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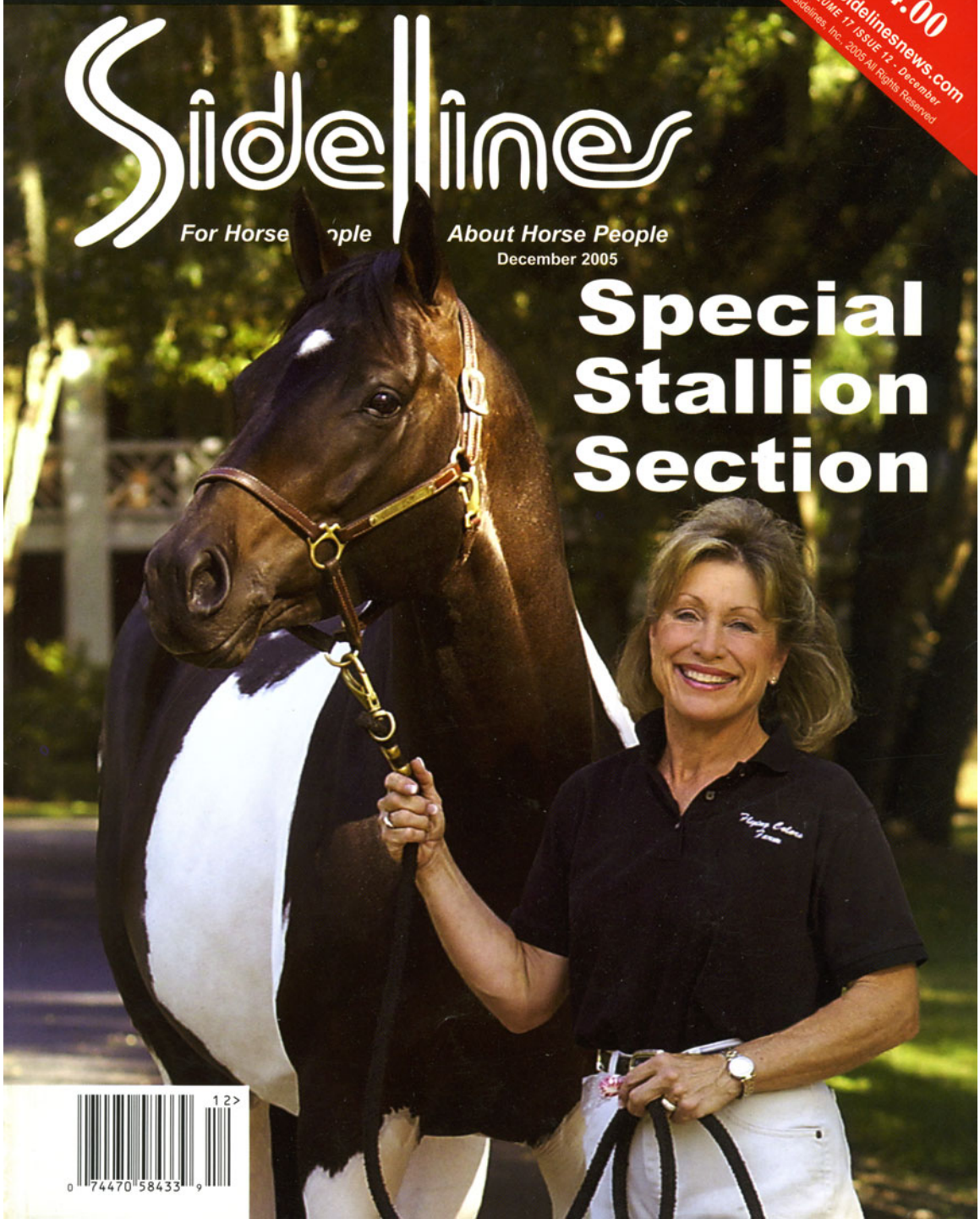
