

## Viva Las Vegas

By Alden Corrigan for HRRC, Inc.  
Photos by Waltenberry Inc.

Question: What do you get when you combine over \$300,000 in added money and prizes, some of the best horses and riders in the country and a city that never sleeps? Answer: The 2011 High Roller Reining Classic.

As part of the Reining Super Series, the High Roller Reining Classic is the second of the four-event series joining the Ariat Tulsa Reining Classic, the Scottsdale Classic Reining Futurity and Horse Show and Southwest Reining Horse Association Futurity and Horse Show. Competitors in these premiere events are eligible to win \$10,000 in both the Open and Non Pro divisions at the end of the series.

Amanda Brumley, Manager of the High Roller Reining Classic, is thrilled to be part of the new program. "Regional events are the foundation of the reining horse industry. They are where people get their first introduction to the sport. As a Producer, I am honored to have one of my events included in this program. I value the support we are providing each other, and that we're able to offer a unique series with big payouts, without any additional fee to our exhibitors." If the 16% increase in exhibitors over 2010 is any indication, the Reining Super Series concept is a winner.

Colleen McQuay, one of the driving forces behind the Reining Super Series shared her enthusiasm for the turnout. "I think the Super Series is definitely attracting attention, and has made a contribution to our events." Colleen goes on to explain the \$10,000 incentive "For the Open rider it is all horses, because we want to encourage the Open riders to show as many horses as they can. As is the norm for Non Pro's we want to make sure that we don't give a multiple horse Non Pro rider a huge advantage, so it's a horse and rider combination (that has the most money earned after attending at least 3 of the 4 shows)."

The High Roller Reining Classic also played host to the first-ever World Reining League (WRL) open meeting. Founder and CEO Michael Miola of Silver Spurs Equine was very pleased with the turnout " To see all of the top 10 riders who were at this show at the meeting was very gratifying. I thought the questions they asked were very intelligent and well thought out. They care. They want to see this (WRL) succeed, so all of their questions were along that line, to make sure they understood what we were trying to accomplish."

Michael went on to discuss the selection process. "Invitations were sent to the top NRHA LTE riders, and we stratified the group. The top 8 riders make up Level 4, and in turn, they will be the Captains of the 4 shows that we are going to have during the year. Then we divided the rest of the group by earnings in to Level 3, Level 2 and Level 1. The Captains have to pick one from each level, so that at each competition

while the names (of the competitors) will be different, the level of competition will remain the same."

At the end of the meeting Michael shared his assessment of the interaction. "We invited anyone who wanted information as well as the riders, so it was an open meeting. I was nervous in the sense that I didn't know what to expect. Were they going to say this was the dumbest idea they had ever heard of, or were they going to embrace it? But clearly it was embraced whole-heartedly. They applauded when I announced that the conditions were unanimously approved by the NRHA, and they did again at the end of the meeting.

Now that I know I have the riders support and the NRHA's support we're going to reach out to the sponsors so they can help the WRL underwrite these events. I think it'll be absolutely fantastic for the sponsors. We're going to pack those stands with 8,9,10 thousand people and they're going to have a captive audience. One thing that I've learned in my years of sponsoring shows is that the people are very loyal to their sponsors. If they see that you're supporting their sport, they're going to support you."

For more information on the World Reining League visit:

[www.worldreiningleague.com](http://www.worldreiningleague.com)

All the prize money at the High Roller Reining Classic was not won in the pen. Jeri Allen of Redwood City, California won the FarmVet sponsored 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Play It Forward Poker Tournament Benefiting the Equestrian Aid Foundation. This was a long sought after victory for Jeri who had coveted the crystal trophy from afar. "For 3 years I have been trying to win this trophy! The first year I finished 3<sup>rd</sup> and my friends bought me a replica of the trophy for Christmas. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year I was out in a minute flat, and this year I've been listening to my mentors; Jim Warren, Jose Zamora and Mike Murakami who say you just need to know when to hold'em and know when to fold'em. Somehow I made it to the end and now have the trophy along with the bragging rights. What made it even more fun was that Pam Ward of PARW Buckles surprised me by sponsoring my entry fee. "

R. Scot Evans, president of the Equestrian Aid Foundation

[www.equestrianaidfoundation.org](http://www.equestrianaidfoundation.org) said, "The Play It Forward Poker Tournament is a really fun way to bring the competitive edge out of the ring and onto the poker tables. The money raised through this event will assist horsemen from all walks of life and all types of riding."

