

California Special

There was something special about the California sun that helped cutters demolish records.

Article by Kelsey Pecsek • Action photos by Ted Petit



It was unseasonably toasty in Rancho Murieta, Calif., for the El Rancho Futurity and Foothill Fiesta this year. Perhaps that extra heat came from the talented cutting horses that gathered at the Murieta Equestrian Center on Sept. 9-17.

The 1974 record for September days in the area with a high temperature of 90-plus degrees melted away. The average high during the limited-age event hovered around 96, making cutting outside a little more difficult.

But cutters came to California with no hesitation. The entries were up by 236 from 2011, with 622 this year. Only once in El Rancho's six-year history have the numbers surpassed that.

The spectacular turnout in California helped the show set a record of its own – it has now paid out more than \$2 million since it began in 2007. The payout this year totaled \$358,826, which is \$33,124 more than last year and is greater than it has been since 2009.

But that just wasn't special enough. National Cutting Horse Association Open Horse of the Year contender Kit Kat Sugar thought a little more excitement should be paid. The 4-year-old stallion and his trainer, Pete Branch, destroyed the arena record when they marked a 231 in front of a screaming crowd.

Between the sweltering heat, lucrative payouts, hefty attendance and thrilling runs, this year's El Rancho Futurity is not one anyone will soon forget.

EL RANCHO FUTURITY & FOOTHILL FIESTA

Rancho Murieta, CA — Sept. 9-17, 2012
622 Entries - \$105,000 Added - \$358,826 Total Payout
* Co-Champions **Includes money won in all classes & incentives
Event/Horse/Rider/Owner/Pedigree/Breeder/Score/Money

FUTURITY OPEN & JERRY WARD OPEN INCENTIVE

Smart N Special	Tim Smith	Jack & Sherry Cowan
09M (WR This Cats Smart x Special Acres x Bob Acre Doc)		
Jack & Sherry Cowan	221	\$13,500**

FUTURITY NON-PRO

Daintys Kual Kitty	Tom Mertle	Tom Mertle
09M (Dual Smart Rey x Kats Dainty Gal x High Brow Cat)		
Austin Kenyon	217	\$6,000

JERRY WARD FUTURITY NON-PRO INCENTIVE

Sparkee Cat	Dan Hansen	Dan & Karen Hansen
09G (High Brow Cat x Neverey x Dual Rey)		
Dan & Karen Hansen	214.5	\$8,318**

DERBY OPEN

Kit Kat Sugar	Pete Branch	Lonnie & Barbara Allsup
08S (High Brow Cat x Sugar N Dulce x Smart Lil Ricochet)		
Lonnie & Barbara Allsup	231	\$12,000

DERBY NON-PRO

Just As Reckless	Janet Westfall	Russ & Janet Westfall
08M (CD Royal x Trouble Lynn 495 x Smart And Trouble)		
Russ & Janet Westfall	223	\$5,500

DERBY LIMITED NON-PRO

This Cats Dazzlin	Melissa Weis	Melissa Weis
08M (WR This Cats Smart x Ms BF Quick Silver x Lil Lenas Peppy)		
Dassel Family	222	\$1,700

DERBY AMATEUR

This Cats Phat*	Linda Butlin	Butlin Ranches
08G (WR This Cats Smart x CC Topsy x CD Olena)		
Otto Stanislaw Jr.	219	\$1,650

My Lil Lucky Duck*	Mary Kate Huntsberger	Mary Kate Huntsberger
08G (Blue Duck Okie x Tachitas Hickory x Doc's Hickory)		
San Juan Ranch	219	\$1,650

CLASSIC OPEN

Lizzys Gotta Babe	Adan Banuelos	Tim & Missy Drummond
08M (Lizzys Gotta Player x Morns Stylish Babe x Docs Stylish Oak)		
Drummond Land & Cattle	222	\$10,000

CLASSIC NON-PRO

Nievas	Brandon Dufurrena	Brandon Dufurrena
07M (Cats Merada x Smart Little Boogie x EG Southern Dancer)		
Ed Dufurrena	225	\$8,000

