

NRHA

AUGUST 2013

THE OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL REINING
HORSE ASSOCIATION
www.nrha.com



2013 DERBY OPEN CHAMPIONS

**Jordan Larson
& HF Mobster**

NRHA Open Derby

A MOBSTER, A MODEL AND A WHIZ.
HEAT UP THE 2013 NRHA DERBY
COMPETITION IN OKLAHOMA CITY.



BY GAVIN EHRINGER

IN MANY WAYS, THE 2013 NRHA DERBY LEVEL (L) 4 OPEN FINALS were shaping up a lot like the conclusion of the 2012 NRHA Futurity just seven months earlier.

Casey Deary of Weatherford, Texas, paired with the Arcese Quarter Horses USA-owned Paint mare Americasnext-gunmodel (Gunner x Cee Dun It Do It), grabbed a decisive

lead in the closing half of the Open finals performance. The pair marked a 227.5—a point and a half more than any previous score in the finals—and looked like a cinch to seize Derby victory. The crowd enthusiastically backed the team, raising a storm of applause that rivaled thunder when the charismatic pair ended their run and the score was posted. Just as they'd



Jordan Larson and HF Mobster win the 2013 NRHA Derby Level 4 Open division.

WALTENBERG

Waltenberg



Jordan Larson and
HF Mobster

Walt
WALTENBERG

been at the 2012 NRHA Futurity, Deary was mobbed in the warm-up arena by well-wishers offering their congratulations. But as baseball sage Yogi Berra said, "It ain't over 'til it's over." NRHA Million Dollar Rider Jordan Larson, winner of the

2010 NRHA Futurity, and Jason Vanlandingham, whose recent performances at the 2011 and 2012 futurities marked him as a rising star in the sport of Reining, simply weren't willing to concede defeat.

