, I'd find them.

I panned the ridge. Left to right, right to left across clumps of scrub cedar and outcroppings of rock. I was about to turn back when the slightest of movements caught my attention. There, at the top of the ridge, was what I had driven miles to see. I held my breath to keep the binoculars steady against the rush of adrenaline.

A herd of horses began to gather, first two, then three, four, eight, 10, possibly 15. The slant of the sun shadowed their colors. One of the horses stood apart from the others, presumably the lead stallion. I had a sense he was looking directly at me, sizing me up, deciding if I was friend or foe.

"Come on, big boy, come on down," I said. "There's plenty of water. Take a good long drink."

The stallion turned his head as if listening. He looked at the herd for a moment, then took off at a

gallop down the hill toward me, his family in tow. As the land leveled, he slowed and the other horses followed suit. They bowed their heads and began to graze on the scant clusters of grass. The stallion remained off to one side, ears alert and pointed, tail and mane blowing in the brisk breeze. Even though they were still half a mile away, I could count them now. Ten mares, four babies, and the stallion. All mustangs, all wild. Most were chestnut brown or black with black manes and tails. Two had solid golden coloring. The babies were light dusty brown, still too young to have grown into their colors. The smallest suckled on its mama, a thin sorrel mare with a large head. The stallion was jet black.

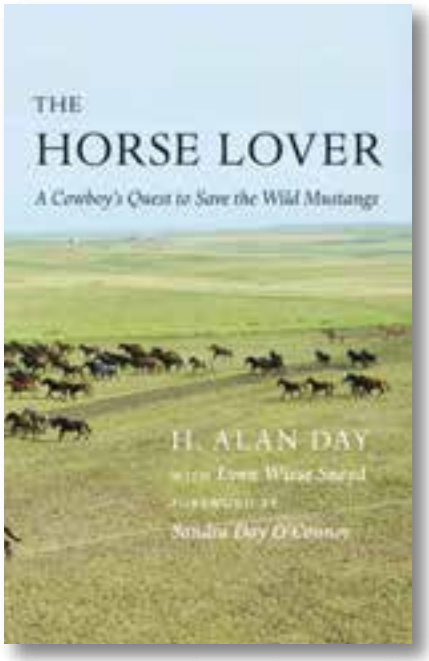
I watched, sometimes tucking the binoculars under my chin to give my arms a rest, though never moving more than a few slow inches at a time. I never had observed wild horses in their natural environment, yet I knew they were shy and skittish. They continued grazing their way down the last gentle slope of land toward the gurgling water. When they reached it, I felt like I had been awarded a gold medal for crossing the finish line of a strenuous race. I stood a quarter mile downstream from them. I wanted to hoot and holler in celebration but barely dared to breathe. Each horse took a long drink and splashed in the stream.

I remained still for who knows how long, 20, 30 minutes, sweating under the Nevada summer sun. Finally I reached into the truck for a bottle of water. The movement triggered the stallion to give some sort of secret signal to the herd. Heads raised and whinnies floated in the air. The stallion took off running.

Without hesitation, the horses turned in unison and gracefully followed him over a small hill. When I next spotted them, they were trotting over the ridge where they first had appeared. I focused the binoculars and saw the stallion stop on the crest of the ridge as if surveying whatever mysteries lay on the other side. His tail waved at me. In a blink, he disappeared from sight.

I stood in the cedar-and grass-scented wind, stood beneath the bowl of blue sky, no human or other vehicle in sight. A few hawks circled overhead. I wondered what the stallion had thought of my presence. I only knew what I thought of his.

I climbed in my truck and turned the key. The dream of 2,000 wild mustangs running through long, thick prairie grass played across my mind. I turned toward Reno. The last thing in the truck's wake of dust was a whoop that soared as high as the hawks.



courtesy University Of Nebraska Press

The Horse Lover, by H. Alan Day, tells the story of Day's transformation of a 35,000-acre South Dakota ranch into Mustang Meadows Ranch, a sanctuary for unadopted wild horses.

Without the South Dakota ranch, the wild horses and I would never have gotten to know each other. That much is certain. The ranch found me in the early summer of 1988, before a single wild horse stepped into my peripheral vision. At the time, I owned and managed two ranches and needed a third one about as much as I needed a permanent migraine. That's what I told Joe Nutter every time he pestered me to go see the old Arnold Ranch.

"But Alan," Joe would say, "I know how important good land is to you and, by gosh, this is 35,000 acres of mouthwatering prairie." He was the consummate real estate agent. "It's beautiful. Absolutely incredible. And has the potential to be so productive. You of all people could turn this place around."

Every call. Beautiful. Incredible. Productive.

Joe wore me down like heels on a pair of cowboy boots. Finally, I said, "Goddamnit, Joe. I'll go with you just to get you off my back."

A few days later, I met him in the hamlet of Nenzel, Nebraska, population 18, and climbed in his pickup a bundle of grumbles. I hadn't taken my first sip of Joe's offered coffee when he turned off Highway 20 and headed north up a narrow dirt road.

"It's five miles to the state line and another five to headquarters," said Joe. He swung the wheel to skirt a pothole on the verge of becoming a crater. I quickly gave up drinking the coffee and concentrated on preventing my head from banging against the window. Joe pointed out a gnarled post, long divorced from a fence. "Welcome to South Dakota," he announced. Three potholes later, we clacked over a cattle guard. "Here we are, on the ranch." He looked at me for a reaction.

I couldn't reply, much less move. I had been slammed with an acute case of *déjà vu*. Somehow I knew this godforsaken road, knew it swerved right before we swerved right, knew what lay around each bend before we made the turn. This was more than a fleeting feeling. It intensified with every bump. I looked out over rolling, grass-covered hills that felt like old friends ready to embrace me, pour me a drink, and sit me down to

reminisce about the good old days and the adventures we shared. I saw familiar fence lines, smelled the sweetness of familiar meadows. Without looking at the car's mileage, I knew we were nearing headquarters.

"Did you say there's a creek on one side of the main house?" I asked.

"No, I didn't say that," said Joe, "but there is." He gave me a quizzical side glance. "Have you been here before?"

"Not that I recall." I turned toward the window, unnerved. Not being prone to these types of experiences, I figured any explanation would sound as woo-woo as it felt.

We drove over a culvert and crested a hill. A cluster of buildings and corrals spread out before us. At the center stood a boxy three-story colonial home, white with dark green shutters and shaded by thick elms. A faded red barn anchored one end of the compound.

When the ranch was at its zenith, this immense structure would have been its nerve center. The road forked in front of the house and Joe turned left, drove another hundred yards, pulled into an open graveled area, and parked near a pickup and two tractors. I stepped into air alive with the scent of freshly cut grass and livestock.

"The corrals are over there," said Joe, pointing past the tractors. "I believe there's a big roping arena and four or five smaller corrals. We'll check them out, but first let's see if the Pitkins are home."

We walked across an expanse of trim lawn. A tire swing hung from one of the elms and I gave it a friendly push. Joe knocked on the door. I swished the blades of grass back and forth with my boot and tuned in to the

midday conversations of redwing blackbirds and meadowlarks. A sense of belonging washed over me, dissolving weights on my shoulders. I wanted to run and touch everything like a small child returning home from a long vacation. I couldn't think beyond the moment; this was the only place in the world I needed to be.

"They must be gone," he said. "Too bad. I was hoping you could meet John and Debbie. Wonderful people. John knows every inch of this place. He's been managing it since Don Raymond fell in the bottle."

"I'm sure we'll meet at some point," I said, running my hand over paint peeling from the clapboards. I backed up from the house, craned my neck, and examined what I could see of the chimney and roof. The tuck-pointing looked intact, though some of the shingles lay crooked.

Joe mimicked my view. "Big old house, huh? Nine bedrooms."

"How old is it?"

"I think it dates back to the 1930s. Arnold and his wife had nine kids. Needed them to work the hundred thousand acres he owned back then. No wonder he became a local legend. After he died, the kids ended up selling off parcels of the land. Apparently none of them were big enough to fill his big shoes. Don Raymond bought 35,000 acres."

We walked to the back of the house. A guesthouse sat a stone's throw away and just beyond was a doublewide trailer where Joe said Raymond lived until he filed for bankruptcy. What a shame he became an alcoholic. Having to sell this place must have added to whatever misery festered inside him. I would be heartbroken to lose such a treasure. The ranch charmed me, flirted with me as seductively as a starlet flirts with her fans. But I didn't need to fall in love with it, because in some strange, inexplicable way, I already loved this ranch and had loved it forever.

We crossed the road near the trailer. A spring-fed creek pooled into a pond ringed with cattails and marsh grass. The water reflected the blue-and-white patchwork sky. A beaver had built a lodge on the far side and beyond its dwelling, a sea of prairie grass stretched out to a distant rise of hills. Its undulating surface mesmerized me and spoke of the land's great potential.

"Let's check out the rest of the place," said Joe. I forced myself to turn and follow. We crunched down the road back to the main house, then veered off toward a bunkhouse and a shop. Both looked weathered around the eves, windows, and doorframes. The glass in one of the bunkhouse windows had cracked. On the other side of the buildings were the corrals. The roping arena had to be a good 500 feet long. A corner gate opened into a series of smaller corrals. In the farthest, a black horse and a bay grazed on hay. They raised their heads and looked at us curiously but were too intent on eating to walk over to say hello. Some of the corral posts looked worn and the rub boards that protected livestock were almost nonexistent. The neglect didn't deter me. Quite the opposite. I couldn't stop thinking about ways to refurbish the headquarters.

We slid open the gate of the arena and walked a few yards to the entrance of the barn. What a majestic building. One of the first things I would do is restore its proud red. A flash of reality intercepted my vision. How was I going to buy this ranch and what in God's name would I do with it besides fix it up?

"How you doing?" Joe asked. He looked at me oddly.

"Fine, just fine," I said, stepping into the dim light of the barn and readjusting my poker face. Joe led the way down the row of 20 horse stalls, then climbed a ladder into an empty, dormant hay loft.

"Pitkin said they baled about 3,000 acres of hay in the meadow last summer," Joe said. In times past, this

space would have been filled with loose hay, feed for the workhorses.

Back outside, the sunlight glared bright. Joe suggested we drive over to the meadow on the south side of the ranch. The road went over Spring Creek and passed the pond. Joe slowed to allow a flock of wild turkeys to march across the gravel in front of us. A little farther on, the road turned left near a metal Quonset building.

"Don Raymond told me once that 20 vehicles could fit in there." I mumbled that he probably was right. The building, however, seemed insignificant compared to the scene in front of me. Joe stopped the truck at the edge of the sea of grass that extended beyond the pond. I got out and walked in a few yards. The grass was so thick I barely could see my shoes. For any grazing animal or rancher, this was the gold coast.

"The meadow extends around the back of those hills," Joe said, "and to the east. Then there's about another 1,200 acres to the north." He dangled the carrot. "Do you want to go look over there? Or drive over to the Little White River? It snakes around for a good five miles through the ranch and is real pretty."

"That's okay," I said. "I've seen enough for today." I didn't add that it wasn't necessary because on some level I knew those meadows and places and indeed, they were perfect, beautiful and fit for ownership. Maybe Joe was a good poker player and could read my face because he didn't look perturbed. We got back in the truck and bounced back toward Highway 20. We passed the flock of wild turkeys, maybe 12 or 14, bobbling along the road in single file, heading out on

some secret journey. At the gnarled post, Joe popped the question. "So what do you think?"

"Well, I gotta be honest. My rule of thumb is not to tangle with property on the brink of foreclosing. But this is one gorgeous ranch. Not sure what I would use it for." But did it matter?

"You're a good cattle rancher," Joe said.

"I'm not so sure I want to invest in any more cattle. Right now I'm running a total of 4,000 cows. That might be putting too much risk in one place."

"You'll think of something," said Joe.

We pulled into Nenzel and I promised to call him within two days.

I climbed in my pickup and swallowed some cold coffee, hoping it would restore my senses. I had my arms wrapped around the old Arnold Ranch in a big bear hug and I couldn't let go. But this overwhelming desire to own the ranch was totally illogical. It bucked the core principles that guided me in business. I knew that unprofitable, troubled ranches should be avoided like melting ice on a pond. My dad had ingrained that lesson in me before I even broke my first horse, and his dad had ingrained it in him.

Furthermore, it was a family mantra never to invest in unneeded property. I currently co-owned and managed two ranches: the Lazy B, a 198,000-acre chunk of high desert straddling southern Arizona and New Mexico, and the Rex Ranch, a 45,000-acre parcel of prairie nestled in the Sand Hills of Nebraska. My Cessna was getting worn out arcing between the Southwest and the Midwest. For certain, my life did not need this ranch. Plus, I only took calculated risks. Too many times I had seen cattle prices bounce like a rubber ball on asphalt, watched miserly rain clouds disperse drops that barely dented the sand, and felt the slap of governmental regulations that gummed up well-oiled ranching practices. Excessive risk is like a saddlebag stuffed with fool's gold; it weighs the horse down and doesn't pay off. So why gamble? Because I sensed that within the boundaries of the old Arnold Ranch lay something special. A journey? A destiny? A fate? My soul needed to know.

That night I made a series of phone calls. First, I gushed to my wife, Sue, who was back in Arizona. During my absences, she was my eyes and ears at Lazy B.

"I think that pen is already in your hand ready to sign an offer," she said. "I'm already looking forward to seeing the place when the time is right."

It was a green light, but I needed a different kind of green. I phoned each of my business partners. Beautiful, incredible, productive, I repeated over and over. My enthusiasm must have swayed them, because all five agreed to go deeper into debt. Forty-eight hours later, I made a conservative offer on the old Arnold Ranch. That beautiful, beat-up, bankrupt ranch. It was like rolling a little white marble counterclockwise in the groove of the spinning roulette wheel. I'm pretty certain my dad and granddad did flips in their graves that day and not from joy. The offer did not include the 40 head of cattle running on the property, but it did include every machine and building, as well as the big house, home to the Pitkin family.

How was I going to staff the old Arnold Ranch? The question nudged me from a deep sleep one night. Less than a week had passed since Joe Nutter submitted my offer to the bank and already my mind was grappling with management issues. I would need to hire a foreman. I had a fabulous one on Lazy B and a cantankerous one on the Rex Ranch. Joe had spoken highly of John Pitkin. If he equaled his reputation, the job search might end before it began. Regardless, I owed this Pitkin fellow a visit since his future was in my hands and he was probably suffering a bit of anxiety wondering what was in store for him and his family. A call to the Pitkins would be the first order of business in the

morning. I punched the pillow, rolled over, and tried to still my thoughts.

