

The Price Was Right

Bargain mare Sanjo Play and trainer Craig Thompson win Futurity Open with 224 to earn \$23,000 while making their third finals in three tries.

By Mark Thompson and Bridget Kirkwood Cook • Action photos by Jami Littlefield

Sanjo Play and Craig Thompson won the Brazos Bash Futurity Open with 224.



Smooth N Glow and Matt Gaines finished as Futurity Open Co-Reserve Champs to pick up the young mare's first large check. (Below) RPL Ich This and Phil Rapp followed a win at the Music City Futurity with a Brazos Bash Futurity Open Co-Reserve Champion finish.



Two years ago, in late fall of 2008, Huntersville, N.C., businessman and cutting enthusiast Barney Ramsey asked Buffalo, Texas, trainer Craig Thompson, who had already worked with several Ramsey horses, to find him another one worth the money.

Another mare owned by Ramsey, 2005 model Pepto Stylish Pancho (Peptos Stylish Oak x Ms Panchos Cal Bar x Pancho San Bar) won a Southern Futurity Open title with Thompson in October 2008 to earn \$9,275, but then she suffered a career-ending injury. That prompted Ramsey to send Thompson back to the sale ring a few weeks later.

Ramsey asked Thompson to look for something "in the \$10,000 range," but authorized him to spend up to \$15,000 if it was for a prospect he liked well enough to spend it on.

"With weanling horses, if you pay more than \$10,000 to \$15,000, you run a serious risk of losing money," Ramsey said. "So, we were looking for something in that \$10,000 range."

Thompson ended up calling Ramsey from the late fall of 2008 Fort Worth sale to tell him he'd purchased a soon-to-turn 2-year-old filly that he really liked, and one with a solid pedigree (Playdox x Sanjo Marla x San Jo Lena) for just \$4,000.

"I said 'I think you just made me happy,'" Ramsey recalled. "I think she was a steal," he added of Sanjo Play, a

mare Ramsey estimated as that sale's "400th highest seller."

Sanjo Play, bred and originally owned by Slate River Ranch owner Glade Knight, teamed with Thompson to mark a 224 as they won the Brazos Bash Futurity Open title and earned \$23,000 on Sept. 28 in Weatherford, Texas.

Knight, who runs a real estate business that operates many hotels, lives in Richmond, Va. His Slate River Ranch, based in Weatherford, Texas, has ranked among cutting's leading owners and breeders for several years. Playdox (Freckles Playboy x Dox Come Back x Bob Acre Doc), Sanjo Play's sire, was one of Slate River Ranch's first great cutting competitors, with its ranch manager and lead trainer John Mitchell, and an early signature sire.

Bred by Greg Coalson, Weatherford, Texas, and bought by Knight before he turned 3 in late 1997, Playdox is now owned by Jimmy Jack Biffle, Muenster, Texas.

Thompson described Sanjo Play's early career as "real solid, real consistent," and said he knew she had another big run in her during the Brazos Bash finals, if he could find the right cows. He did find them and the mare performed like a champion while producing a score seven points better than any other horse when the big money was on the line. She competed from a No. 9 draw in the 12-horse finals, with a pair of solid 217s on the board.

Brazos Bash

Weatherford, TX — Sept. 24-Oct. 3, 2010
664 Entries — \$285,000 Added — \$812,682 Total Purse

