



Welcome to the BAR-D

Joe and Jan Bard's Bar-D Ranch is in its third decade of breeding versatile and useable Appaloosa horses.

BY STACY PIGOTT

Not too many ranches got started at McDonald's, yet that's exactly where Joe and Jan Bard's Bar-D Ranch got its start back in 1979. While sitting in the fast-food eatery, they made the decision to purchase a horse—the horse—that would become the foundation of Bar-D Ranch's breeding program.

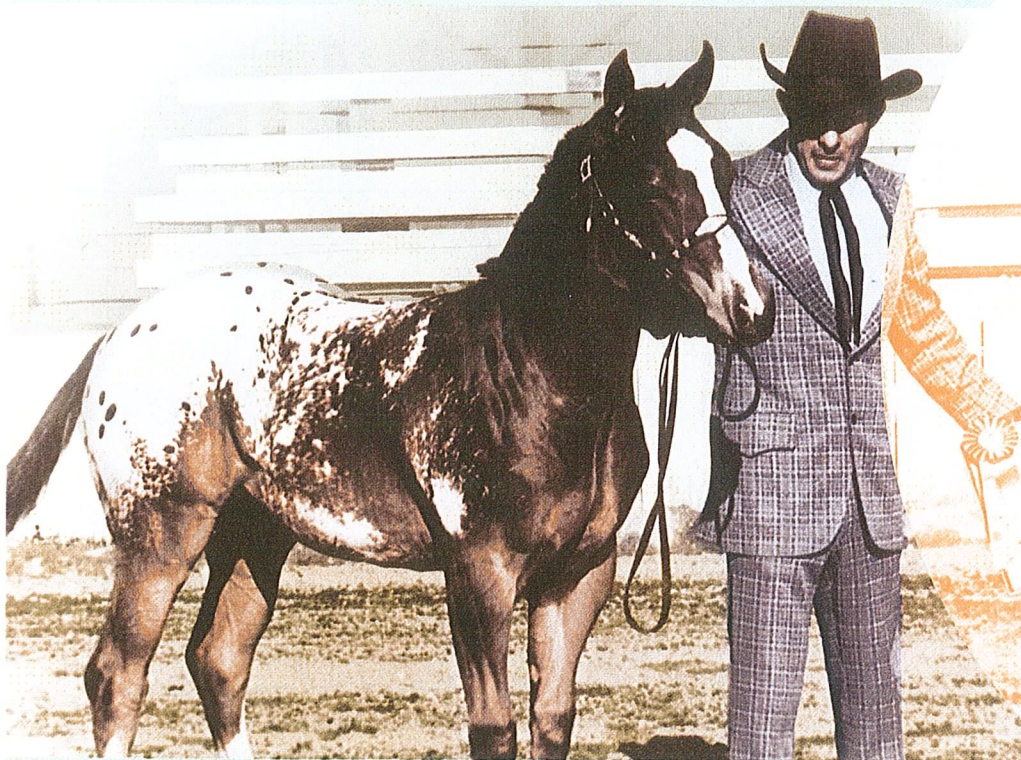
For the next quarter-century, Bar-D Ranch in Maple Valley, Washington, bred and promoted Sir Wrangler and his offspring. Prior to his death in March 2006, Sir Wrangler bred more than 200 mares, most of them from his permanent home at Bar-D.

THE EARLY YEARS

While in their 20s, Joe and Jan met through a local trail riding club. Jan grew up in the suburbs, boarding her Appaloosa gelding and trail riding. Joe, on the other hand, grew up showing Quarter Horses in halter and gaming.

"I liked that Joe is an intelligent cowboy. He was valedictorian at the University of Washington, and now he's a finance estimator at Boeing," says Jan, who introduced Joe to Appaloosas when he said she could breed an Appaloosa to his Quarter Horse mare, Miss Lotta Bull. "What I liked was the Quarter Horse/Appaloosa type. Joe was very impressed with the quality of the Appaloosas. He could see that the build was as good as anything he's ever seen."

Having bought Sir Wrangler from breeder Jess Moreno when the colt was one month shy of his second birthday, they quickly found two mares to breed to him that season. Sir Wrangler spent the next year at Quarter Horse trainer Steve Metcalf's barn. Steve showed the stallion when his schedule permitted, and



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Sir Wrangler as a weanling in 1977 with breeder Jess Moreno

Joe and Jan racked up many miles showing Sir Wrangler themselves.