Two days later Debbie Pitkin and I sat on the south porch of the big house, glasses of ice tea sweating in our hands. She was telling me what grades her four kids were in when a screen door slammed at the back of the house.

"Here comes John," said Debbie.

Heavy footsteps echoed inside and a tall man wearing cowboy boots walked through the doorway. "John Pitkin," he said, extending a hand. He was a handsome man, dark haired, square jawed, with a smile that made him look about 18.

Debbie went to refill our glasses, leaving John and me to chat about seasonal rain levels and temperatures and how the hay was growing in the meadows. He asked what it was like in Arizona this time of year. I described the dry, hot climate and the scant grass that poked up through the desert pastures.

"Not sure I could handle days over a hundred," he said. "Guess I'm acclimated to this country."

"How long have you lived on the ranch?" I said.

"We moved here about six years ago. I was working for Don Raymond at the time, down near North Platte. Debbie and I both grew up in the Platte River Valley. Don owned a small feedlot and I started working for him when I was a teenager. Over time, I had a chance to wear all sorts of hats – mechanic, farmer, cowboy, vet, truck driver."

"Which did you like best?"

"Oh, I always preferred working with the cattle and horses. That's why I wanted to tag along when Raymond bought this ranch. He planned to run a thousand head on it, and I thought it would be a good way to learn more about ranching. First time I came up here, I fell in love with the place. Don has four daughters and I'm the closest thing he has to a son, so I didn't have to twist his arm to let me join him. We had a couple of good years at the start, but then the drinking got the best of him. The last

few years haven't been too much fun. He sold several bunches of cattle at the bar when he was too drunk to make a good deal. I've spent more time keeping creditors at bay than I have ranching."

John and Debbie exchanged a commiserating look.

"I can teach you good ranching practices," I said. John leaned forward like he was ready for class to begin right now. "I've always been a hands-on rancher and that's what I intend to keep doing. I'm not coming in here as a mere investor. Though I do need someone to teach me in return." John looked a bit surprised. "Having done most of my ranching in Arizona, I'm not expert on what grasses are native to this ranch or how to handle livestock during a blizzard. I spent only one winter on the Rex Ranch and it was mild." John nodded in understanding.

We continued talking for well over an hour. John had an aura that commanded attention and openly shared his frustrations and accomplishments. It didn't seem to bother him that I didn't have a specific game plan for the ranch. As long as he could work the land and the livestock, he would be happy.

The ice tea had long disappeared when I decided it was time to take my leave. "It's been a real treat to sit here and talk to both of you. I have a pretty strong feeling that my offer will be accepted and I'll become the owner of this place. At least I hope so. I'd like you to stay on as foreman if you're interested, John. We can work out the details, but I promise you two things. I won't fall in the bottle and your family can continue living in this house."

I could almost hear John and Debbie's joint sigh of relief.

"That's the best plan I've heard in some time," said John, and we shook on a future together.

With the property in escrow and the Pitkin family in place, I faced the facts that now stood staring me down. Talk about a holy shit moment. I had persuaded the bank to lend me money to buy the ranch, which meant I had two monthly mortgages but only one ranch, the Rex Ranch, generating income; Lazy B belonged to my family and its profits were off limits. I found myself waking up in the middle of the night lost in an arithmetic jungle, counting the number of calves I needed to sell in order to cover those mortgages. I felt uneasy about running cattle on a third ranch lest the market nosedive and no profits cross the finish line for anyone. Finally, weary from sleep deprivation, I shifted my anxious mind into creative mode and tried to think of a different way to generate income on the new ranch. That's when the roulette wheel came to a stop and the little white marble dropped to its destiny.

https://youtu.be/oHf4dlKZhig
Alan Day and Sandra Day O'Connor appear at the Library of Congress Book Festival in 2014.

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Your Horse's Feet, A Series

Rural Myths

By Pete Healey, APF

We all have beliefs about certain things whether true or false and the horse's foot is no exception. A couple of these have been around for centuries.

White Feet aren't as good as black feet: Not true, studies have shown that there are no significant differences. The dark horn of the black foot is from the hair of the skin above it, a dark leg produces a dark hoof, a red leg produces a red hoof and a white sock will produce a white foot. Sometimes you will see a leg that is white but has some black or red spots; if these are at the coronet they will produce a colored strip in the foot. White feet are more transparent than dark feet and show more abuse but they are not structurally weaker.

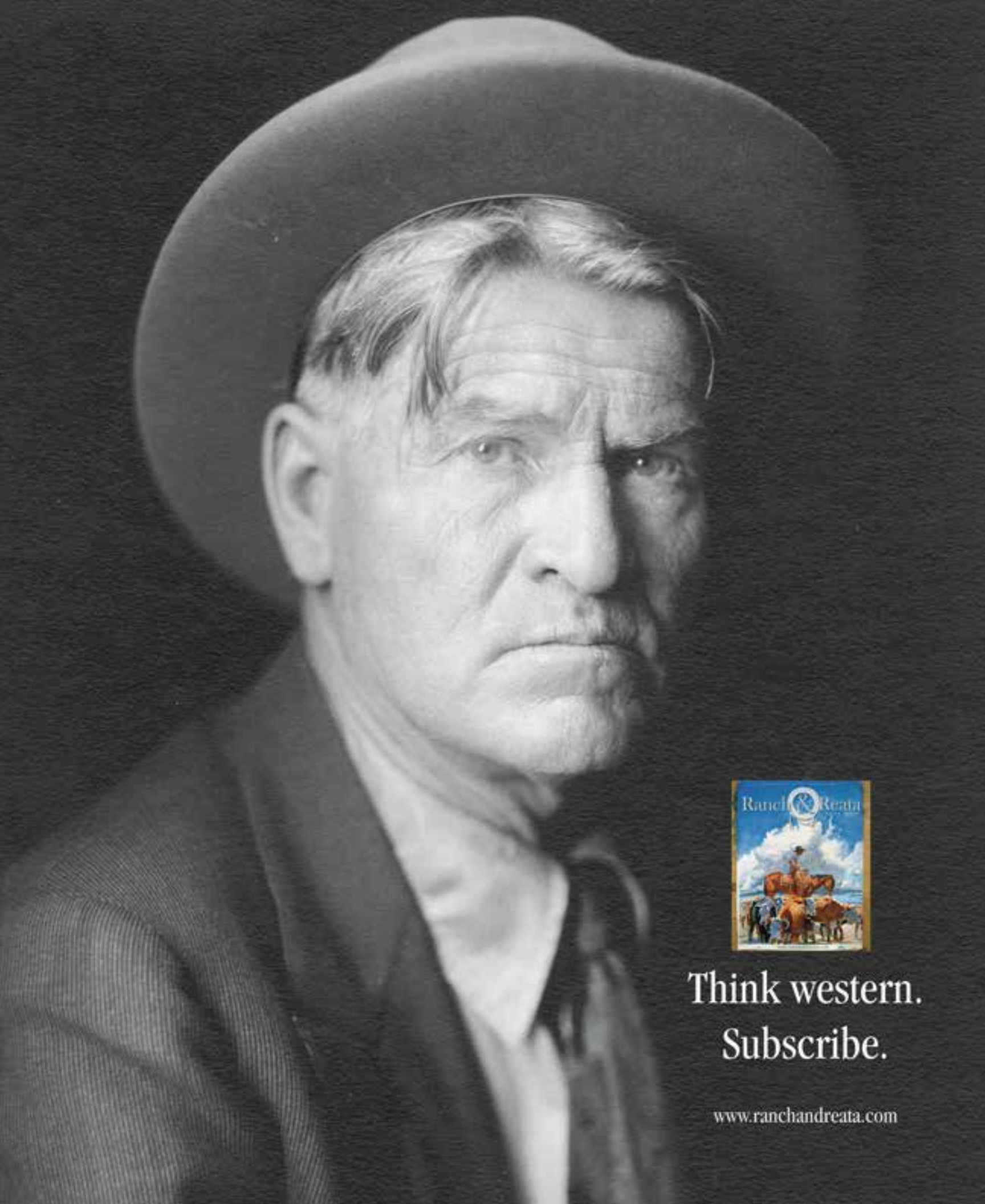
Feet need moisture: Not really, the wild horses in the great basin have dry feet and they are harder than the hubs of hell. The best feet I see are the ones that come from a dry environment. Horses that are in permanent pasture or in a wet environment have soft feet that over-expand. The vessels that come out of the face of the coffin bone go into the lamina and are imbedded in the inner layer of the hoof wall. The weight of the horse pushing down causes the foot to expand and when they are soft they spread causing leverage and compressing the circulation (ectodermal compression) of the foot. These feet are the ones that have thin walls and thin soles, they also crack easily and people think they are dry so they let them stand in water or put hoof dressing on them which just makes it worse.

Take the shoes off so the feet can expand: As discussed above a lot of these feet have too much expansion. The feet can only be as big as what the size of the bone is with healthy soft tissue components. The upper half of the foot gives a better impression of the real size of the foot as the lower half is beneath the insertion of the deep flexor tendon and gets more leverage. Taking the shoes off can help some poor quality feet as it gets the frog down on the ground for foot support.

Take the shoes off if the horse is lame: It fascinates me how a lot of us handle lameness; if a horse is lame and barefoot put shoes on him; if a horse is lame and has shoes, pull the shoes. Sometimes this is the wrong thing to do but the human can't figure this out because it has to be the shoe. The right thing to do is find out what is making him lame and then adjust, but this takes learning.

One foot is higher than the other so it needs more heel off: Big no no. The high foot has a smaller shoulder and the flat foot has a bigger shoulder. The smaller shoulder has a shorter muscle-tendon unit so it pulls the foot up at a higher angle, cutting the foot down just creates more tension.

My horse has to have a specific shoe: I hear this all the time, it's not true. What he needs is the mechanics that shoe is providing. There are several ways to skin a cat and when we get bogged down on one thing it eliminates our options. The mechanical formula on the feet can change from one shoeing to the next and that is why measuring is so important.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Dispatches from Patagonia:

The World of J.P.S. Brown

By Tom Russell

Friend Tom:
I'm proud of the land and people I chose to record, so I ain't sorry about anything. I went all out and it is what it is. Remember, I'll always keep coffee and a pot of beans hot for you and your lady.
Hold fast,
Joe

Letter – J.P.S. Brown to Tom Russell
11/14

Patagonia was down there somewhere. The name kept badgering me. It was postmarked on a batch of letters on my desk. Not the Patagonia at the tip of South America, where a *gaucho* bucked off his mount might wander through the desolation, lose his bearings, and vanish forever. Not the far terrain of *The Last Cowboys at the End of the World*. Nor *the ancient land of the giants*, named by Magellan.

There was another Patagonia at the Southern end of Arizona and I kept chawing on that name. The eminent Western author J.P.S. Brown was living there, a few hundred miles south of my El Paso hacienda. Joe and I had corresponded, but I hadn't made the trip down there to meet him in person.

photographed by Jay Dusard, 1985

J.P.S. Brown at his then home in Tucson.

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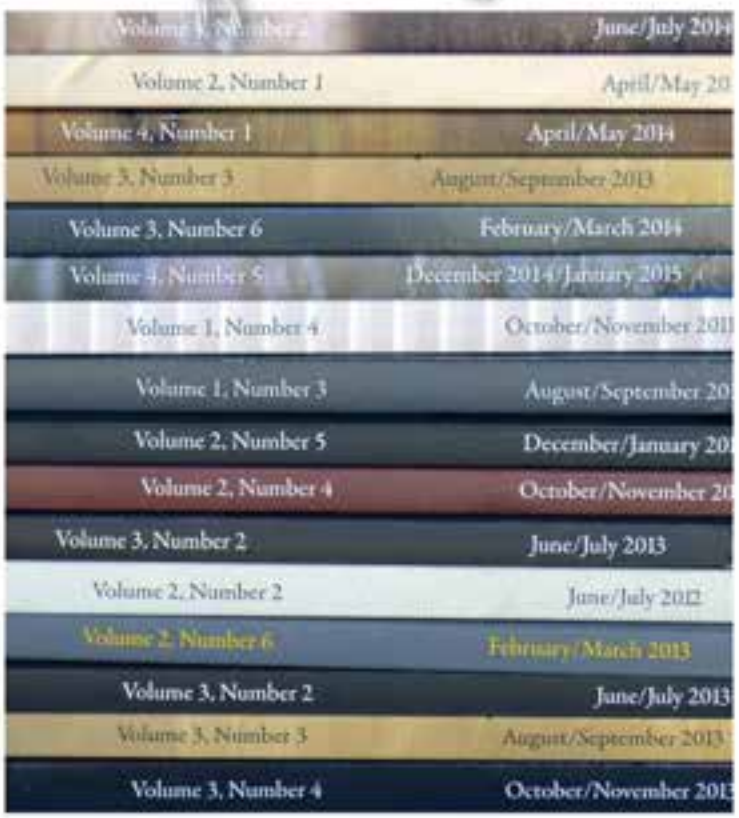

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J.P.S. Brown photographed with his bedroll on the front porch of his house in Patagonia by Jay Dusard, April, 2015

I'd read sundry outrageous stories and anecdotes, and heard so many rumors about the man and his colorful life, it was a lot to confront. Then there were the acclaimed novels. And those dispatches from Patagonia.

We'd exchanged letters every six months over the last five years. I would ask Joe a question, or just say *hello*, and Joe would fire-off random anecdotes and fragments of his cowboy life. A life never dull.

An example:
Jan 21, 2015
Friend Tom,

In 1948, for my HS graduation, my dad gave me a John Bean saddle. Made for quick, sure, free escape with as little abrasion as possible, it was flat as can be, no cantle, no swells...slick. It was rough side out, but had a foam rubber seat covered with tight buckskin with colored needlework. Very short in the skirts. I broke 25 colts every summer so that saddle wasn't made for it. Nevertheless, because it gave me such pleasure it made my ass laugh it was put to work full time. It was a roping and bulldogging saddle, so it got a lot to do for those two sports that I indulged myself in, from time to time. I used it to do a bulldogging exhibition at the "Congresso National de Charros" in Tepic in the 70s. My son has it now as a stuntman in the movies. I hated to give it up, especially to him, because he can hairlip and anvil and gives daily live performances of that.
Hold fast,
Joe

What, in hell, did *hairlip* and *anvil* entail in stunt riding? And I wondered why he'd sent me the saddle anecdote, then I remembered I'd written an essay on that same Johnny Bean, saddle maker and horseman, who'd been torpedoed on a ship transporting mules to Burma during WW II. There were sharks involved in the story. Johnny Bean survived. The mules did not.