Event	Horse	Rider	Owner	Score	Money
Futurity Open 60 Entries \$58,100 Added \$117,000 TP	Sanjo Play 07M (Playdox x Sanjo Marla x San Jo Lena) Smooth N Glow 07M (Smooth As A Cat x A High Glow x High Brow Hickory) RPL Ich This 07M (Cat Ichi x Ruby Duece x Smart Little Jerry)	Craig Thompson Matt Gaines Phil Rapp	Barney Ramsey Andy Dunning Bobbie Atkinson	224 217 217	\$23,000 \$17,000 \$17,000
Futurity Non-Pro 12 Entries \$11,900 Added \$23,393 TP	Justa Little Jimmy 07G (Smart Little Lena x Justa Swinging Jane x Justa Swinging Peppy) Smooth As A Twist 07M (Smooth As A Cat x LB Ms Cowtown Twist x Doc O Lena Twist)	Dustin Adams Chad Bushaw	Dustin & Deena Adams Crown Ranch Lp	219 215	\$7,000 \$5,500
Futurity Ltd. Open 8 Entries \$3,168 TP	Spina Cat 07S (High Brow Cat x Spin N Roses x Docs Spinifex) Holiday Ware 07M (WR This Cats Smart x Readytoware x Peptoboonsmal)	Scott Johnston Trey Hunt	Slate River Ranch Jim Carola	420 209	\$1,901 \$1,267
Futurity Lt. NP 6 Entries \$2,376 TP	Peekin Merada 07G (Peeka Pep x Meradas Token x Freckles Merada) MK Vivian 07M (Kit Dual x Runnin Mate x Smart Mate)	Susan Marvin Mitch Burns	Tommy & Susan Marvin Mitch Burns	213 203	\$1,426 \$950
Derby Open 124 Entries \$67,100 Added \$188,985 TP	Proof Of Diamonds 06G (Power Proof x Quixotes Diamond x Doc Quixote) Pounce 06M (High Brow Cat x Haidas Little Shorty x Haidas Little Pep)	Curtis Bass Phil Hanson	Jacey & Hannah Bass Clarke Butte Ranch	225 221	\$22,000 \$18,000
Derby Ltd. Open 18 Entries \$7,128 TP	Proof Of Diamonds 06M (Power Of Proof x Quixotes Diamond x Doc Quixote) Miss Rita Wood 06M (Nitas Wood x Miss Rita Quixote x Captain Quixote)	Curtis Bass Curtis Bass	Jacey & Hannah Bass Jacey & Hannah Bass	225 218.5	\$2,138 \$1,782
Derby Non-Pro 78 Entries \$42,900 Added \$119,670 TP	Sisters My Brother 06G (CD Olena x Little Baby Sister x Dual Pep) Badgers Prescription 06M (Reys Dual Badger x An Apple A Day x Doc's Prescription)	Wade Rust Kelle Earnheart	Wade Rust Kelle Earnheart	221.5 220	\$18,000 \$15,000
Derby Ltd. NP 27 Entries \$10,692 TP	Purely Badger 06M (Reys Dual Badger x Purely Bob x Bob Acre Doc) Shes Twice As Smooth 06M (Smooth As A Cat x Dually Lil Pep x Dual Pep)	Alexa Stent Jennifer Foland	Alexa Stent Jennifer & Jeffrey Foland	217 209	\$2,994 \$2,459
Derby Amateur 51 Entries \$2,500 Added \$22,496 TP	Olenas Color Me (PT) 06M (Color Me Smart [PT] x Olenas Dually x Dual Pep) Sarenadual 06M (Dual Pep x Sarenalena x Smart Little Lena)	Jon Winkelried Kathleen Moore	Marvine Ranch Kathleen Moore	220 218	\$4,000 \$3,000
Classic Open 99 Entries \$56,000 Added \$153,323 TP	Cherry Chex Dually 04M (Hes A Peptospoonful x Bueno Chex Dually x Dual Pep) Justa Little Mate 05S (Smart Mate x Little Smart Quixote x Doc Quixote) Peptos Stylish Miss 04M (Peptoboonsmal x Stylish And Foxie x Docs Stylish Oak)	Eddie Flynn Craig Thompson John Mitchell	Marvine Ranch Lloyd & Linda Morrison Slate River Ranch	222 219 219	\$20,000 \$16,000 \$16,000
Classic Ltd. Open 9 Entries \$3,546 TP	Fletch The Cat 05M (Royal Fletch x Lil Sally Cat x High Brow Cat) Anniversary Cat 05M (High Brow Cat x PG Special Edition x Playgun)	Curtis Bass Chris Johnsrud	Kit & Charles Moncrief Cox Trinity Equine LLC	426 425.5	\$1,782 \$1,069
Classic Non-Pro 79 Entries \$44,000 Added \$121,760 TP	Playin N Fancy Smart 04M (Smart Little Lena x Playin N Fancy Peppy x Freckles Playboy) Special Blue Bayou 05S (Blue Bayou Boon x Bobs Special Kay x Bob Acre Doc)	Glade Knight Cassity Mitchell	Slate River Ranch Cassity Mitchell	224 223	\$17,000 \$15,000
Classic Ltd. NP 29 Entries \$11,484 TP	Special Blue Bayou 05S (Blue Bayou Boon x Bobs Special Kay x Bob Acre Doc) Peptacular 04M (Peptoboonsmal x Miss Echo Wood x Doctor Wood)	Cassity Mitchell Tara Gaines	Cassity Mitchell Matt & Tara Gaines	223 217.5	\$3,216 \$2,641
Classic Amateur 64 Entries \$2,500 Added \$27,644 TP	Cherry Chex Dually 04M (Hes A Peptospoonful x Bueno Chex Dually x Dual Pep) Genuine Bet 04M (Bet On Me 498 x Genuine Desire x Genuine Doc)	Jon Winkelried Harrison Perrin	Marvine Ranch Harrison Perrin	226 221	\$4,500 \$3,500

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The crowd, and more importantly the judges, rewarded the horse and rider for their action-packed performance, featuring plenty of working time and good form.

"She was trying real hard and she finished real strong," Thompson said. "She did some pretty hard things for a 3-year-old."

Reserve Co-Champions RPL Ich This and Smooth N Glow, mares ridden by Phil Rapp and Matt Gaines, both of Weatherford, Texas, each recorded 217s to earn \$17,000 payouts. RPL Ich This and Rapp had just won the Futurity Open at the Music City Futurity earlier in September to earn \$18,341. Smooth N Glow and Gaines had only earned \$618 prior to competing at the Brazos Bash, according to NCHA records.

Bobbie Atkinson, Henderson, Texas, owns RPL Ich This (Cat Ichi x Ruby Duece x Smart Little Jerry). Andy Dunning, Plano Texas, is the owner and breeder of Smooth N Glow (Smooth As A Cat x A High Glow x High Brow Hickory).

Ramsey, who operates a company that sells household and personal care products to grocery stores, was too busy to attend the sale where his champion horse was purchased three years ago. "I was at a conference in Philadelphia. Craig ran across his filly and thought she had great confirmation and good, solid size for a long yearling."

Thompson knew the mare's dam, Ramsey said, adding that was an advantage he had over some bidders. "She [Sanjo Marla, a career earner of \$23,151] was a really good horse that really wasn't shown a lot and he [Thompson] thought a lot of her."

Of course, Sanjo Play's father, Playdox, has sired some big cutting winners (Pet Squirrel, \$389,160, Playing At the Mall, \$252,771). Playdox also earned \$57,021 during his cutting career. "He [Thompson] just thought this would be a good fit," Ramsey said. "She [Sanjo Play] certainly has been that."

Ramsey readily admits Sanjo Play and

Thompson's 224 in the Futurity Open finals caught him by surprise. While he was able to watch the second of the pair's three runs at the Brazos Bash on the Internet, he had to wait until he received the finals video by mail.

"I knew she was doing well [after a 221 and a 214 in the early rounds] but I did not expect a 224 in the finals," Ramsey said. "This is a horse that literally paid for herself. Most of us in the horse business don't get to say that too often."