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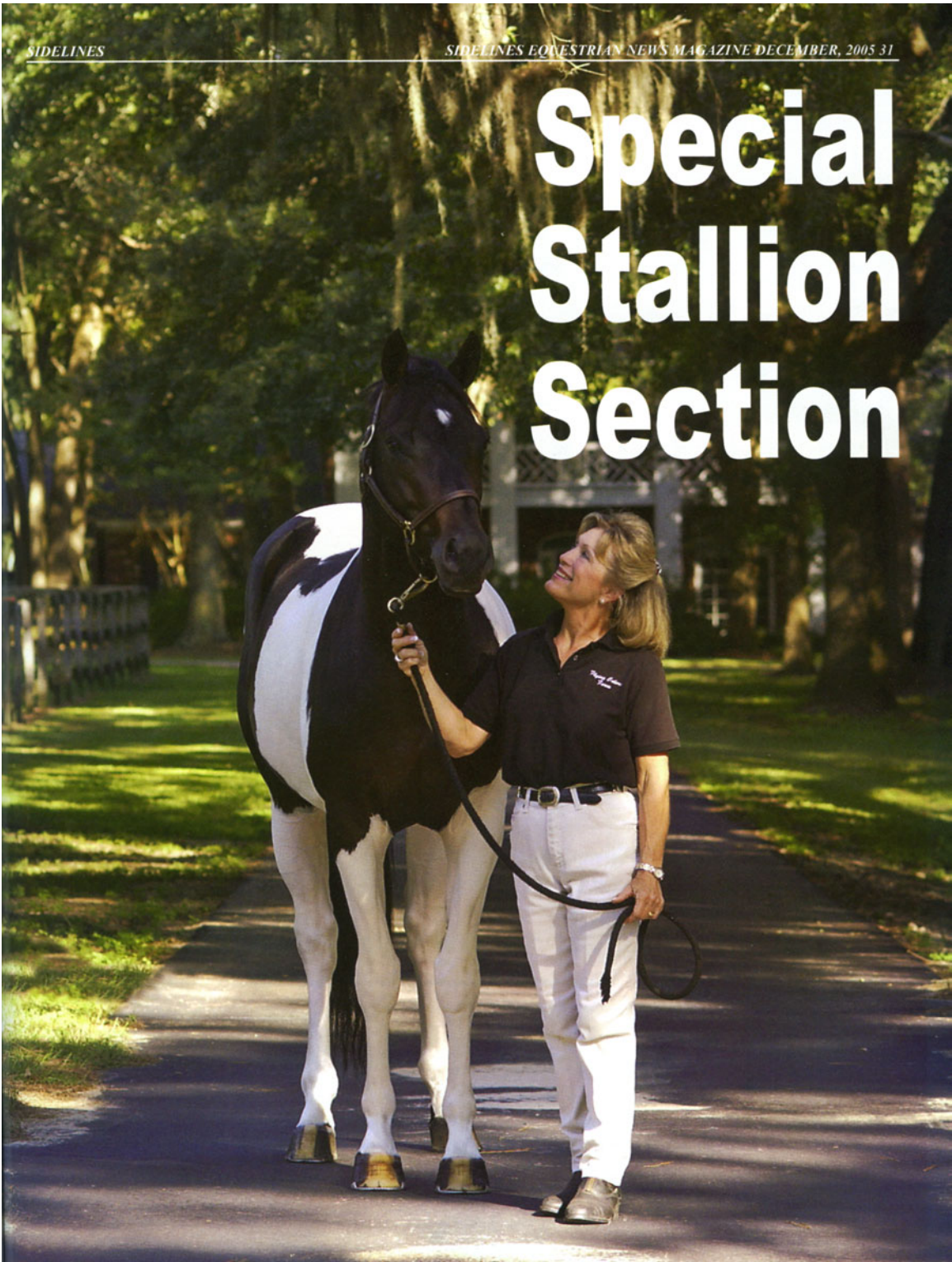
December 2005