I asked my cowboy brother and his stuntman friends about those terms, *anvil and hairlip*. Nobody had a clue. So I wrote Joe. He answered:

Feb 27, 2015
Friend Tom,
(Re: Hairlip and Anvil.)

It's Joe Brown talk about destructive cowboys. Give him a shovel and he breaks it before he finishes the job. Harelip and anvil? He could permanently scar or break anything he's given to handle, even put a harelip on an anvil.
Hold fast,
Joe

Each letter is signed *hold fast.* You'd have to hold fast to follow the sage, maverick insights and insider lingo. In four letters from 2010 Joe spoke of his time as a journalist at the *Herald Post* in El Paso, when he was 24 years old.

I worked full time at the Herald-Post and earned $62 a week. I became very dedicated to becoming a matador and spent every Saturday afternoon in Juarez, either practicing with a "capote" and "muleta" in the main Juarez ring, or doing the same thing with cattle in the stockyards...I really wish I had thought of being a rodeo clown, but I never considered it, because I aspired to be a matador, not a clown.

Joe wrote of his wife's Alzheimers, which went on for 22 years, until she died in 2010. She required constant care and Joe wrote in the midnight hours after she fell asleep. He was as candid in his reports on their love and daily struggle as he was in his straightforward prose on cowboy life.

In December of 2014 I wrote and asked Joe his views on Spanish and Mexican horse traditions, which trail back to the Moors. Below his letter, which speaks to the historic core of what the hell may have happened to the Middle East, and why it's violently off kilter. Leave it to J.P.S. Brown. The trouble began when the Moors stepped down off their horses. Consider this, all ye smug world news commentators:

December 8, 2014

Friend Tom,

On the Moors: I believe that they founded an immortal horse tradition that began when mankind first mounted a horse. That was probably about Biblical times in Arabia

The lobby of the Gadsden Hotel in Douglas, Arizona. It opened for business in 1908. The hotel was one of the first to feature individual bathrooms and still has the original 1929 telephone switchboard; reportedly the first of its kind to be used in Arizona.

between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was it not? Most of the tradition has been passed down to us through the Spaniards and the Mexicans. I have a limited edition book that was published in 1946 by a Mexican Charro for his colleagues that is full of the tradition. Some of the tales and folklore credits the Moors, some does not, but has surely been borrowed from them.

Their mastery of horsemanship has never been equaled. How long did they keep Spain under their saddle blankets? Something like 300 years, until El Cid finally mounted his country on a horse and used what he had learned from the Moors to run them out.

All of the Moorish and early Arabian folklore is a song to the horseman and to chivalry, valor, honor, dignity, and romantic love. What happened to the people who invented their own distinguished brand of that? What brought them so low that they murder their own kind by the thousands to kill a dozen infidels? They got off their horses and turned them loose, that's what. Even now, the Bedouin, who is still a horseman, keeps himself apart from the rest of the fanatics that today are called Arabs and other Muslims, like the Iranians and Afghans, mostly all city-dweller Moors without horses, now.

History sorted. Damn right. The letters are vital, plain-speak documents. Joe has a point of view and an unblinking knowledge of horse traditions. I'll roll back now to the point of time when Patagonia kept tugging at me. Before I shook hands with Joe Brown.

I kept sifting through those endless letters, articles, and anecdotes about Joe, the man who had herded horses and wild cattle up from Mexico. The *hombre* who'd flown low in small airplanes and scared hell out of every whore in every whorehouse in the Sierra Madre Mountains. The boxer who'd sparred with Rocky Marciano. Then there was the bullfighting, whiskey smuggling, knife fights in bars, heart attacks, and five marriages.

Somewhere in there he'd taken the time to write a dozen books chock full of the real Western deal. I'll ponder the details in a moment. Enough footnotes to fill a Western encyclopedia on living on the hellish, raw edge of the final frontier. Creating art out of it all.

The important news: Joe's now pushing well past eighty and still writing down in Patagonia, Arizona. It was time to meet the man. My wife and I loaded up the truck and drove across the bottom of New Mexico, towards Arizona.

I Homage to Patagonia

The Patagonia, my friends, is a blue rock pigeon. At first glance she looks like a big dove, much larger than a mourning dove, a little larger than a white wing. She's not a big-footed Indian, as people wrongly believe...her eyes are red.

That makes her a pigeon.

J.P.S. Brown

Patagonia, Arizona, is one of those Western places which exist under a veil of Eden. A land unto itself. We drove southwest across the spare reaches of the Sonora desert, past Columbus, New Mexico, where Villa's troops invaded the U.S. one hundred years ago. We crossed into Arizona. Onward past long miles of *cholla*, sand, and mesquite, past the canyon where Geronimo surrendered. Finally we drifted over a hill, looking down on green rolling ranch land. The change in landscape is dramatic.

Patagonia is tucked down in the valley of the Sonoita Creek, between the Santa Rita Mountains to the north, and the Patagonia Mountains to the south. A haven for ranchers, the rare Mexican jaguar, and writers and artists like Joe Brown and Jim Harrison. Men who prefer to carve out their art in splendid isolation, ignoring the vagaries of Hollywood and New York.

My wife and I drove into town and called Joe from the local phone booth, tucked next to the Post Office. In a matter of minutes a pickup truck clattered into the lot and out stepped Joe Brown, the man Lee Marvin termed *the wildest son-of-a-bitch who ever walked*.

His skin was coffee-colored, seared and sandblasted from years of riding the outback trails of the Mexican Sierra Madre. He stood barrel-chested and a trifle bow-legged, and as cowboy-fit as the man who faced Rocky Marciano. The old whiskey smuggler with a smirk. *Hold fast*, boys. The beans are on the stove and there's *lechuguilla* in the jug.

We followed his truck, winding up dirt ranch roads towards Joe's house, which was set back in a canyon, shielded behind rows of old rose bushes. These old soldier plants were high, wild looking shrubs with white

J.P.S. Brown at a book signing.

and yellow petals falling down to the earth. We met his dog *Mike,* and Joe pointed off towards a far corral where his old racehorse *Mercy* was lodged. Joe tells us Mercy stands for: *Mercy, boys, let her run*.

Inside the house there was the eternal pot of beans on the stove, and a Notre Dame football game on the T.V. Joe graduated from Notre Dame in 1952 with a degree in journalism. He showed me a photo of the ring where he sparred with Marciano at Notre Dame. Later Joe was scheduled to spar with Sonny Liston in Las Vegas, but Joe fell ill, and while recuperating he began to write short stories.

I listened, and tried to juggle the Joe Brown timelines – writing, boxing, the Marines, marriages, the Mexican cattle trail, the movies. The whiskey. The flash of knives. The great books. It was coming at me from all angles. J.P.S. Brown was able to toss a deck of biographical cards at you, a poker hand where every card was wild. And when the cards settled on the floor they were fodder for his novels.

I asked Joe his about his writing ritual. When his wife was alive he worked between midnight and six. Patsy was a dancer, barrel racer, and the love of his life. She died a few years ago. He showed us their bedroom, with wonderful photos of Patsy, and then he opened a bottom dresser drawer filled with recent editions of his books. He pulled out three and walked into the front room to sign them for me.

Joe Brown signs his name in a measured, floral penmanship, taught by The Christian Brothers. He uses a fountain pen. He told me he went to town to buy ink and no one knew what he was talking about. *Bottled ink? Fountain Pens?* It's all disappeared and gone to hell since the Moors got down of their horses.

After a few hours and more stories we have to take off, and I tell my wife, Nadine, we've just chatted with one of the last great Western writers. The real deal. As we were leaving Joe handed me eight few pages of the oration he gave at his wife's funeral. Then he pointed out toward the fence post and told us the story of the Patagonia pigeon.

Joe and his brother-in-law were sitting out on the porch on a Saturday morning in May, 2010, and a Patagonia pigeon flew in and perched on the only bare limb in a grove of mesquite trees. Prior to this Joe had only seen the Patagonia's in (his words) *wild and reckless flight.* He had never seen one at rest.

The bird was only fifteen yards away and Joe studied her through binoculars. She had the red eye of the Patagonia. She was completely at peace. Then the phone rang in the house. The Patagonia sat there at rest, *preened and fluffed her feathers.* At that moment Joe turned and went inside to take the phone. He found out that his wife had just died, the very moment the Patagonia landed on that mesquite limb.

II The Wildest Son-of-a Bitch Who Ever Walked

Yes, I smuggled whiskey into Mexico to make money. Yes, I stayed half-drunk for most of three decades. Yes, I've had five wives, including the third, a Zapotec Indian from Jalisco, who poisoned me with strychnine. Irene was a working girl in a Mexican whorehouse...she tried to bump me off. Twice.

J.P.S. Brown,
quoted by Leo Banks, the *Tucson Weekly*

Joseph Paul Summers Brown was born in Nogales, Arizona, 1930, a fifth generation Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, cattleman. His father, Paul Summers, was part Irish, part-Choctaw, and *wild as a wolf,* according to Joe. His dad came from an Arizona cattle family, as did Brown's Irish-Cherokee-French Basque mother, Maggie Sorrells. Dad gave him his first swallow of *bacanora,* a Sonoran *mescal*, as a 5-year-old riding cow trails. Summers would tell the boy, "It freshens the horse for the ride back to camp.

After graduating from Notre Dame, in 1952, Joe was a commissioned second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was a heavy machine gun platoon commander in Fuji, Japan, 1955-1956. He also coached Third Marine Division boxing team and animal packing in the Marine Corps Mountain Leadership School. Joe would later box professionally in Mexico. He broke his hand 17 times.

When he was released from active duty in 1958 he wrangled and purchased cattle and horses in Mexico: Chihuahua, Sonora, Baja California, Coahuila, and Jalisco. He built the first dipping vat for the eradication of the fever tick in the municipality of Navojoa, where he was also a member of the Charro Association. Later he worked in Tucson as a member of the Teamsters Union Movie Wranglers, providing cattle, horses, stunts, and acted in bit parts in the movie business.

He ran with folks like Casey Tibbs and Slim Pickens:

I knew Casey and Slim very well during their final years. Casey and I wrangled The Alamo*, the TV version that starred Jim Arness...Casey liked my books long before we ever met. I worked with Slim Pickens on the movie* Tom Horn *with Steve McQueen. I was the priest who spoke with McQueen in the jail and Slim was the jailer. Slim and I had a lot of mutual cowboy friends in the cattle and horse businesses and in the movie business.*

In Mexico Joe began to write stories that became his first novel, *Jim Kane*, in 1960. He admits to the influence of Hemingway, William Saroyan and Mickey Spillane. The protagonist of that first book, Jim Kane, buys cattle and horses in Mexico and sells them in the United States. Joe Brown's ability to write up the rugged Mexican Sierra Madre equals the scenery in B. Traven's classic: *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

Jim Kane was made into the movie *Pocket Money* with Paul Newman and Lee Marvin in 1972. The script got out of hand, hacked together by re-write boys who figured it should have an overdose of lightweight humor. Foolish mistake. Much of Joe Brown's hard-edged knowledge of Mexico and the cattle business was lost in a sea of one-liners.

Jim Kane was followed by *The Outfit,* and *The Forests of the Night. Forests of the Nights,* the story of a man trailing a renegade jaguar through Mexico, was hailed by Sam Peckinpah as the best novel every written. Film promises were made. The script never surfaced.

To compose *The Forests of the Night*, Joe went to a ranch in the Mexican Sierra and completed the bulk of its 278 pages in 30 days. He wrote in longhand, barely eating or sleeping, fueling himself with *lechuguilla*, a rawer cousin of *mescal*. When he needed a boost, he'd dip his cup into the five-gallon jug underneath his writing desk.

Joe rode out of the Sierra Madre with his manuscript in a satchel strapped to the saddle and went on a two-week binge in Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta, Mexico. He kept the manuscript under his arm as he staggered from bar to bar. At the far end of the binge he woke up in a bed at the hotel in Douglas. His limbs were still attached to his body, but his manuscript was gone.

Joe's words:

Ten days went by and I woke up in my room at The Gadsden Hotel to read from my manuscript and couldn't find it. I was having too much fun to worry about it...

Joe and his drinking buddies retraced their steps, back through the bars along the border of Arizona and Mexico. After a three-day search a cowboy friend found the manuscript in a trash barrel behind a poolroom called *The B and P Bar*.

I probably put it there for safekeeping and forgot about it, Joe remarked.

Much of Joe Brown's *walk on the wild side* life has been well documented by writers such as Leo Banks in the *Tucson Weekly* and Richard Grant, in his book on the Sierra Madre: *God's Middle Finger*. Recommended reading for those seeking more J.P.S. Brown color.

Joe filled Richard Grant in on the Mexican history which impacts cowboy culture.

That's where all the cattle traditions come from, not from the East or England. The Pilgrim fathers weren't known for their hospitality or their horsemanship or their generosity. They were more intent on punishing and killing people for their own good.

The J.P.S. Brown books cascaded out in between turns to Mexico, the knife fights and the binges, the whoring and the coming home. Between the ranching, the settling down, and the losing of ranches. And the string of wives – until he found his true love Patsy. He never quit the writing.

The literature rolled forth: *Keep the Devil Waiting, The Cinnamon Colt (stories), Steeldust, The World in Pancho's Eye*, *Wolves at the Door*, *The Sprit of Dogie Long,* and others. There were essays, a screenplay on

Ben Johnson, short stories and a still unfinished three-part autobiography. The well of Joe's cowboy material is fathomless.

He now lives alone and works in the afternoon, those moments when, as Hemingway stated, a writer *faces eternity or the lack of it every day.*

Here's Joe in 2010:

I sit down with three fingers of bourbon and write two hours or a thousand words every afternoon at 4. Two years ago I completed a novel about a boy who is found in an abandoned wagon by a trail crew driving a herd from New Mexico to California. They keep him and raise him the Cowboy Way.

I don't cowboy so much anymore, but as a cowboy, I often knew the privilege of being way out alone in great country doing work that took risk, instinct and courage, and I wished everybody could know more about that aspect of a cowboy's life. Now I write more than ever about the Cowboy Way.

The *cowboy way* is deeply carved into J.P.S. Brown's classic, *The Outfit.*

III The Outfit: A Cowboy's Primer/A Runaway Horse Opens A Grave

The Outfit *is the best contemporary Western novel yet written.*

Ian Tyson

Present time. March, 2015. Ian Tyson was visiting my office-studio recently and he spied my stack of J.P.S. Brown novels. Each one signed by Joe Brown in fountain pen ink. I asked Ian which ones he favored and he reached into the middle of the stack. He pulled out *The Outfit*. He slapped the book down and declared it the best contemporary Western novel yet written. To rate *The Outfit* above Larry McMurtrey's canon and Cormac McCarthy and other Western writers is fulsome praise, and issues from Tyson, the man who re-invented the cowboy song.

