

PCCHA 2009 Year-End Champions

Written by Tara Madgwick

Open Champion: Whittle Wed Boon and Cookie Banuelos

This year's prestigious Open Championship was won by the talented Cookie Banuelos riding Whittle Wed Boon. Banuelos resides in Las Vegas, Nevada where he trains for the Rocking K ranch. Over the past ten years he has had much success with lifetime earnings exceeding \$386,000 and numerous championships, including, the 2001 NCHA Futurity LTD Open Champion. This year Banuelos also branched out and tried his hand in the cow horse circuit. He proved that his talent wasn't only limited to cutting by winning the 2009 NRCHA Snaffle Bit LTD Open Futurity.

Whittle Wed Boon, fondly called Richard, is owned by Banuelos' fiancé Katie Gaughn. Richard is by Peptoboonsmal and out of Smart Whittle Wena. He was born and raised at Rocking K ranch. With over \$165,000 in earnings it is apparent that this nine-year-old stallion is the real deal with titles such as 2008 PCCHA Open Reserve Champion and top 10 in NCHA Open standings consecutively in 2008 and 2009.

"He acts like a gelding, takes no loping, takes no work at home, all you have to do is go show him. Plus, he is producing some really good babies," says Banuelos.

This is the first year that Banuelos has really gone down the road the entire year, but it wasn't his original intention.

"I realized I was going to haul about mid-year when I saw that I was close to the top," remembers Banuelos.

While Banuelos enjoyed numerous shows, his favorites were Echeta Ranch and South Point cuttings because they paid the best. Looking back upon the year his memories revolve around, "the good friends, good times, and good help."

To Banuelos, cutting is a family thing, especially because his family are the ones who got him involved. His love for cutting stems from the fact that "it is always challenging." Both his fiancé and he are extremely involved with the cutting horse industry and have continuously been in the winning circle. This year Katie was the PCCHA Reserve Champion in both the Non-Pro and \$15,000 Novice Non-Pro divisions. After this year, it is apparent this pair is bound to spend many more together, in and around the cutting pen.

Open Derby Champions: Jaebars Angel and Cookie Banuelos

When Cookie Banuelos put Jaebars Angel into the trailer all he had in mind was getting her seasoned. Winning the Year-End Derby Championship was just icing on the cake.

Jaebars Angel is currently owned by Katie Gaughn, the soon to be Mrs. Banuelos, and is by Smart Little Jaebars out of Angels Little Gunner. With more than \$25,000 in lifetime earnings and titles such as 2008 NCHA Open Futurity Semifinalist this young mare is already creating a name for herself.

Jaebars Angel was purchased from EL Cid Ranch during the 2006 NCHA Futurity sales for sentimental reasons.

"My brothers and I had trained her mother when we

were at El Cid. She looked just like her momma and she was cheap, so we decided to buy her," says Banuelos.

Ever since then Banuelos has enjoyed working with her, "the best thing about her is that she is just a little cow horse. Plus, she is really easy to train," explains Banuelos.

After this year, the goal of getting Jaebars Angel seasoned has been achieved, and she is well on her way to having a championship filled career.

Open Classic/Challenge Champions: Wildcats and Rock Hedlund

Trainer Rock Hedlund rode the talented Wildcats owned by John Echeverria to the Classic/Challenge championship this year. The five year old gelding Wildcats, by Highbrow Cat and out of Starlights Liz, is bred to be a winner, and he has been just that throughout his career. As a full brother to Frank and Bonnie Martin's great mare Kittens, everyone had high expectations, and Wildcats has met all of them.

Wildcats' current lifetime earning are over \$88,000 and he has numerous titles such as PCCHA Derby Reserve Champion, and Breeders Invitational 5/6 Open Reserve Champion. Russ Miller first trained him, and he entered Hedlund's barn in August of 2008. Hedlund and Wildcats have become a team to be reckoned with as they have made all but one of the finals they entered.

Due to Hedlund's encouragement Echeverria bought Wildcats in August of 2008 from Jerry Cronquist.