### In The Family Way

It may seem counter intuitive for Las Vegas, but at this year's HRRC there was an overwhelming feeling of family. John and Rosie Irish along with Martin and Kim Muehlstaetter, and Corey and Kristin Cushing were proudly showing off their new

little bundles of joy, and slowly but surely word got out that Casey and Nicole Deary are also expecting another addition to their family. There were kids everywhere, many wearing cowboy hats and belt buckles almost as big as they were. On a larger scale, there was a genuine sense of community both in the barn and in the pen. Everyone wanted to win, but only if their competition was bringing their "A" game as well.

Mandy McCutcheon of Aubrey, Texas kept it all in the family as well by riding Tim and Colleen McQuay's Coronas In Hollywood (Hollywood Dun It x Coronas Missin Star) to the winners circle in the \$15,000 added Spooks Gotta Gun Non Pro Futurity besting a field of 17 with a score of 144.5. This will be Mandy's last ride on Coronas In Hollywood as fellow Non Pro Shaundra Ruckman has purchased the 3-year old.

Mandy felt the trip west was well worth the effort. "In my eyes any trip to Vegas is a good one. Adding a Reining event to that makes it even better! Brumley Management does a great job at the show trying to make sure everybody is happy and has what they need. The facility is amazing. To have everything you need under one roof is so nice. I love that I can watch the show from my room and know what is going on.

My last trip to the HRRRC was not nearly as successful, so this year I was determined to make it better. Coronas In Hollywood, aka, Oscar is a gelding by Hollywood Dun It out of Dont Miss This. Dont Miss This was one of my best show mares and is still very special to me. So showing her offspring has a little extra meaning to me. I was 3rd on him in the Non Pro Futurity in Tulsa and then we headed to the HRRRC. He was all business from the moment he arrived in Vegas. I was thrilled with the way he showed for me. Unfortunately he didn't make the trip home with us. Shaundra Ruckman, a Non Pro client of Martin Muehlstaetter bought him the day after the Non Pro Futurity. It was very hard to let him go, but I know The Muehlstaetter's and Shaundra will do a good job with him and take good care of him."

Mandy, also had her family cheering for her, as husband Tom and parents Colleen and Tim McQuay made the trek to Las Vegas as well. "Everyday I think how lucky we are to do something we love so much, the support my family and crew give me is the only reason I can do all this!"

Tish Fappani of Scottsdale, Arizona had 3 generations of her family cheering her on in the \$40,000 added Conquistador Whiz Non Pro Derby, and she did not disappoint. She and her own Premier Diamond (Like A Diamond x Sexy Chexy Nic) who she shared at HRRRC with husband Andrea posted a score of 222.5 to out run a field of 31 competitors for the win "He's finally feeling like a seasoned show horse. I had some really good shows on him at the end of his 4-year old year but never won anything on him. I was always up there and super happy with the way he was showing and what we were getting done in the pen, but he feels like a show horse now.

We bought him as a 4-year old but he's out of one of our client's mares and Andrea chose Like A Diamond for that mare to be bred to, so it's like we've had him since he was a baby, so he's been with us for a long time."

Did Tish have the 2011 Trifecta Non Pro Reining Challenge trip to the Four Seasons Jackson Hole on her radar? "No...Andrea and I were laughing at each other and he said 'Gosh darn it Tish, why didn't you show at the Cactus Reining Classic?' To be eligible to win the Trifecta, the same horse and rider combination had to compete at the Cactus Reining Classic, Reining By The Bay and High Roller Reining Classic, the last two of which Tish won. "Last year over the winter "Ace" had time off, and with the move from California to Arizona we weren't legged up and we weren't ready. That wasn't a big focus for me at all. I said we'll shoot for the NRBC, but now Andrea's saying next year, that's it, you're hitting all 3 shows."

Speaking of the 2011 Trifecta Non Pro Reining Challenge, no one was more surprised than Vicki Dias of Kingsburg, California to find out she and her 5-year old A Bright Tag (Whiz N Tag Chex x Genuine Starbright) had won the trip to Jackson Hole, Wyoming by accumulating a total of \$6,614.09 over the 3 show series to put a lock on the top spot. "I didn't even have this on my radar. I just try to stay consistent. It's show-by-show, class-by-class. I just try to do the best job I can. I was having a really tough week, and having trouble getting him stopped. It was probably more me than him. When I walked into the pen I thought this could go really, really good or maybe not so good." I just can't believe how it ended up. I'm so excited! My husband was so funny...he never comes to horse shows, and I find out and he stands there totally clueless, once he found out that we were going to the Four Seasons Jackson Hole, he was so excited. We can't wait!