CLASSIC LIMITED NON-PRO

My Lizzy Babe	John Kratzer	Cows & Horses Etc.
07M (Lizzys Gotta Player x Morn Stylish Babe x Docs Stylish Oak)		
Drummond Land & Cattle	223	\$1,550

CLASSIC AMATEUR

HA Gypsy Crackin	Cheyenne Carpenter	Cheyenne Carpenter
06M (Starlights Gypsy x Smart Crackin Chic x Smart Chic Olena)		
Garth Brown	219	\$1,500

UNCOLA 7-UP NON-PRO

Sweet Abra	Alvin Fults	Alvin Fults
03M (Abakadabraxe x The Better Choice x SR Instant Choice)		
Pat Foreman	224	\$2,200

COMPLETE RESULTS BEGIN ON PAGE 131.



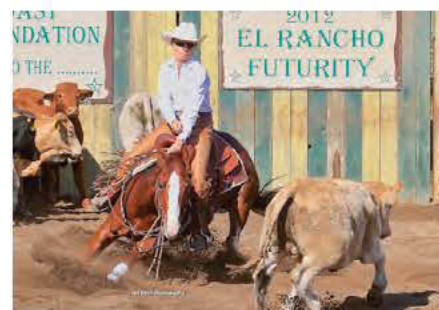
CLASSIC NON-PRO RESERVE

Teles Bout This Cat (WR This Cats Smart x Teles Lies x Lenas Teles), bred by Bill and Sharon Goddard, Spring Creek, Nev., carried her owner, Cody Hedlund, Weatherford, Texas, to a 218.



CLASSIC LIMITED NON-PRO RESERVE

Roger Booth, Acton, Calif., marked a 221 aboard his 2006 gelding Pure Redwhiteandblue (Mecom Blue x Purely Bob x Bob Acre Doc), bred by Jerry Durant, Weatherford, Texas.



UNCOLA 7-UP NON-PRO RESERVE

A 220 earned Debbie Day, Reno, Nev., and her homebred 2005 gelding Scootin With Style (Smart Lil Scoot x Style O Bar x Docs Stylish Oak) a \$1,900 check.

This Cats Proven



WR This Cats Smart —Photo by Cam Essick

After racking up \$236,474 in the cutting pen, it was clear that WR This Cats Smart was a talented horse. After his offspring won three Champion titles and one Reserve Championship at the El Rancho Futurity this year, it's just further confirmed that the 1999 stallion (High Brow Cat x The Smart Look x Smart Little Lena) is a pre-potent sire.

WR This Cats Smart is owned by Wagonhound Land and Livestock, Douglas, Wyo., bred by Wiens Ranch Co. Inc., Sedalia, Colo., and stands at The Four Sixes Ranch in Guthrie, Texas. His first foals hit the ground in 2005 and they have been earning money ever since.

To date, there are 188 performers on the sire's record, with total earnings of \$2.8 million. The offspring's cutting earnings make up \$2.3 million of that,

with 148 performing foals. The sire also has four money-earners in reining and 37 in reined cow horse. In fact, more than \$547,000 of WR This Cats Smart's total offspring earnings can be attributed to working cow horses.

Teles Bout This Cat (Teles Lies x Lenas Teles), owned by Cody Hedlund, Weatherford, Texas, and bred by Bill and Sharon Goddard, Spring Creek, Nev., is the stallion's No. 1 performer. The 2007 mare has more than \$158,000 in lifetime cutting earnings, including the \$6,000 Reserve Champion's check she picked up in the Classic/Challenge Non-Pro finals in Rancho Murieta, Calif.

