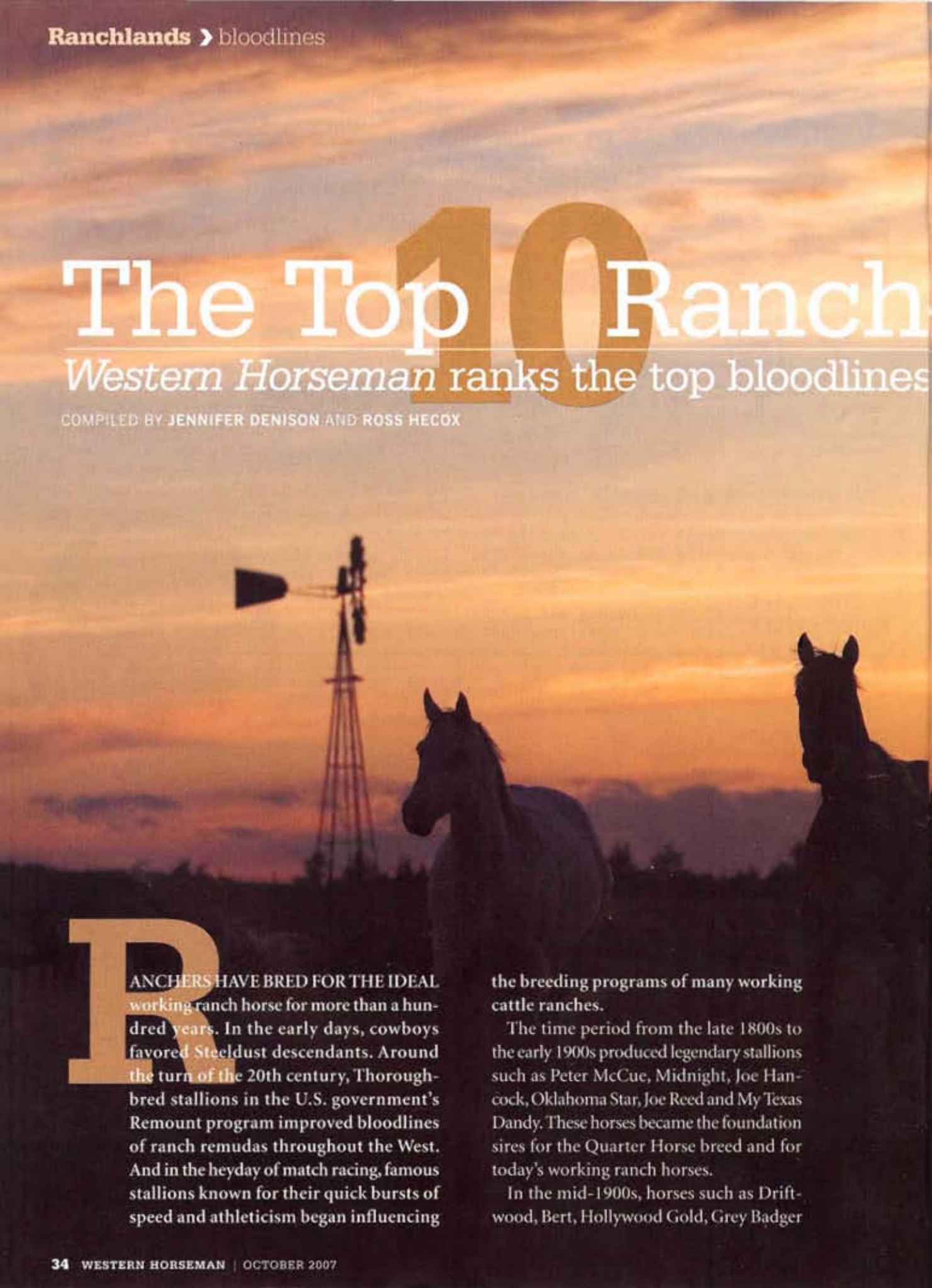


The Top 10 Ranch

Western Horseman ranks the top bloodlines

COMPILED BY JENNIFER DENISON AND ROSS HECOX



RANCHERS HAVE BRED FOR THE IDEAL working ranch horse for more than a hundred years. In the early days, cowboys favored Steeldust descendants. Around the turn of the 20th century, Thoroughbred stallions in the U.S. government's Remount program improved bloodlines of ranch remudas throughout the West. And in the heyday of match racing, famous stallions known for their quick bursts of speed and athleticism began influencing

the breeding programs of many working cattle ranches.

The time period from the late 1800s to the early 1900s produced legendary stallions such as Peter McCue, Midnight, Joe Hancock, Oklahoma Star, Joe Reed and My Texas Dandy. These horses became the foundation sires for the Quarter Horse breed and for today's working ranch horses.

In the mid-1900s, horses such as Driftwood, Bert, Hollywood Gold, Grey Badger

A photograph of two horses silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. The horses are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with their heads and necks clearly visible against the bright orange and yellow light of the setting sun. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a lighter, hazy yellow at the top. The overall mood is serene and evocative of a rural landscape.

Horse Bloodlines

used in today's working ranch remudas.

III, Sugar Bars, King, Poco Bueno and Leo added another layer to the foundation of the breed.

