

Highpoint Hobby

Highpoint Performance Horses earns a top spot on the leading owners' chart.



KENNETH SPRINGER

By SPRINGER

Slick By Design pictured with his rider Michele McLeod and owners Charlie Cole and Jason Martin.

WHEN SLICK BY DESIGN WON THE SECOND ROUND at the 2015 National Finals Rodeo with Michele McLeod, the stallion's owners Charlie Cole and Jason Martin witnessed one of their dreams coming true.

"We can go home now totally happy was literally how Jason and I felt," Cole says with a laugh. With the rounds paying \$15,000, McLeod told them they were definitely staying. "We didn't care about the money. We just wanted 'Slick' to win a round. The rest of the NFR was just cake for us!"

Cole and Martin are two of the most successful performance horse trainers in American Quarter Horse Association history. Just some of their most noted accomplishments include training the all-time leader of AQHA World Championship titles Acadamosby Award, the stallion with the most AQHA World Championships Hot Ones Only, the highest point earning horse in AQHA history Harley D Zip and four AQHA Superhorses.

They've built an empire at Highpoint Performance Horses in Pilot Point, Texas. Yet, stabled amongst Western and English performance horses reside some of the top barrel horses in the country.

"We have a lot of barrel horses," Martin says with a chuckle. "We have four rodeo horses, two 4-year-old futurity horses, five 3-year-olds that are all in training, and I think I have eight babies coming this year. I have a couple of yearlings and three 2-year-olds. We are in the barrel business now.

"It really just grew into something that we didn't anticipate. Now we're just trying to turn it more into a business to pay for itself, and it's doing pretty well. This is still our hobby. When we're at a barrel race or Calgary, it's a vacation for us. It's our hobby. Charlie's always telling me this is supposed to be fun so he's always making reality checks for me. It's supposed to be fun and most of the time it is. Sometimes it's not. The highs and lows are much more than I ever dreamed.

The First Wave

In the late 1990s, Cole was looking for another event to do completely for fun.

"I love horses and all aspects of them," says Cole. "I thought about getting a reiner, but thought, 'Nah, it's a judged event. Everything I do is judged.' I had a friend who had a barrel horse and he said I could run him."

Cole was hooked. After starting out with a 4D horse, Cole was soon making a call to decorated AQHA barrel racer and pole bender Ross Carnahan to find a better barrel and pole horse. Cole says, "he got lucky right off the bat," when he purchased a 4-year-old gelding named FQH A Sharp Move ("Boomer").

"Right away I knew he was really good," recalls Cole. "When I started running him around Texas, he was always in the 1D. I thought there's no way that it could be this easy, this horse must be really good."

Cole turned to one of his southern California friends, Kristen Weaver Brown, to see how good Boomer was. Brown, an accomplished horsewoman in the show arena and a NFR qualifier, took Boomer to his first professional rodeo and won. The following year, Boomer found himself in Charmayne James' trailer. The world champion had leased Boomer and won her first ever Cheyenne Frontier Days Championship aboard the 5-year-old gelding. She also ran him in a round at the 2000 NFR.

That was their first taste of the excitement of owning a rodeo horse, says Martin.

"We were like, 'Wow, this is really fun!'" Martin says. "I really enjoyed Charmayne, she was so professional to work with."

Cole and Martin also owned Boomer's full sister Rod's Last Ladybug ("Boomette"), who won the 2004 AQHA Junior Barrel Racing World Championship with Brown and finished Reserve World Champion in the Senior Barrels a year later. They also bred Boomette to leading barrel horse sire Dash Ta Fame and got Rockette Ta Fame.

With P.J. Burger in the saddle, Rockette

2015 Barrel Horse News Statistical Review

TOP DAMS ALL AGES ALL DIVISIONS (Number of Performers / Average / Total)

1. LADY KAWEAH CASH	1	\$421,877	\$421,877
An Oakie With Cash, \$421,877			
2. SHORT PENNY	2	\$144,798	\$289,596
Fame Fling N Bling, \$288,678; A Streakin Legacy, \$918			
3. RARE CLASS	6	\$41,503	\$249,018
Rare Dillion, \$242,062; JM Smooth Operator, \$2,826; Crystals Got Class, \$2,581; Rare Vue, \$730; Quijet, \$667; Rare Vue, \$152			
4. MISS ASSURED BEST	3	\$71,288	\$213,864
JKR Assured Win, \$207,556; Dash To Tim, \$6,012; JKR Dashes Best Jet, \$297			
5. SIXES FUTURE	3	\$61,248	\$183,743
Frenchmans Future, \$164,743; Stoli My Guy, \$17,979; Spy Guy, \$1,021			
6. FLOWERS AND MONEY	3	\$57,887	\$173,662
Flos Heiress, \$172,030; Nicks Nefertiti, \$1,203; Flos Nicknack, \$429			
7. STREAKIN SIX BABE	4	\$40,122	\$160,487
Babe On The Chase, \$154,350; Ima Super Fly Guy, \$2,901; Smoke N The Babes, \$2,749; Streaking Is Easy, \$487			
8. ONE HOT LANE	2	\$76,979	\$153,958
Bulleva, \$153,502; Foreva, \$456			
9. DREAMS OF BLUE	1	\$153,160	\$153,160
Slick By Design, \$153,160			