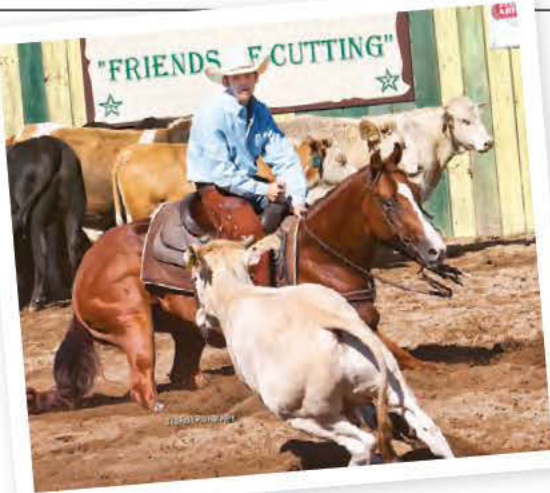
A reined cow horse takes the spot as WR This Cats Smart's second-highest-earning performer. Tuckers Smart Cat (Smoke Time Tuck x Doc Tom Tucker), a 2007 geld-

ing owned by David and Barbara Archer, Clovis, Calif., and bred by Bar Eleven Quarter Horses, Eagle Point, Ore., boasts a \$114,839 **Equi-Stat** record.

Other WR This Cats Smart foals that made an impression at El Rancho include the Futurity Open Champion, Smart N Special, the Derby Limited Non-Pro Champion, This Cats Dazzlin, and the Derby Amateur Co-Champion This Cats Phat.

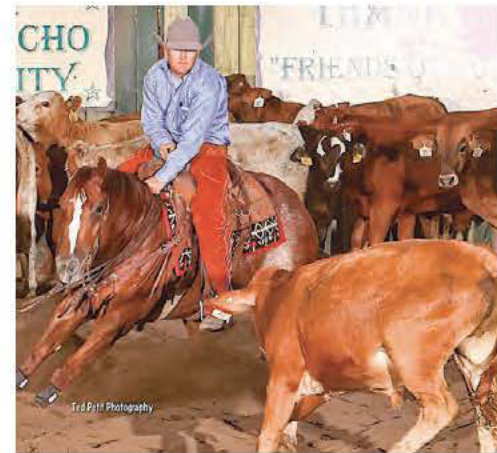
Tim Smith, Temecula, Calif., rode Smart N Special (Special Acres x Bob Acre Doc) to her Championship. It made the winning moment particularly special for the **Equi-Stat Elite** \$5 Million Cutting Rider because he also trained and showed the 3-year-old mare's sire.

"With him, the tougher it got, the better he was," Smith said of WR This Cats Smart. "She's a lot like her father." —KP



CLASSIC OPEN CHAMPION

(Left) Lizzys Gotta Babe (Lizzys Gotta Player x Moms Stylish Babe x Docs Stylish Oak), owned and bred by Drummond Land and Cattle, Pawhuska, Okla., turned up the heat for rider Adan Banuelos, Jacksboro, Texas. "She is pretty much phenomenal," Banuelos said after marking a 222 on the 2006 mare for the \$10,000 winner's check. "This mare was turned out for a year. She's a dream – she'd give her life to do a good job."



CLASSIC LIMITED NON-PRO CHAMPION

(Left) My Lizzy Babe (Lizzys Gotta Player x Moms Stylish Babe x Docs Stylish Oak), bred by Drummond Land and Cattle, Pawhuska, Okla., had big shoes to fill when her older sister won an Open title at El Rancho. She and her owner, John Kratzer, Austin, Texas, busted out a 223 for the win, worth \$1,550. "She's a really cool horse. I've just been learning how to ride her," Kratzer said. "We're starting to come together."

CLASSIC NON-PRO CHAMPION

"It's been a blessing," Brandon Dufurrena said of his career with his horse Nievas. The 2007 mare (Cats Merada x Smart Little Boogie x EG Southern Dancer), bred by Dufurrena's father, Ed, has amassed \$110,345 with his owner in the saddle, including an \$8,000 check for this 225. "This is a family sport, so for it to work with my sister loping, my dad in the corner and my mom here is even more special."



DERBY OPEN RESERVE

Just As Reckless (CD Royal x Trouble Lynn 495 x Smart And Trouble), owned by breeders Russ and Janet Westfall, Los Olivos, Calif., carried Russ to a 224 for \$9,000.