The Outfit concerns the time Joe spent cowboying on the 1,300 square mile Nevada ranch owned by T.V. personality Art Linkletter. Linkletter bought the ranch thinking there were 1,400 cattle out there, but Joe and crew gathered 5,000. Four months later, the ranch was sold with the additional 3,600 cattle as part of the deal and Linkletter did well.

In Joe Brown's world the word *Outfit* is defined as a group of men or an entire ranch equipped to husband a herd of cattle from birth to market. The novel's format is distinctive. Chapters are headed with a Western term or concept which are explicated and jawed-on for a paragraph, then the action and the plot are carried forward. We have a Western primer melting into a novel.

Chapters begin with terms such as: *remuda, leppie calf, buckaroo*, *dogie*, *riding in a circle*, *rimming*, *querencia, tallow*, *hondo, remnant cattle*, *dally*, *horse poor, rimfire, houlihan*, *night loop, running iron*, *retozo* (a horse getting loose with the saddle on), *turned out*, and *maverick*.

You can explore many of these terms in compendiums like the Ramon F. Adams classics: *Western Words*, and *Cowboy Lingo*, which are fine resource books, but Joe Brown's take on the lingo is unique, and his personal insights work into the plot. He *lived* the concepts.

Here's a sample from *The Outfit:*

A "querencia" is an individual animal's own abode...the place where he finds subsistence best for himself. The brave bull will often make a "querencia" of a certain area in the bullring and a matador feels he can do a better job of killing him if he can draw him out of his "querencia."

An Indian is united with his "querencia" no matter how far away from it he finds himself and no matter who thinks he owns it. The Indian yearns to be in his own home ground in this life and the next. A cowboy's "querencia" is anywhere he finds the seldom and meager society of other cowboys, open country, and good horses for travelling it, feed and water and cattle and job to do with cattle.

Dead on. I learned about *querencia* in a few amateur bullfight classes in Mexico and Spain. Hands-on. I am reminded of the old bullfighter in Hemingway's time, Luis Freg, who was gored 72 times. His respect for *querencia* was obscured by bravery or extreme stupidity. Hemingway called it a *strange valor*.

For another angle on *querencia* I'd recommend Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines,* in which Australian aboriginals walk across their *querencia*, singing up the land as they go. Each rock and riverbed has a distinct song.

Along with cowboy terms in *The Outfit,* Joe mixes in Mexican *caballero*-proverbs such as: *Al ojo del amo engorda el caballo* – under the watchful eye of his master the horse will prosper, and *Caballo encarrerado, sepultura abierta* – a runaway horse opens a grave. Joe's command of colloquial *espanol* lends even more depth and lyricism to the book.

In an updated introduction to *The Outfit:* Joe puts a final wrap on the cowboy deal:

I've always laughed when I heard people say cowboys are extinct...I knew the shoot 'em up cowboys were all dead before most people did. They killed themselves off in the big shootouts Hollywood staged over and over and over again...those cowboys died with their hats on wrong, wearing trousers too short, still packing baby fat, and nobody cared. I write about cowboys because I believe people should know the real animals, men, and women who make their living with horses and cattle, and the artful life they create

photo by Jay Ducard

The late actor, Richard Farnsworth on set for an episode of *Highway to Heaven* with Michael Landon, on location in the Altar Valley of southern Arizona. Joe Brown – at right – furnished the horses.

for themselves, with no audience, no background music, and no ticket sale.

Basta. Enough said.

IV Goin' Back Where the Bullets Fly

Oh, curse your gold and your silver too,
And curse the gal that can't prove true;
I'm goin' back where the bullets fly,
I'll stay on the cowtrail till I die.
The Trail to Mexico
(As sung by Buck Ramsey)

All the J.P.S. Brown lore began to remind me of that old song "The Trail to Mexico," about a lovesick cowboy who vows to return to Mexico where the bullets still fly. I'm also reminded of Charles Goodnight, who lived 93 years. Joe Brown and Goodnight are kindred spirits. Along with Oliver Loving, Goodnight established The Goodnight-Loving Trail. He and Loving first drove a herd of feral Texas Longhorns up the trail in 1866. Goodnight also invented the chuck wagon.

In his younger days Charlie smoked up to fifty cigars a day, and in his later days, age 91, he married a 26 year old distant cousin named Corrine, who became pregnant with their child, but miscarried. His was a legendary life on the last frontier. Hold fast, boys.

And J.P.S. Brown? I think old J. Frank Dobie would have loved Joe Brown. Frank Dobie was a strong judge of character. Here's what he said about Goodnight, and it would serve J.P.S. Brown as well:

I have met a lot of good men, several fine gentlemen, hordes of cunning climbers, plenty of loud-braying asses and plenty of dumb oxen, but I haven't lived long enough or traveled far enough to meet more than two or three men I'd call great. This is a word I will not bandy around. To me, Charles Goodnight was great natured.

Amen. Joe Brown is *good-natured,* truly kind, and *great* in the sense of Dobie's *cowboy great*. Joe's been up the mountain and slapped the elephant on the hind end. He's cowboy'd on the last wild edge of the border West – the cattle and horse trade, the whoring, drinking, and knife fights, which eventually faded into finding his true love Patsy, ranching and wrangling for the movies, and sharing all this hard won life experience with readers. Woody Guthrie said *all you can write is what you see* and J.P.S. Brown has seen plenty.

If there was any difficulty in writing this essay it was – where in hell do you start? We're confined now to the diminishing returns of worn out vocabulary and a dissipated language. Computers with short cuts to hell. Tweets and texts on phones. In essays we overuse words like *great* and *wild* until they're watered down and meaningless. And the local store doesn't know what the hell ink is. And there sits J.P.S. Brown. In spite of it all. A man who created a cowboy-lingo of his own by living

J.P.S Brown photographed by Jay Dusard near Tucson, 1985.

it. How do you do a life like that justice?

The books are all you need for evidence. Here's one recent dispatch which manifests Joe's kind-heartedness toward fellow writers:

Friend Tom,
I've been reading and enjoying your stories in R&R. *They hit square at home with me...You are in a position that I always wanted to be in. I had an ambition to write a novel about a cowboy's first hand experience with every husbandman in the world. I'm 85 now and won't ever do it, but I sure like what you are doing with your knowledge of many of the people and places that I would have liked to write about. However, I'm proud of the land and people I chose to record, so I ain't sorry about anything. I went all out and it is what it is. Remember, I'll always keep coffee and a pot of beans hot for you and your lady.*
Hold fast,
Joe

A generous man. J.P.S. Brown may never make *The New York Times* best-seller list, because the real Western truth lies on a road that forks away from where Hollywood and Western dime novels have taken us. His work is imbued with the personal history of an educated, articulate, multi-lingual cowboy was has been in the trenches and still signs his name with a fountain pen.

The lingo which rings with truth. I've always enjoyed the introductory note from John Lomax in his first edition of *Cowboy Songs*, pertaining to the hard lingo and deep spirit of traditional songs:

To paraphrase slightly what Sidney Lanier said of Walt Whitman's poetry, they are raw collops slashed from the rump of Nature, and never mind the gristle...some of the strong adjectives and nouns have to be softened...there is, however, a Homeric quality about the cowboy's profanity and vulgarity that pleases rather then repulses...he spoke out plainly the impulses of his heart. But as yet so-called polite society is not quite willing to hear.

J.P.S. Brown and his work. Poetic raw collops composed, carved-out, and slashed from the rump of Western Nature. Lived fully. Never mind the gristle. Joe Brown speaks and writes plainly from wise impulses of a cowboy heart. Hold fast, boys. Here comes another dispatch from Patagonia.

Joe Brown takes orders for his books via P.O. Box 972, Patagonia, Arizona. 85624 and will sign each one. Tom Russell's *The Rose of Roscrae*, a double album "horse opera" on the West, is now available from www.fronterarecords.com All of Tom's tour dates, including Santa Ynez in June, are now up on www.tomrussell.com

The Magic Still Happens

Revisiting the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

By Hal Cannon

As the founding director of Elko's National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, I was involved in running the event for its first 15 or so years. In those years, I was never satisfied with the way in which journalists covered the Gathering – they rarely got its spirit – but I was always its most ardent critic. Even now, with the celebration of cowboy culture in its 31st year, it's not easy for me to objectively report on it, given my history of being critical of both the event and those who've written about it.

It's hard to describe *magic*, and that's the trait upon which I base my appraisals of any artistic presentation, Elko included. Organizers do what they can to set the stage, invite the right performers, and make everything comfortable and seemingly effortless, but in the end, magic either happens or it doesn't.

My first impression of the 2015 Gathering – which highlighted the cowboy culture of Mexico's Baja California – was that it didn't seem to have the raw energy of past events. Ticket sales were good, but there didn't seem to be the press of humanity I usually experience in Elko. In past years, I've always enjoyed the first part of the week, before throngs arrive for the weekend. This year, that relaxed, easygoing feeling spilled over into the weekend, perhaps thanks to Elko's now multifaceted nature, with several event categories – poetry, cowboy gear, music, food, dance – playing out simultaneously, perhaps spreading the crowds over a wider area.

This year, poets seemed to offer an overabundance of material on the theme of getting old. One reason cowboy poetry connects so deeply with audiences it that the best of the poets have lived lives of cowboys and can "tell it like it is." People like the real deal. So, perhaps poets were adhering to the old adage "write (and recite) what you know." Some of us, though, don't want to get stuck in the world of the aged. And, it's not the most captivating subject.

Later, my wife, Teresa Jordan, and I visited the cowboy craft show at the Red Lion. The show is a wonderful grouping of craftspeople and collectors, and has been held side-by-side with the Gathering for many years. There, we ran into Randy Rieman, a fine poetry reciter. We mentioned we'd just been in a poetry session that delved too deeply into the aches, pains and foibles of aging. Randy shook his head and commented that, in all the time he worked with Bill Dorrance (a legendary horseman and a mentor to Randy), he never once referred to being old, even in his advancing years. Bill got slower, and inevitably lost range of motion when he roped, but he still kept with it. Randy explained that he planned to follow Bill's lead, and not fall in with the culture of the old. The exchange reminded me that Elko is all about gaining insight and inspiration, even when it isn't shared from a stage.

It's true, though, that some of the finest performers of cowboy poetry and music are advanced in age. We recently lost some fine artists, people like Dave Bourne, Don Kennington and Glenn Ohrlin, who actually passed away the week after the Gathering. Glenn had performed at the Gathering since its beginning, and came one last time to see friends and sing old cowboy ballads. I was fortunate enough to host two shows with him. One paired him with 14-year-old musician Brigid Reedy, for whom Glenn was a mentor. Brigid knows many of Glenn's songs, and when the two shared the stage, the singing and repartee were charming.

photo by Karla Fernanda Amao/Courtesy Western Folklife Center

The 2015 Gathering celebrated the Baja California cowboy culture.

The second show with Glenn – titled Cowboy Songsters – was musician Andy Hedges' idea, and also featured Don Edwards. (Coincidentally, I'd recently produced a radio documentary, *Texas Cowboy Songsters*, spotlighting Hedges and Edwards, for Australia's Radio National.) In the end, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, another great cowboy songster, joined us on stage. It was a momentous occasion. We will all miss Glenn.

The Gathering included some masterful performances. Baxter Black, who's been involved with the Gathering since its start, performed to a sell-out crowd, one of his final performances before beginning a hiatus to focus on writing and media. Ian Tyson and Michael Martin Murphey continue to put on stellar shows. Don Edwards and Waddie Mitchell knocked me out with their abilities to take audiences into their cowboy worlds. And, filmmaker Amie Knox's *Drawn to Paint* – a documentary about painter William Matthews and screened at Elko – offered a wonderful exploration of the watercolorist's work.

A special dinner theater is a part of each year's Gathering and, this year, Tom Russell brought to Elko a cowboy folk opera, *The Rose of Roscrae*. The project is building in scope, and will eventually include a double CD, book and stage production. At the Gathering, he invited several artists to join with him in telling his story in song. After the second performance, Gretchen Peters, whose singing is prominent in Tom's folk opera, offered a group that included myself and fellow musicians Mollie and Rich O'Brien a lovely rendition of one of Tom's new songs. From that alone, I can vouch for his creative energy being as focused as ever.

As I mentioned earlier, it's rare that a journalist reports on the Gathering and gets it right. But this year, Andy Rieber, a young writer from Adel, Oregon, covered the event for *The Wall Street Journal*. She got it. An excerpt from her subsequent February 10 op-ed:

"This event is a revelation – an immersion course in the culture of the rural West. The ethos here is not one of old-timey nostalgia, however. It celebrates a living, pulsing artistic tradition. Through their chosen artistic mediums, the performers and artists at the

photo by Elton Dale/Courtesy Western Folklife Center

Art, music, food and, of course, poetry are dominant themes in Elko each year.

https://youtu.be/e96g51O8050
Glenn Ohrlin performs "Cancion Mixteca" at the 25th Gathering.

Gathering document the stark beauty and challenges – as well as the frequent absurdities – of a lifestyle still integral to hundreds of small, rural communities across today's Western states: raising livestock, working on horseback, depending on neighbors, and arranging schedules according to weather and the seasons."

So my review of the 2015 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering: the magic is still happening. My hat's off to the organizers who do so much to nurture the expressive life of ranching.

Hal Cannon is a folklorist, journalist and musician. He lives in Utah.

Silver and Accoutrements in the California Tradition.

Spirits of the Big Sky

Montana distilleries rewrite the rules of American whiskey-making.

By Melissa Mylchreest

Whiskey. The word itself conjures visions: laconic cowboys and wide-open spaces, barroom brawls and boomtowns. Holding its own special place in the iconography of the American West, whiskey is an adaptable and wily survivor, enduring trans-Atlantic voyages, translation across international boundaries, and adoption by wildly disparate characters – from the highest of the highbrow, to the lowest of the low. The spirit has been distilled, bought, sold, bartered, smuggled, watered down, blown up, packed over mountains, ferried across rivers, demonized, lionized, and made the stuff of legend.

photo courtesy Roughstock Distillery

Behind the scenes at Bozeman's RoughStock Distillery.

And where better to distill such an elixir than in that most iconic of western states, Montana? Looming large in the collective American psyche, Montana seems the perfect home for a beverage of such renown. And yet, the state endured a long drought – a full century, in fact – when not a single drop of (legal) whiskey was produced within its borders. Today, however, a cadre of pioneering distillers are doing their best to remedy the problem, and bring an end to those long, dry years.