Within the past 20 years, ranches throughout the country have begun using popular cutting horse bloodlines to enhance their horses' athleticism and cow sense. And, while they identify their horses by contemporary names such as Little Peppy or Freckles Playboy, those horses trace to the foundation sires of the Quarter Horse

breed. At the same time, the names of a few old-time bloodlines, such as Hancock and Driftwood, endure to this day.

After interviewing top ranchers and leading horsemen, and analyzing registration statistics and production sale records, *Western Horseman* editors and staff members cast their votes for the ranch-horse bloodlines that have had the most influence on today's working strings.

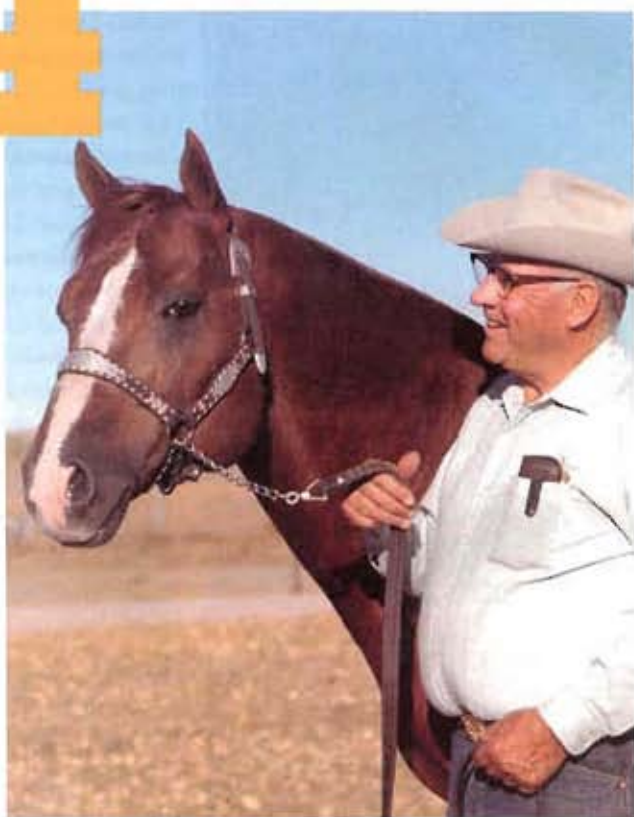
Here's our top 10 list: >>

Two Eyed Jack

JIM BRINKMAN, THE GRANDSON of legendary breeder Howard Pitzer, rode Two Eyed Jack as a boy and has ridden the stallion's descendants all his life. He's done everything on them, from working cattle to roping to showing them in halter. Their versatility and disposition have made them ideal ranch horses, particularly in Nebraska, where the Pitzer Ranch is located, and throughout the Midwest.

"Whenever someone came to look at [Two Eyed Jack], Howard threw me on him hareback with just a halter on him," Brinkman recalls. "You didn't worry about him being broncy or anything. His foals were all gentle horses, on the verge of being a little lazy. But at the same time, they had a lot of bottom."

Two Eyed Jack was bred by Herman Mass of McHenry, Illinois. Pitzer acquired the stallion in 1964 as a 3-year-old. The 1961 sorrel earned a Superior in halter and AQHA points in a wide variety of events, including reining, working cow horse and Western riding. He sired 1,416 foals and 149 AQHA Champions.



COURTESY PITZER RANCH

Pedigree: sired by Two D Two and out of Triangle Tookie. Traces to legendary sires Silver King, King, Grey Badger III and Roan Hancock.

Descendants: Watch Joe Jack, Mr Baron Red, Two ID Bartender, Two Eyed Red Buck.

Ranches that use this bloodline: Hutchings Cattle Company, Pitzer Ranch, Bartlett Ranch.

Joe Hancock

JOE HANCOCK'S HISTORY IS FILLED with approximation and uncertainty. Bred by John Jackson Hancock, Joe Hancock was foaled sometime between 1923 and 1925. His sire was the great foundation stallion Peter McCue, and his dam was a grade mare by a Percheron stallion and out of a Thoroughbred-type inare. This unusual cross gave Joe Hancock his stout conformation, calm yet tough disposition, speed and cow sense.

After a colorful match-race career, during which he stood open to race any horse for three-eighths of a mile, Joe Hancock retired virtually undefeated. Tom Burnett paid \$2,000 for the horse, and retired him to stud on the Four Sixes/Triangle Ranches.

Today, rodeo competitors, ropers and ranchers appreciate Hancock-bred horses for their big, stout conformations, grittiness and cow sense.

Some Hancocks are known for their buck, big feet and plain heads, but staunch supporters say few foundation bloodlines produce such hardworking horses.



COURTESY AQHA

Pedigree: sired by John Wilkens, by Peter McCue, and out of an unregistered range mare.

Descendants: Hancock's Dude, Little Joe The Wrangler, Red Man, Roan Hancock, War Chief, Hesa Eddie Hancock, Figure Four Fritz, Red Hot Hancock.

Ranches that use this bloodline: Bar B Ranch, Broken Bones Cattle Company, Haythorn Land & Cattle Co., Merrill Ranch.