Special Stallion Section

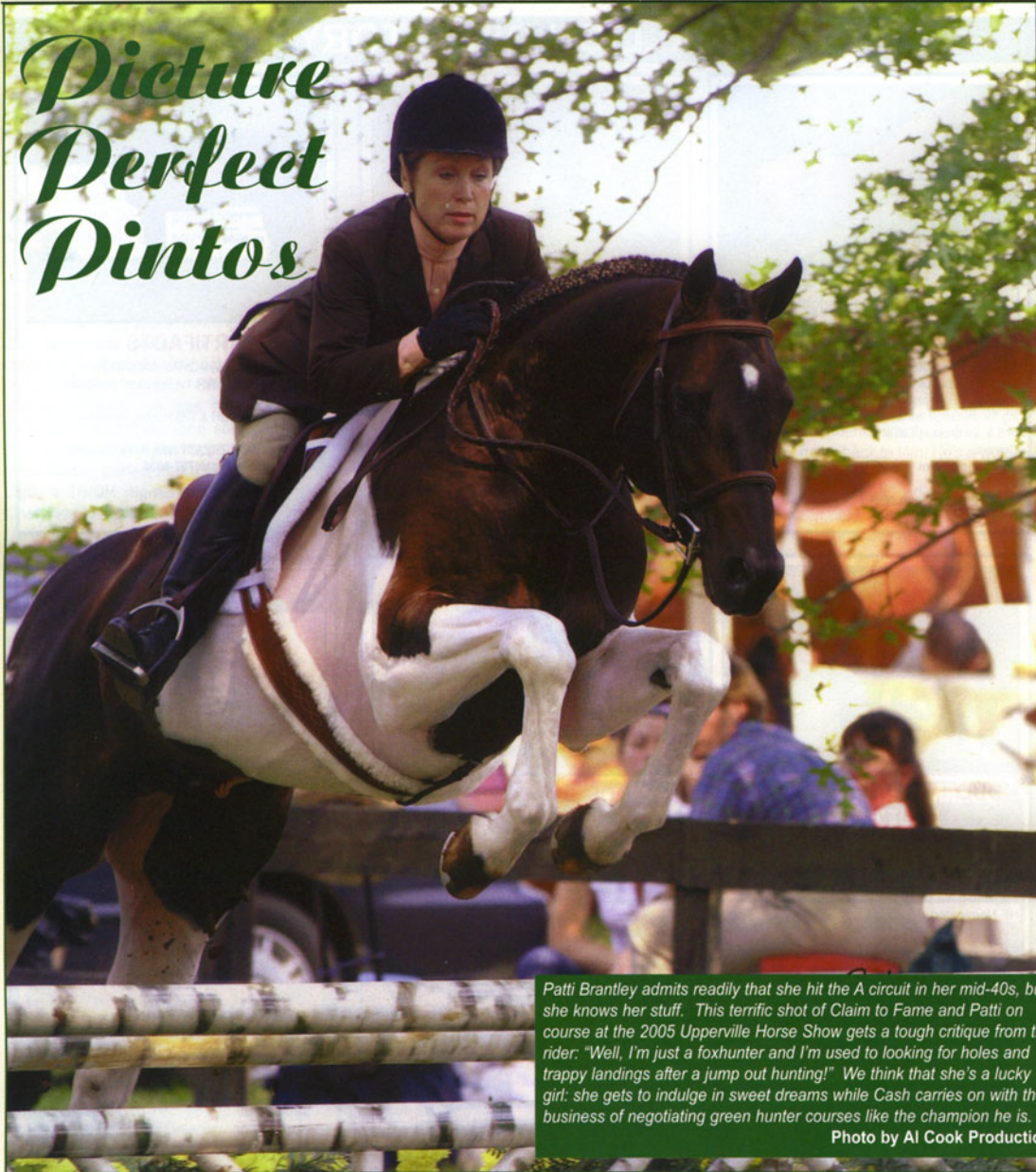
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\$4.00
VOLUME 17 ISSUE 12 - December
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Special Stallion Section



Picture Perfect Pintos



Patti Brantley admits readily that she hit the A circuit in her mid-40s, but she knows her stuff. This terrific shot of Claim to Fame and Patti on course at the 2005 Upperville Horse Show gets a tough critique from the rider: "Well, I'm just a foxhunter and I'm used to looking for holes and trappy landings after a jump out hunting!" We think that she's a lucky girl: she gets to indulge in sweet dreams while Cash carries on with the business of negotiating green hunter courses like the champion he is.

Photo by Al Cook Productions

by Lauren Giannini

Patti Brantley bubbles over when she starts talking about her horses – and why not?

This dedicated breeder and versatile equestrian has a herd of joyously colored pintos and solids, each endowed with outstanding temperament and jumping ability. She stands Claim to Fame, a.k.a. Cash, who to date has four foals on the ground, each tracing its lineage back to Samber, pinto Dutch Warmblood stallion rated '10' in temperament and trainability at his 100 day testing in Holland.

Claim to Fame (1998 Pinto Oldenburg stallion by Hall of Fame out of Akula) is about 80 per cent Thoroughbred and the rest Warmblood. Akula's lineage includes several great classic Thoroughbreds, especially the Tom Fool line of Buckpasser and Buckfinder, who sired Akula's daddy Assault Landing. It's a powerfully talented genetic inheritance. Claim to Fame received a nine for type when he was approved by Rheinland-Pfalz-Saar International.

As for the young stallion's temperament and trainability, Samber would be proud of his show hunter son. At the 2005 Warrenton Horse Show, Claim to Fame earned the Grand Hunter Reserve Championship.