"He was trained by Russ Miller, who also trained Faith N Risk, who has made me look better than I am," Echeverria says. "I knew Rock and I might be able to get along with him. Jerry (Cronquist), who had showed Wildcats, had injured his back and decided to sell most of his horses. I had been away from cutting for several months, but had told Rock to look for an older horse. When Rock called me and told me Wildcats was for sale, I quite frankly had not seen or heard of him...Rock simply said, 'When you get to the PCCHA office look at his Derby run.' I got to the PCCHA office about fifteen minutes later, and asked Cathy (Cook) to pull out his Derby run. Before the run was over, and in less than two and a half minutes, I called Rock back and told him to buy the horse."

This quick purchase has proven to be a smart one. Both Hedlund and Echeverria enjoy Wildcats and though they didn't set out to win this championship they are excited they did.

"I did not actually set out to haul for the PCCHA award, I was merely showing him to prepare him for the bigger aged events. I would like to personally thank John and Cathy Echeverria for the opportunity to train and show such a great horse. He is awesome," says Hedlund.

Non-Pro Champion: Billy Burton

Non-Pro Champion, Billy Burton, started off the year with the idea to just have fun, but hauling quickly took on a life of it's own, earning Burton the coveted Non-Pro Championship.

"We had a really great spring, won a lot of money in Las Vegas. I found myself in the lead for the PCCHA Non-Pro and thought how cool it would be to win, and it all fell into place. Plus, Gordon Hayes really put the pressure on me to win the belt buckle," recalls Burton.

Two special horses, Captain Scrumpy and Telerada,

helped Burton achieve his win. With lifetime earning over \$165,000, Captain Scrumpy was Burton's main ride of the year. The special gelding has won numerous championships for both Burton, and his wife, Kathy. Including, a World Championship in the \$20,000 Non-Pro, and 3rd place in the world in both the \$2,000 limit and \$10,000 Novice Non-Pro division. When Burton purchased him as a three year-old most people thought he was out of his mind.

"I felt sorry for him because he had a broken leg. Watching Ronny Ralls work him during the sale in the round pen he had so much expression on a cow that I simply couldn't pass him up. Everybody sitting around me told me that I was crazy. I went there to buy his full sister, but I just couldn't pass him up. Watching those ears and all that expression, I had to buy him, broken leg and all," says Burton.

With all the success both Burton and his wife have had on Scrumpy, they are living proof that sometimes taking a risk is worth it. "He keeps diesel in the truck, hay in the shed, money in the coffers, and lots of entertainment. He's family, he's just as nutty as I am," says Burton.

There is no end in sight for this die-hard cutter, you can guarantee that Scrumpy and he will be in the Non-Pro draw at the next show. "I need to join a twelve step program to get me out of cutting, I'm so addicted," jokes Burton.

His favorite quote by Ian Tyson explains it all for him, "Cutting is a disease for which there is no cure."

Non-Pro Derby Champion: Smart Michaelangelo and Elizabeth Booth

Elizabeth Booth took a chance when purchasing Smart Michaelangelo, aka Mikey, sight unseen from the snaffle bit sale in 2006. As a futurity horse Mikey made the finals at numerous aged events, and this year Booth has racked up titles, such as PCCHA Limited Non-Pro Co-Reserve Derby Champion, AZCHA Reserve Non-Pro Derby Champion, and NCHA Area 2 Non-Pro Derby Champion.

With every member of the Booth family actively showing in the cutting horse arena, and the numerous horses they own it is no surprise that they end up sharing and trading horses often.

"In 2009, we had a few aged event horses that needed to be shown. We swap horses often to see who gets along best with a horse, and in April when we brought Mikey home from training, it was decided that I would be the one to continue showing him during his four year old year. With a lot of help from David (her oldest son), I was able to accomplish that," says Booth.

Hauling down the road is no new adventure for Booth as this is her third year hauling, but this year was special for her.

"2009 hauling was exciting, since it was this time being shared with my Roger, I love to see him smile after successfully laying down an awesome run," says Booth. "I met some new people and made some great friends. My family was a team, we always pulled the day together and helped each other out, because when you haul it's all about survival. You think you've experienced it all after you've hauled, but it is never the same twice."

With over \$75,000 in lifetime earnings Booth has