DAWN BAKSTROM



Heritage Ranch's Andy Fishburn with Taylor Larson and Talmadge Smedley



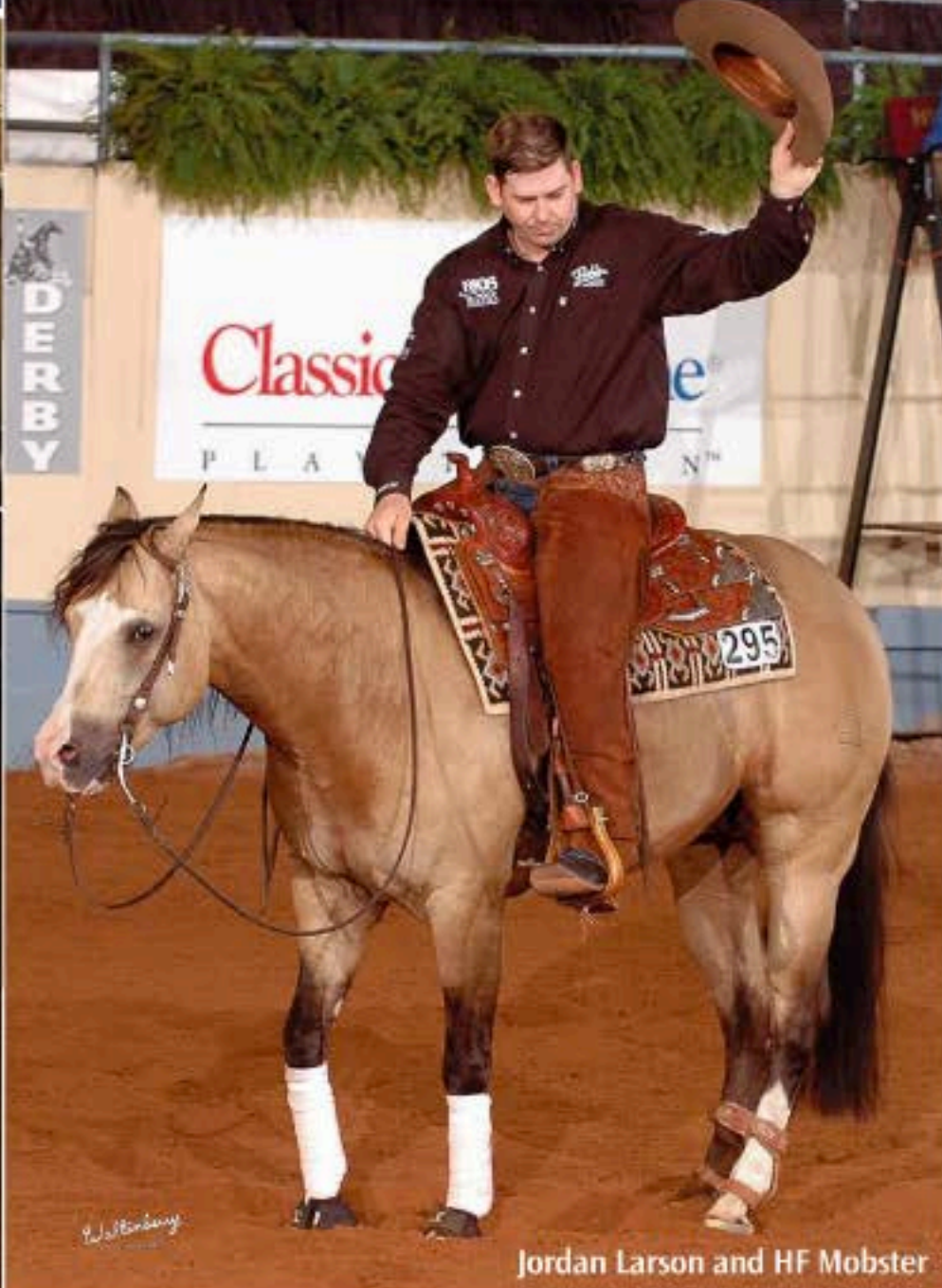
Stiff competitors in the show pen congratulate each other for their wins. L-R: Jason Vanlandingham, Jordan Larson with his son Cash and Franco Bertolani.

DAWN BAKSTROM

DAWN BAKSTROM



Jordan Larson and his son Cash



Jordan Larson and HF Mobster

WALT ENBERRY

Riding the third of three horses he'd qualified for the finals, Larson, an NRHA Professional, put on a show aboard the stallion HF Mobster (Gunner x Dun Its Black Gold), a 5-year-old paternal half-brother to Americasnextgunmodel, the 2012 NRHA Futurity Open Champion. It was a breathtaking performance by "Mobster," who left everything he had in the arena, including a shoe he threw in the final run-down. As the buckskin horse limped out of the arena, Larson's elation at capturing the lead with a 228.5 score was tempered by concern for the welfare of his mount.

"I thought I'd go out and get the biggest check I could. Casey had a great ride. I am just fortunate to have had this run," he said, begging off further interview questions as he hastened to find a veterinarian. (As luck would have it, the injury would prove neither grave nor lasting). HF Mobster's take for the day was \$60,000, which included a \$3,000 payment to nominator Rhodes River Ranch.

Vanlandingham, riding next to last, had an equally inspired performance on A Smokin Whiz (Topsail Whiz x PF Nu Miss Royal Rsk), earning 228 points and the reserve championship for owner Sunrise Ranch LLC. The reserve spot added \$47,468 to the horse's prior NRHA Lifetime Earnings of \$83,119. The exceptional finish for the trainer from Whitesboro, Texas, and the 5-year-old stallion came as no surprise; in the preliminary qualifying round, the pair had scored 222.5 to tie for the lead, making them a favorite going into Saturday's finals.