"Being from Montana and growing up around a lot of grain, I always wondered why we didn't have more brewing and distilling," says Bryan Schultz, founder and owner of RoughStock Distillery in Bozeman. "There were lots of breweries popping up, so I started looking into distilling. And that started me down the path of looking into why nobody had done it, and before we knew it we found ourselves with a bill to allow distilleries passing in the Montana legislature."

RoughStock opened its doors in 2005 and paved the way for what has, in just a decade, become a thriving industry in Montana: handmade, small-batch whiskey, made from locally grown grains, with a keen eye toward heritage, flavor, innovation and craftsmanship.

photo courtesy Glacier Distilling

In the past decade, handmade, small-batch whiskey has become a thriving industry in Montana.

"We just started pestering everyone we could find in the U.S. and even overseas about how to do it on a small scale, because not many people were," Schultz says. "I look at it more as an art or craft or a trade, like a plumber or a cabinet maker. It takes years of doing something before you become proficient at it, a master. And the only way to really learn about distilling is to do it."

As the vanguard, it's fitting that RoughStock embraced the traditional imagery and ethos of the West. Invoking cowboys, rodeo, hard work and stout moral character, they forged a trail and built a brand (no pun intended) that paid homage to the past while acknowledging the modern realities of the industry – national and international markets, competition, distribution, supply chains, the changing palate of the public, and the economics of running a business that makes only whiskey.

It's within this complex and shifting landscape that other distilleries have popped up around the state. And, just as whiskies are widely variable – bourbon, rye, straight, single-malt, single-barrel, Canadian, Scotch, Irish, Tennessee – distilleries each have their own distinct character as well, based not just on the distillers' preferences, but also their markets. Here in Big Sky Country, where cowboys now share the state with wilderness-seeking recreationists, out-of-state tourists, and urban hipsters, a little digging reveals that these groups may have their differences, but whiskey is

something on which everyone can agree.

"I'm a chemist by education, and grew up in North Carolina around the Appalachian moonshining tradition. I can neither confirm nor deny that I may have distilled liquor in college in the chemistry lab," Nicholas

photo courtesy Glacier Distilling

Glacier Distilling is headquartered near Glacier National Park. Its whiskeys are available only in Montana.

Lee says with a smile. The founder and owner of Glacier Distilling in Coram, Montana, Lee represents a very different side of the state's distilling industry. Whereas RoughStock is available in 34 states, Canada, Europe and the United Kingdom, the products that come from Glacier Distilling are available only in Montana – and many are available only from the distillery itself.

Located as they are at the gateway to Glacier National Park, the small crew at Glacier Distilling, which opened in 2011, has no problem marketing and selling their products to the steady flow of tourists that passes their door each summer. "Our plan is to stay small," Lee says. "I think that for some things, it's nice that you have to go somewhere to get them, that you can't just order them on the Internet. This is the proof that you got *here*. People call and say, 'Can you ship it?' And I say, 'Nope. You're just going to have to come visit us again.'"

RoughStock and Glacier differ not only in area of scale and distribution, but in the choices they've made about their products: RoughStock makes whiskey, and only whiskey. Glacier, on the other hand, chose to diversify their offerings. In addition to their standard lineup of whiskeys, they boast a steadily rotating assortment of other liquors, from brandies to cognacs to gin to applejack.

This diversified approach is more common among craft distillers, in part because non-aged spirits – such as gin and vodka – provide income while whiskeys are tied up aging in barrels. (It should be noted that some distilleries "source" their whiskey, importing it from outside the state, then barrel-aging and bottling it here in Montana. The general consensus among distillers is that there's no real shame in this – as long as there's complete transparency about the practice – but that it's also a bit of a shortcut.)

Whistling Andy, a distillery that opened in 2010 in Bigfork, Montana, took a diversified route in order to offset the initial wait time required for aged whiskeys, and it was a choice that paid off. Now they specialize in award-winning Martinique-style rum and a cucumber-citrus gin as their primary moneymakers, which enables the whiskeys to age at their leisure.

"People appreciate the way we're doing things," says Brian Anderson, founder and owner of Whistling Andy. He's referring not only to their local sourcing – like many Montana distilleries, they get all of their grains from nearby farms – but also their approach. "We have so many spirits, we don't have to pull our whiskeys early. We can sit and wait on them. We're not doing small barrels and short ages. We're doing full 53-gallon barrels, and aging for a long time."

Meanwhile in Missoula, the folks at Montgomery Distillery are waiting – as patiently as they can – to reap

the fruits of their labor. While they've been distilling and selling gin and vodka since 2012 to national acclaim, they have yet to release their first batch of whiskey (they're on schedule for January 2016). But down in the distillery basement, owner and founder Ryan Montgomery is cautiously optimistic, letting a visitor take a whiff of an unstoppered barrel. Rich notes of fruit and spice suggest this rye is tantalizingly close to being ready – and it's going to be a knock-out.

Montgomery explains the process of distillation, from grain (grown on his family's fourth-generation Montana farm) to finished product, and details the ways in which the long years of barrel-aging impart flavor. He talks about where the spent grain goes (to a local pig farm, for feed), and why they're so excited to have sherry casks from Spain in which to age their rye (because nobody else in the United States is doing it). He talks about yeast and glucose and starches and carbohydrates, the "heads" and the "tails" and the "hearts" that are separated during the distillation process. He gives the full tour of the operation, and finally, at the end, he just sort of shrugs and grins.

And here in this spotless, well-lit, production-line distillery basement, it's clear that although times have changed, the essence of the process and the product remain the same. Despite our technological advances, a globalized market, and the fickle laws of distribution, whiskey still demands the same as it's always demanded from those who make it: patience, more patience, adoration, and a little bit of obsession.

In hidden valleys and tucked against foothills, ambitious, precocious distilleries are sprouting up around Montana – and they're succeeding, not just here in a state with a history of bootleggers and outlaws with undiscerning palates, but in the broader world of whiskey enthusiasts and hundred-year-old recipes. To accomplish this, they've needed something more than clever branding, mountainous loans, or even good old-fashioned cowboy work ethic.

photo by Jenny Montgomery

As its first batches of whiskey complete the aging process, Montgomery Distillery's gins and vodkas have earned national acclaim.

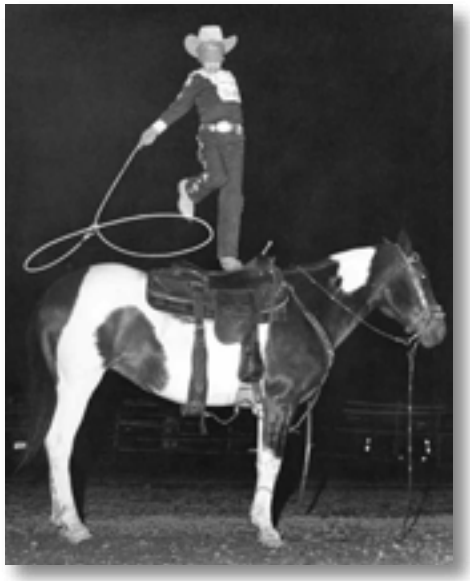
Perhaps Brian Schultz, a decade deep into his profession as a distiller, sums it up best: "There's a lot of romanticism behind making whiskey, and once you get into it you realize that romanticism is basically just on the page of a magazine or a website, and making it is actually a completely different thing. It's a labor of love. And I love doing it. I wouldn't be here every day if I didn't."

Melissa Mylchreest is a writer living in Montana.

A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

The Fourth Element

I have thought quite a bit about the piece I related to you in the last issue. (4.6 – "Battling Our Dark Side") And I hope the fellow I told you about has straightened out his approach to life. I say that because his approach to his horse said volumes about the way he lived his life. Some folks see deeper into their lives through their horses and for some, this horse thing can be like searching for the Holy Grail. For some it's maybe just a way to be a little safer on a horse and a little bit more confident. And frankly, it may be something that's totally on the surface, that a little more confidence gained through being able to maneuver a horse a little more accurately, a little safer, will help them as a person with some of the other things that they encounter in their life. And as I said – for some – it goes way deeper. It can become a real spiritual existence between them and their horse, as the connection they make with horses is something that helps get them maybe a little closer to God. Over the years, a number of folks have told me that, and yet it's a different thing for every person. So like the fellow in last issue's story, I'm careful – in what I do for a living – to not to judge a person in the beginning or project the outcome for them because it's a little something different for everyone. My experience is the "ah-ha" moments come differently to different riders. But if one gives themselves to the experience and the relationship – to make it good for both sides – those moments present themselves pretty regularly.



photograph and print by James Fain/courtesy the Brannaman family.

Buck Brannaman – aka "Buckshot" – in the midst of his blind folded, trick-roping performance at Spanish Forks, Utah in 1971. Buck was 9.

The late Tom Dorrance, one of the greatest horsemen of a generation, told me repeatedly, "Buck, it's all about feel, timing, and balance." And he said, "Oh, and there's one other thing." He told me it was the spiritual part of the horse and that was the fourth part, the fourth element in the relationship. I believe what he told me deeply and it is the place I am always trying to get to with my horses. I realize it is a very private thing to each person, and that said – I know it is achievable if we open ourselves up to the opportunity.

Horses and life, it's all the same to me.

- Buck Brannaman

Houlihan Ranch, Wyoming *A.J. Mangum*

www.brannaman.com

The Humanness of it All

By Hannah Ballantyne, Reata Brannaman and Nevada Watt

A few days ago we attended a candidate review for a teaching position in the college of arts and architecture here at MSU. Sophia, the prospective professor was reared in computer science but had combined interests in design and psychology. She spoke deeply of her interactions with computers and code from the age of two and how it had shaped her life and directed her career path. But she also spoke of her great concern of the impact technology is having upon the unique humanness we all share. How our interactions and memories are changed, altered, or possibly not even experienced because of it all. She worked countless hours on an "empathy box" to imitate the warmth and connection another human would give and talked about her extensive research in the matter.


Nevada Watt, happy to be outside.

Not to downplay her very insightful topic but as we were sitting there listening, we couldn't help but think there was a simple solution... put down your phone, iPod, Mac, or tablet for a while and get out into the world.

Before you assume we are drawing a blanket statement that all technology is bad, let us assure you we are not. We are simply recognizing the imperativeness of human connections for our society to

Reata Brannaman and Hannah Ballantyne

thrive. The human connections we were created to need; the touch, feel, and sight of others are the essence of our beings, as is the gloriousness of being out in nature. Possibly the lifestyle that we were raised in is rare or seems outdated, but is being human really a thing that can ever be outdated? The lifestyle that taught us looking an individual in the eye when speaking and shaking their hand conveys trust.

We don't understand why people have to overanalyze the living daylights out of all the topics concerning being human and pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to tell us what we already know. Have you ever wondered why you crave the feeling of sunshine and a breeze riding out in the morning? Or wish to give that hurting friend a hug? It's human, people! It is exactly what we were meant to want. And boy, isn't it a thinker that those landscapes we often find ourselves in are so breathtaking? It's as if we were supposed to enjoy them…what a coincidence.

Being outdoors, in nature or around livestock gets you out of your own head.

You cease to be the most important thing at the moment. When you're surrounded by creation and nature it becomes easier to see what is truly important and what is superfluous. It reminds you of the great joy you receive by taking care of those animals. The little

wins you celebrate when that colt completely gets what you were teaching, the balling of a newborn calf, the wet kisses of that oh so stinky dog; it all speaks to exactly what we are.

Confession here: we're not saying we're the saints of no technology – we have spent too much time staring at our smartphones and mindlessly surfing through YouTube,

Yet as we begin the final semesters of our college life/era, it's becoming irritatingly more apparent how short life is and that we should spend it with the things that really matter. Boy, we should start a self-help hotline or something with all this talk, ha! Sorry, random. But really, why don't we let our true self out to roam? True self is different for every person because we are all unique with a whole crazy set of emotions and thoughts, likes and dislikes.

Nevada's going to take moment to brag on her father, Jeremiah Watt, who just a few days ago completed a goal of a lifetime by successfully riding around the world on a bike (yep, a two wheel peddle bike, no motor). People thought he was nuts for doing this, they said, "Oh boy, that Jeremiah – what will he think of next, must have gone off the deep end!" But he was simply embracing that heart of his and desires to discover and meet vastly different cultures. It was extremely difficult at times and mind-blowing at others. He found out he could take more than he thought and

did it all because of the big Guy in the sky. Don't worry we're not all cyclists and need to ride around the WORLD to figure out who we are! The point here is – go for those off-the-wall ideas if they speak to you, they can help reintroduce you to the world around, and, to you.

The Hen House girls.

McGuire on McGuire

The Nashville Portraits

"Find what you love, and let it kill you." – Charles Bukowski.

It's so interesting that the seemingly random decisions you make when you're young, often set you on a trajectory in life that you could not have planned or even imagined. In 1963 I was a weatherman in the Air Force having fun chasing tornados around Oklahoma. I had one more year to serve and was given a choice to spend it in Midwest City or volunteer to help set up landing strips in some remote jungle country that I had never heard of. So being full of piss and vinegar, at age 22 I volunteered for Vietnam to get out of Oklahoma.