10. STING IT	3	\$46,675	\$140,025
Flit N Fizz, \$139,086; Frenchstingaleypower, \$907; Imdalastfrenchtrain, \$33			
11. HONEY OFA JET	1	\$138,266	\$138,266
Honor Thy Frenchman, \$138,266			
12. IMANONSTOP PRINCESS	2	\$66,399	\$132,797
Imanonstop Fame, \$131,897; Good To Be The King, \$900			
13. FC PEACHFUZZ TA FAME	1	\$127,989	\$127,989
Smooth N Famous, \$127,989			
14. MISS LANDING ROCKET	1	\$121,392	\$121,392
Guys French Jet, \$121,392			
15. BASHFUL DASH	2	\$59,693	\$119,385
JK Reckless Lady, \$109,656; HM Cornerstone, \$9,729			
16. CURIOCITY CORNERS	3	\$36,575	\$109,724
Perculatin, \$108,872; RL Rare And Lucky, \$451; Pyro Babe, \$401			
17. SX FRENCHMANS VANILA	5	\$21,581	\$107,905
Vanilas Sudden Fame, \$98,832; Famous French Flair, \$4,634; No Pressure On Me, \$2,886; Vanila Gold, \$1,411; Dash Ta Vanila, \$140			
18. FAIR RETURNS	3	\$34,952	\$104,857
TS Hayday Returns, \$94,758; Complete Bully, \$9,967; Fair Profit N Perks, \$132			

19. SANCEE BUG	1	\$103,410	\$103,410
KR Last Fling, \$103,410			
20. BUCKLE UP BUNNY	3	\$34,018	\$102,053
Hip Swingin Gypsy, \$100,404; Foolish In My Socks, \$1,296; Make No Assumptions, \$353			
21. THE SKYE CHICK	1	\$101,564	\$101,564
Kellies Chick, \$101,564			
22. DO IT FOR BEAU	5	\$20,243	\$101,216
KG Justiceweexpected, \$48,516; KG Blazin Nine Oh, \$36,967; KG Jet O A Go Go, \$14,151; KG Cashin In On Beau, \$1,220; KG Do It For Fame, \$362			
23. IM TESTY TOO	1	\$99,400	\$99,400
Sweet Heart Special, \$99,400			
24. GO ROYAL SCARLETT	7	\$11,943	\$83,603
Royal Star Commander, \$39,096; Famous Scarlett, \$38,701; Frenchmans Royal Guy, \$2,694; Royal And Famous, \$2,025; Royal Star Bug, \$396; Ima Royal Frenchman, \$381; Royal Three Ohs, \$309			
25. DASHING TO FAME	5	\$15,939	\$79,696
French First Watch, \$58,520; Smart Fame, \$12,195; Takin On Fame, \$8,371; TS Dashen To The Sun, \$456; TS A Frosty Dash, \$153			
1-25	69	\$54,676	\$3,772,644
26-12235	20034	\$1,037	\$20,766,030
Grand Total	20103	\$1,221	\$24,538,674

Ta Fame won the 2011 AQHA Senior Barrel Racing World Championship. They were also top contenders on the rodeo trail, even making the finals at the Calgary Stampede.

The Second Wave

As the perpetual wearer of the thinking cap, Martin was looking toward the future when he and Cole began standing stallions at Highpoint Performance Horses.

"I really wanted to get into that aspect of it, thinking that later in life we could do less training," Martin says. "I thought, 'Let's get a barrel stud.' We talked to Kelly Yates about Firewater Fiesta. We ended up buying an embryo, and we bred to Dash Ta Fame. That same year, out of the blue, Charlie was talking with Sherry Cervi, and he randomly asked her if she'd sell an embryo out of Stingray (WPROA World Champion MP Meter My Hay)."