Some may recall that A Smokin Whiz is the same horse that carried Vanlandingham to a dramatic ride-off victory in the 2011 NRHA Futurity L 3 Open division. The last two years have been something of a Cinderella story for the horse,

owned by Sunrise Ranch LLC (John Walker). Born to a ranch mare, A Smokin Whiz was put up for sale twice in advance of the 2011 NRHA Futurity, but both times ended up being withdrawn due to illness. Vanlandingham says he had to plead and



L 4 Open Reserve Champion
Jason Vanlandingham and
A Smokin Whiz

WALTENBERRY



Jason Vanlandingham and
A Smokin Whiz celebrate
his score with his family.

DAWN BAXSTROM

2013 NRHA DERBY OPEN SIRE & DAM AWARDS



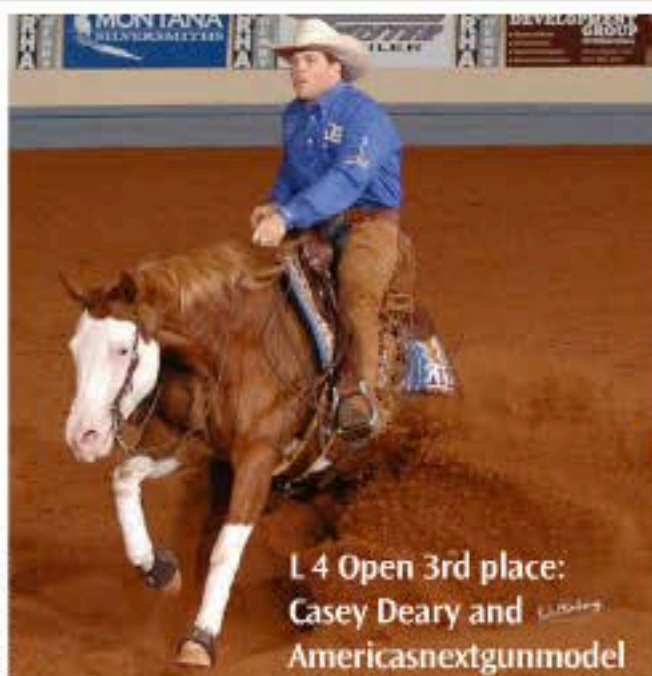
LEVEL 4 OPEN

SIRE	OWNER	AWARD
1. Gunner	McQuay Stables	\$1,500
2. Gunner	McQuay Stables	\$1,000
3. Wimpys Little Step	Xtra Quarter Horses LLC	\$500

LEVEL 3 OPEN

SIRE	OWNER	AWARD
1. Wimpys Little Step	Xtra Quarter Horses LLC	\$1,500
2. Wimpys Little Step	Xtra Quarter Horses LLC	\$1,000
3. Banjo Whiz	Nedpoint Quarter Horses Inc	\$500

The first-place winners also received an NRHA Sire & Dam trophy.



L 4 Open 3rd place:
Casey Deary and
Americasnextgunmodel



L 4 Open 5th place:
Andrea Fappani and
SG Frozen Enterprize

beg for the owners to keep the horse; who, he said, generally sell off their best horses rather than gamble on their future at the big events such as the NRHA Futurity, the NRHA Derby and the NRBC. But, as a result of the illnesses and Vanlandingham's urging, they left the stallion in the trainer's program. And boy are they glad they did.

"John [Walker] first saw this horse compete at the 2011 NRHA Futurity, when I won the ride off. And he got so excited; he's been to every finals since. He's just thrilled by this horse!" said the trainer. "It's been a pretty cool deal, as far as the horse business goes."

With more than a half-million dollars in NRHA Lifetime

Earnings, Vanlandingham is hopeful that this reserve Derby title will help him achieve richly-deserved recognition as one of the sport's elite trainers—and perhaps fill his barn with more top futurity and derby contenders.

"Everybody tells me after these big finishes that I am going to get a bunch of interest from owners, but it hasn't happened yet. In fact, you can tell people I am sure looking for more three years olds," he said, with a good-natured laugh.