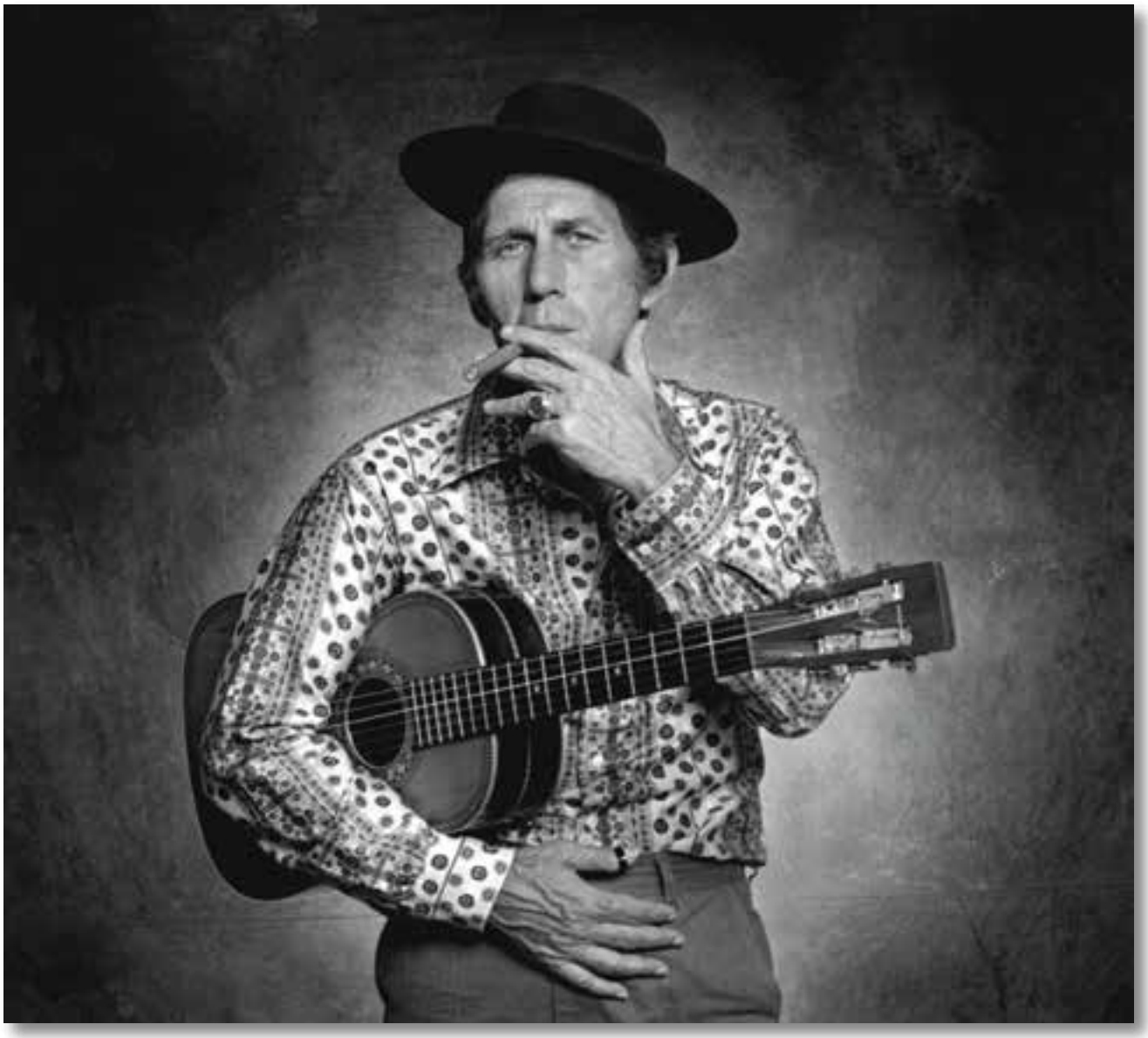
Jim McGuire and Shorty

It was one of the best decisions I ever made. I was soon made the camp photographer only because I was the only simple SOB who knew how to use a camera. I developed my first rolls of B&W film in an old Army tent at night, mentored by a 75 year old Vietnamese photographer who ran one of the only family portrait studios in the Mekong Delta. So that's what I did for the next year. I went over a weatherman and came back a photographer.

When I got home, I decided to see if there was any way to make a living doing this. My misspent youth was growing up in rural New Jersey in the 1950s where my only interests were building fast cars and music, mostly country music. But I was intrigued by this new little toy...the camera. So I moved to New York City and worked as a darkroom slave for three years for $65.00 a week. This was my real education and another one of those seemingly random decisions.

The late 1960s was an amazing time to be in New York. Not only the iconic music scene but many of the great B&W photographers were working there and in their prime: Richard Avedon Irving Penn, Wingate Paine, Bert Stern... so many. I had always been drawn to B&W images from *LIFE* magazine, the great 50s B&W films...but it was Penn's small trades B&W portraits that stopped me in my tracks. He took trades people off the street.... plumbers, electricians, butchers and photographed them with the tools of their trade. So simple and elegant and so powerful. It made me realize that photographing something so seemingly ordinary in B&W made it seem more important somehow...and I liked that. It was a revelation and I wanted to do that.

If we're honest, most artists copy to some degree, from those who came before them. So I figured if I am going to



Chet Atkins (1924 – 2001) Known as "Mister Guitar," Atkins was a trailblazer who is widely credited for the creation of the so-called "Nashville Sound." One of the most influential and best-loved guitarists in the history of the instrument, he became the president of RCA Records and produced many classic country albums. Photographed in 1976.

copy....copy from the best. So I hand painted a canvas to look like a Penn backdrop and started shooting musicians with the tools of their trade. This was the beginning of what would become The Nashville Portraits. The very first ones were of John Hartford and his Areo Plane Band. It was shot about 2 AM after a gig at a club in the Village. In the darkroom as I printed these first images of Hartford, Vassar Clements, Tut Taylor and Normal Blake, I knew I was onto something. All of The Nashville Portraits were shot on this same old original canvas backdrop that I've been using for the past 45 years.

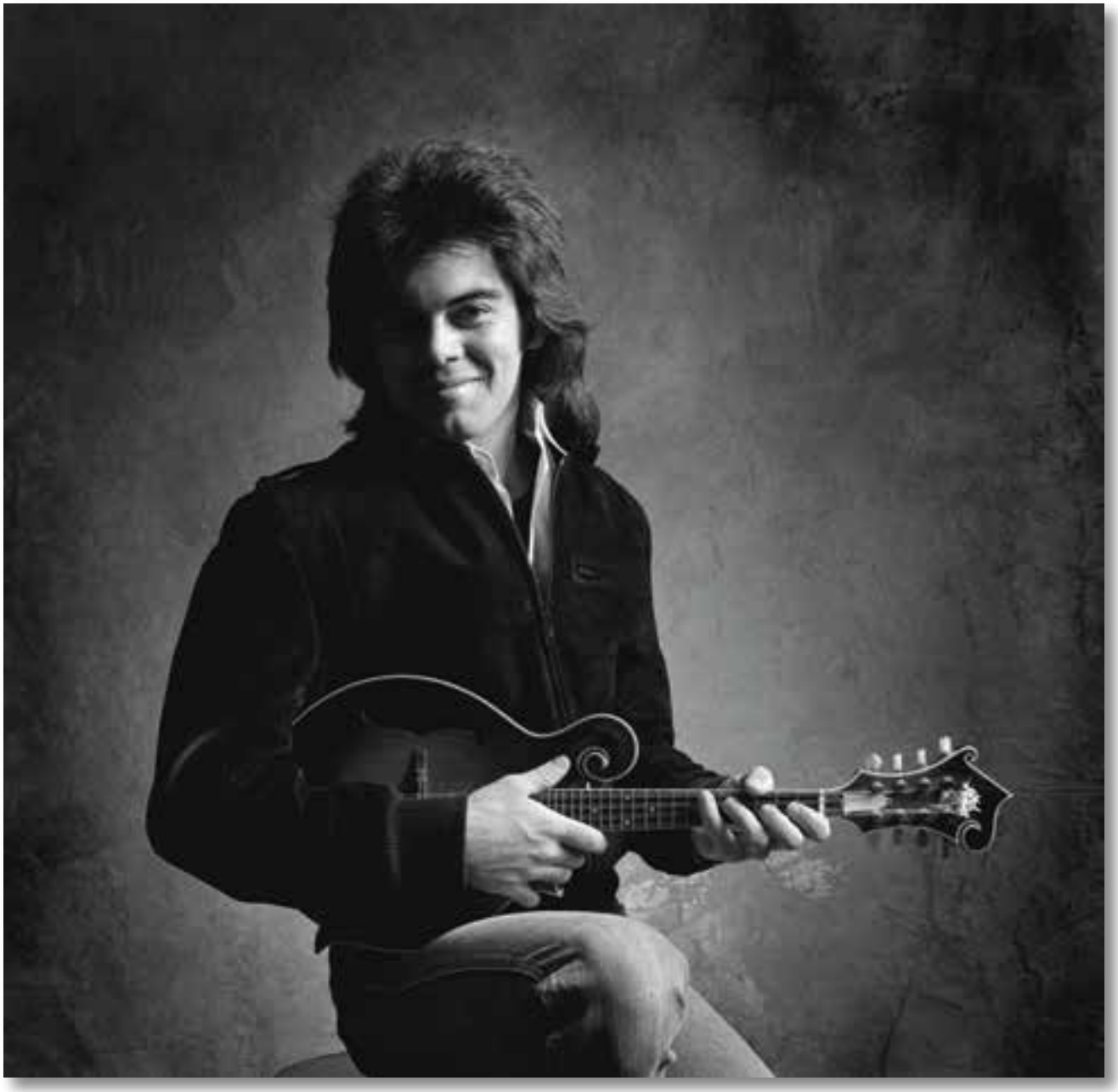
In 1972 I moved to Nashville to be surrounded by the music I loved and never looked back. The result is almost 700 album covers and the extensive B&W Nashville Portraits series that I am delighted to say spent a number of years traveling to museums around the country. Quite an amazing ride from a clueless kid chasing tornados around the flatlands of Oklahoma.

To see more of Jim McGuire's work, www.nashvilleportraits.com

Vassar Clements, 1972. Originally from South Carolina, Vassar Clements, a legendary Nashville fiddler and session player, was entirely self-taught. Over the length of a fifty-year career, he played on more than 2,000 albums and performed with a wide range of artists – everyone, or so it seems, from Woody Herman and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band to the Grateful Dead and Jimmy Buffet. His career began when he joined Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys as a teenager in 1942. Though he was a major influence in the developing "new grass movement," he cited big band swing music as a significant influence over his own style and musical development.

Jerry Jeff and Susan Walker, 1977. Originally from Oneonta, New York, where he was born in 1942 as Ronald Crosby – he adopted the stage name "Jerry Jeff Walker" in 1966 – he has become an icon in Austin, Texas, since moving there in the early 1970s. Mr. Bojangles is, perhaps, his best known work, and it has been recorded by dozens of artists, ranging from Bob Dylan to Nina Simone and Philip Glass to the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. After a lengthy series of records for MCA and Elektra, produced after his move to Austin, he gave up on the mainstream record industry and founded his own independent label, Tried and True Music. His wife, Susan, is its president and manager. Jerry Jeff and his work are chiefly associated with the country-rock outlaw scene that also included such artists as Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Guy Clark, and Townes Van Zandt. His birthday bash has become a near-legendary event that attracts top musicians and thousands of fans to Austin.

Carole King, 1978. Active as a singer, songwriter, and pianist since the 1960s, she has been inducted into the Songwriter's Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. McGuire photographed her during a recording session in Austin, Texas.



Marty Stuart, 1978. Almost completely preoccupied with country music from a very young age, he taught himself how to play the guitar and mandolin. He emerged as a fourteen-year-old instrumentalist, so accomplished that he was invited to join Lester Flatt's band. After ill-health forced Flatt to break up his band, he worked as a sideman with Vassar Clements and Doc Watson before joining Johnny Cash's band. He stayed with Cash until 1985 before embarking on his own successful recording and performance career in Nashville. A member of the Grand Ole Opry since 1993, he remains an avid collector of country music memorabilia and a fan himself. He has served on the board of the Country Music Foundation (for a time as its president) and has written numerous magazine articles related to the music and its writers, producers, and performers.

George Strait, 1982. Known for his unique style of Western swing music, Texas native George Strait began his solo recording career at MCA Records in 1981. A member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, he has been nominated for more Country Music Association awards than any other artist. He holds the record for the most number one songs on the Billboard Country Music charts, and over the length of his long career has had more albums certified gold, platinum or multi-platinum than any other artist except Elvis Presley and The Beatles. It is unlikely that his record of fifty-four number one records will ever be broken.

Rosanne Cash and Rodney Crowell, 1983. Rosanne Cash (born 1955), the daughter of Johnny Cash and his first wife, Vivian, was married to Texas singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell from 1979 until 1992. A successful, Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter in her own right, she has had more than twenty top 40 country singles. Her work draws from many genres, including pop, folk, blues, and rock and roll. She is also a published author and respected amateur painter. Considered a part of both the mainstream and alternative country traditions, Rodney Crowell (born 1950), originally from Houston, is closely associated as a songwriter with his contemporary Steve Earle. (Both were influenced by fellow Texans Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt.) He performed as part of Emmy Lou Harris' Hot Band in the eighties before striking out on a successful solo career. An earlier Crowell-led band, The Cherry Bombs, included such future luminaries as Vince Gill and Tony Brown in the seventies. Now, he is also a successful record producer. The couple divorced in 1992.

Guy and Susanna Clark, 1978. Texans Guy and Susanna Clark, both singer/songwriters, first came to Nashville at the time that McGuire did, in 1972. They became fast friends when McGuire shot the cover photographs for Guy's first studio album Old Number One, which was released by RCA Records in 1975. In the 1970s, when this photograph was taken, the Clark's Nashville home was a haven for emerging songwriters and musicians. Guy Clark has served as a mentor to many other songwriters, most notably Steve Earle and Rodney Crowell, and numerous artists have recorded Clark-penned songs. The couple divorced in 2012.

Johnny Cash (1932 – 2003) and **Dr. Billy Graham** (Born 1918). Two legends in their own fields of endeavor, they were great friends for many years. Photographed in 1978.

Tammy Wynette (1942 – 1998) Once known as "The First Lady of Country Music", she was a talented singer-songwriter who, during the 1960s and 70s, simply dominated the country music charts. (In 1968 and '69, she had five number-one hits, among three of her signature songs, "Stand by Your Man", "D.I.V.O.R.C.E." and "Take Me to Your World". In all, she had seventeen number one songs, and her work, along with that of Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, and Lynn Anderson, helped to define the role of the female country singer, influencing many of the younger singers who followed them. Many of her songs seemed, at least to her fans, to be influenced by her tumultuous private life. Married five times – productively in the case of her marriage to singing partner, George Jones – she was often ill, surviving numerous hospitalizations and surgeries. She succumbed, unexpectedly, to a cardiac arrhythmia at the age of 56. She was photographed in 1987.

Handmade

Montana filmmakers work to strengthen the culture of craftsmanship.

By A.J. Mangum

There's a moment in the trailer for the film series *The Makers* in which blacksmith Eric Dewey runs a wire brush across an iron bar heated to red, sending hot slivers of metal raining down on the floor of his Montana workshop. In a sequence of slow-motion shots, the camera pulls in tight as Dewey strikes the still-hot iron with a hammer and begins the process of giving the raw material shape, form and utility.

The work possesses a primitivity – metal and fire, hands and a hammer – that's almost shocking. How many viewers, one can't help but wonder, are even aware blacksmithing still exists as a profession? It's a craft whose intricacies would seem appropriately documented not in the cutting-edge media of digital film, but in faded sketches on the yellowing pages of a weathered notebook. For the documentarians behind *The Makers*, that juxtaposition – the use of 21st century tech to illustrate an archaic vocation – is a key theme of their work.

photos courtesy The Handmade

The ink says it all. Montana saddlemaker Brian Esslinger displays his commitment to the notion of handcrafted work.