Sanjo Play and Thompson debuted in August by placing sixth in the Futurity Open at the West Texas Futurity in Amarillo, Texas, to earn \$6,063 with a 212 in the finals. They had marked an event-best 218.5 in the first round and they had tied for the best two-go composite. Two weeks before their Brazos Bash victory, the mare and Thompson tuned up by earning a two-judge 148 and winning a Futurity Open title worth \$1,800 at the Michelle Lynn Hulsey Benefit Cutting in Crockett, Texas.

That means a horse purchased for Ramsey just before she turned 2 for \$4,000 earned \$30,863 at her first three events as a 3-year-old cutter.

Ramsey, 55, owner of one other limited-age futurity champion during his first eight years in the cutting business (the one injured right after she won), had no problem pronouncing Sanjo Play "the best horse I've ever had" three shows into her career.

"Not often do you think that you'll have a horse in three futurities, and she'll be in the finals in all three of them," Ramsey said. "She's just been steadily getting a little bit better. Craig knows her a whole lot better than I do. Sometimes, I think its better when I don't even see the horse."

Thompson, 40, the 2006 NCHA Futurity Open Champion rider with 2003 gelding Oh Cay Felix (High Brow Cat x Oh Cay Shorty x Shorty Lena) and a career winner of more than \$1.5 million as a cutting horse rider, described Ramsey as "a great customer." Thompson

Brazos Bash Entries, Payouts Increase During Tough Year

Brazos Bash Show Manager Chris Benedict was pleasantly surprised by an increase in total entries (up 62) and total payout (up \$44,767) from last year's event.

"We were up 10 percent (664 total entries in 2010, compared to 602 in 2009). That's really good news," said Benedict, a cutting horse trainer and rider, stallion station manager and the NCHA's president this year.

"I thought if anything, we might be down 10 percent," Benedict said, adding he's well aware that some other summer and early fall cutting events struggled, in part due to present economic conditions. "Yes, it [increased entries] was a surprise, because of the way things have been going."

One factor in the Brazos Bash's success is that it's location, Silverado on the Brazos in Weatherford, Texas, is close to many of the competitors. At the same time, there were

2010 entrants from Oklahoma and Nashville and "all over," Benedict said.

"We had the same usual crowd," Benedict said. The event's reputation as one of the best-paying "small" futurities is a big draw, along with its somewhat top-heavy payouts. At the Brazos Bash, it pays a lot more to finish as an event's champion than as its reserve champion. Brazos Bash officials, including event founder and show producer Jerry Durant, and original show manager Chubby Turner, have always agreed on that point.

"The bottom line is whether you win it by a half-point or six points, it doesn't matter. If you win it, you win it. The winner should get paid more," Benedict said. "You should get paid to win. That's my thinking. And that was Chubby's thinking when he started it 10 years ago." —MT

Brazos Bash History

2000	372	\$115,000	\$412,296
2001	282	\$110,000	\$327,952
2002	463	\$115,000	\$460,753
2003	477	\$110,000	\$490,054
2004	523	\$125,000	\$550,550
2005	661	\$275,000	\$860,246
2006	700	\$250,000	\$860,919
2007	712	\$285,000	\$862,490
2008	686	\$285,000	\$859,348
2009	602	\$285,000	\$767,915
2010	664	\$285,000	\$812,682
Totals	6,142	\$2,240,000	\$7,265,204



Spina Cat and Scott Johnston won the Futurity Limited Open with a two-go 420.



Dustin Adams marked a 219 on Justa Little Jimmy to win the Futurity Non-Pro and his third title of the season. (Below) Chad Bushaw and Smooth As A Twist finished as Futurity Non-Pro Reserve Champs with a 215. (Right) Susan Marvin and Peekin Merada won the Futurity Limited Non-Pro with a 213.



said Ramsey's support paved the way for what has proven to be a profitable purchase.

"He just kind of lets me make the call of where we need to go and what we need to do," Thompson said. "I just feel blessed and fortunate to have gotten her shown and to earn some money for him and the horse.

Sanjo Play was scheduled to compete at two more limited-age shows, late October's Southern Futurity in Jackson, Miss., and the Waco Texas Futurity, Nov. 2-6 in Waco.

Ramsey and his wife, Vicki, have been married 32 years and they have two adult daughters. One is currently serving in the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic and the other is a senior at Clemson University. The entire family enjoys horseback riding, although Barney Ramsey is the only one that has competed as a cutter.

"I started locally, and we probably have 55 or 60 head of horses on 225 acres," Ramsey said. "The girls have done every kind of horse show possible, but they do not show in cutting."

If Thompson thinks it might work out well, Ramsey, a career earner of \$1,283 as a cutting ride so far, according to **Equi-Stat** records, might ride Sanjo Play in the Amateur division at some point next year. If not, he said he's willing to wait. He does not intend to sell her and plans to eventually utilize her as a broodmare later, Ramsey said. —MT

Futurity Non-Pro

When it comes to horse auctions, Dustin Adams has happy hands, and because he knows that, he didn't go to the 2009 NCHA Futurity sale until he thought it was over.

"I came over at the very end just to see if they were finished selling them, and they ran him [Justa Little Jimmy] through again at the end — he was the only horse I saw. He was out of Justa Swinging Jane, who was Kelle Earnheart's mare that she won the Derby on [in 2000]. I showed

against that mare and really like her. He was pretty cool, and they had him in the price range where even though I didn't know any history on him, I could take a chance, so I did," Adams said.

Less than a year later, Justa Little Jimmy (Smart Little Lena x Justa Swinging Jane x Justa Swinging Peppy) proved worth the gamble when he marked a 219 to claim his third futurity non-pro title of the season. With \$7,000 from the Brazos Bash, plus money from the West Texas and Music City futurities, the gelding earned \$28,520.

Adams is a non-pro cutter who trains his own horses at his Dublin, Texas, home. He has earned approximately \$2.98 million. Even with that success, he feels pressure to win.