Just as the reserve by A Smokin Whiz marked another career highlight for Sunrise Ranch, Jordan Larson's win aboard Mobster was a sweet victory for Heritage Ranch of Ogden, Utah. Owner Andy Fishburn runs the all-around Quarter Horse training facility and often employs Larson to show his reining horses. It was Larson who recommended that Fishburn add "Mobster" to the Heritage Ranch string.

"I've been with Jordan for about nine years, and I trust him. When he called me with the chance to buy this horse, I knew it was the right decision. Success (Mobster's) is all due to Jordan and his wife—I just pay the bills!" said Fishburn.

Larson's association with the buckskin dates back several turns of the calendar. HF Mobster was previously known as CFR Joyero Gunner and was owned by Claudio Ramón, whose family owns Rancho El Fortín. Prior to the 2011 NRHA Futurity, Larson got a call from Claudio urging him to come down to his ranch home in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, Mexico, to take a look at a pair of NRHA Futurity prospects. Larson was skeptical that there were two horses in Mexico capable of earning Futurity finals' berths. Moreover, he had already picked three horses for the Futurity that he felt he could show. But he made

the trip anyway ... and promptly put the two horses in his string. Joyero (now Mobster), would go on to become an NRHA Futurity finalist in 2011, and of course, the Derby winner two years later.

The other horse Larson looked at that day was CFR Centenario Wimpy (Wimpys Little Step x Miss Hollywood Whiz). "Rio," as he is known, also became a Futurity finalist under Larson at the 2011 NRHA Futurity, marking a 221.5. The following summer, he



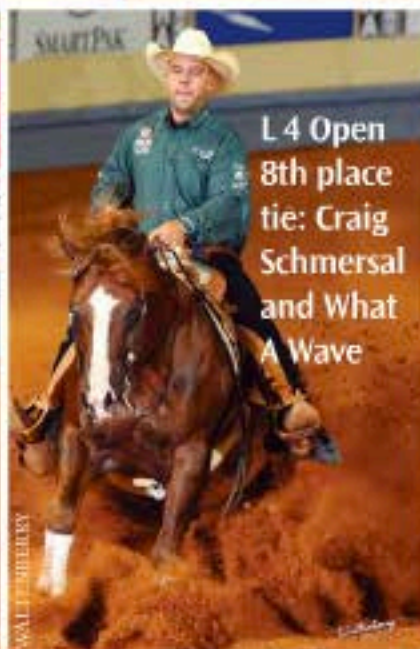
L 4 Open 6th place tie:
Jordan Larson and
Wimpys Littlecolonel