Cole and Martin ended up with three Dash Ta Fame foals, a colt and filly out of Fiesta and a colt out of Stingray. The two stud colts—HP Dash Ta Fiesta and Feel The Sting—as well as the filly are currently in training for the 2017 futurities.

Then at the 2012 AQHA World Show, Cole spotted Slick, who won the Senior Barrel Racing World Championship with Jennifer Sharp in the saddle.

"I was by myself watching the prelims—I

love to watch—and this black stallion flies around there and wins the round," recalls Cole. "I texted Jason and said, 'I just saw the most amazing black stallion.' We weren't really looking for a stallion because we had already pulled those embryos on Fiesta and Stingray that year, hoping to get a stallion. The next day, he did it again. I text Jason, 'This horse is amazing.' He was like, 'Well, go find out about him!' I had never heard of him. I don't follow the futurities. I follow the rodeos more. I just knew when I saw him he was something special."

Team Assembled

In 2012, Cole had another good horse of his own, the gelding Moss Me Moe. As he'd done with Boomer and Boomette, he wanted to see just how good Moe was so he asked McLeod, who lived in nearby Whitesboro, Texas, to take the gelding for a spin.

"Moe was actually the first horse Michele rode for me," Cole says. "I didn't know Michele really well, but she was always super friendly and her horses were nice. At Houston at the Quarter Horse show, the Senior Barrels was huge and I was winning it up until the very end when Michele came in and beat me. I asked her if she would try my horse. She ran him at a bunch of UPRA (United Professional Rodeo Association)

rodeos and made the finals at Mesquite [Texas]. The next year he ended up being her backup horse and doing really well."

In the spring of 2013, McLeod started rodeoing on Slick, and it was a match made in heaven.

"When Michele started running Slick and she won Guymon [Oklahoma, in early May], we were just like we'll spread our wings and go a little bit further, but none of us—neither me, Jason nor Michele—thought we'd go to the NFR. By July, every phone call, Michele would say 'I won it by 3/10ths, I was second, I won, I was third.' Every phone call, she was winning a check," says Cole.

"When we had Rockette, she did very well, but it was up and down. With Slick in 2013, I told Jason this isn't how barrel racing normally goes. You don't keep getting big check after big check. We just didn't have any of the ups and downs that barrel racing really is. By July, we knew we had a special horse and legit shot. It wasn't like we sat down and said, 'Let's go to the NFR,' but when you know you have that special horse, I think that's your moment and we had to seize that moment and do everything we could to make it a possibility. We went all in by the middle of the year to make it come to fruition. It was a risk. We're just horse trainers, Jason and I."

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Expansion

Cole says the addition of Kellies Chick ("Skye") to the herd was actually all Martin and McLeod's doing. They were looking for a horse to share Slick's load, and they didn't really care if it was a mare or a gelding.

"We thought we were buying a backup horse, but within a couple of months, we knew she was more than that," Cole says. "There was something special about her. Of course in hindsight, she was a really good cross on Slick, but that's not what we bought her for."

After an illness took Slick out for the second half of the 2014 season, Skye did more than her fair share, including surviving the treacherous footing at the NFR. She also won Cole and Martin's coveted first NFR go-round buckle.

"My dream was for my horse to win a round at the NFR," Cole says. "In 2014, I was there for Skye, but I had to leave for one night to teach at the AQHA's judges seminar in Dallas. There was no way out. On the fourth night I told Michele, 'You know what's going to happen tomorrow night, right?' She was like 'No, what?' 'You're going to win the round, because I'm leaving and I'm not going to be here for the buckle ceremony.' I was sitting in a bar in Fort Worth with the other judges watching the NFR on TV and Michele flies in there and wins the round just like I said, and I was sitting in Texas! I just knew she was going to win!"

In August of 2014, they added Streakin'flingindisco ("Disco") to the mix, too. McLeod had ridden the mare at the Arizona futurities for her trainer Monica McClung and recommended the daughter of A Streak Of Fling. Disco earned her first professional rodeo money for the team in the fall of 2014 and had picked up a few checks in 2015 before fracturing a hock in May. In early 2016, she had already made significant contributions to the coffers thanks to her performance at Fort Worth, and she qualified the youngest McLeod daughter, Lindsey, to The American Semifinals.

When Disco got hurt, Cole knew he needed another horse in the trailer, preferably one that could buddy with Slick. That led to the purchase of Apt To Be Special ("Toby"), a gelding who shares the same sire, Special Feelins, with WPRA World Champion, Dynas Plain Special.