"It is a lot of pressure because there's nothing more embarrassing than when your horse isn't any good and your name is tied to it," Adams said. "If someone else trains your horses then you can try to pass the buck and blame it on a trainer, but when it's you there's no way to pass the buck. Sometimes it works and you look good and sometimes it's bad and you look terrible. It is a little nerve wracking at times but I appreciate the challenge and responsibility."

To celebrate his win, Adams went mule deer hunting in Utah.

"I have a great life," Adams said. "I enjoy my horses and I've got an amazing family and an amazing wife and she's got an amazing family."

Reminiscent of the West Texas Futurity, Chad Bushaw and Smooth As A Twist again finished second to Adams and Justa Little Jimmy by marking a 215 to earn \$5,000. That raised the Reserve Champion mare's career earnings to \$9,662.

Bushaw is financial consultant who also trains his own horses and has earned \$2.29 million cutting so far. He purchased Smooth As A Twist as a yearling and is pleased with her small-show success.

"She's just a really nice little mare and I probably should have saved her to show at Fort Worth, but I did not, so she'll be



one to have next year," the Peaster, Texas, rider said.

Susan Marvin finished third on Peekin Merada with a 213 to win \$4,500. They picked up an additional \$1,426 for winning the Futurity Limited Non-Pro title. —*BKC*

Derby Open/ Limited Open

When Curtis Bass first saw the Derby Open and Limited Open champion Proof Of Diamonds, he wasn't that impressed. The newborn colt looked like a little rat.

It wasn't until two years passed that Bass gained an appreciation for the gelding owned by his teenage daughters, Hannah and Jacey.

"Once we started riding him we knew he was a nice colt, but you never know to what level they'll be," Bass said after marking the 225 with the 3-year-old gelding in the Futurity Open finals at the Brazos Bash on Sept. 29, netting the duo \$24,130, plus Futurity Open and Futurity Limited Open titles.

With his snaky neck and low-hanging head, Proof Of Diamonds catches cows with his eyes. Combined with his low-squatting, pretty moves, he's a horse that steals points.

"He's real bendy, real foldy and the thing I like about him is that he stays level doing that," Bass said. "He doesn't have to elevate up; he can get in that ground and stay low through that turn. I think he's a nice, nice horse."

Proof Of Diamonds (Power Proof x Quixotes Diamond x Doc Quixote) is the result of a free stallion service from friend Bob Mayfield, Wills Point, Texas. The horse is out of an old mare Bass' daughters learned to cut on. As with all nice horses, there have been offers to purchase him, but Bass has maintained that he's the girls' horse.

"It was just a 'meant to be deal.' The girls have wanted to keep him and I enjoy seeing them enjoy him. That's what the buzz to me is as a parent," Bass said.

"I want my kids to ride him," said a forward-thinking 14-year-old Hannah.

Her sister, 17-year-old Jacey, said, "I want to keep him just because. I'm probably more proud of dad [than my horse]. It's exciting. Him winning on our horse makes it even better. We weren't going to come [to the Brazos Bash] but we decided to take off school and come and I'm really glad we did."

Proof Of Diamonds hasn't always been a shining star. He was even given an initially uncomplimentary nickname, "Elmer," by Jacey.

"I did that when he was 2. I was trying to catch him in a pen and it took me an hour and half," Jacey said. "I was so



Proof Of Diamonds and Curtis Bass won the Derby Open with a strong 225 effort, and they also claimed top honors in the Derby Limited Open division. (Below) Pounce and Phil Hanson finished as Derby Reserve Champions with a solid 221.



mad I told dad to send him to the glue factory."

According to *Equi-Stat*, a statistical division of Cowboy Publishing Group, Proof Of Diamonds had prior earnings of \$30,292, and Curtis Bass had earned \$169,765.

Known as a handy 2-year-old trainer, the soft-spoken Bass has been wrestling demons in the show pen.

"I went from the 2-year-olds to keeping one and going to the [NCHA] Futurity and I'm still waiting to make the finals there," Bass said. "I've been going and showing more and have just been trying to figure the game out. I always knew what I wanted one to feel like, but learning to show one has been my biggest challenge. It's been hard for me to get that part of this game figured out," Bass said.

Bass has made NCHA Futurity Open semifinals and Limited Open finals at all three events that he's competed at so far.

Asked what part of showing has been

hard, the 43-year-old, Seymour, Texas, trainer said, "Every bit of it – it's the whole two and a half minutes of it. I'm feeling a little more confident about it now and I've known for a while that this is a good horse and it puts a lot of pressure on you to go get him shown and it aggravates you when you don't."

"It's nice to get one [limited-age championship] under my belt. I was co-champ at The Non Pro last year, but far and away this is the best I've done. It feels good to know I can [win a high-profile limited-age title]. You sit here and watch all your peers and it's good to know that you can go compete with them."

It was also a night that his wife, Gina Bass, won't soon forget. As her husband's head loper, she has felt every show ring disappointment and has thought about a different life.

"A trainer's wife and his family probably think that every day, but we're proud of him," Gina Bass said. "It is like a Cinderella story. We just wanted him

[Proof Of Diamonds] for the girls to learn on. You always hope you are going to have a nice colt, but you don't really know what you are going to get."

Bass also claimed second in the Futurity Limited Open and eighth in the Futurity Open with a 218.5 to win a total of \$9,782 on 3-year-old mare Miss Rita Wood, owned by Mike and Laurie Jones, Cushing, Okla. —*BKC*

Derby Open Reserve Champ

Whetherford, Texas, trainer Phil Hanson is packing a pair of punchy mares that have consistently proven there's grit behind their flash.