L 4 Open 6th place tie:
Tom McCutcheon and
Dun Git A Nicadual



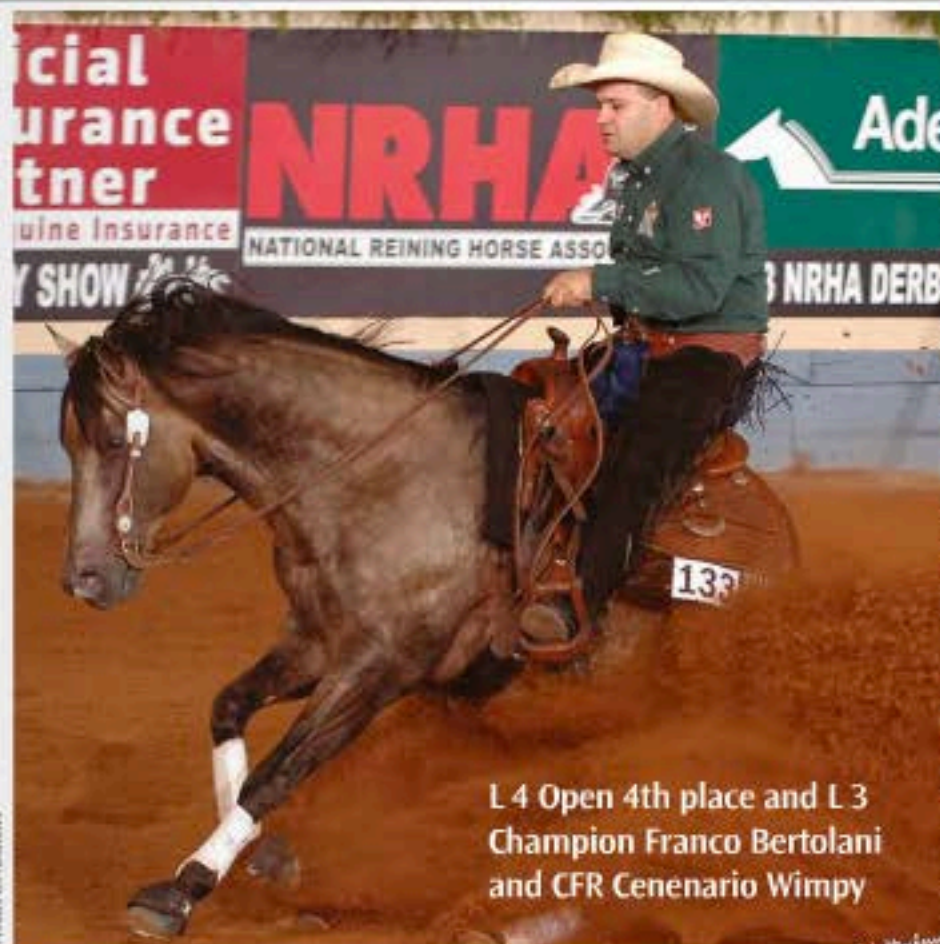
L 4 Open 8th place tie:
Jason Vanlandingham
and Wimpys High Bid



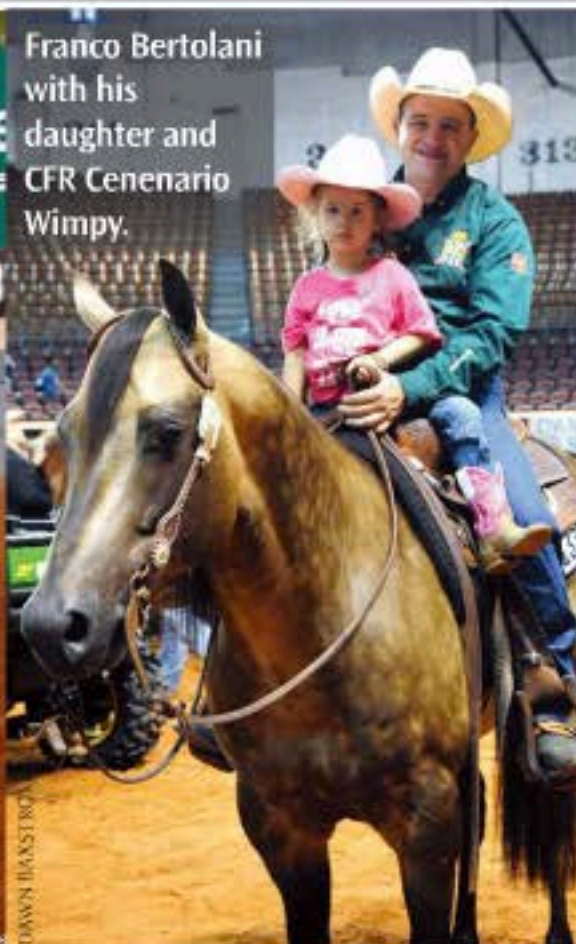
L 4 Open
8th place
tie: Craig
Schmersal
and What
A Wave



L 4 Open 8th
place tie:
Martin
Muehlstaetter
and Blue
Collar Tag



L 4 Open 4th place and L 3 Champion Franco Bertolani and CFR Cenenario Wimpy



Franco Bertolani with his daughter and CFR Cenenario Wimpy.

was a finalist at the 2012 NRHA Derby, again with Larson at the reins. But just after that performance, Ramòn sold the horse to its current owner, Domenico Lobuto. After a stay with Shawn Florida, the horse fell under the direction of Brazilian-born trainer Franco Bertolani, who had less than four months to prepare Rio for the 2013 Derby.