Vicki acknowledges that "I would never have gotten to where I am this year without Kim Yancey, she has been a great trainer and coach and I appreciate her patience and her expertise. She is awesome!"

### Showing While Showing

Casey and Nicole Deary of Weatherford, Texas had quite the show in Las Vegas. Nicole and her mother's Tagged My Chic (Whiz N Tag Chex x Cheeky Boom) marked a 147 to win 3 out of 4 of the Non Pro Ancillary Divisions (slate 2) and the coveted HRRC Limited Non Pro High Point Bob's Custom Saddle. Husband Casey rode Carlos Gonzalez' 3-year old buckskin Wimp Daddy (Wimpys Little Step x Cody Kay Quixote) to a 224.5 to win the Level 4 division of the \$70,000 added Spooks Gotta Gun Open Futurity out of a field of 33.

Nicole shares how the pair met when they were 15 and both competing in 4H. "He had Reining horses and Stock horses and I had done the all around. We both did horse judging, and that was the extent of our showing. It was always my dream to

go to an NRHA show or to qualify for the Quarter Horse World Show. I thought it doesn't get any better than that.

We were friends a really long time. I moved away to school and moved back. I ran into him at the Paint World Show in 2000 and he was working for Clint Haverty. Casey had been in an accident when he was 16, and he had 8 of his front teeth knocked out. He went without those teeth for 3 years. We dated when he had no teeth, and I wouldn't kiss him." Casey chimes in "That was the longest year of my life!" Nicole continues, "Then we were married in 2002, we were running the business and I had a job. After 3 years we had Wyatt our Short Stirrup son, followed in 2008 by our second son Owen."

Casey will tell you that he is part of Nicole's business, not the other way around "She does all of the office work, all the billing, entries, hotels, and contacting clients about the show schedule. The pair juggles 55-60 horses at home, 30 of which are in the show barn, as well as training clients that haul in for lessons and meet up with them at shows, many of them Non Pros. We take about 25-30 horses to our local shows and half of those are haul-ins because there really isn't anyone in our area that will let them take a \$40 or \$50 lesson and then give them help at the horse show. There are a lot of people out there who can't afford to keep a horse in training, and I've got to make sure that they have the availability to get the help and be able to go to a show."

Nicole's philosophy is all or nothing "I am competitive and I take it really seriously. I go to the shows 90% of the time, we go as a family and I love that. I don't get to show very often. I think I showed 3 times last year, and this year Reining By The Bay and here, and this will probably be my last one. Now that I'm pregnant and the baby is due in March, this is great timing for me."

Both Casey and Nicole's parents became involved in horses after their children did. The mare Tagged My Chic was actually bought for Nicole's mother "We bought her from the Schmersal's, Ginger Schmersal's father raised her. We found her in November before the Futurity, and my mother said that she would like Casey to train her and finish her, and then my mom would get to show her as a 4-year old. I started riding her before Reining By The Bay, and took her there and won a Novice Horse Non Pro class there, my mother showed her in Ft. Worth in all 4 divisions and marked a 211.5 and won \$1,800. It was a real thrill, my mother had never scored that high." Casey who coaches his mother-in-law adds, "I was in shock."

The game plan was for Nicole to get the mare in the pen and then her mother would show her in the Non Pro Derby. "I schooled her and marked a 71.5, so I entered everything in the Non Pro classes. The mare is very true, very honest, and she doesn't take one step without you telling her. She doesn't have any cheat in her, and she stops really, really big. " The strategy paid off and the pair marked a 147.0 to win 3 out of 4 of their classes.

On the other hand, Wimp Daddy, Casey's Futurity horse came to him by way of Mexico. "We got him in late January of his 3-year old year. It was a miracle that he survived the quarantine (in Mexico) without a scratch. The owners were customers of mine for several years and I coached their son. They called me and asked if I would take this horse. He came, wasn't scared and does a lot of nice things, so the horse fits me really well. The initial plan was for the son to get to show him, so I told the son that I was going to break his legs if he tried to take the horse! They laughed. They are very pleased to see him be so successful in the Open. I'm just going to school him a couple of times before the Futurity, and then let him rest and get strong."

### Team Fappani Banks Over \$50,000

The \$70,000 added Conquistador Whiz Open Derby was a fight to the finish in the Level 4 Division. Andrea Fappani was leading on Rancho Oso Rio's Country Custom (Custom Crome x JJM Sunny Delight) with a score of 228.0 for most of the 44 horse Level 4 Open Derby, that was until Craig Schmersal riding his own Pale Face Dunit (Gunner x Lena Dunit) ran into the ring from the back of the schooling area and marked a 229.0.

