

Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Presents their 2008 Award Winners . . .

Written by Megan Madgwick

Open Champions: Tachitas Cat and Gavin Jordan

This is not Gavin Jordan's first trip to the winner's circle.

The Australian trainer with over a million dollars in earnings under his belt has more than his fair share of accomplishments. Over the past several years, Jordan has managed to be not only the NCHA \$3k Novice World Champion, Reserve World Champion and World Show Champion, but was also able to score a PCCHA Derby Championship and six separate PCCHA Year-End Champion titles.

Tachitas Cat, a High Brow Cat gelding with over \$120k in earnings to boast, is no stranger to winning either. With the guidance of Jordan, Tachitas Cat is the 2006 PCCHA \$3k Year-End Novice Champion and NCHA \$3k Novice World Champion in past years. When they teamed up again this year, it was only to continue such a record of success.

"Tachita is one of my favorite horses. He is very strong with a big stop," said Jordan. "He is a lot of fun to ride, and always tries hard which is why he won both the Open and \$50k Amateur this year."

Starting out this year, Jordan had no plans to haul the gelding simply known as Tachita. "I started the year out hauling but Tachita was not my Open horse, he was for Margot [Hazzell] to show in the \$50k Amateur, so I did not start on him 'till April," said Jordan. After clinching the PCCHA Open with over \$18k in earnings, there is no doubt the pair are glad they teamed up once more.

"The thing I like about him the best is his heart; he has had a lot of runs and just keeps cutting at a high level. I have been very lucky to have him in my barn," he said.

Carrying two separate riders to two separate Championships is no easy feat, let

alone when the decision to haul is made late in the game.

"It is amazing, since we only started showing him in the Open 'to keep him right' for me," said owner Margot Hazzell. "Then he started doing well in the Open, and since it was working for me in the \$50k Amateur, we kept showing him in two classes. He is a trooper."

With several clients scoring their own year-end titles and with another PCCHA \$3k Novice Championship on Suzy Silverberg's Little Dirty Dancer, Jordan has managed to have yet another banner year for himself. "The year was great; all my people did well and I made some good friends on the road," commented Jordan.

Non-Pro Champion: Suzy Silverberg

This year's Non-Pro Champion, Suzy Silverberg, is no rookie when it comes to the cutting pen. In fact, Silverberg grew up around the sport, and was hooked at a young age.

"Ginger Turner and I grew up together and Chubby [Turner] found my first cutting horse for me which was Brigapep. Starting with a horse like that will get you hooked real fast," said Silverberg.

With over a \$160k in earnings, a NCHA and PCCHA Year-End \$50k Amateur Championship and several other championship titles, one could easily say that Silverberg has made quite a name for herself in the industry. Such a high level of success was made with the help of several great horses, such as her first horse Brigapep, and her main mount this year, High Style Travalin.

"Owning a horse like High Style Travalin makes it hard for every other horse in my barn. When you start with one like her you just look at the others and say 'Why are you so difficult?' High Style just makes it all seem so easy," she said.

The mare, sired by Travalena, has carved out over \$200k earnings for herself,

starting with an illustrious career as a Limited-Aged-Event horse and moving into her current role as weekend horse. The mare's momentum was Silverberg's initial cause for starting her trailer race in the first place.

"I never really thought of this year as a hauling year. My plan was to get High Style's earnings over \$200k. It had been a goal of mine for a long time," she said.

However, when the mare came down with a bone bruise in March, Silverberg began to swap between her and her Dual Pep mare, Little Dirty Dancer, a.k.a. Dede.

"Most horses can't even be shown when they have a bone bruise like her's. When she was too sore to show I would jump on Dede and show her until High Style was back," recalled Silverberg. "What she really needed was about four months off but she worked through it and she finished the year as good as she was at the beginning of the year."

Between the two mares, Silverberg was able to cannon herself to the top of the competition. However, the year was more than simply winning runs and checks for Silverberg.

"You start to feel like an extended family by the time the year is over. There are always tricks being played on one another or funny things happen along the way that make it entertaining. I can't tell you any of them though. That's the haulers code."

\$50,000 Amateur Champion: Margot Hazzell

Not every horse is made of the right mettle to carry a rider to a year-end championship. Which is why it takes an extraordinary horse to carry two riders to two separate year-end titles in the same year. Under the talented guidance of Gavin Jordan and this year's \$50k Champion Margot Hazzell, Tachitas Cat was able to do just that.

"He is an awesome horse, so consistent

run after run. It took a few months for me to learn how to get him shown, but once we got it together he was so much fun!" commented Hazzell.

Hazzell herself is no mere passenger, however, carrying around \$115k in earnings and having scored the \$50k 7-Up Championship at the Paso Robles Derby Classic/Challenge in 2007.

With such accomplishments under her belt, Hazzell set her sights on her next goal, purchasing the horse specifically for that reason.

"I knew I wanted to haul in the \$50k Amateur and Tachitas Cat already being World Champion in an Open class made him really competitive," said Hazzell.

With the right horse, Hazzell aimed for the 2008 year-end championship. "I decided I would haul in summer 2007, and discussed it a lot with Gavin since he knew first hand what was involved," she said. "I wanted to ride and show better and knew the only way to improve was a lot of practice in the real show situation. There is no substitute for riding to herd time after time."

Hazzell wasn't disappointed. Reaching her goal by almost doubling her closest competitor's final earnings, Hazzell and Tachitas Cat finished the year admirably.

"The year was great; everything everyone tells you about hauling is true. Before you do haul, it is hard to understand what they mean, but once you have a few months of show after show you understand the dedication it takes, what slumps feel like, and you become much more resilient," Hazzell emphasized.

\$20,000 Non-Pro Champion: Kathy Parker-Burton

It was a team effort for Kathy Parker-Burton and her husband, Billy Burton's, Doc's Hickory gelding, Captain Scrumpy, to seize the \$20k Non-Pro title this year. Having started cutting only in 2005, Parker-Burton came into the year with a PCCHA Reserve-Champion Year-End title in the \$2k Limited Rider from 2006.

She was in good hands with her partner, Scrumpy, who carried her husband Billy to four Aged Event Championships, two Aged-Event Reserve-Championships and handfuls of weekend titles. Having been with her from the beginning, Scrumpy not only helped her steal this title, but taught her to cut as well.

"I can't tell you how many times I'd

Photos by Ted Petit - Video West



Open Champion Tachitas Cat



Non Pro Champion Suzy Silverberg



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