"I rode him for 15 or 20 days, and then took him to the Cactus Classic in Arizona, where we won the NRHA L 3 Open reserve trophy. He was really good, you know, but a lot different than what I am used to riding," Bertolani said. Despite the strong early finish in Arizona, Bertolani, who honed his skills while competing in Europe these past eight years, felt that the pair didn't really come together until the 2013 NRHA Derby.

With surging confidence in his mount, Bertolani took the early lead in Saturday's afternoon performance with a score of 226 points. Although that score was later bested by Deary, Larson and Vanlandingham, it still represented victory for Bertolani, who now plies his trade as a trainer in Aubrey, Texas. The score held up not only for fourth place in the Open Level 4 finals, it was also high enough for first place in the Level 3 Open competition. All told, the horse and rider combined for a \$46,807 payoff. Not bad for a Derby first-timer.

Bertolani, however, is hardly a newcomer to fierce competition, having gone the rounds at both the NRHA European Derby and Futurity during his years spent in Italy.

"I am 40 years old. I have shown all over the world, so it is not like I am new to the game," said Bertolani, laughing. "It just goes to show that, if you can do well in Italy, you can do it anywhere in the world."

As Bertolani and Larson gathered accolades in the arena, Claudio Ramòn looked on with an inscrutable face. He was on-hand to watch one of his family's horses, REF Black Mamba, compete in the finals. Having seen both of the horses he'd sold do exceptionally well in the Derby, one had to wonder

if Ramòn had any regrets at selling HF Mobster, the winner, and fourth-place CFR Centenario Wimpy.

"I could say I have regrets, but really I don't," he said. "I was glad to see both do well for their owners. And I sold those horses for a lot of money!"

Likewise, Casey Deary couldn't feel bad about the day's outcome, despite watching his lead slip to third place. In fact, he felt pretty darn good about Americasnextgunmodel, who earned \$35,237.

Rounding out fifth place in the L 4 Open divi-

sion was NRHA Three Million Dollar Rider Andrea Fappani and the horse SG Frozen Enterprize (Frozen Sailor x RS Rose SJ) owned by Silver Spurs Equine.

Fappani, second in NRHA Rider Lifetime Earnings behind Shawn Florida, marked 225.5 points on the 5-year-old stallion, and earning \$18,929.

Level 3 Open

In the L 3 Open, the reserve champion title went to Brazilian Thiago Boechat, an NRHA Professional, and Wimpyneedsacocktail (Wimpys Little Step x Smart Lassie Chick), owned by Xtra Quarter Horses LLC of Purcell, Oklahoma. The pair earned 223 points to capture reserve behind Boechat's fellow countryman, Bertolani. The \$19,742 payday (plus \$10,156



L 4 Open 8th place tie and L 3 Reserve Champion: Thiago Boechat and Wimpyneedsacocktail



L 2 Open Champion and
Prime Time Open
Co-Champion: Ann Salmon
and Dunit A Lil Ruf



Prime Time Open
Co-Champion: Carol Metcalf
and Whattadualpep

paid for their top-10 finish in the L 4 competition) pushed the horse's NRHA Lifetime Earnings to more than \$258,000.

Third place in the division went to NRHA Professional Patrice St-Onge, Gainesville, Texas, and the horse Custom Banjo (Banjo Whiz x Custom Bobbie) owned by Melanie Schuckers. The duo combined for 222.5 points. According to the Canadian-born trainer, the 5-year-old stallion was purchased by Schuckers in October 2012. St-Onge remarked that the NRHA Derby was only the horse's fourth outing in the competitive arena.