Fappani was not going to settle for second so he pushed Rancho Oso Rio's Custom Spook (Smart Spook x Custom Spinderella) farther than he ever had before in their career together and marked a 231.0 to bring home the \$12,422 pay check to Rancho Oso Rio owners Jim and Pat Warren. Rounding out the top 4 was yet another Fappani ride, Tish's horse Premier Diamond (Like A Diamond x Sexy Chexy Nic) marking a 226.5. Andrea had captured 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place, and only WEG team gold medalist and individual silver medalist Schmersal could crack into the top 4.

The Open Derby domination by Team Fappani didn't end there. Team Fappani members Arno Honstetter tied for 5<sup>th</sup> with a 225.5 on Jan Peterson's Star For The Chicks (Smart Starbuck x Dun It By Chick) and Luke Gagnon was 7<sup>th</sup> on the Rancho Oso Rio entry Brennas Dream (Magnum Chic Dream x Brennas Red Dunit). Luke was also 13<sup>th</sup> on Courtney Ryan's Whiz Jewels (Topsail Whiz x Hot Hollywood Jewels) marking a 222.5. In total the Fappani Team brought home over \$50,000.

Fappani discussed his 3 very ~~Derby different~~ ~~different~~ ~~Derby~~ rides "Custom Spook is the horse that I know the best (out of the 3). The first horse, Country Custom, this is the first time I have ever shown him. We bought him at Reining By The Bay for Pat (Warren) to show as a Non Pro horse, and she wanted me to try him the first time just to see what he feels like, and then she's going to show him next time. I didn't know what to expect of him, and he was great. I was very happy with him. He is a 5-year old that we bought as a seasoned horse, but he actually showed like a 3-year old. He's really honest in the show pen and he has over \$150,000 in earnings in the Non Pro so he's been shown a lot by Kim Muehlstaetter and her husband Martin,

and they've done an awesome job, and I think Pat's going to have a lot of fun with him.

Premier Diamond, my wife has been showing the whole time. He missed his 3-year old year due to an injury, but this is only the second time I have shown him myself. I've ridden him and prepared him for her many times, so I know him pretty well, but I don't know him that well in the show pen. I wasn't supposed to show him here, I was supposed to show Nics Little Bud, but he had a high fever so I couldn't show him, so I swapped his entry with Tish's horse at the last minute, so we weren't planning on doing him.

The horse I did the best on, Custom Spook, I don't know if he's the best horse of the 3, but he's the one I pushed the hardest, because I wanted to win it. I was winning and then Craig beat me, so that pushed me to try a little harder. I wasn't planning on showing him that hard because he's another horse that Pat is showing. She showed him yesterday in the Non Pro Derby and I just decided that we were going to win it one way or the other. If we weren't going to win it we were going down trying.

He's a horse that I know very well. I've trained him since the beginning of his 2-year old year. I broke him and basically did all the work on him so I know him pretty well. I struggled with him as a 3-year old. He always made the top 10 or top 15, but he never stepped up to be what I was hoping he would be, then in the last 2 shows, Reining By The Bay and here, I think I figured out what it takes to prepare him right, and he really stepped up to the plate. I found out the harder you push him the better he is."

How does Andrea juggle Open horses, client's horses, Non Pros (including his wife) and his kids who if they aren't holding his hand, are always near by "I have a great group right now...This last year has been a blessing for me. I have multiple guys, but I have two main guys at home, Arno and now Luke, that just started this year and is someone who really fits the program. I have 75 horses in training, but more than that, I have a lot of young horses that take a lot of time, and I've been gone a lot....the last 4 weeks I haven't been home at all, and these guys have been training these horses for me. We brought 15 horses here, and without this team I couldn't do it. My hat goes off to them. They're the ones behind the scenes, and that's what counts. If you don't have a good group behind you, I don't care how good you are, you're always going to struggle. Somehow we need to give the exposure to these guys because they show and they do well. They placed up there, both of them. I can tell they put more effort in me doing well than in them doing well. It's important to me that they get the recognition that they deserve. It's hard because the public doesn't see that. They think its Andrea, Andrea, Andrea, but it's everybody behind Andrea that makes it happen. "

For complete results visit: [www.highrollerreiningclassic.com](http://www.highrollerreiningclassic.com)