Drawing the third hole in the second set and showing right after Proof Of Diamonds' 225, Pounce (High Brow Cat x Haidas Little Shorty x Haidas Little Pep) and Hanson marked a 221 that held solid for the rest of the set to claim the Reserve title.

"She's really been doing good. She's been making all the finals," Hanson said of Pounce, a Co-Reserve Champion with Rascal Cats in the Derby Open at the NCHA Summer Spectacular in July. The duo also placed third at the West Texas Futurity in the Derby Open in August.

"I thought she was going to be a pretty good horse," Hanson said. "She's such a strong mare. She's really starting to develop a lot more style. She's just a strong, stout hold a tough cow kind of horse. She just keeps getting better."

Pounce owner Julie Clarke, who owns Clarke Butte Ranch in Bend, Ore., was not on hand to receive the \$18,000 check, but she did watch the run on the live webcast.

Prior to the Brazos Bash, Pounce had earned seven checks totaling \$66,289.

Hanson's other standout mount this year, NCHA Open Horse of the Year contender LHR Smooth Jamie May, has won Derby Open championships this year at the Bonanza, Breeder's Invitational, Summer Spectacular and Fort Klamath Ranch Festival limited-age events. At the Brazos Bash, the mare and Hanson marked a 219.5 for sixth and earned \$10,000 after finishing her run on a disappointing third cow.

Sherry Chamberlin's Lazy H Ranch South, Weatherford, Texas, owns LHR Smooth Jamie May. She had earned more money than any other horse in 2010 – \$234,616 – heading into October.

"Both horses [LHR Smooth Jamie May and Pounce], I know I can count on every time. I know they will come out and try their hardest," said Hanson, who has career earnings of more than \$3 million as a cutting horse rider.

At the conclusion of the Brazos Bash,

LHR Smooth Jamie May (Smooth As A Cat x Just Scarlet x Smart Lil Ricochet) also led the NCHA Open Horse of the Year race by 10 points with Dont Look Twice and Third Cutting tied for second. All three contenders were expected to compete at late October's PCCHA Futurity in Paso Robles, Calif. —BKC

Derby Non-Pro

Wade Rust believes if you like a horse the first time you try it, then you should buy it, but if you don't like it first time, you're probably not going to get along that great with it.

Listening to his own advice, Rust tried more than a dozen horses before early spring's NCHA Super Stakes and his trip to Paul Hansma's place in Weatherford, Texas, where he found Sisters My Brother, the gelding he marked a 221.5 with to win a Brazos Bash Derby Non-Pro title and earn \$18,000.

"I was looking for something that I could come to these deals and know I could win first. Paul kept telling me 'This gelding, this gelding.' I told him I didn't want a gelding, I wanted a mare, so I rode everything and finally I said, 'Hmm, I like that gelding.'" Rust said. "He just fit me. Everything I did he seemed to go, 'OK, I understand.'"

Rust is an equine chiropractor, and one of the first things he did was adjust Sisters My Brother's (CD Olena x Little Baby Sister x Dual Pep) body.

"He doesn't have a great neck; he can be pretty stiff to the left and you can really get one to move their front end a lot cleaner if you get them in line."

Rust went on to explain that a chiropractor can also help the horse in the hind end. "If one's pelvis is out, then they don't want to stop and draw. If you've ever had one that somebody's worked on and done a good job, then it's a night-and-day difference."

Rust, 40, shares a facility with his father, a professional trainer, at Gorman, Texas. He has shown cutters since he was in the fourth grade and he has earned \$772,223, but it has only been the last seven years that he's concentrated on aged events.

As an NCHA Non-Pro World Champion weekend rider, Rust is used to getting through rounds but he loves the "go get 'em" attitude of limited-age finals. Using a late draw to his advantage, Rust set about beating the 217 and 218 that had been posted.

"In the finals you can go for it; you can cut a cow that's a little risky or push your horse out to one's head and really try to make a run, because a lot of times in the go-rounds, you're not trying to have a run — you're trying to mark yourself a safe little 72, and to me that's not fun. The finals are fun because you can let it



Wade Rust and Sisters My Brother won the Derby Non-Pro title with a 221.5. (Below) Kelle Earnheart and Badgers Perscription were Derby Non-Pro Reserve Champs.



Alexa Stent and Purely Badger won the Derby Limited Non-Pro and placed fifth in the Derby Non-Pro finals to earn a combined \$11,493.

hang out.

"To me, this is one of our premier events. If you look at the field that was in our finals, there wasn't a weak link that was in our finals."

Sisters My Brother (CD Olena x

Little Baby Sister x Dual Pep) had earned \$28,018 prior to the Bash.

Working the best she has since winning a 2009 NCHA Futurity Non-Pro title, Badgers Perscription (Reys Dual Badger x An Apple A Day x Doc's

Prescription) marked a 220 from the last draw to take Reserve and add \$15,000 to her career earnings of \$94,454.

"You couldn't have asked her to be better," said rider/owner Kelle Earnheart, Weatherford, Texas. Thanks to that No. 2 finish, Badgers Perscription took the lead in the NCHA Non-Pro Horse of the Year race.

Earnheart has earned \$930,411 during her career as a cutter so far. She is the daughter of Mississippi trainer Pat Earnheart and gives him credit for teaching her how to work under the judge's gaze. She shared his advice,

"Showing is all based on feel. You don't have to select any particular cow because it's all based on feel, so whenever you're down there, keep an open mind and look around at all times because the cow you picked might not always be the best, and even if it is, they always have to be in the right spot," Earnheart said. "I might have a good cow sitting up there, but if she's not in the right spot, I won't cut her. I'll cut something else because it's all to do with presentation, being in the middle of the pen and doing what looks good."