By 1981, Joe and Jan had finished building their facilities at Bar-D Ranch. Nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains 35 miles southeast of Seattle, the Bar-D Ranch offers a gorgeous view of Mount Rainier as well as access to miles of trails. Sir Wrangler took a position of honor at Bar-D, with his own stall and one-acre pasture, where he's buried today.

THE "WRANGLER" YEARS

What started as a decision to breed a few mares blossomed with Sir Wrangler's rising status. With Joe showing the stallion at halter and Jan showing him under saddle, in 1985 Sir Wrangler became the Northwest's first ApHC champion.

While Wrangler was accumulating points, his first two foals were born. Katy Kay Hicks (AQHA), a 19-year-old mare the Bards had purchased from Jess specifically to breed to Sir Wrangler, gave them a filly named Sirpent. From the beginning, the Bards knew Sirpent was special. It wasn't long before they were hauling father and daughter to shows together.

"Sirpent started winning, and then everybody wanted to breed to Wrangler," says Jan, who has posted the story of Sirpent's life on the Bar-D Ranch web site, www.sirwrangler.com. "Sirpent, as special

as she was, typifies what Wrangler produced. Wrangler was phenomenal as an individual, and he also produced that—the ability to move and the good mind."

Wrangler's growing fame brought more outside mares to Bar-D, where Joe and Jan—who each have full-time jobs aside from the ranch—did all of the work themselves. They also bred three to six of their own mares each year, raising baby Wranglers to ride and enjoy. As the number of Wrangler offspring grew, so did the Bards. In 1982, daughter Sydney was born, followed two years later by Linze.

"The kids were literally raised in a barn," Jan says with a laugh, explaining that their barn has a caretaker's residence in one end, where the family lives. "They've never known a day without Wrangler, and were fortunate to be mounted on the best-minded, smoothest-moving, versatile, winning Wranglers."

Sydney's first horse was Wrangle On By, a mare she showed extensively in 4-H. Even at the young age of 10, Sydney knew her horses and knew the horse business. According to Jan, one of the horse show moms approached Sydney and offered her \$3,000 for Wrangle On By. Sydney politely said no, it would take a lot more money than that to buy the mare. She then proceeded to negotiate a selling price, finally parting with the mare for \$7,000. Her talent for business is paying off, as she recently graduated from the University of Washington with a



Jan's passion is trail riding. She makes at least one two-week trip each year in addition to shorter local rides.

degree in business management and now works at Boeing in the military division. Sydney's next horse was Wrangler's Cougar, who won many open and 4-H shows and was the state 4-H trail champion.

While Sydney preferred show-ring competition, it was Linze who inherited her mother's passion for trail riding. Whether exploring the trails around their house or taking a two-week pack trip through Montana, Jan never passes up an opportunity to saddle up and hit the trails. Linze was an ever-present partner for years, and continues to join her mother when possible while serving as a Navy cryptologist. Jan continues a 25-year tradition of trail-riding trips to the mountains with her best friend, Chris Nelson, generally saddling up for a two-week vacation at least once a year.

"Sirvived was one of my first horses that I used in the mountains," Jan says of one of their home-bred Sir Wrangler sons. "He got to be about 6 and Joe said, 'I have somebody interested in buying him, and he's too valuable a horse to throw off a cliff.' And he started his show career then."

WRANGLER HONORS

It was also Linze, an avid Breyer collector, who convinced her mother to submit Sir Wrangler as a Breyer model candidate. Breyer, which receives more than 1,000 submissions each year, chose Sir Wrangler. The stallion's Breyer likeness was released

in 1999, introducing Sir Wrangler and the Appaloosa breed to a new group of people.