TOP BREEDERS ALL DIVISIONS ALL AGES

1. TIMOTHY & KELLY BAGNELL Ronan, MT - An Oakie With Cash, \$421,877; Biebers Spark, \$264; Biebers Quest, \$136	\$422,277
2. BILL & DEBBIE MYERS Saint Onge, SD - Smooth N Famous, \$127,989; Guys Amberetto, \$47,811; Guys Best Bet, \$41,663; Bring It On Guys, \$40,945; Ima Friendly Guy, \$23,136; Guys Dash Of Colour, \$11,947; Guys Dashing Girl, \$7,973; Guys Streakin Angel, \$6,236; Set Me Free Guy, \$5,643; All Warm N Fuzzy, \$5,579; A Special Colour, \$4,192; Guys On A High, \$4,022; Itis What Itis Guys, \$3,582; Guys Voodoo Bug, \$3,165; French Cash Yawl, \$3,138	\$386,284
3. SHANNON RENEE AKERSTROM Potter Valley, CA - Fame Fling N Bling, \$288,678; Guys Six Pack To Go, \$33,601; Mia Fabulous Fame, \$23,813; Classy Rose Bug, \$11,396; Miss JB 102, \$9,164; Uno Dos Tres, \$2,641; Famous Disco Queen, \$1,593; Fame En Fuego, \$1,266; Jerry B Moonin, \$778; Flingin Cash 37, \$571; Rockstar Perks, \$537; Big Bad Blush, \$440; KN Jastr Tazz Tafame, \$438; Fabulous In Bed, \$186; JDM Cinderella, \$179	\$375,515
4. HARRY & VIVIAN BLACKWELL Naylor, MO - Flit N Fizz, \$139,086; Vanilas Sudden Fame, \$98,832; Feelinthefirewater, \$30,641; Famousfirewater Anny, \$8,939; A Shawne Romance, \$6,727; Famous French Flair, \$4,634; Six Pack Nick, \$3,195; No Pressure On Me, \$2,886; Vanila Gold, \$1,411; Leos Romance, \$1,137; Heavenly Firewater, \$1,043; On The Money Molly, \$269; Leos Moon Frost, \$252; Four B Firewater Leo, \$134	\$299,188
5. MOBBS JAN & ROLLER C E Lindsay, OK - Rare Dillion, \$242,062	\$242,062
6. JACK & KARMETTA RUPPEL Sargent, NE - JKR Assured Win, \$207,556; Dash To Tim, \$6,012; JKR Kenny, \$412; JKR Dashes Best Jet, \$297	\$214,276
7. JUD LITTLE Ardmore, OK - Dash Ta Jones, \$29,603; Especially Frosted, \$24,541; JL Dash Ta Heaven, \$11,391; Chicados Cash, \$10,320; Credit To Fiesta, \$8,913; Cashin On The Bayou, \$7,100; Brick House Dynasty, \$6,474; Romance A Wildthing, \$5,220; Flyin High Gamble, \$5,046; Firin To Be A Hero, \$4,598; Catchin Air, \$4,530; Marthas Sixshooter, \$4,507; Burnin Brownies, \$4,285; Smashed In Paris, \$3,679; Sign Of Frost, \$3,583	\$204,412
8. CHARLES & KRISTIE PETERSON Chilton, TX - Frenchmans Future, \$164,743; Stoli My Guy, \$17,979; Vegaspeed, \$4,744; Frenchmans Cheyann, \$2,242; Like A Gidget, \$1,717; French Fame, \$1,456; Spy Guy, \$1,021; French Disco Playboy, \$856; Fabulous Flitwonder, \$740; Vegas French Boy, \$488	\$195,986
9. PEDONE RYANN & HARVEY JOSH Decatur, TX - HIP Swingin Gypsy, \$100,404; Solid Red Socks, \$72,298; Dontbeadragbeaqueen, \$12,770; Motivating Mover, \$3,168; Bratwhereyoursocks, \$2,964; Foolish In My Socks, \$1,296; Feature Me Firin, \$604; Oe Fire Me Up, \$375; Make No Assumptions, \$353	\$194,233
10. VICTORY FARMS Ada, OK - VF A Sporty Design, \$34,415; VF Mr Ed, \$21,555; VF You Think Im Hot, \$13,133; VF Famous Duck, \$11,786; VF Coup De Ville, \$10,913; VF Hi N Famous, \$7,092; VF The Final Design, \$6,510; VF Easy Dash Home, \$5,496; VF Rock Grinder, \$4,670; VF Forceadash, \$4,457; VF Mr Universe, \$3,436; VF Bright N Famous, \$3,399; VF A Live Design, \$3,387; VF Call Me Famous, \$3,127; VF I Will B Famous, \$3,112	\$192,939
11. FALLON TAYLOR Whitesboro, TX - Flos Heiress, \$172,030; Nicks Nefertiti, \$1,203; Flos Nicknack, \$429; Shez A Rebel Doctor, \$170	\$173,832
12. TIANY SCHUSTER Lumberton, MS - Bulleva, \$153,502; A Master Disaster, \$10,439; SR Missfirewater, \$6,115; Foreva, \$456; Lark Express, \$26	\$170,538
13. BRITTANY POZZI TONOZZI Victoria, TX - Babe On The Chase, \$154,350; Pocket Fulla Pozzis, \$3,881; Ima Super Fly Guy, \$2,901; A Guy With Proof, \$1,168; Magnolia Martini, \$591	\$162,891

