

NRCHA HONORS NEWEST MILLIONAIRES

Jay McLaughlin is formally recognized as a Million Dollar Rider, while WR This Cats Smart and Gallo Del Cielo join the Million Dollar Sire ranks.

By Stephanie Duquette

The Snaffle Bit Futurity is the annual showcase for the reined cow horse industry's best and brightest, and a fitting place to shine the spotlight on the latest members of the National Reined Cow Horse Association Million Dollar Club.

During a special ceremony before the Snaffle Bit Futurity Open Finals on Saturday, October 1, the newest NRCHA Millionaires were recognized before a packed house at the Reno Livestock Events Center and awarded a special Carol Owens bronze trophy in honor of their seven-figure earnings milestone.

JAY MCLAUGHLIN

Born in 1974, into a Missouri family where horses were a primary focus, McLaughlin was competitive from the beginning. His father, Mike, was a ver-



Jay McLaughlin receives the special Million Dollar Rider bronze trophy, presented by NRCHA Executive Director Jay Winborn, and the bronze artist, Carol Owens.

satile professional horse trainer who prepared Quarter Horses for many disciplines, including reining, pleasure, halter, Western riding, horsemanship, trail, barrels, poles, and more. His mother, Julann,

built a successful 4-H program from the ground up, and operated it for decades. McLaughlin credits her for instilling his strong foundation as a rider and competitor.

PRIMO MORALES

"Her rule for me was, I had to show in the horsemanship, the showmanship, all of that stuff, before I could do any of the reining or the barrels or the poles or any of the other fun classes. I think that has a lot to do with my horsemanship skills. It was fun for me because I'm very competitive, so I excelled at those too. I wanted to win. It's hard for anybody to be second, but I really took it hard."

McLaughlin's competitive nature served him well as he grew up and followed in his father's footsteps, starting his professional horse training career at age 18. His initial focus on reining soon turned to the adrenalin-fueled challenge of reined cow horse.

"The cow horse is the most difficult discipline that I've ever been associated with. You can only ride so many cow horses a day. You have to learn how to train those horses in three events, or two events, depending on the age of the horse, not burn them out, and strive to have something that will go mark a 75 in every event," he said.

According to NRCHA records, McLaughlin earned his first reined cow horse paycheck in 1999. In 2004, he made his debut at the Snaffle Bit Futurity, enjoying success that few first-timers can claim, qualifying for the Open and Intermediate Open Futurity Finals on SS Rosa (Sailing Smart x Snowmans Rose x Snowman Doc), owned by Julie Gibbons.

"I can still remember my scores that got me into the Open finals the first year I ever went. I marked a 209 in the herd, a 217.5 in the rein work, and a 219 down the fence. You can't do that any more. There's no way you could make the Open finals marking a 209 now. That's how much I think it's changed. It wasn't very long ago, and it's that much more competitive," McLaughlin said.

He credits his wife, Wendy, for her stalwart support during his million-dol-

lar journey, with its inevitable ups and downs.

"She's put up with a lot of headaches, and the times we didn't have any money, and living in a trailer, like every horse trainer has done once or twice, or still is, in their life. She's pushed it all the way. She's always there whooping and hollering, whether I suck or I don't. That's a pretty big deal. She sure has backed me 190 percent, and I love her," he said.

The McLaughlins and their sons, Ryder and Cutter, live in Commerce, Texas, where Jay is resident trainer at Aaron Ranch, a NRCHA Breeder Sponsor and show sponsor.

MILLION DOLLAR SIRE: WR THIS CATS SMART

The 1999 stallion WR This Cats Smart (High Brow Cat x The Smart Look x Smart Little Lena) bred by Wiens Ranch Co., Sedalia, Colorado, and owned since 2004 by NRCHA Breeder Sponsor Wagonhound Land and Livestock, Douglas, Wyoming, began his performance career in the National Cutting Horse Association arena. The fancy sorrel earned \$236,514 in NCHA money, and became a finalist at 24 major NCHA aged events as a 4-, 5-, and 6-year-old. His

accolades include the 2005 NCHA Open Finals Championship, shown by leading cutting horse professional Tim Smith, who described the stallion as "A star all the way—so very smart and stylish."