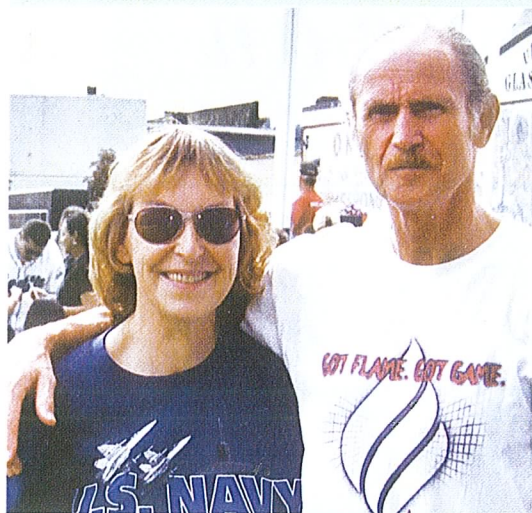
Next was the quest for the Hall of Fame, which came true in 2000. Joe, Jan and Linze loaded their horses for the trip to the National Show in Oklahoma to accept the award. They rode trails along the route, having great adventures and seeing the country from horseback while Sydney stayed home to take care of the ranch.

MOVING ON

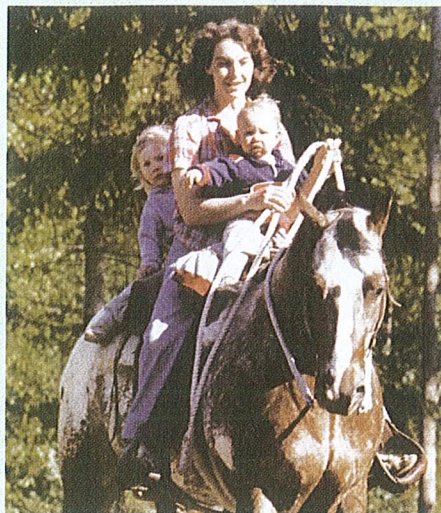
The entire Bard family lost a piece of their lives when Sir Wrangler passed away on March 13, 2006.



A 2006 filly by Sir Wrangler son Wranglers Toolman



Jan and Joe Bard founded Bar-D Ranch.



Jan, Sydney, Linze and Sir Wrangler



Bar-D Ranch in Maple Valley, Washington

"We were really fortunate to have him cross our paths, and he was fortunate to come here," Jan said of Wrangler. "He got shown, and he got trail ridden. When the kids were little, I'd take them out—'Syd' on my back and Linze on my front—in backpacks belted to me. We'd go out for two hours every day. They'd take a nap and I got my ride, and it would be on Wrangler because he was the safe horse."

The Bar-D Ranch is now a limited liability company with equal partnerships between Joe, Jan, Sydney and Linze. Sydney continues to teach lessons, and judges 4-H and open shows in addition to her full-time job. Linze will be leaving the Navy this fall after four years of service, and plans to return home and attend college. And even though Wrangler is gone, the Bar-D Ranch will continue the Wrangler tradition with his sons, Wranglers Toolman and Zip Up My Wranglers.

Wranglers Toolman is an 8-year-old linebred son of Sir Wrangler out of Wrangler Serenade, who's a full sister to National champions Canute, Wranglers Lansir and Sirafin. Bred and owned by the Bards, Wranglers Toolman began his stallion career at Buck Roth's Fattig Creek Horses in Roundup, Montana, before returning to Bar-D Ranch.

"Toolman' puts out the same mind as Sir Wrangler did—they're just smooth, smooth horses—but they're a little bit taller and bigger-boned," Jan says.

Zip Up My Wranglers, aka "Zee," is a yearling colt sired by ~~Toolman~~ ^{Wrangler} and out of the Quarter Horse mare Zippos Classic Lass, who nearly lost her life to clostridium bacteria. Thanks to Jan, who is a respiratory therapist at Virginia Mason

Hospital in Seattle, the mare lived to produce again.

"Zee is a pretty phenomenal horse," Jan says of her stallion prospect. "He's the spitting image of his dad in conformation, but he is a sorrel with a blanket and spots. His dam is a western pleasure winner, so Zee's future is bright."

With two stallions to carry on Sir Wrangler's legacy, and two daughters to carry on at Bar-D, it's a safe bet that this proven Pacific Northwest ranch will continue producing good-minded, versatile and smooth Appaloosas for many years to come.

Editor's note: To learn more about Sir Wrangler, his life and accomplishments, read "Appaloosas lose an ambassador" on page 52 of this issue. 🐾

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— Jan Bard, about her stallion, Sir Wrangler