14. JACKIE DUBE JATZLAU Giddings, TX - Imanonstop Fame, \$131,897; Be My Valentine Guy, \$23,591; Si Can Too, \$3,012; Catch The Rain, \$1,799; Black Betty Bug, \$1,171; Good To Be The King, \$900; French Pistol, \$110	\$162,481
15. ALLENE TATOM Conroe, TX - Slick By Design, \$153,160	\$153,160
16. RONNIE & MARTHA SHOMAKER Mc Kenzie, TN - Honor Thy Frenchman, \$138,266; SF Fired Up N French, \$5,830; SF Come N Gettumm, \$1,260; SF Hell On Wheels, \$1,216; SF Keep The Change, \$1,147; SF Who Shot Doc, \$1,091; SF Its Ez Bn French, \$953; SF Devil In Disguise, \$765; SF Icewaterinmyveins, \$700; SF Justa Frenchin, \$400; SF Shecouldbefrench, \$394; SF Gin And Juice, \$297; SF Yeah Ima Racer, \$285; SF Tenn On Firewater, \$176; SF Flamin Tennhonors, \$137	\$153,047
17. RONALD K & LINDA PAULSON Fairfax, SD - Guys French Jet, \$121,392; La Frenchman, \$10,445; Frosty Bar Drift, \$440	\$132,277
18. PHARR D & TONOZZI B Victoria, TX - Kisskiss Bangbang, \$57,097; Coronaforacovergirl, \$50,470; Fly Fame Fly, \$19,440; Smoke N The Babes, \$2,749; Famous Fetish, \$1,170; Streaking Is Easy, \$487; Streakin Dash Wonder, \$337; Runnin Proof, \$250	\$132,000
19. GARY A BAGGETT Dexter, GA - JK Reckless Lady, \$109,656; HM Cornerstone, \$9,729; Reckless Dreams, \$3,828; SRR Reckless Rona, \$1,424	\$124,637
20. LISA O'ROURKE-FULTON Valentine, NE - Streakin Ta Corona, \$29,378; Streakin'flingindisco, \$22,436; Streakin Easy April, \$17,850; Streakinlenawhiskey, \$12,404; Flashlightirishazure, \$6,474; A Streakin Bull, \$5,932; Streakinbaileysfling, \$5,689; Streakin Wild Bug, \$3,679; Baileys Laststreaker, \$3,372; Alotofstreakindisco, \$2,696; Streakin Wild Jet, \$2,110; Streakin French TJ, \$1,902; Streakin Queenie, \$1,570; Flashlightgoldseeker, \$1,265; Streakin Irish Paddy, \$1,162	\$123,758
21. HILL BO & SWITZER JEFF Dodge City, KS - Sho Off, \$50,422; Luthor, \$13,258; Ears No Evil, \$11,417; Buckwyld, \$7,250; Bugs Bunn Knee, \$7,200; Boogie Down Bugs, \$5,830; Saltybugz, \$3,898; Gold D Perks, \$3,830; Famouskansaswildcat, \$3,584; Vini, \$2,585; Nehi Bugz, \$2,018; Bugs In My Martini, \$1,578; Blondy, \$1,500; Hansford, \$891; Bachlor, \$884	\$120,499
22. KENNY NICHOLS Waco, TX - Buggin To Be Fab, \$68,312; KN Fabs Mist Of Fame, \$8,759; KN Fabulous Ladyluck, \$8,515; KN Fabs Gift Of Fame, \$5,084; KN Fabulous Breeze, \$4,970; KN Fabs Lady Fame, \$4,521; KN French Dot Fame, \$3,816; KN Fabulous N Famous, \$3,755; KN Fabs Hollywood, \$1,683; Fabs Perky Ole Man, \$1,499; BS Guys French Girl, \$816; KN Fabspecialeffort, \$526; KN Fabulous Check, \$376; KN Fabulous Fed X, \$374; KN Kamikaze, \$308	\$114,832
23. REIJAN PICKENS Kiowa, OK - Perculatin, \$108,872; RI Rare And Lucky, \$451; Pyro Babe, \$401	\$109,724
24. KATHY L GRIMES Medical Lake, WA - KG Justiceweexpected, \$48,516; KG Blazin Nine Oh, \$36,967; KG Jet O A Go Go, \$14,151; KG Katy Bar The Door, \$2,398; KG Cashin In On Beau, \$1,220; KG Do It For Fame, \$362	\$103,613
25. KAMI KREBS Gordon, NE - KR Last Fling, \$103,410; Streakin French Kiss, \$79	\$103,489
1-25	\$4,767,948
26-9050	\$19,770,726
Grand Total	\$24,538,674