Elliot Lindsey is the Bozeman-based director of *The Makers* and the principal behind The Handmade Movement, a collaborative effort between artisans and creative professionals to document and celebrate handcrafted work.

"The effort is half and half," Lindsey says. "Part of it is the preservation of these crafts on film, but the other part is motivating craftsmen to see content and social media as ways of working with one another and marketing themselves, to see technology as something other than this evil thing that's taking over their industries."

Lindsey first became involved with filmmaking more than a decade ago, as an 18-year-old semi-professional skateboarder fascinated with the work of crews filming his sport. As digital video revolutionized the medium – creating affordable strategies to enter the field and produce quality work – Lindsey moved behind the camera, eventually landing a job as a film editor for

Oregon hatmaker Cate Havstad is among the first subjects featured in *The Makers*.

a production company in his native Bozeman. He saw Montana's culture of craftsmanship as a unique storytelling opportunity and spent two years developing the concept for *The Makers* before applying for funding from the Montana Film Office. The MFO has since awarded filmmaking grants to Lindsey and his team, which includes his producing partner Justin Brodin, cinematographer Eric Kucinski and editor Sam

Elliot Lindsey in the editing bay.

Hedlum, as well as some "freelance film kids" from Montana State University's film program.

The first four installments of *The Makers* feature the aforementioned Eric Dewey, Montana saddlemaker Brian Esslinger, Oregon hatmaker Cate Havstad, and Montana knifemaker Thomas McGuane.

"The craft is always the big contributor in our decisions as to who we feature," Lindsey says. "We don't feature anyone whose work we don't love. The most important thing as a filmmaker, though, is the story. How did these people come to devote their lives to crafts that are so threatened, possibly even dying? And how did they learn these trades when those resources are not generally available?"

Supplementing the film series is a collection of artisans'

The team behind *The Makers* works in what Lindsey describes as a "run and gun" fashion, with a tight budget and skeleton crew.

galleries – online at www.thehandmademovement.com – and a forthcoming series of digital tutorials filmed with craftsmen featured in *The Makers*.

"The bigger idea is to create an online channel where craftsmen can feature their work, and share ideas and resources, and where we can feature the stories behind the work," Lindsey says. "Ultimately, it'll be a feed of all kinds of content, a digital celebration of handcrafted work."

Since the release of the film series' first trailer, Lindsey says five to 10 craftsmen have contacted him each day, asking about being featured. The filmmaker admits that such enthusiasm has been hard-earned, that getting buy-in from craftsmen was initially a challenge – "like pulling teeth," he says. He chalks up such hesitance to the reclusive nature of independent craftsmen, and to their culture's understandable disdain for technology. For many artisans, the concepts of digital filmmaking and online media were uncomfortably close to those of mass production and corporate marketing, arguably two

Filming Esslinger on location.

of the biggest threats to their trades.

"It was a big PR issue, getting people to understand that media creation didn't have to be a bad thing," Lindsey says. Technology, he asserts, could in fact prove to be the savior of even the most ancient of handcrafts. "The first craftsman we filmed didn't even have a phone. After we started working with him, he got on Instagram and now has people ordering from Japan. With our ability to connect globally through the Internet, we can all find handmade goods if makers are active enough online. If you wanted a really nice knife or cowboy hat, you could just search and find makers. You wouldn't have to order from some big company. Through that technological revolution, we'll see more makers online, and they'll be able to distribute their goods internationally. We'll see more quality products on the market. In the future, everything could be handmade."

In a similar spirit, Lindsey and his team have declined offers for corporate sponsorship of The Handmade Movement, preferring instead to work in "run and gun" fashion, with a skeleton crew, a shoestring budget and full creative control of their films.

"We can never get everyone in the same place at the same time, and we have to take opportunities when we have them," Lindsey says. "Only occasionally do we have the luxury of planning bigger shoots for more cinematic efforts. But, right now, the best thing is still to keep big brands off of it. That's not what this is about – promoting companies."

Working on *The Makers* has led Lindsey to believe stories about craftsmen and craftsmanship get to the root of what it means to be human, and can offer clear perspectives on the connections of people to the world around them.

"I studied anthropology in college, and most of our brain development can be attributed to humans being bipedal," he says. "Standing on two feet, holding something close to our eyes to inspect it, to manipulate it, to make it be something it doesn't want to be. That's what's enabled us to come up with ideas, understand the world, create languages, plan. There's something inherently human about it."

http://vimeo.com/112881618
The trailer for *The Makers* had close to 50,000 Facebook views within two months of its debut.

A.J. Mangum is the editor of *Ranch & Reata*, and the author of the non-fiction collection *Undiscovered Country: Dispatches from the American West*. Learn more about The Handmade Movement at www.thehandmademovement.com.

Emerging Artists

A unique competition offers valuable experience for the West's aspiring craftsmen.

By Kathy McCraine

It didn't seem to matter to the contestants who won or lost at the third annual Traditional Cowboy Arts Association Emerging Artists Competition; the enthusiasm amongst these 20 young craftsmen was palpable.

Bradan Wiest of Midland, Texas, a first-time contestant in the contest's silversmithing division, summed it up when he said, "I came here to learn from great craftsmen and see what I need to work on, so I can become a better silversmith." Wiest admitted to being nervous, but that evaporated quickly in the camaraderie of the event.

photo by Kathy McCraine

TCAA members John Willemsma (left) and Pedro Pedrini judged the saddlemaking competition.

The competition was held in January, in conjunction with the High Noon Western Americana Show in Mesa, Arizona. The 2015 competition featured divisions for up-and-coming saddlemakers and silversmiths. Even-numbered years offer divisions for rawhide braiders and bit and spur makers. The winner in each category receives prize money of $1,000 and a trip to Oklahoma City for TCAA's exhibition and sale, held at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum as part of the annual Cowboy Crossings event, which features a concurrent show by the Cowboy Artists of America. This year's TCAA show, the group's 17th, will take place October 8-10.

TCAA was founded in 1998 by a group of the West's master craftsmen who felt there was a need to attract younger generations to the four disciplines – saddlemaking, silversmithing, rawhide braiding, and bit and spur making – as well as educate the public on the value of fine craftsmanship.

"The founding members felt these trades and crafts were dying because there weren't a lot of young guys interested in pursuing them, due to the fact they didn't feel they could make a living at it," says Nate Wald, of Lodge Grass, Montana. Wald is a rawhide braider and TCAA's current president. "The Emerging Artists

photo courtesy Darcy Kabanoff

Darcy Kabanoff's winning saddle was a Visalia 3B style, with 26-inch tapaderos.

Competition was created three years ago as a way for us to recognize up-and-comers and people who are striving to improve their work."

The mission of TCAA, which has 15 active members, centers on education. In addition to the Emerging Artists contest, the group offers scholarships, fellowships and workshops for student craftsmen.

"In the Emerging Artists competition, we wanted to bring young craftsmen from all over the continent together to start building a community," says Scott Hardy. A Longview, Alberta, silversmith, Hardy is a founding member of TCAA. "Contestants can get an honest critique, form relationships, and learn that these four disciplines are serious trades, not only historically, but also today. It's all about helping them move ahead in their chosen trades."

Judges for the saddlemaking competition included TCAA members John Willemsma of Guthrie, Oklahoma, and Pedro Pedrini of Marysville, California. Mark Drain of Shelton, Washington, and Hardy judged the silversmithing competition. All were on hand for group discussions and individual critiques, before and after the judging.

After a full day of scrutinizing the 10 saddles in competition, the judges awarded first place to a Visalia 3B saddle with large, square-pointed skirts and 26-inch tapaderos, designed and built by Darcy Kabanoff of Mission, British Columbia.

"The workmanship on this saddle was incredibly nice as far as layout, tooling and design," Willemsma says. "In our opinion, it was the cleanest, neatest saddle there."

Kabanoff, 46, has been making saddles since 2000, when he decided he couldn't afford a quality saddle and decided to learn to build one. He credits Bob Land of Vernon, British Columbia, and TCAA founding

photo by Kathy McCraine

Tad Knowles shows off the Visalia centerfire saddle he entered in the competition.

member Chuck Stormes of Millarville, Alberta, with mentoring him. Even as the contest's winner, Kabanoff recognizes he has room for improvement.

"The areas in which I need the most work are floral carving, layout and design," he says, "but that's the point of going to this competition. Being able to talk to other saddlemakers, both TCAA members and contestants, you learn a lot. You look at each other's work and hear new ideas and techniques. You can't put a value on that. It's an enormous learning experience."

Braidie Butters, a 28-year-old silversmith from Dalhart, Texas, was the winner in the silversmithing competition, with a five-inch, sterling silver, heart-shaped padlock that was fully functional. Two years ago, Butters was awarded the first TCAA fellowship, a $12,000 award funding a year of study with TCAA members. She received her first formal engraving instruction from Mark Drain, David Alderson and Scott Hardy in 2009. Prior to that, she worked with her dad, bit and spur maker Randy Butters.

"He taught me the basics – soldering, cutting and fabrication," she says. "That's when I decided I wanted to do more engraving. This was the first lock I ever made,

photo by Kathy McCraine

TCAA emeritus member and silversmithing judge Mark Drain (left), visits with competitor Bradan Wiest.

photo by Kathy McCraine

Joshua Olschewski of Herriman, Utah, competed in the saddlemaking competition.

and there were so many different skills involved in this one piece. It had to be forged, sculpted, formed, engraved, riveted and soldered. Winning this show was rewarding because it showcased everything I have learned."

"The lock Braidie made was an incredible piece of fabrication," Hardy says. "It took a lot of thought and even more planning, working with a blacksmith to figure out how to create the locking mechanism inside. This is exactly what we are looking for in this contest. Her imagination, fabrication and decoration made it a special piece."

The uniqueness embodied in Butters' entry is a theme TCAA strives to impress on young craftsmen: makers can stay true to traditional roots, but don't have

photo by Don Reeves

Braidie Butters' sterling silver padlock won the silversmithing division.

to mimic work created 50 years ago.

"What you're supposed to do in a competition like this is push the envelope and come up with something unique," Willemsma says. "I think all these craftsmen stretched themselves and tried very hard to do that."

Contestants left Mesa eager to move forward in their respective trades, thanks to the knowledge gained from master craftsmen, as well as interaction with fellow artists.

"I was extremely pleased with the caliber of work shown and the strides these young people have made," Hardy says. "Cowboy Crossings in Oklahoma will offer a stage where we can show them that if they persevere and dedicate themselves to becoming great craftsman, there is somewhere to move on to, where they can be rewarded and celebrated. There's no other program like the Emerging Artists Competition that helps people grow into great craftsmen."

Kathy McCraine is a writer and photographer based in Prescott, Arizona.

Road Trip List

Will Ackerman, Jimmy Buffet, Rhiannon Giddons and another insanely good T Bone Burnett produced album in *Another Day, Another Time*.

Passage
William Ackerman
Windham Hill (Vinyl)

Let's start with the vinyl. Yes vinyl. Tough to play in the truck but the quality of a vinyl sound can be figured out for travel music. (Think: Neil Young and Pono). Back when we all had phonographs and record players – the alternative was a cassette player – the music industry was altered by the entrance of what would be called "New Wave music. Today, it's the "Spa" channel on Sirius/XM. Quiet and contemplative and no one did it like the folks at upstart Windham Hill Records. Originally founded in 1976 as an "indie" record label by guitarist and carpenter William Ackerman and his then-wife Anne Robinson, Windham Hill was a successful and well-respected music label during its height in the 1980s and 1990s and featured not only Ackerman's own music but that of the likes of George Winston, Michael Hedges, Mark Isham, Liz Story, and Nightnoise among many others. But it was Ackerman who gave up most of his day job of carpentry when the label took off. He discovered George Winston and Michael Hedges – famously signing Hedges to a contract on a cocktail napkin having just seen Hedges perform in a Palo Alto café.

Ackerman's 1981 album *Passage* is a re-recording of older pieces as duets (including one with George Winston), and a few solo guitar pieces. Ackerman's ex-wife Anne – designer of all the label's initial covers, designed the album art. The album is filled with tunes you have heard a billion times but still remind you of a slower, pre-digital time. "The Bricklayer's Beautiful Daughter" is a grand example. Windham Hill and Ackerman's effort was one of the last gasps of the OLD record business. And like the song says, he did it his way. And yes the album is available on iTunes. But find the vinyl.

"The Bricklayer's Beautiful Daughter"
https://youtu.be/auQNLn0LLkY

Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes
Jimmy Buffett
ABC Records (Vinyl)

Back in 1975 when Jimmy Buffett was doing the soundtrack for a little film called *Rancho Deluxe* – see Western Moment in Issue 4.6 – he included a song called "Wonder Why You Ever Go Home." It was fill for the film's soundtrack album but was always overshadowed by the album's big party song, "Livingston Saturday Night." "Wonder" would go on to be included in Buffett's blow-out 1977 album, *Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes*, under the new title, *Wonder Why We Ever Go Home*. The title song got huge AM airplay but nothing like Track 1 on Side 2 – Buffett's ode to "that frozen concoction" the Margarita. "Margaritaville" would go on to be the anthem of everything from summer anywhere to spring break parties everywhere. This is a great driving album mainly because you will know the words to every song. Again, the vinyl is best.

Wonder Why We Ever Go Home (test pressing) (This song was actually on a test pressing entitled *Kick It In Second Wind*. The album became *Havana Daydreamin'* and was released in 1976 but the song was left off of it. Two other versions of "Wonder" were released – one, as we said on the soundtrack to *Rancho Deluxe* (1975) and then *Changes In Latitudes, Changes In Attitudes* (1977). This a great version of EB – Early Buffett.)
https://youtu.be/g8Uzz-Zuo8E

Another Day, Another Time:
Celebrating The Music of "Inside Llewyn Davis"
Various Artists
Nonesuch

Anyone who has followed the music business knows that T Bone Burnett seems to have the Midas touch when it comes to producing artists and music of significance. *Another day, Another Time: Celebrating the Music of "Inside Llewyn Davis"* is classic Burnett – filled with new talent matched with pros. It was a concert inspired by the Coen Brothers' film, *Inside Llewyn Davis*, which is set in the 1960s Greenwich Village folk music scene featuring live performances of the film's music, as well as songs from the early 1960s. The concert was shown as a Showtime cable special and featured performers included the Avett Brothers,

Joan Baez, Dave Rawlings Machine, Rhiannon Giddens, Lake Street Dive, Colin Meloy, The Milk Carton Kids, Marcus Mumford, Punch Brothers, Patti Smith, Willie Watson, Gillian Welch, and Jack White, as well as the star of the film, Oscar Isaac. The album features 34 tracks and among them are standout performances including "Joe Hill" by Joan Baez, Colin Meloy and Gillian Welch; "That's How I Got To Memphis" by The Avett Brothers; "Tomorrow is a Long Time" by Keb Mo' and the classic Union song, "Which Side Are You On?" with a unique take by Elvis Costello and Joan Baez. As Chris Thile of the Punch Brothers said (don't miss their performance of "Tumbling Tumbleweeds"), "The idea of all these artists waiting in the bowels of the New York Town Hall was to not only to play the music of Llewyn Davis but also to sing a bunch of the music that was swirling around the music of the film. And so what everyone was working towards was to create the experience of songs around a campfire – while in Town Hall." They did it and did it well. And yes, the album is available on vinyl.