Patti Brantley enjoys a joyful gallop on Her Foxhunter in the final test of the North American Field Hunter Championship, held on the scenic race-course at Glenwood Park, Middleburg, Va. Patti and Dakota have eight seasons together in the hunting field. They earned the reserve championship in some very competitive field trials

Photo by Lauren Giannini

from the alpha female at Flying Colors.

In fact, Patti has a passion for that 'mystical relationship between horse and rider' – she knows firsthand what it means. During the recent North American Field Hunter Championships, held in Virginia, enthusiasts witnessed Patti and Her Foxhunter in action. They made a spectacular showing during

He also won the Special Conformation Hunter Division.

Although Art Deco, sire of Hall of Fame, is known primarily for dressage prospects, his own sire Samber gets progeny that excel in both dressage and upper level jumping. Patti will be the first to remind you to look back in a pedigree for great ancestors like Samber – ridden by a junior to great success in jumpers – and always be sure to take a good, long look at the mare.

"A lot of Cash's elegance comes from Akula's side – she has Tom Fool and Buckpasser, two great Thoroughbreds," she states. "I love the pinto color, but never underestimate the importance of the mare. I infuse a lot of Thoroughbred blood into my horses and that's why they look and move so elegantly."

Akula is everything a good Thoroughbred should be – and then some. At the age of 15, after producing six foals, she was judged premium. "I've had her 10 years – even hunted her barefoot – and she's still that sound," says Patti.

While bloodlines contribute mightily to successful progeny, there's more to breeding good horses than sires and dams. Patti starts educating youngsters from the time she personally foals the mares at Flying Colors Farm. She imprints newborn progeny, after they've had a chance to meet mama and nurse, with every possible first experience. They learn about noise and vibration from clippers, gentle grooming with brush and curry, having their hairy little hooves handled and tapped to simulate what the farrier will do – everything from A to Z in the equine lexicon. These four-legged children live what they learn

the judged hunts the preceding week and qualified for the finals on October 2nd at Glenwood Park. Their first ever attempt was pretty impressive and earned the reserve championship.

"I was so pleased with Dakota (Her Foxhunter)," says Patti. "As a hunter rider always getting seven out of eight spots, on both trips in those two last tests, I got it right! It helps so much to be on a horse you don't worry about."

Although Patti wasn't the only competitor riding a horse of color, her pinto stood out. Dakota's performance, manners and way of going both on the flat and over hunting fences, up and down the hilly terrain surrounding Glenwood Park, made Patti the envy of many of the spectators trading opinions on their favorites. When judges awarded the reserve championship to Patti Brantley and Her Foxhunter, a few of their supporters felt slightly miffed that they didn't win the trophy. Patti, however, was her usual upbeat self: very pleased to be there, having all that fun, collecting all those priceless memories. In fact, such was the magic of their partnership that someone bought the horse then and there. This

continued on page 58



Sane and sensible attitude plus athletic ability pretty much describes Her Foxhunter's performance in the NA Field Hunter Championships. It's also a testimony to Patti Brantley's ability to make horses on the flat and over fences

Photo by Lauren Giannini

PICTURE PERFECT PONITOS

continued from page 57

left Patti in floods of tears for days until the horse gods intervened: ask no questions and we'll tell no lies. Patti got back Her Foxhunter, and this made her very happy, because that horse really is one in a million the way he carries his rider safely through the crazy thrills of the cavalry charge when hounds are in full cry. They are walking advertisements for the horse & rider partnership that makes Patti's progeny *uber-special*. She knows what it is and nurtures it.

"I want to find the best owners for my horses," says Patti. "Every horse at my farm gets individualized attention. From the time my husband and I foal the babies – for the first 24 hours of life, I'm with them all the time, imprinting them. I introduce them to the world, I ride them, and I feel a great responsibility as an owner and breeder to get my foals the best possible homes. I bring them up to have that special horse-rider relationship."

Flying Colors Farm resulted from an odd combination of serendipitous circumstances, which always makes total sense after the fact. Patti served as political wife during her husband Bobby's career as Lt. Governor of Florida. But wait: it goes back even further.

"My first meaningful horse was a palomino pinto paint when I was 14 years old," recalls Patti. "He was just an all around backyard horse. My husband likes pintos and when he was in politics and our sons were grown, I bought a fancy Arab hunter for myself and he bought a paint to ride in parades.