TOP OWNERS ALL DIVISIONS ALL AGES

1. GRADY A & LISA LOCKHART Oelrichs, SD - An Oakie With Cash, \$421,877; Fast An Gold, \$14,757	\$436,634
2. COLE CHARLIE & MARTIN JASON Pilot Point, TX - Slick By Design, \$153,160; Kellies Chick, \$101,564; StreakinFlingIndisCo, \$22,436; Apt To Be Special, \$22,388; Rockette Scientist, \$2,007; Bought Chicka Wowwow, \$1,936	\$303,491
3. LARRY AMMONS Brunswick, GA - Fame Fling N Bling, \$288,678; Brookstone Rose, \$1,976; JW Streakin Hottie, \$385	\$291,039
4. CP VENTURES 3 LLC Boerne, TX - Rare Dillion, \$242,062; Streakin Easy April, \$17,850	\$259,912
5. BRITTANY POZZI TONOZZI Victoria, TX - Babe On The Chase, \$154,350; Kisskiss Bangbang, \$57,097; Fly Fame Fly, \$19,440; Pocket Fulla Pozzis, \$3,881; Open Ta Fame, \$3,411; Smoke N The Babes, \$2,749; A Guy With Proof, \$1,168; Magnolia Martini, \$591; First Real Deal, \$581; Streaking Is Easy, \$487; Doafavorpourthejager, \$251	\$244,006
6. CASSIDY R KRUSE Gillette, WY - JKR Assured Win, \$207,556; Dash To Tim, \$6,012	\$213,567
7. JORDON J PETERSON BRIGGS Chilton, TX - Frenchmans Future, \$164,743; Ima Friendly Guy, \$23,136; Cinnamon On Top, \$6,436; Firin To Be A Hero, \$4,598; Famous Coaltown, \$1,596; Guys Smashinly Yours, \$172	\$200,680
8. TAMI SEMAS Lipan, TX - Smooth N Famous, \$127,989; Guys Amberetto, \$47,811; Ninnekahs Guy, \$12,428; Our Superior Choice, \$690	\$188,918
9. ANGELA GANTER Abilene, TX - Guys French Jet, \$121,392; Blazin Baby J, \$47,109; Cartels Fame, \$9,060; Last Woody Lady, \$854; Firewater Ivanca, \$330	\$178,745

10. DIAN & SHELTON TAYLOR Ponder, TX - Flos Heirress, \$172,030; Nicks Nefertiti, \$1,203; Flos Nicknack, \$429; Chuck Me Right, \$89	\$173,751
11. JOE & CARLA SPITZ Lamar, CO - KR Last Fling, \$103,410; A French Chick, \$22,766; Freckles Ta Fame, \$22,736; Francy Streak, \$6,617; Lady La French, \$3,107; Flashlightgoldseeker, \$1,265; Streakin Boon Dox, \$938; A French Coyote, \$937; Famed French Kiss, \$654; Frenchmans Penny, \$357	\$162,786
12. HALL SHARIN & OESCH BRAD Kingston, OK - Bulleva, \$153,502; Go Go Fame, \$2,092; Frenchmans Day Hay, \$166	\$155,760
13. FRED & NANCY W HUNTER Neola, UT - Flit N Fizz, \$139,086; Wee Boss Man, \$964; Lu Lus Pistol, \$375	\$140,425
14. TAYLOR LYNN JACOB Carmine, TX - Honor Thy Frenchman, \$138,266	\$138,266
15. SHELLY J WEAVER Drumright, OK - Imanonstop Fame, \$131,897; Frenchmans High, \$1,777	\$133,674
16. DINO CHQUEST Cut Off, LA - RLJ High Intedsity, \$36,240; VF A Sporty Design, \$34,415; DTF Way Ta Fire, \$22,501; Buddy Rose, \$16,523; Briscosanggetit, \$5,865; Dashin Live Rockette, \$4,262; The Riverboatgambler, \$3,973; Sixums Lady Luck, \$3,599; Uno Dos Tres, \$2,641; Smart Lil Spade, \$583; I Am A Gold Mine, \$308; Natural Nikki, \$152	\$131,063
17. WEBB RANCH LLC Isabel, SD - Vanilas Sudden Fame, \$98,832; Justalilwilder, \$23,746; One Wild Dash, \$1,684; Cartel Fame, \$400; Vanillas Sudden Fame, \$394	\$125,057
18. JUD LITTLE Ardmore, OK - Coronaforacovergirl, \$50,470; Especially Frosted, \$24,541; JL Dash Ta Heaven, \$11,391; Chicados Cash, \$10,320; Corona Four Fiesta, \$7,178; Brick House Dynasty, \$6,474; Sissys Little Corona, \$5,781; Lindas Sunset, \$2,524; Sooner Superstar, \$1,473; Aced My Bully,	\$124,866

