

Tie Brings Battle of the Sexes to Western States Mustang Makeover

Wild horse adoption finds homes for 22 American Mustangs at the event

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It all boiled down to the dashing cowboy and the dazzling cowgirl. After two days of go-rounds and stiff competition from 20 other trainers looking for their share of the \$7,500 purse, Californians Katherine Cumberland of Santa Maria, riding Wendy, and Joel Sheridan of Acton, riding Lilly Bet, grabbed the attention of the judges in very different ways at the Western States Mustang Makeover in Sacramento, June 12-13.

In a finals competition featuring 11 formerly wild horses, Sheridan managed to grab the attention of nearly 5,000 spectators and judges Ken McNabb, Donna Synder-Smith, Tootie Bland and Tommy Garland with an original routine that featured a battle of the blades between Zorro Sheridan and an evil foe. Lilly Bet took the swordplay, as well as the noise of the crowd, along with small jumps and standing on a platform, all in stride.

Cumberland, though, a recent graduate of Cal-Poly with a degree in Animal Science, gave the crowd a lesson in horsemanship with Wendy, having perhaps the most correct routine of the evening when it came to lead changes, spins and variation in speed in her circles. Wendy worked quietly throughout the routine with a headset that would be the envy of a veteran horse, let alone one with only 90 days training. John Lyons, commentating from the arena along with two-time World Greatest Horseman Russell Dilday, complimented Cumberland on her riding style, saying she had the best conformation he'd seen for a rider.

Scores for technical merit and artistic merit are offered during the finals competition, and it was clear that Sheridan had won over the judges with his theatrics while Cumberland had them with style. The result was a mustang smackdown like none ever seen in Extreme Mustang Makeover history.

With 90 seconds to perform and music selection management's choice, Cumberland won the coin toss to perform first. The petite blonde urged Wendy along to the strains of the theme song to "The Sons of Katie Elder," working the four-year-old bay through rhythmic movement and showing the judges that the mare was hardly flustered at having to perform again. Sheridan followed to the rock beat of "The Great Adventure," by Stephen Curtis Chapman, moving Lilly Bet into her circles right away, while removing his jacket and spinning it around her head, followed by some solid stops and spins. But it was technical merit and grace that took the win for Cumberland and a first-place prize of \$2,000.

"This mare has been the sweetest horse since the day I got her," said Cumberland. "I was able to get on her after only three days and from then on she was just so willing to learn what I had to teach her."

That willingness shown through during the adoption that immediately followed the competition, as Wendy was also the high-adopting horse at \$4,000, while Lilly Bet adopted for \$1,400. The second highest adopting horse went to Marley, trained by Greeley, Colo., horse trainer Randall Davis, who adopted for \$2,200 and placed fourth in the competition. All 22 mustangs were adopted for an average of \$1,100 per head.

The Mustang Heritage Foundation (MHF), in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), created the Extreme Mustang Makeover events to highlight the recognized value of American Mustangs through a national training competition. The event gives the public a unique opportunity to see the results of wild horses becoming trained mounts and then participate in a competitive bidding process to adopt one of these treasured animals. The purpose of the competition is to showcase the beauty, versatility, and trainability of these rugged horses that roam freely on public lands throughout the West, where they are protected by the BLM under Federal law.

Nearly 29,000 Mustangs roam federal and privately held contracted lands across the country. In order to manage the herds and maintain both land and herd health, the BLM oversees the adoption of wild horses and burros through public adoptions held throughout the United States. Since 1973, more than 219,000 wild horses and burros have been adopted.

Results:

1. Wendy, shown by Katherine Cumberland of Santa Maria, CA, earning \$2,000 and adopting for \$4,000.
2. Lilly Bet, shown by Joel Sheridan of Acton, CA, earning \$1,500 and adopting for \$1,400.
3. Kanterry, shown by Bob Britland of Galt, CA, earning \$1,000 and adopting for \$1,500.
4. Marley, shown by Randall Davis of Greeley, CO, earning \$800 and adopting for \$2,200.

5. Cowgirls Hotrodd, shown by Amber Bussell of Oakdale, CA, earning \$600 and adopting for \$1,650.
6. Wild Rose Mustango, shown by Krista Koenig of Paso Robles, CA, earning \$500 and adopting for \$1,500.
7. Kto~, shown by Mardi Radway of Roseburg, OR, earning \$400 and adopting for \$1,000.
8. Sangria, shown by Juliane Hanley of Fall City, WA, earning \$300 and adopting for \$1,100.
9. Abby Lane, shown by Gary Wedemeyer of Winton, CA, earning \$200 and adopting for \$500.
10. Bella, shown by Joe Weitekamp of Las Vegas, NV, earning \$200 and adopting for \$500.

Other Adoption Results

- MissFire, shown by Jennifer Mothershead of Buckley, WA, adopted for \$600.
Tonopah Ora, shown by Steve Bauhr of La Grange, CA, adopted for \$1,000.
Slippery When Wet (Slipper), shown by Julie Baumann of Lincoln, CA, adopted for \$700.
Tesla's Sweet Dream, shown by Julie Baumann of Lincoln, CA, adopted for \$1,000.
Shekinah, shown by Destry Campbell of Alturas, CA, adopted for \$550.
Monique, shown by Micheal Carpenter of Lincoln, CA, adopted for \$950.
Acacia, shown by Stephanie Korhel of Maple Valley, WA, adopted for \$400.
Payette, shown by Curtis Northrup of Alturas, CA, adopted for \$500.
Chili Pepper, shown by Rob Radway of Roseburg, OR, adopted for \$800.
Barbwire, shown by Carlos Talamantes of Oakdale, CA, adopted for \$400.
Mustang Candy, shown by Gena Wasley of Roseville, CA, adopted for \$1,800.
Ima Your Horse, shown by Susan Watkins of Sheridan, CA, adopted for \$900.