

Extreme Mustang Makeover a Grand Success

Surprises were in store at the first-ever Mustang challenge.

When trainer Ray Ariss went off pattern during the "horse course" of the Extreme Mustang Makeover, his hopes for representing his hometown of Norco, Calif., and displaying the talents of his American Mustang Hail Yeah were dashed. Or so he thought. That was until Hail Yeah was adopted for \$50,000 during the Extreme Mustang Makeover adoption process, making it the highest amount of money paid to adopt a Mustang in the history of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) adoption program.

"It was totally my fault that I missed the pattern," said Ariss, who conditioned 3-year-old Hail Yeah to perform dressage, pull a cart and do mounted shooting in only 100 days. "I hated that I didn't have the opportunity to show the judges what this horse could really do."

BLM Chief of the Wild Horses and Burro Division Don Glenn was almost speechless with the success of the adoption.

"I'm having a hard time putting into words what this event has done for the wild horse and burro program," he said. "This event has brought more attention to what we are doing to preserve the American Mustang than any other program in my 30 years with the division."

The second highest adopting horse was a Calico Mountain Mustang named Larry, trained by Dave Schaffner. Schaffner suffered a serious riding accident on another horse shortly before the competition and was not able to compete. As a result, Larry was shown by Schaffner's son Tyler and was adopted for \$10,000 by Mustangs Forever Inc.'s Randy Olson of Kerrville, Texas. Olson was also the high-money adopter, purchasing two horses for a total of \$13,100.

The Sept. 23 adoption took place following an exciting day of competition Sept. 22 at the Will Rogers Equestrian Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Seventy-five Mustangs were adopted for a total of \$233,100, making a sale average of \$3,108. The BLM received \$125 per head as the minimum adoption fee and the remainder was allocated for the development and programs of the Mustang Heritage Foundation. Trainers also received a 15 percent adoption commission for any horse adopted at more than \$250.

The Extreme Mustang Makeover will also become a six-episode series on RFD Television's Wide World of Horses through Dec. 2007. The show will share the stories of the mustangs and trainers as they learn to trust in one another and gain competitive confidence.

For more about the winner of the Mustang Makeover, click here >>