DERBY NON-PRO RESERVE

Theresa Gillock, Las Vegas, Nev., earned a 219 aboard her Fortune Bend (One Time Pepto x Stylish Baby Doll x SR Instant Choice), bred by Walton's Rocking W Ranch, Millsap, Texas.



UNCOLA 7-UP NON-PRO CHAMPION

A 224 took Alvin Fults, Amarillo, Texas, and his 2003 mare Sweet Abra (Abakadabracre x The Better Choice x SR Instant Choice), bred by Pat Foreman, Jacksboro, Texas, to the top of the leader board. Their second-draw performance held strong for the win, which paid \$2,200, bringing Sweet Abra's **Equi-Stat** record to more than \$115,000. Fults' lifetime earnings now exceed \$227,000.

DERBY LIMITED NON-PRO RESERVE

Debbie Hall, Paso Robles, Calif., and her gelding Gracierey (Reys Dual Badger x Gracilena x CD Olena), bred by Winston Hansma, Weatherford, Texas, marked a 215 for \$1,600.

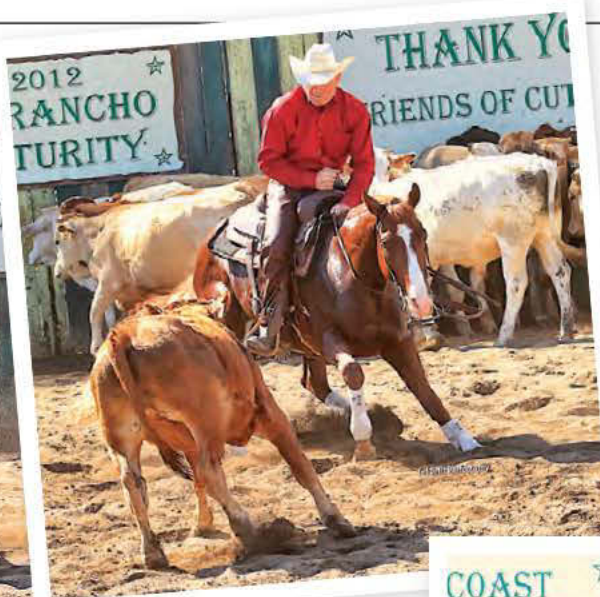
CLASSIC OPEN RESERVE

Whiskeydirtyglass (High Brow Cat x Jitters Brown x Smart Little Lena), owned by Vincenzo Vario, Weatherford, Texas, and bred by David Brown, Gainesville, Texas, marked a 221 with Adan Banuelos, Jacksboro, Texas.



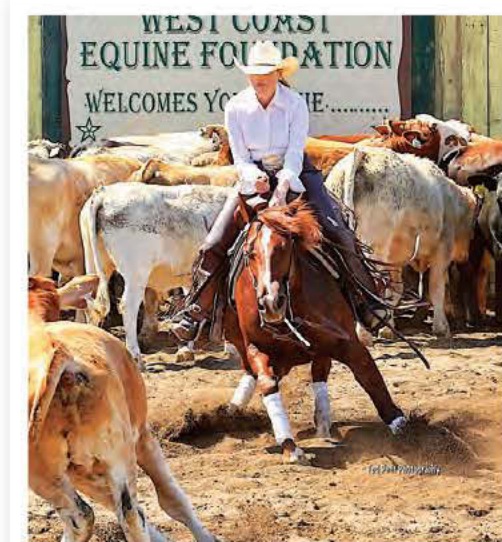
FUTURITY NON-PRO CHAMPION

Tom Mertle rode Daintys Kual Kitty (Dual Smart Rey x Kats Dainty Gal x High Brow Cat), bred by Austin Kenyon, Park Hill, Okla., to a 217 from his next-to-last draw in the Non-Pro finals. The Windsor, Calif.-based rider banked \$6,000 for that performance and won another \$3,700 as an Open finalist. "She's the easiest 3-year-old I've ever trained. She's one of those horses that's just fun to own."