Alexa Stent and Purely Badger (Reys Dual Badger x Purely Bob x Bob Acre Doc) received \$2,993 and \$8,500 for winning the Derby Limited Non-Pro and placing fifth overall with a 217. Stent is from The Woodlands, Texas, and has earned \$211,025 as a cutter so far. Purely Badger had previously earned \$8,000. —BKC

Classic Non-Pro

Glade Knight didn't want to be the opening act, but when he learned he'd drawn up first in the Classic Non-Pro finals there was nothing to do but stick to his routine of watching cows, loping two circles and stepping off.

Two and a half minutes later, Knight and Playin N Fancy Smart had handed down a 224-point gauntlet to the remaining 18 horses.

"It was just terrific! When the horse is doing good it's just beautiful. Your winning rides are your easiest rides, you work hard for the others," said a quietly excited Knight. "I knew it was a very good run and I knew that I had ridden the best I could. You get a feel for the content of the run and when it begins to build and build the cows are almost on automatic. Then the score comes up and it's big like that and it really is exciting."

A slashy second cow challenged the super run by making Playin N Fancy Smart chase it to the outer limits of the pen.

"That's a good mare. When you've got a real good horse it makes those average cows good," said the mare's trainer Kory Pounds, Weatherford, Texas. He



Glade Knight and Playin N Fancy Smart won the Classic/Challenge Non-Pro with a 224. (Right) Cassity Mitchell and Special Blue Bayou finished as Classic/Challenge Non-Pro Reserve Champs and won the Classic/Challenge Limited Non-Pro title with a 223.

got the mare in February of her 3-year-old year. Knight and Slate River Ranch's manager/lead trainer John Mitchell had decided to send some of their top horses to outside trainers.

Playin N Fancy Smart (Smart Little Lena x Playin N Fancy Peppy x Freckles Playboy) placed eighth in the 2007 NCHA Futurity Open, but after producing X-rays that looked like she should hurt, it appeared the 2008 Super Stakes might be her final show in an attempt to win the \$10,000 needed to give her six-digit earnings. Playin N

Fancy Smart had a different idea. With the attitude of a born competitor, she shunned those who said she couldn't and called for the cows.

In 2008, she was a Co-Champion at the NCHA Open Super Stakes and an Open Reserve Champion at the Summer Spectacular and she carried Knight to Non-Pro finals at both shows. In 2009, she made the Classic Open finals at the Summer Spectacular.

According to **Equi-Stat**, a statistical division of Cowboy Publishing Group, Playin N Fancy Smart had earned

\$361,135 before receiving her \$17,000 check from the Bash.

"She loves, loves, loves to cut – always has. And she's a tough old thing, but we haven't shown her that much," Pounds said, adding she's been saved for the big shows.

Toughness that made her a standout in the show pen is also what made Pounds question her ability during training.

"She was hard to train. She just wanted to be too quick and not think a whole lot, just react," Pounds said.

Sound and strong as a 6-year-old,

2010 has seen Playin N Fancy Smart compete more than ever. Knight and the mare placed second in Augusta and third at the NCHA Summer Spectacular in Fort Worth. Pounds earned Reserve titles with her in Abilene, Texas, Augusta, Ga., and Amarillo, Texas, and placed 10th with her at the Summer Spectacular.

Just like the horse, Knight said he loves cutting. "I love the challenge of it and the driving force of it for me is the excitement of having a really good animal and having it all come together. It's just a great, great, great feeling," said the career earner of more than \$530,000 as a cutting horse rider.

When Knight wins, charities win, too. For the past few years, he said everything he has personally won as a cutter went into a pot. When the pot is full, he donates to charity.

Cassity Mitchell rode 5-year-old Special Blue Bayou (Blue Bayou Boon x Bobs Special Kay x Bob Acre Doc), a mare she placed second with in the Limited Non-Pro at July's NCHA Summer Spectacular, to earn Brazos Bash Classic Non-Pro Reserve Champion and Classic Limited Non-Pro titles.

"He was awesome I couldn't have asked him to be any better. From the first go-round to the finals, he just got better and today he was outstanding," Mitchell said of the duo's 223-point run that

Taste of Australia in Texas

If you've ever been to a cutting at Silverado on the Brazos, then you know the concession stand is a little different. There are no nachos, tacos or breakfast burritos. Instead the cultural influences come from a little further south of the border – way south.

The food served at the Brazos Bash is similar to what you'd find at a cutting in Australia. That's thanks to Aussie baker Marilyn Schaeche and her meat pies, sausage rolls and Aussie burgers.

The meat pie is quintessential Aussie cuisine, and Australians give them the same respect Americans give to their favorite hot dogs.

"At home when we got to the football or any sporting deal, you'd have a pie. Some people also eat them for lunch every day, so instead of going to a drive-through burger place you'd go to a bakery and get a pie or a sausage roll," Schaeche said. "A meat pie is similar to a chicken pot pie, but its



Marilyn Schaeche works on an order during the recent Brazos Bash cutting event.

ground beef and gravy, with a pasty case and flaky top. A sausage roll is ground beef that has been made up with herbs spices in to a sausage and then wrapped in puff pastry."

Every person has a preference regarding the correct way to eat a pie. Some put ketchup on top of the pastry lid, while others put the ketchup under it. Some just pick up the pie and eat it, while others eat the lid first or save it for later. The one thing most people agree with is that it's not good manners to eat a pie with a knife and fork.

Another big hit on Marilyn's menu is the Aussie Burger.

"The way I put it together on the bun is that first there's a beef hamburger patty, then a fried egg, bacon, onion, grilled pineapple, lettuce tomato and pickled beets," Schaeche said. "When people see the cooked egg and beets they say, 'What?' But after they try it once, most of them like it and have it again."

Alongside American favorites like peanut butter cookies, Schaeche sells an ANZAC biscuit – similar to an oatmeal cookie. It derives its heritage from the First World War.