\$1,105; Valiant Heroine, \$835; Ima Cash Dancer, \$744; Coronas At The Bar, \$594; One Frosty Corona, \$509; Flitin Firin Cash, \$334

19. CHAD HART Royston, GA - JK Reckless Lady, \$109,656; VF Strike It Famous, \$896; Kiss This Guy, \$825; Z Jet Corona, \$218	\$111,595
20. WALKER AND COGBURN LLC Ennis, TX - Perculatin, \$108,872	\$108,872
21. PETER M OEN Ardmore, OK - Hip Swingin Gypsy, \$100,404; Regal He Is, \$5,141; Driftintothebar, \$407; Dash Ta Task, \$147; All Chicks Dig Me (PT), \$74	\$106,173
22. TOM STOCKTON Kiowa, CO - TS Hayday Returns, \$94,758; Complete Bully, \$9,967; Fair Profit N Perks, \$132	\$104,857
23. RAFTER NZ RCH & PERF HORSES Roy, MT - Sweet Heart Special, \$99,400; Thunderlighting, \$4,390; Passngosmoothly, \$212	\$104,002
24. DANNY KINGINS FARMS LLC Hazel, KY - Lovin Fame, \$46,706; LLP Streakin Dolly, \$21,176; VF Famous Duck, \$11,786; Easy Down Honor, \$7,717; VF Hi N Famous, \$7,092; VF Takin The Fame, \$2,156; BS Shining Freddie, \$955; PT Cowboy Cadillac, \$533	\$98,122
25. KIMI & STEPHEN NICHOLS Brownwood, TX - KN My Mamas Famous 2, \$45,436; KN Born This Way, \$28,413; KN Famous Czar, \$6,904; KNmargaritaondarocks, \$5,644; KN Red Hot Scandle, \$1,912; KN Beetle Bug, \$1,647; KN Full Of Credit, \$622; KN Del, \$507; KN Fire N Ell, \$141; KN Just Sweet Rhythm, \$75; KN Hugos Cash, \$52	\$91,353
1-25	\$4,327,612
26-10546	\$20,211,062
Grand Total	\$24,538,674

"It's funny how things work," he says with a laugh. "I was going to visit a friend in Florida and I was sitting in the airport. Michele and I had a conversation. I had sold my horse Moe, which was Slick's buddy, and we probably needed to get another gelding in the trailer that could be a backup and Slick's buddy. I hang up and call Kim Thomas, whom I'm friends with, and have always respected her opinion. I told her to keep her eye out and she told me, 'I know of one; it's in Florida.' Well, I'm sitting in the airport about to fly to Florida. She gave me their number and 12 hours later I was trying Toby at a jackpot near Tampa, Florida. I made a couple of runs on him and he seemed pretty nice. It just seemed like fate."

They also added the 5-year-old gelding DM Shot Of Firewater late last year. The gelding is still running with Latricia Duke.

Cole says he's trying to add another horse to the mix, because four rodeo horses simply isn't enough, especially now that McLeod's

middle daughter, Katelyn, is on the road with her.

"You would think that four horses for three girls would be enough," laughs Cole, "but it's not. Luckily, Lindsey wants to futurity, and thankfully, I have several of those."

The Future

While Cole and Martin are some of the leading owners in the business, they're working for a place on the leading breeders' list.

"I only want babies out of proven mares," Martin says. "I don't want to just go buy a Dash Ta Fame mare. I'm only doing embryos and breeding mares that have great bloodlines and records. My goal is if I raise 10 babies a year and I sell six of them, then that will give me enough money for the horses that I'm keeping in training."

