

NO-FAIL TWITCHES: LEARN HOW TO SAFELY RESTRAIN YOUR HORSE

The International Magazine of Stock Horse Culture

WESTERN HORSEMAN[®]

Top 20 Ranch Horse Programs

**Inside the Ranches
Producing Today's
Best Working
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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

BITS, SPURS, ACCESSORIES & TRAINING AIDS

Find just the right bit, or take your training to a new level.

Hansen Silver

Oakdale, California

(209) 847-7390; HansenSilver.com

Tim and Marie Hansen, along with son Tim, daughter-in-law Kelleigh, and grandson Wyatt, all share a common interest in ranching and rodeo. They also share a common business with the family's hand-engraved silver business. Hansen Silver offers silver trim for saddles and headstalls, silver buckles and conchos, belt buckles, as well as knife sides, money clips, and jewelry. All of their products are sold wholesale through distributors and retail stores. "Nobody offers the selection we do," says Tim. "We offer sterling overlay, solid sterling, silverplate, brass, and rust. We keep a good inventory and can ship most orders the same day."

Gear Insight: All of their products are hand engraved, not stamped or embossed. For a list of dealers and distributors, or to see the range of products offered, log on to their Web site, HansenSilver.com.

Heel-O-Matic Training Systems

Longmont, Colorado

888-433-5464, heelomatic.com

Heel-O-Matic roping machines from Perfect Practice provide realistic, customizable practice that simulates a variety of cattle run patterns. They can be used in any sized riding area, and almost anyone can help you practice. "Controlled practice is good for you, and even better for your horse," says Jan Johnson of Heel-O-Matic. "If you keep live cattle, a Heel-O-Matic can improve your practice results with a smaller herd, and it can reduce your investment and risk, as well as your feed, veterinary, containment and time expenses."

Headers and heelers can work on position, swing, timing and delivery with Heel-O-Matic's "patented rear leg hop" and quick-release head and horns.



PARELLI EQUIPMENT KIT

They're built to take a hard hitting dolly, and each machine comes with a full year warranty.

There is a Perfect Practice machine for every roper. The tow vehicle generates the speed and hop of the popular Ground Driven Trainer. The Pro adds the option of stationary practice to regular roping runs. The Sled, designed for headers, provides real-time practice alone or with a partner, with stationary back legs that snap back into place. The Bones, the most realistic heading dummy on the market, has three sets of horns in different lengths. Check the website for complete information on the full line of products.

Gear Insight: "Heel-O-Matic is the essential tool for anyone who ropes. I can ride multiple horses in an hour and get forty identical runs. I can dictate the entire run and set up any scenario," says Clay O'Brien Cooper, seven-time world champion.

Les Vogt's Performax Bits

Arroyo Grande, California

877-LES-VOGT; www.LesVogt.com

"Finding the bit that would maximize your horse's potential used to be just hit or miss," says NRCHA Hall of Fame Trainer Les Vogt. "But through many years of



LES VOGT'S PERFORMAX BIT



HEEL-O-MATIC TRAINING SYSTEM

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trial and error I started to understand just how dramatically leverage ratios—that is, how high or low the mouthpiece is placed on the cheek piece—combined with the correct mouth piece for a particular horse, could really improve his performance.

Vogt explains that there are six different pressure points on the horse that bits can affect. His Web site features lots of information to help you learn how to select the bit that will provide the best combination for your horse.

His Performax bit line features an extensive selection of mouth and cheek combinations that are both a pleasure to use and to look at. They're meticulously crafted and finished with a custom alloy overlay that gives the look of sterling without the price. If you're looking for something really special, Vogt also creates heirloom-quality silver bits and spurs that can be customized just for you.

"I stand for outstanding horsemanship," Vogt says. "And carrying on the wonderful Spanish horsemanship traditions is important to me. We create bits that will deliver for today's rider, and then enhance them with the beautiful traditional designs."

Gear Insight: "I feel a strong wave of riders who are more educated on bits and what they can do," says Vogt. "Most folks used to just buy a bit because it was pretty. Now they're figuring out how much the right bit can improve their horse's performance."