"When people were sending care packages to the men in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, they sent them ANZAC biscuits. That's because they have a long shelf life. If the biscuits got hard, the soldiers could still eat them by dipping them in their cup of tea."

A baker by trade, Schaeche spent her early years working in a Dutch bakery. She got her first taste of the United States in 1987 as Australia's cowgirl ambassador to the US and Canada in the rodeo queen program.

Then in 1991, Schaeche and her husband, Shane, moved to Texas to ride cutting horses, working for Mike Mowery and GCH. After the birth of their son, Jed, the couple moved back home, but they still had a hankering for the Texas way of life. Shane, who makes fancy custom ironwork such as chandeliers and ranch entrances, had clients in Texas, so once again they traveled across the ocean. In 2001, Schaeche opened the Aussie Bakery and began selling food at Silverado. She took over the restaurant in 2004.

"We've lived here for so long that we know most of the cutting horse people," Schaeche said. "Everyone always wants to know what Australia's like, so it's been good being able to serve them our food. It's also fun when we see an Australian who hasn't been home in a long time get excited about being able to buy a sausage roll or pie." —**BKC**

earned them a combined \$18,215.

Mitchell, Weatherford, Texas, is the daughter of past NCHA president Bronc Willoughby. She grew up showing cutters, but this is her first aged-event horse.

"I feel like it's a great accomplishment making the finals against all those non-pros who have been showing for years and to be able to win the Limited is more than words can say."

Special Blue Bayou previously earned \$21,936. Mitchell had earned \$50,958. —*BKC*

Classic Open; Classic Amateur

Selena Flynn gave the mare's tail one last swipe with the brush, took a step to the side and waited. Though you couldn't tell by looking at her, this was one of those moments; it was the last time her husband, Eddie, would ride the standout red roan to the herd.

From the grandstand, another couple anticipated the run and 150 seconds later, Abby and Jon Winkelried looked at their horse Cherry Chex Dually with pride. In a tight pen full of tough cows and competing against some of the grittiest show horse in the world, the 6-year-old who had given them cutting highs for three solid years delivered again with a 222 to win the Brazos Bash Classic/Challenge Open, earn \$20,000 and push her approximate lifetime cutting earnings to about a quarter of a million dollars.

"There was some definite nervousness, but we knew she could do it," Jon Winkelried said of an action-packed run that let the mare show she could head a cow and do fancy footwork in the middle. "Eddie is so well matched with her. I think the tougher it gets and the more the cows challenge her, the grittier she gets – it was characteristic of her."

Like firecrackers on New Years Eve, Flynn and Cherry started 2008 with a bang by winning in Abilene. They also earned big checks in Fort Worth and Weatherford, Texas, Oklahoma City, and Las Vegas, and they were Reserve Champions at the Music City Futurity in Franklin, Tenn., to finish the mare's 4-year-old season with \$124,852 earned. In 2009, seven checks, including two for third place at the Bonanza Cutting and NCHA Super Stakes totaled \$72,253.

Competing in her final limited-age event at the Brazos Bash, "Cherry" won with her trainer, Flynn, and carried her owner, Jon Winkelried, to a victory in the Classic/Challenge Amateur with a 220 to earn a combined \$24,500.

"She's been a great mare for us," Flynn said. "It's been just an absolute blast. I'm very proud of her and I want to thank Jon and Abby Winkelried for allowing



Cherry Chex Dually and Eddie Flynn won the Brazos Bash Classic/Challenge Open.



Jon Winkelried and Cherry Chex Dually won the Classic/Challenge Amateur title.

me to show her."

Abby Winkelried said, "It's nice in general for a horse like that to go out on a high note. She stands out, just because you know that she wants it and you can tell she enjoys it."

Held late in the season, the Brazos Bash is one of the last shows for limited-age horses to top off their career earnings. Attesting to the quality of horses in the pen, the Co-Reserve Champions were a pair of 6-year-old mares who each marked 219s and earned \$16,000. Peptos Stylish Miss (Peptoboonsmal x Stylish And Foxie x Docs Stylish Oak) owned by the Slate River Ranch, Weatherford, Texas, and ridden by John Mitchell, had prior earnings of \$276,760. Justa Little Mate (Smart Mate x Little Smart Quixote x Doc Quixote), ridden by Craig Thompson for Lloyd and Linda Morrison, also marked a 219.

"The caliber of the horses and riders in this event was exceptional and to come away with a victory is very special," Flynn said. "Selena [who prepared "Cherry" to show] had her dead on the money, just like she always does." —*BKC*

The Cherry on top

Fast forward four days to the first go-round of the Amateur and Jon Winkelried climbed in the hot seat. Riding a wave of confidence that came from winning the Classic/Challenge Amateur at July's NCHA Summer Spectacular and knowing that "Cherry" had been tuned to a whisper, Winkelried wanted to fan the fire at the mare's last show. After posting a safe 215 to start, it was time to get down to final-round business.

"Coming off the win at the Derby was an amazing boost of confidence for me. You realize that it's doable, that you can handle it," Winkelried said. "So much of sports and competing is confidence. When you're confident that you can do it you relax more so you are more aware of your surroundings and you can naturally be more aggressive."

Winkelried also made the 4-Year-Old Amateur finals, and after analyzing both go-round runs with his resident trainer Roger Wagner, he had a game plan.

"The one thing I was absolutely committed to was that I was going to be much

more deliberate and much smoother on my cuts."

Winkelried is a purposeful guy by nature. He's the type who looks like he's getting something done when he's just sitting there eating a sandwich. Flynn said Winkelried was ready to ride and Cherry Chex Dually was ready to roll as they marked a 220 to win the Classic/Challenge Amateur.