"In '86 we moved to Tallahassee and the first time I got to foxhunt, my Arab was too hot, but Cowboy, Bobby's paint, was a phenomenon in the hunt field," she adds. "Then, for a few years, we lived in Colorado part-time when my husband got out of politics. I had empty nest syndrome, no more political wife duties. All of a sudden, I'm 40 years old and I have nothing to do. Bobby said, 'You can raise horses – we'll get a farm.' Little did he know!"

Flying Colors Farm took off in Florida in 1995. At that point, Patti wanted a new horse for foxhunting and she looked for a pinto, but it took 2½ years to find Dakota, formally known as Her Foxhunter. She wanted a horse at least 16 hands, Thoroughbred-y, who moved with big strides.

"There were only a few," she recalls. "Liz Hall had just imported Art Deco, and I bought a mare by that stallion – Queen's Colors – and threw myself into breeding. I talked to everyone, read everything, and immersed myself completely. I knew I wanted to breed hunter-type pintos. I wanted size, movement and elegance.

"I bought a black Thoroughbred mare (Akula) and bred her to Hall of Fame," adds Patti. "I wanted hunter types. The second foal was Claim to Fame. I had really done very little showing. I didn't ride on the A circuit until I was 46, but I'd ridden all my life. I stay on pretty good even though I didn't grow up in junior equitation. I bring along a lot of youngsters."

In 1999, the Brantleys invited Marty and Daphne Woods, Masters of Live Oak Hounds (Fl.) along with their guests J.W.Y ("Duck") and Glennie Martin, MFH Green Spring Valley in Maryland to come for dinner. They toured Flying Colors' barn and Duck spotted Claim to Fame and said words to the effect of: Oh my God, this horse has to go to Devon. Patti recalls turning to Bobby and asking, "How do I do that?" Duck suggested several good people to call. Following a foxhunting connection, Patti called Oliver Brown in Virginia. He agreed because both Martin and Woods have solid reputations as good judges of horses.



Claim To Fame relaxes with breeder/owner/rider Patti Brantley at Flying Colors Farm. When the approved sport horse sire isn't in the hunter rings winning championships and reserves, he's endowing offspring with his temperament, Devon blue-ribbon winning conformation, and outstanding athletic ability on the flat and over fences

Photo by Bobby Brantley

es. Patti sent a video as requested and didn't falter when Oliver called and asked (slight editing here): Holy smokes, what are they going to do with him?

Brown knew that in 103 years a pinto horse had not won in hand at Devon, but he also recognized that Claim to Fame had the quality to win. They carried on, against the odds, and triumphed.

In his Best Colt class, competing against 15 or 17 super-nice youngsters, Claim to Fame made history in 2000 by going on record as the only Pinto horse ever to win at the Devon Hunter Breeding Show. Granted, in Best Young Horse, judges put the pinto colt behind two showed by Kenny Wheeler, but Claim to Fame has his Devon blue rosette for Best Young Colt.

In 2003, Claim to Fame showed pre-green in his first season on the circuit and earned a fair number of championships and reserves at HITS Ocala and Jacksonville, to name a few. Cash (isn't that a great nickname for Claim to Fame?) returned home to grow up some more, breed a few mares and freeze some semen. He spent the summer of 2004 at Salamander Farm to acquire more competitive polish with Jane Gaston and Billy Moroney. This winter Cash will show on the circuit in Florida and Patti says they're going to Atlanta, also.

"How many stallions can be ridden by a 55-year-old amateur who didn't start showing until she was 46?" Patti asks. "I'm really looking forward to showing him. I have a couple of mares bred to him for next year. In one year I want only four foals, at most. I like to spend time with them individually, work them in hand, show them the world, and give them a good foundation. Plus, I have to sneak in time for my first love, foxhunting, especially now that I'm field master for Live Oak. Cash has been very successful in the hunters and he's so well behaved, I'm tempted to try him at eventing, but who knows. Maybe when he's older I'll hunt him."

Patti sneaks in a few more breathless words about the pinto Voltaire colt (yep, number one in the USEF hunter sire listings) out of her Hallmark mare by Hall of Fame. "He's a pretty dark bay and white pinto weanling," she says. "And we have a colorful black and white homozygous colt by Cash, big and fancy, but who knows where they'll end up and what they'll enjoy doing. Maybe one of them will be my next event horse. "My husband says the horses will keep me young or kill me," adds Patti with a big grin. "I'll be 58 when I start Voltaire's colt. Some days, I don't even get off the farm and most days I'm totally happy, staying at home, fooling with my horses. I just love them."