Mikmar Bit Company

Fallbrook, California
866-MIKMAR7; mikmar.com

In the early 1950s, California judge and trainer Frank Evans developed and patented the Mikmar Four Point Pressure bit to help improve his horses' responsiveness, flexion, and relaxation. Some 40 years later, when Frank was a guest on Larry Mahan's show, "Horseworld," he left some bits for the show's staff to try. It was then that Dan Weyand, the show's producer, and his wife, Kim, had a chance to try them. "We were impressed," says Kim. "In the barn where I was working, word spread fast and it became a problem—people kept taking my bits to use!"

After Frank Evans passed away, Dan and Kim purchased the few remaining bits and parts and opened the Mikmar Bit Company in August 2001.

They offer six "Four Point Pressure" bit styles, and Kim says the best seller in the Western market is the original Training bit. It works to disperse nose, mouth, chin, and poll pressure when a rider contacts the rein. The nose rope applies mild pressure to the nose, slows down the action of the bit, and takes some concussion out of the mouth. The flat/wide mouthpiece also aids in the bit's slow action. The bits are non-pinching, with a copper roller that stimulates saliva and keeps a nervous horse pacified.

Gear Insight: "It's excellent for re-schooling horses with bit evasion issues and produces a good head set," says Kim. Mikmar offers a DVD that explains the



MIKMAR
TRAINING
BIT

Mikmar bit product line in-depth, and also sponsors Equestrian Nation on RFD-TV, which demonstrates how the bits are used.

Parelli Get Started Equipment Kit

Pagosa Springs Colorado
800-642-3335;

Parellinaturalhorsetraining.com

Renowned natural horsemanship educators Linda and Pat Parelli have put together the Parelli "Get Started Equipment Kit," which provides you with the tools you need to start training with their Get Started DVD.

The kit—which includes a halter, lead rope, Carrot Stick® and Savvy String—helps riders start developing communication, cooperation, and trust while working safely on the ground.

Specially designed for natural horsemanship training techniques offering superior durability, the halter is hand-tied with balanced, well-placed knots. It's made from high-quality, soft yachting rope that offers the ultimate in softness and strength and withstands salt and moisture. Also made from high-quality yachting braid, the 12-foot lead rope is smooth, flexible and features a latigo popper. A sturdy swivel snap prevents the rope from twisting and improves feel. The 4-foot Carrot® Stick features a leather loop and rubber handle for non-slip, comfortable grip. It's made with a non-flex design to provide more feel, accuracy and options on the ground

and when riding. The Savvy String is a 6-foot long rope designed with a smooth, 1/4 inch, high-quality yachting braid with looped end and latigo popper.

Gear Insight: "When communication and trust is established on the ground, a rider is naturally set up for success when riding," says Pat Parelli. "The Get Started Equipment Kit helps the rider with basic skills and safety when working with their horse. Together the tools are essential to applying love, language and leadership in order to develop a successful relationship with your horse."

Willing Partners Horsemanship

Wheatland, Wyoming
800-349-7078; Willingpartners.com

Peter Campbell's 35 years of horse experience ranges from pack outfits to working ranches to show-jumping horses. In the early '80s he rode at a clinic with renowned horseman Ray Hunt. Driven to truly understand the horse, Peter met Ray's mentor Tom Dorrance. Over the years Tom was not only a mentor, but a dear friend to Peter.

For more than 20 years, Peter has been sharing his wisdom through clinics across North America. He's also authored a DVD set, explaining the most effective ways to help your horse become a "Willing Partner" through practical and essential values that create respect and a strong bond between horse and rider. Peter has made guest appearances at special events such as the Spruce Meadows Masters and the Canadian Finals Rodeo.

Gear Insight: Check Willingpartners.com for Peter's favorite gear and products, including lightweight flags, slobber straps, parachute cord mecatees, lariat ropes, handas, headstalls, snaffle bits, rope halters, saddle pads, and lead ropes.