"Jon did a good job showing her and the mare was outstanding in the finals. She's a very physical horse and she's not an easy horse to ride just because of her sheer power. She's one of the strongest horses I've ever rode myself," Flynn said. "If she gets a little bit behind, you're going to have to bear down and hang on because she's going to give it everything she's got to get to where she needs to be. Obviously, the time Jon puts in with Roger on his riding has sure helped him a lot."

"He's a good student," Marvine Ranch resident trainer Roger Wagner said of his boss. "He listens good, tries real hard and works at it."

Previously more used to wrangling on Wall Street than kicking about in cow pens, Winkelried lopes his own horses at home, so that he can spend more time in the saddle.

"I have been focusing a lot more on my riding," the retired Goldman Sachs executive said. "I work with Roger at becoming a better rider and understanding a lot more about what is going on out there; that is everything when you're trying to be successful, understanding all the dynamics of the cut, putting yourself in a decent position to start the run, being much more precise and deliberate with your feet and reading the cow."

After the show, the elation of winning mixed with the sadness of Cherry's retirement.

"It's a shame," Winkelried said. "I've had an absolute blast showing her and having success on her."

Flynn, an earner of \$2.42 million as a cutting horse rider, feels Cherry Chex Dually's move from his ranch to the breeding barn at Winkelried's Marvine Ranch will be hard.

"She's a part of Selena's and my family," Flynn said.

Winkelried appreciates how the trainer and his wife took care of his mare.

"I feel very thankful for Eddie and for Selena for caring for her like they did, and for winning on her," Winkelried said. "Hopefully, she'll pass on her strength and her grittiness."

Cherry Chex Dually (He's a Peptospoonful x Bueno chex Dually x Dual Pep) expects to have a foal via embryo transfer to Spots Hot early in 2011.

In the Classic/Challenge Amateur, the Reserve Champion was youth rider

Harrison Perrin, Houston, Texas. She marked a 221 on her father Harry's horse Genuine Bet (Bet On Me 498 x Genuine Desire x Genuine Doc) and won her \$3,500. Genuine Bet had prior earnings of \$41,350. Perrin had \$18,041 from two years of showing including a third-place finish on Genuine Bet in the same class at spring's Breeder's Invitational.

Derby Amateur

With barely enough time to catch his breath after a Classic/Challenge Amateur victory, Jon Winkelried entered the pen for the Derby Amateur finals.

This time he competed on a horse with just \$950 in prior earnings, but Winkelried felt confident that he and Olenas Color Me (Color Me Smart [PT] x Olenas Dually x Dual Pep) could mark in the 220s.

They marked a 220 to win the title and \$4,000.

"She's progressively been getting better and I'm getting better, so that makes her better," Winkelried said. "The 213.5 [that the duo marked in the first go] was my fault because my cuts were lousy and rough. In the finals, I was very deliberate. I drove my cows out and kept my momentum going. I was much more in control, so the cuts probably earned points instead of losing points."

The bright-eyed, prick-eared, flashy Paint mare also came through. Winkelried bought her for the 2009 NCHA Futurity, but missed the ownership transfer deadline. At early 2010 shows, the pair made mistakes but by midsummer they were finals material.

"It wasn't like she'd had her 2- and 3-year-old years with Roger [Wagner], so she's been changed over a little bit to Roger's style and she's taken that very well," Winkelreid said.

Wagner called the mare "efficient" and said, "She stays in the right spots and doesn't use any more energy than she's got to. She likes it and she tries hard."

Winkelried called her "a pretty cool horse."

"What's really interesting about her is that everywhere that she is, whether she's in her stall, hanging around at home or before she goes in to practice, she's a bit eccentric," the horse owner said. "She's a little touchy, but when you walk in to the cutting pen she literally becomes a different horse. She's completely calm and focused and really wants to cut. That's what she wants to be doing, she really goes for it and is fun to cut on as a result of that."

Winkelried enjoys trail riding with his family on their ranch in Colorado. In recent years, he was attracted to the challenge of cutting.



(Left) Jon Winkelried and Olenas Color Me won the Derby Amateur Championship. (Above) Kathleen Moore and Sarenadual were Derby Amateur Reserve Champions.



(Above) Justa Little Mate and Craig Thompson were Reserve Co-Champions in the Classic Open. (Left) Harrison Perrin and Genuine Bet were Reserve Champions in the Classic Amateur. (Below left) Curtis Bass and Fletch The Cat won the Classic Limited Open Championship. (Below) Peptos Stylish Miss and John Mitchell were Reserve Co-Champions in the Classic Open.



"I love to ride horses and cutting is an extension of that," he said. "In addition to that, cutting is something that's hard to do well. I enjoy the goal-oriented nature of cutting and I appreciate horses, have a lot of respect for them and think they're amazing animals."

The reappearance of Winkelreid's NCHA Derby-winning shirt on finals day at the Brazos Bash raised questions as to whether cowboy superstitions had rubbed off on him.

"No," Winkelried laughed. "When I was coming down to this show, I threw a couple of shirts in. When it came time to go to the finals, I had two shirts there – I had another one and the one I wore in the Derby. I looked at it and I said, 'Well, I wore that in the Derby and that worked, so I'll wear it again.' I'm not overly superstitious – I don't think that will become my permanent finals shirt."

Summer Spectacular Derby Amateur

Champions Kathleen Moore and Sarenadual marked a 218 to finish as Brazos Bash Reserve Champions and earn \$3,000.

"She just always wants to be there for you. She never abuses you and tries her heart out all the time," said Moore, who lives in Madill, Okla. "If I get in a bad position, she'll help me out, and being an amateur, that means a lot. You couldn't ask for a better horse."

Moore has earned \$105,414 as a cutter so far. Sarenadual (Dual Pep x Sarenalena x Smart Little Lena) has earned \$37,163. —BKC

Reach Bridget Kirkwood Cook at bridgetmcook@gmail.com.