"I'm just very happy to have made the finals on this horse and gotten a piece of it," said St-Onge. That piece amounted to \$16,565, plus \$7,644 more for their 12th-place finish in the L 4 Open. Also eligible for the L 2 finals, "Banjo" and St-Onge finished second in that division, piling on another



Level 1 Open
Champions: Mirjam
Giraudini-Stillo and
Spin N Wimp



L 2 Open Reserve
Champion: Patrice St-Onge
and Custom Banjo



L 1 Open Reserve Champion:
Trapper Lowndes and
Smokin Squirt Gun



The 2013 NRHA Derby Levels 1-4 Open Champions.

DAWN BIANSTROM

\$8,693. The pair's combined sum of \$32,902 in Derby winnings in a single afternoon was more than four times the horse's lifetime earnings going into the day's event.

Level 2 Open

Top honors in the L 2 Open finals went to NRHA Professional Ann Salmon, Tioga, Texas, on her horse Dunit A Lil Ruf (Lil Ruf Peppy x A Bueno Poco Dunit). Her 223-point ride earned \$10,966 and a bit of redemption for the trainer. Riding in last year's Derby finals, Salmon rode a nearly flawless pattern until the final maneuver, when the mare backed out of the pattern to earn a no-score. It left a bitter taste.

"She was really good last year. I just added a maneuver that wasn't in the pattern. It is nice to know I came back to the same pen, the same situation, and got it right," she said.

In addition to winning the L 2 championship, Salmon and her Dunit A Lil Ruf shared the Prime Time Open win with friend and co-competitor Carol Metcalf of Pilot Point, Texas. Metcalf and Mark Miers' Whattadualpep (Mister Dual Pep x Whattaroyalprincess) marked a 220.5 in the preliminary qualifying round to tie Salmon for the win. The co-champions earned \$1,890 each.

"I am happy I had a nice run. I can say that my customer was thrilled!" said Metcalf.

Level 1 Open

Victory in the L 1 Open went to Italian Mirjam Giraudini-Stillo and Spin N Wimp (Wimpys Little Step x Spinning Beauty). The 2007 gelding is owned by the Mirjam's husband, Andrea Stillo. Both the rider and the horse were competing for the first time in the NRHA Derby. Just a month prior to the competition, they'd won the L 3 Open division in the NRHA European Derby. They left Rome, Italy, a week later to

take up residence in Tioga, Texas. Mirjam's plan is to expand her client list while working in the United States.

"I still have yet to realize what's happened," said Mirjam, who admits that the hot, humid conditions of Oklahoma in June sapped both her energy and that of her horse. Not that you could see it in the air-conditioned arena, where the pair combined for 219.5 points—the identical score they'd earned in the preliminary qualifying round. Prior to his trip to America, the gelding had earned wins at the Italian Reining Horse Association Futurity for 4-year-olds, as well as the German Breeder's Futurity.

"Buying this horse is probably the best thing we've ever done in the horse business," said Andrea Stillo.

All told, the New World newcomers banked \$13,338 for the win, plus a trailer full of gifts from event sponsors and NRHA Corporate Partners. ♦

NRHA Derby Show Awards

Thanks to the support of NRHA Corporate Partners and Event Sponsors, NRHA is proud to give out an array of awards at the NRHA Derby Show.

\$2,000 in Pard's Western Shop Gift Cards

10 Classic Equine Bell Boots

10 Classic Equine EZ-Wraps

5 Classic Equine Legacy Boots

5 Classic Equine Skid Boots

2 Classic Equine Pads

5-25# Platinum Performance CJ

5-9.4# Assure Guard

5-3.5# Assure Guard

5 Steadfast Canine

4 Pairs of Rios of Mercedes

1 Pair of Anderson Bean Boots

50 bags of Purina Feed (A ton and a quarter of feed)

\$1,000 in SmartPak Gift Cards

5 Montana Silversmiths Buckles

4 Bob's Custom Saddles

\$15,000 in Twister Trailer Certificates

New West Headstalls

2 Shorty's Caboy Hattery Hats