The first foal crop by WR This Cats Smart arrived in 2005, and he has sired 1,066 American Quarter Horse Association-registered offspring. His foals quickly proved their abilities in multiple performance arenas, earning more than \$6.1 million in all disciplines, primarily cutting. Eighty-seven foals by WR This Cats Smart contributed to his NRCHA Million Dollar Sire status, winning a total \$1,080,082 in the multi-event reined cow horse arena.

WR This Cats Smart has been bred to some of the industry's finest mares, including leading NRCHA dam and Hall of Fame horse Smoke Time Tuck (Doc Tom Tucker x Ima Smoke x Mr Fools Smoke). One foal from that particular cross, the 2007 gelding Tuckers Smart Cat, has become WR This Cats Smart's top NRCHA money-earner, with more than \$155,000 and a Supreme Reined Cow Horse designation on his resume.

In the 2016 Snaffle Bit Futurity Open Finals, WR This Cats Smart shined brightly as a sire, with six of his off-



FILE PHOTO

WR This Cats Smart is one of two new NRCHA Million Dollar Sires in 2016.



NRCHA Executive Director Jay Winborn presents the WR This Cats Smart Million Dollar Sire award to Wagonhound Land & Livestock General Manager Dustin Ewing and Wagonhound Land & Livestock owners Catherine and Art Nicholas.

spring among the horses competing for the NRCHA's top prize.

Other top cow horses by WR This Cats Smart include Sinful Cat (x Sinful Playgirl x Freckles Playboy), a 2008 stallion and earner of \$102,258; Shine Smarter (x Shiney Tari x Shining Spark), a 2012 mare who has earned \$86,550; TF The Gus Man (x Classy Remedy x Tangys Classy Peppy), a 2008 gelding who has earned \$83,748; Halo Cat (x Stylin Jewel x Docs Stylish Oak), with \$76,729 in NRCHA earnings; and Camilla The Cat (x Bit Of Starlight x Grays Starlight), an earner of \$73,860.

MILLION DOLLAR SIRE: GALLO DEL CIELO

The other new NRCHA Million Dollar Sire, Gallo Del Cielo (Peppy San Badger x Doc Starlight x Doc Bar), also known as "Rooster," died following an August 20, 2015 accident, but he left an indelible impact on the entire Western performance horse industry. One of his most

recent accolades is Million Dollar Sire status in the National Reined Cow Horse Association.

Foaled in 1989, the bay stallion was bred by Harold "Spook" Stream III, Lake Charles, Louisiana, and owned by the Polo Ranch Stallions, Marietta, Oklahoma. His own show career was brief. He competed only as a 4-year-old

year, winning \$28,438 in National Cutting Horse Association money.

Rooster's defining role would be as a sire, and his foals achieved greatness in multiple arenas. Though Rooster was trained as a cutting horse, his offspring demonstrated particular flair for the reining maneuvers, making Rooster a \$3 Million Sire in the National Reining Horse Association. His more than 500 performing foals have earned more than \$5.8 million across all disciplines.

Rooster babies do more than spin and slide; they also have risen to the top in the multitasking reined cow horse arena. In the NRCHA, 112 Rooster foals shared in their sire's Million Dollar Sire achievement, with combined earnings of \$1,010,778.

The top reined cow horse by Rooster is Roo Star (x Anna Paulena x Doc O'Lena), a 1999 stallion with \$79,354 in NRCHA money. He is followed on the earnings list by Son Shining Rooster (x Shining Zanzee x Shining Spark), a 2005 stallion who has won \$62,231; Roosters Chicaroo (x Meerly Chic Olena x Smart Chic Olena), a 1996 mare with \$60,150; Sheza Roo (x Sheza Shinette x Shining Spark), with \$57,641; and Roosters Rozalena (x Rosezana Lena x Doc O'Lena), with \$47,805. 🐾



FILE PHOTO

NRCHA Million Dollar Sire
Gallo Del Cielo.