"Hear Them All/This Land Is Your Land"
Performed by the Dave Rawlings Machine
https://youtu.be/Def5J2wQP9M

Tomorrow Is My Turn
Rhiannon Giddens
Nonesuch

When *Another Day Another Time* was broadcast on Showtime, critics raved at the performance of one Rhiannon Giddens. Much praise was given to her ability to switch genres – and instruments as she plays both the violin and the banjo. As a founding member of the Grammy-winning country, blues and old-time music playing Carolina Chocolate Drops, Ms. Giddens seems to be everywhere, pushing further into her solo career. In early 2014, she was featured on the album *Lost on the River: The New Basement Tapes* alongside Marcus Mumford, Elvis Costello, Taylor Goldsmith and Jim James. This album was also produced by T Bone Burnett and featured a compilation of partial songs written by Bob Dylan that were never released. *Tomorrow Is My Turn* is Ms. Giddens first solo album and she has been guided by – you guessed it – T Bone Burnett through an incredible "freshman' effort that includes songs made famous by Patsy Cline, Odetta, Dolly Parton and Nina Simone. It is not just a worthy effort, it is a long ball over center field fence. The record is mesmerizing. Her performance of Odetta's version of "Waterboy" is truly from another time as well as her take on the Patsy Cline classic, "She's Got You." Yes, you can get the vinyl here too.

"Waterboy"
https://youtu.be/XyWa6v-ifRY

A Western Moment

A Merging of Greatness

Singer/Songwriter Gary McMahan, "Shorty" and photographer Jim McGuire – together they created one of the great press shots of all time. Back in the pre-digital days, masking photos and merging them together was a "hand-crafted" process. As Gary said of his doggin' horse Shorty, "he's great with cattle but hell on the mailman!"
www.singingcowboy.com

Photo Paper: A Tribute

In 2008, the Smithsonian mounted an exhibit titled "Click, Photography Changes Everything" that examined the importance and evolution of photography. It was loosely based on the realization that like everything in the digital age, change and technical advances were coming fast and furious but imagery and content were what mattered.

Even during the short time this journal has been produced; the way we approach photography assets – both in their creation and in their delivery has changed exponentially. Even with the technical aspects changing so quickly, we too believe that the content and its quality must never take a back seat to execution. Images come to us now mostly in digital form and are shot on an amazing array of equipment – many even shot on iPhones or iPads. It's amazing. That said, as publisher, I am old enough to remember and appreciate what came before – the paper print, and why in many cases, it cannot be duplicated by any digital devise. We'll call it "analog photography" and the beauty of a labored over "silver" print is second to none.

By way of example, we had the great joy recently of working with the renowned photographer and filmmaker, Kurt Markus. In issue 4.2, we premiered his portfolio of images from his many years of shooting in

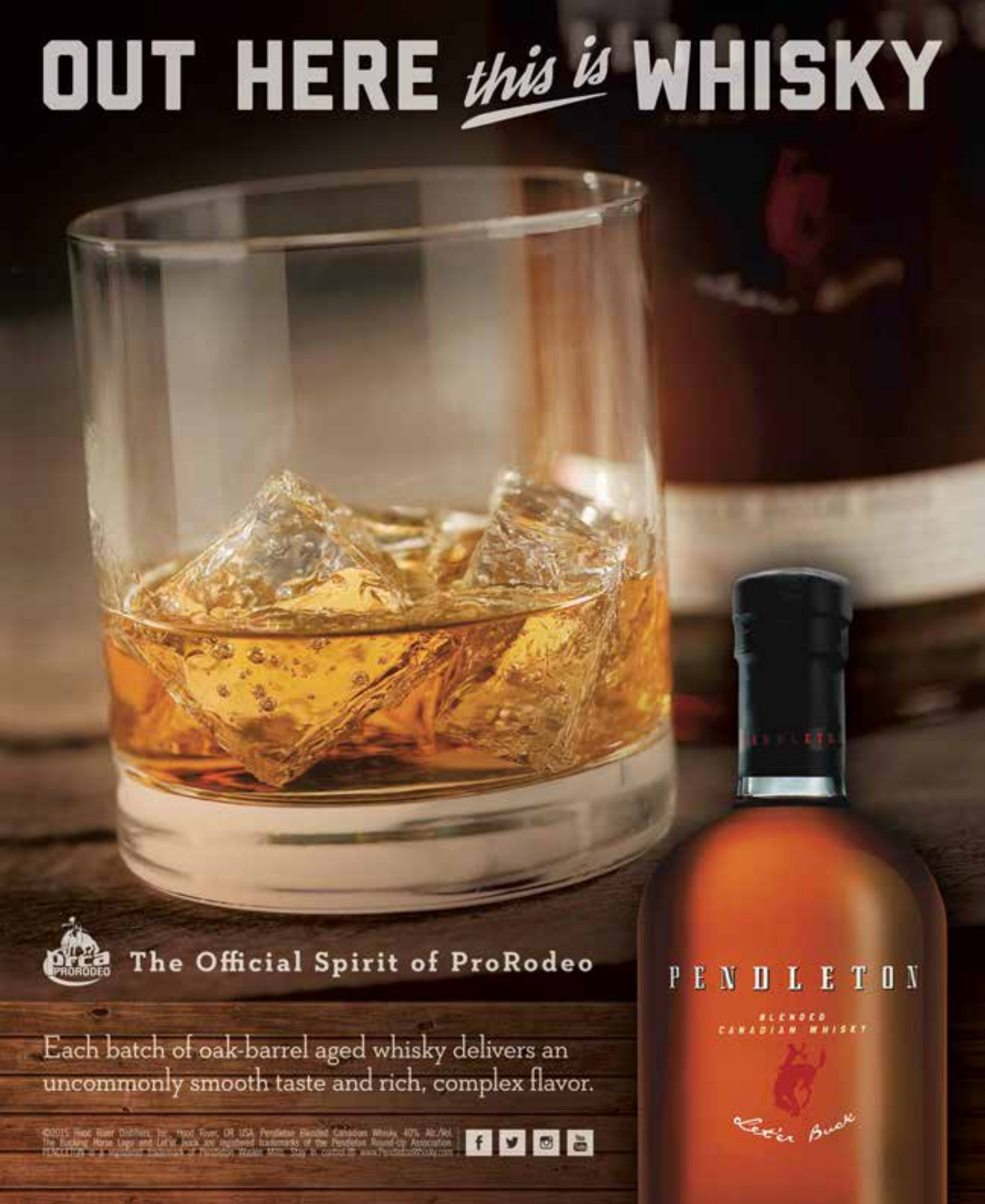
The Publisher's parents, Los Angeles, 1941.
Photograph and silver print by Edward S. Curtis.

Alabama Hills and Sierra Nevada, California, 1992. Photograph and silver print by Jay Dusard.

Monument Valley. The task of bringing the images to you, dear reader, was filled with many sleepless nights worrying that the tonal ranges he provided us would be thoughtfully reproduced from the scans he sent us. *Ranch & Reata,* unlike most magazines, is printed on a sheet-fed press, one sheet at a time, rather than on a web press that uses paper in roll form. The sheet fed process takes longer and costs more – natch – but it also allows for greater image control. It is why we are so pleased in this issue to show the photographs of Jim McGuire – all scanned from his original, and glorious, silver prints. I asked him what his go-to paper was in the dark room and he had no trouble responding with "Agfa Portriga... PRK 111. It's a beautiful, rich, warm tone paper, but it's not available anymore." Alas.

Photographers like McGuire, Kurt Markus and Jay Dusard – who provided images for this issue's Tom Russell story on JPS Brown – have years of experience in the darkroom and have carefully nursed countless images into full tonal glory as their body of work affirms. That skill and depth of photographic awareness is not achievable to the same degree with digital photography. Of course, images can be manipulated and retouched and adjusted beyond anyone's imagination in the hands of those technically adept at Photoshop or other photo adjustment programs. Don't get me wrong, I am not knocking progress or technical advancement – in many ways it makes our job much easier. But we will never lose sight of what it represents when a truly glorious image comes our way by the likes of Markus, McGuire, Dusard and others when we know the image started out as a hand and eye crafted silver print. These "analog" photographs can be compared – without too much of a stretch – to the audible difference between vinyl records and MP3s. The differences are there if one really listens, and in the case of skillfully created darkroom images, can be seen if one truly looks.

Admittedly, this is all about subtlety, and as one reader commented – "it's sort of like the engraving on the inside of the ring." Maybe. But as someone who loves to see competency at work, it is glorious to see talented artists provide their best – so we can share it with you. It matters. BR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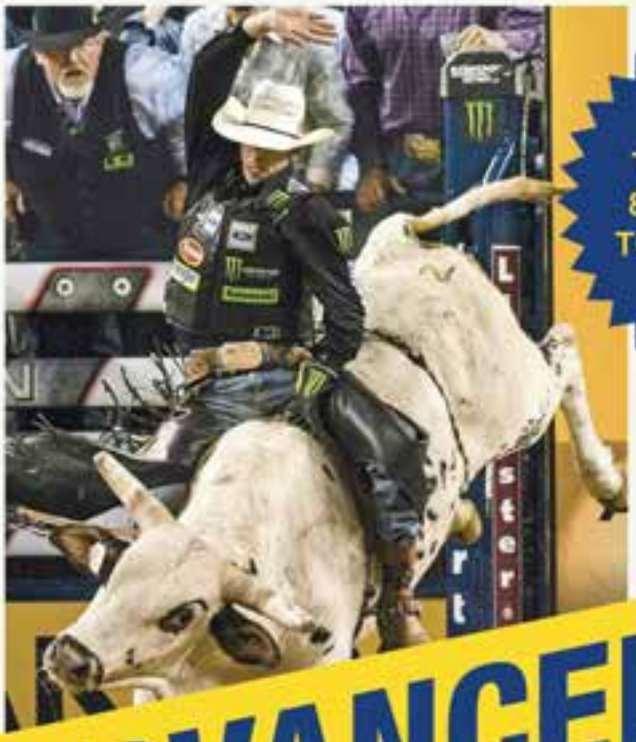

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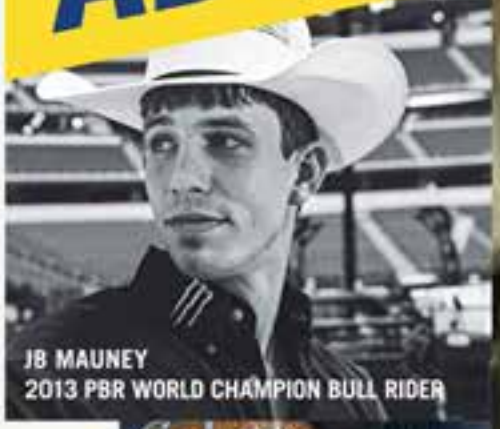

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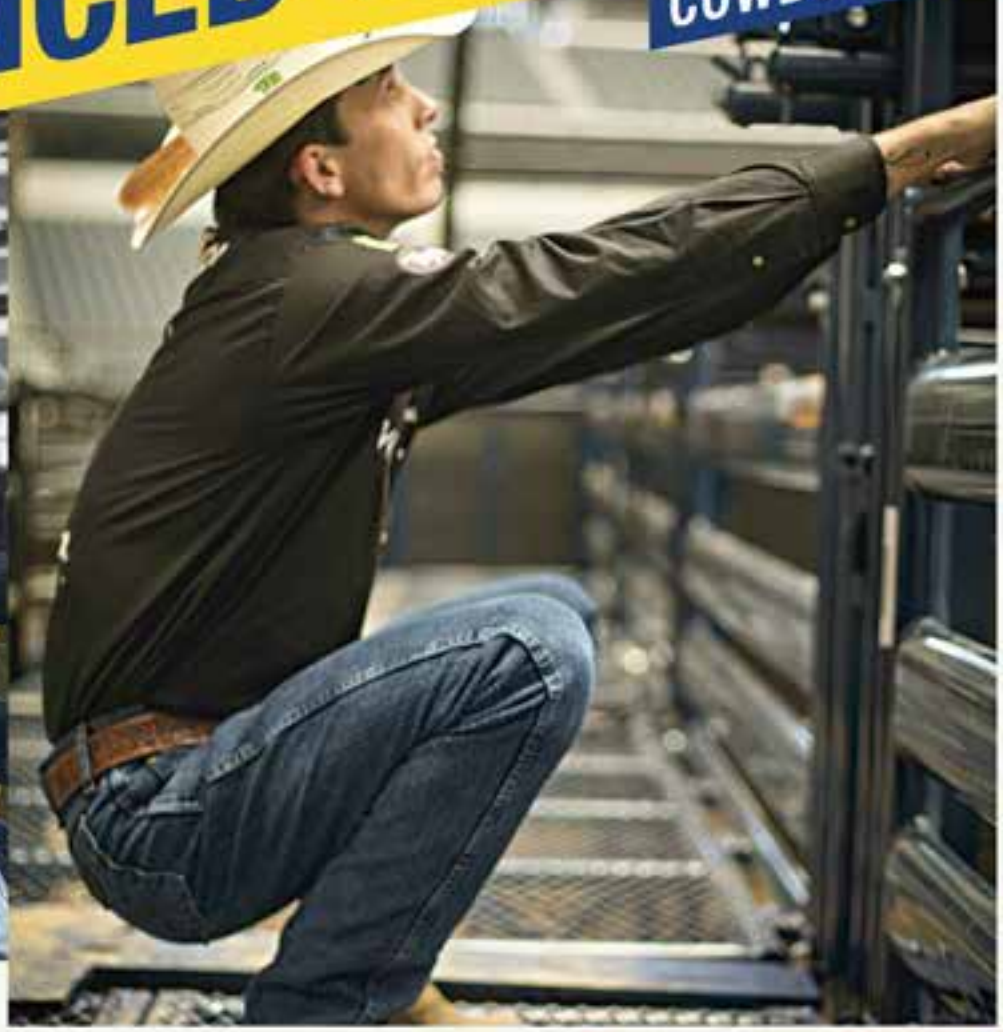

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