They're also stepping into the barrel futurity game more. They currently have two 4-year-olds out of Rockette Ta Fame that Lindsey McLeod is running.

"We're going to try the futurity thing

for a couple of years, but I don't know if that's our cup of tea or not," says Martin, who noted that they're not big into futurities, outside of a few, with their show horses either. "We're dipping our toes in it, but our goal really is rodeo and longevity more than the futurity life."

They've got Feel The Sting with Ryann Pedone and Jolene Montgomery has HP Dash Ta Fiesta.

"Both the Stingray and Fiesta colts are exceptional animals," adds Cole. "They're beautiful and great minded. The goal with the colts is to take them to the futurities and then to the breeding barn. I'm super excited about them."

A Hobby That Pays

As their barrel racing operation has taken on a life of its own, both Cole and Martin have to be reminded that it's still a hobby.

"It's definitely been the most ups and downs of anything that I've been involved with in my life, as far as the highs and lows,"



Slick By Design and Michele McLeod.

Martin says. “It’s really turned into something we didn’t anticipate. Now, we’re just trying to turn it more into a business to pay for itself, and it’s doing pretty well. It’s completely separate from our training business.”

Keeping a business perspective on their hobby has forced them to make some decisions that they’d rather not, like the selling of Skye to Busby Quarter Horses last fall.

“It wasn’t our plan,” Cole says. “Jason and I have been very lucky in the horse business, and it’s allowed us to have an amazing life and lifestyle, but I do want to retire at some point and not have 60 horses in training. It was a financial decision. I hesitated on it, but it was the right decision. I knew it was a great home for her and they have a great stallion. It just felt right.”

Cole says he doesn’t intend to sell any of his other rodeo horses, but with barrel racing being an expensive hobby, he knows he might be faced with that decision again if someone comes with an offer. Sales are and always have been an integral part of a successful horse business.

As for their show business, Cole and Martin still attend at least one major show a month, with their efforts focused toward the championship shows and AQHA Congress.

“We are definitely slowing down with the number of shows that we go to,” says Martin.

“We have quite a big staff who works for us now and they can go to shows by themselves and take some clients. Our show schedule is definitely cutting back. We enjoy going to Calgary [Stampede] and Cheyenne [Frontier Days]. We are really hoping to go to Salinas this year. We try to pick a few neat ones that we want to go to.”

They’re also in it for the adventure.

“Two years ago I took a trailer and drove 6,000 miles in one week with Michele,” says Martin, who noted that Charlie got his turn last year. “I started in Santa Fe, New Mexico, went up to Canada and ended up in Colorado all in a week’s time. Michele would jump on a plane. I would take the truck and Kellies Chick to another rodeo.”

Martin also experienced firsthand the struggles of rodeo.

“We went to six rodeos,” he recalls. “She didn’t get one check and she was literally in 11th place by a hundredth of a second at every rodeo. It was one of those things, ‘How do you keep going? How do you keep driving?’ It’s interesting when I read other people’s stories, like Jackie Ganter’s, when they talk about the highs and lows of how hard it is to be on the road. My hat’s off to those girls. It’s so much harder than I’ve ever imagined.”

Thank you Charlie and Jason from the McLeod family

Jason and Charlie are incredible horsemen. I’m so thankful they chose me to ride Slick By Design, and then saw what an amazing bond Slick and I formed. They have truly changed my life! I’m very excited about their breeding program, and I hope I will be able to ride and win on Slick babies!
~ MICHELE MCLEOD

I’m so grateful that Jason and Charlie chose our family to showcase the talent of their horses. They have an incredible eye for picking great horses. They have helped open so many life-changing doors for me, and for that, I will forever be thankful. ~
KATELYN MCLEOD

I’m so very grateful for Jason and Charlie. They have an eye for good horses and they are great for our industry. I’m also thankful they trust me with their futurity colts.
~ LINDSEY MCLEOD

The Highpoint barrel racing team has a great shot at another successful year.

“We’ve got a really good start this year,” Cole says. “In fact, we’ve had one of our best starts this winter. We’ll get through the winter and then we’ll evaluate. I really appreciate what Michele does because she goes and leaves her family and hits the road. That’s a lot to do. I told her if she got to where she doesn’t want to go anymore, she doesn’t have to. We’ve been to the NFR three times, two more times than I ever dreamed we’d go. Right now it’s looking like we’re going to keep going as long as everyone’s enjoying it and we’ve got the horses.”

Tanya Randall is a veteran contributor to *Barrel Horse News*. Email comments on this article to bhneditorial@cowboypublishing.com.