DERBY NON-PRO CHAMPION

(Right) Just As Reckless (CD Royal x Trouble Lynn 495 x Smart And Trouble) has garnered nearly \$100,000 for her owners and breeders, Janet and Russ Westfall, Los Olivos, Calif. At El Rancho, the mare carried Janet to the Championship with a 223 worth \$5,500. "It's neat to win on something you raised," Janet said. "It almost makes me teary-eyed. Russ loves this horse – she's his princess."



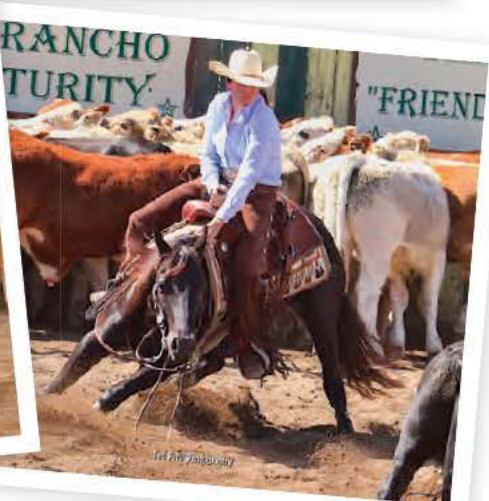
DERBY LIMITED NON-PRO CHAMPION

Melissa Weis, Ojai, Calif., scored a 222 aboard her mare This Cats Dazzlin (WR This Cats Smart x Ms BF Quick Silver x Lil Lenas Peppy) for \$1,700. The horse was bred by Weis and her family, the Dassels of San Juan Bautista, Calif. Weis' **Equi-Stat** record begins in 1994 with reined cow horse earnings and now totals more than \$50,000. "We've had a lot of luck this year," she said. "It's been fun."



DERBY AMATEUR CO-CHAMPIONS

(Left) Linda Butlin, Alberta, Canada, made her second limited-age show a special memory when she won her first title. "[It means] everything," she said of the Co-Championship, earned riding This Cats Phat (WR This Cats Smart x CC Topsy x CD Olena), bred by Otto Stanislaw Jr., Phoenix, Ariz. Butlin won \$1,650 wearing a brand-new, now lucky, shirt she bought on the show grounds. (Right) After winning the 2011 Futurity Non-Pro, My Lil Lucky Duck (Blue Duck Okie x Tachitas Hickory x Doc's Hickory), bred by San Juan Ranch, Shandon, Calif., and his owner had a title to defend. Mary Kate Huntsberger, 29, Paso Robles, Calif., rode her gelding "Bird" to a 219 to split first this year. "He's been a good little horse," she said. "[I thank] my husband for buying him for me."



Derby Open

What better way to heat up California than to burn up the cutting arena with a record-breaking run? Kit Kat Sugar and Pete Branch did just that. A 231 rocked the crowd, including his fiancée Tori, who could arguably be heard cheering for miles. The duo won the Derby Open Championship worth \$12,000 by a seven-point margin.

"That horse was dead on the money," Branch, Farwell, Texas, said. "It was a really good run. He's a cool horse."

"Skeet" (High Brow Cat x Sugar N Dulce x Smart Lil Ricochet), owned and bred by Lonnie and Barbara Allsup, Clovis, N.M., has racked up an impressive \$192,311 **Equi-Stat** record in less than a year of showing. According to his trainer, that much experience has changed the horse.

"He's like an old horse now," Branch explained. "It's like he's got an old soul or something. He doesn't act like a young horse anymore. He's grown up a bunch on this trip."

After accumulating \$3.7 million in his own cutting earnings, Branch has learned to truly appreciate a horse as unique as Kit Kat Sugar.

"He really is a special horse," he said. "I've been very blessed and very successful. The older you get, the more you realize how really rare those horses are. He's just an incredible horse."

Kit Kat Sugar is in a head-to-head race for NCHA Open Horse of the Year with another popular 4-year-old stallion – Hottish. The win in Rancho Murieta edged Kit Kat Sugar ahead by three points, but Branch knows the title is still up for grabs.

"It's really about the two horses," Branch said, humbly. "Those are two great horses. Whichever one is second is no disgrace."

Classic Amateur

If every horse deserves to be loved by a young girl at least once in its life, HA Gypsy Crackin can



Kit Kat Sugar not only took a lead in the NCHA Open Horse of the Year race, but also broke the arena record when he marked a 231 with Pete Branch in the Derby Open.



Cheyenne Carpenter, 16, earned her first limited-age title aboard HA Gypsy Crackin in the Classic Amateur with a 219.

(Right) Julie Clarke piloted Pounce to a 214.5 for the Classic Amateur Reserve Championship.

check it off her list. The 2006 mare (Starlights Gypsy x Smart Crackin Chic x Smart Chic Olena) sits on a pedestal in 16-year-old Cheyanne Carpenter's heart.

Carpenter, Clements, Calif., had \$85 on her **Equi-Stat** record when she drove 30 minutes down the road to compete on the horse



that she'd owned for about two months. After marking a 219 from the last draw in the first bunch of the 18-horse finals for the Classic/Challenge Amateur Championship, she's \$1,500 richer.

"This is amazing," Carpenter said, bubbling with excitement. "She was awesome and I couldn't be more proud of her."

HA Gypsy Crackin, bred by Garth Brown, Gainesville, Texas, won the Classic/Challenge Amateur Reserve title last year with her previous owner, Scott Gaddy. Carpenter said knowing there was a title to defend turned the pressure up.

"I hate pressure," Carpenter said. "I tell [everyone], 'Shut up and leave me alone. I need to be focused.' But I had confidence in my horse and in myself. I walked up there, trusted her and let her to do her thing."

Even as a young woman who recently reached driving age, Carpenter is adamant that her life revolves around her horse.

"It's all about her," she said. "Other than school, I don't have a life outside of cutting. I jump on her bareback at midnight and take her for walks and teach her to bow. At every show, I get made fun of because 'Scotty's' only in her stall for about 40 minutes out of the day – I'm walking her around, giving her baths or letting her eat grass."

Carpenter's favorite prize at El Rancho was a beautiful bottle of wine. Even though her parents wouldn't let her touch it, she plans to pop the cork in a few years when she turns 21. And since her quirky mare usually finishes her drinks off at shows, perhaps they will share a celebratory glass in 2016.

Julie Clarke, Bend, Ore., marked a 214.5 aboard her 2006 mare Pounce (High Brow Cat x Haidas Little Shorty x Haidas Little Pep), bred by Heidi Holden, Weatherford, Texas. The horse and rider were named Reserve Champions and pocketed \$1,350, bringing the horse's **Equi-Stat** record to more than \$205,000.



—Photo by Kelsey Pecsek

El Rancho Futurity History

Year	Entries	Added	Total Purse
2007	592	\$153,000	\$432,368
2008	678	\$150,000	\$503,496
2009	385	\$150,000	\$332,654
2010	398	\$125,000	\$336,890
2011	386	\$125,000	\$325,702
2012	622	\$105,000	\$358,826
Totals	3,061	\$808,000	\$2,289,936

Futurity Open

The sunshine reflecting off of Smart N Special's flaxen mane and tail caught the eyes of the judges. The 3-year-old mare (WR This Cats Smart x Special Acres x Bob Acre Doc), owned and bred by Jack and Sherry Cowan, Payson, Ariz., carried **Equi-Stat Elite** \$5 Million Cutting Rider Tim Smith to a 221 for the win.

"Blondie" debuted with Smith, Temecula, Calif., at the South Point Futurity a month earlier and earned a Reserve Championship. While that was a success, finally securing his first win for the Cowans meant a lot to Smith.

"I couldn't be more happy for the Cowans," he said. "They've been customers for several years and if it could go wrong, it went wrong. We've had a running joke – the 'curse of the Cowans'. They're great folks. Maybe the curse is over."

The talented mare who pulled the cutters out of their dry spell banked a total of \$13,500 for her Futurity Open Championship, bringing her two-show **Equi-Stat** record to \$20,908.

"That's a pretty good start," Smith said, smiling. "This is a really nice mare and I think she's one that can go on and compete. She's got that extra gear."

Smith openly admitted he couldn't take all of the credit for how well-trained Smart N Special is so early in her career. After breaking his foot early in the year, he relied on Ryan Else, Payson, Ariz., who starts the Cowans' 2-year-olds.

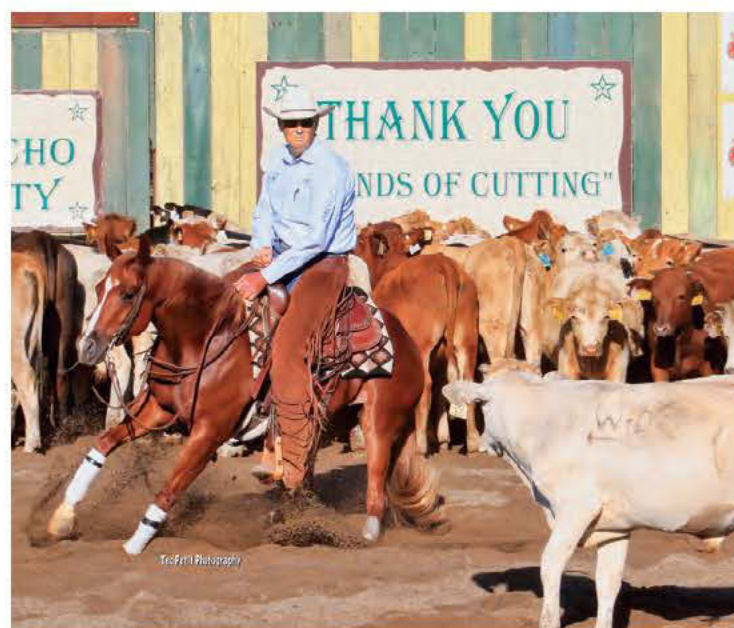
"He did the majority of the work on this mare," Smith said. "I was laid up for three months, so I started riding her in June. I just tried not to screw her up, basically. He deserves as much credit as anybody."

While Smith has had tough luck on Cowan horses, El Rancho has always been a good show for him. Since it began, he has picked up at least one Open Championship every year. What he has never accomplished before, however, is winning the Jerry Ward Open Incentive.

"Jerry was a great guy – he was a friend of mine," Smith said, tears welling in his eyes. "He left us way too soon. It's important for people to realize how important that is to this Futurity. I can't say enough about what Carol [Ward] has done for cutting on the West Coast and by keeping the Incentive. That trophy means as much to me as the buckle."

Mz Hydrivinghula Gal (Hydrive Cat x Intensive Lil Pep x Mister Dual Pep), owned and bred by Alex Penovaroff, Hilo, Hawaii, marked a 217 with **Equi-Stat Elite** \$1 Million Cutting Rider Gavin Jordan, Wilton, Calif., for a \$9,000 check and the Reserve Championship.

The mare earned her first check with Jordan at the South Point Futurity, as well, where she made the Open Futurity finals and split fourth. This win more than tripled her lifetime earnings.



Smart N Special marked a 221 for the Futurity Open Championship with her rider, Tim Smith. Smith, who also trained the mare's sire, was touched to win the Jerry Ward Open Incentive, as well.

Winning Streak

This year's Futurity Open Champion, Smith, has garnered more than \$100,000 at the El Rancho Futurity and Foothill Fiesta since 2007. In fact, he's won a title all six years.

Take a look at the Temecula, Calif., cutter's impressive record. —KP

Year	Champion Title	Horse
2007	Classic Open	Etickets Cat
2008	Futurity Gelding Open	Smokin Cat Wacky
2009	Derby Novice Horse Open	Stylin Roxy
2010	Derby Open	Flo Like A Cat
2011	Derby Open	My Lizzy Babe
2012	Futurity Open	Smart N Special

A 217 earned Mz Hydrivinghula Gal and Gavin Jordan the Futurity Open Reserve title, worth \$9,000.

