



"BOWLEGGED H" MAGAZINE

FALL 2021 • HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™





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WINTER SEASON

## ON THE COVER



A RODEOHOUSTON® Calf Scramble participant is one step closer to winning!



Hunter Hoffman won 1st place for poetry in the Trailblazer Committee's inaugural Writing Competition. His photo was printed incorrectly in the previous magazine.



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### AGRICULTURE

### EDUCATION

### ENTERTAINMENT

### WESTERN HERITAGE



## from the CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

**F**or those of you who have not visited the Rodeo offices lately, I think you would be pleasantly surprised at the energy and enthusiasm evident as

we prepare for the 90th anniversary celebration.

This month, as I walk into the NRG Center and hear the familiar buzz of conversations and see the committee meetings taking place, I am struck by the positive anticipation surrounding the 2022 Rodeo. There's an excitement in the air because we enjoy getting together and reconnecting with our Rodeo family.

While continuing to monitor and follow recommendations for the health and safety of our Rodeo family and guests, we look forward to the special additions and enhancements to commemorate the occasion of our anniversary.

We have added an extra day to accommodate the concert-only performance featuring George Strait, with special guest Ashley McBryde, on Sunday, March 20, 2022.

We have also added a new category to the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest, called "Open Contest," giving the teams another opportunity to express their creativity.

The RODEOHOUSTON® Super Series added Women's Breakaway Roping to its exciting lineup. This all-women event is a variation of calf roping and will be held on seven nights.

Super Scramble, an extension of the fan-favorite Calf Scramble competition, will debut this year and add a new dimension and incentive for the student competitors.

To further enhance the experience for our guests, new food options and merchandise will be added, as well as plenty of other fun ideas and innovations.

The Rodeo will be here before we know it, and I hope you will take this time during the holidays to relax and spend quality time with your family and friends. This year, more than ever before, we appreciate those bonds and relationships with loved ones, who we hold dear to us.

Once we return in the new year, we will be in full Rodeo mode and will be just shy of 60 days away from hosting the 90th anniversary. I am so proud to lead this organization of volunteers and cannot wait to celebrate this time-honored tradition with you soon. 🤠

Sincerely,

Brady Carruth



COMING IN  
2022







**CODY JOHNSON**  
Monday, Feb. 28, 2022



**GEORGE STRAIT**  
Sunday, March 20, 2022



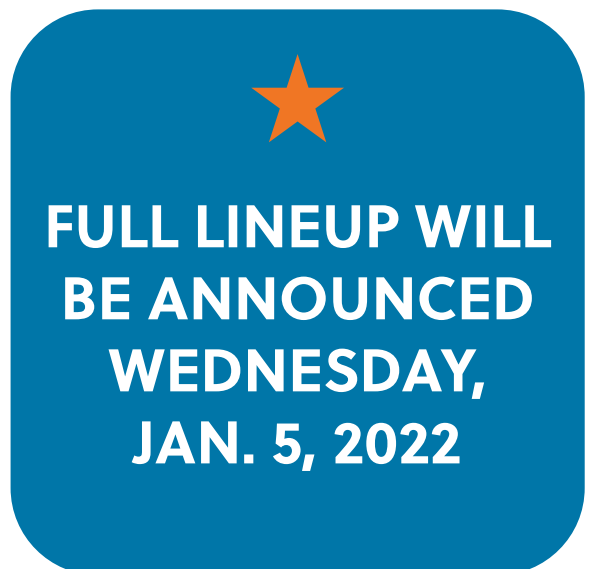
**BUN B'S H-TOWN TAKEOVER**  
*Black Heritage Day, presented by Kroger*  
Friday, March 11, 2022



SPECIAL GUEST **ASHLEY MCBRYDE**  
Sunday, March 20, 2022



**PARKER MCCOLLUM**  
Saturday, March 12, 2022





Since its beginning in 1932, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has committed more than \$550 million to Texas youth and education.



SCHOLARSHIPS.....	\$14,186,000
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS.....	\$472,390
GRANTS.....	\$2,418,610
CONTRIBUTIONS TO EXHIBITORS.....	\$5,048,250
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$22,125,250</b>

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### GEOGRAPHIC SCHOLARSHIPS

<b>Houston Area:</b> \$7,000,000.....	350, \$20,000 scholarships
<b>Area Go Texan:</b> \$1,580,000.....	79, \$20,000 scholarships

### SPECIALTY SCHOLARSHIPS

<b>Texas 4-H:</b> \$1,400,000.....	70, \$20,000 scholarships
<b>Texas FFA:</b> \$1,400,000.....	70, \$20,000 scholarships
<b>Achievement:</b> \$1,200,000.....	approximately 100, current junior & senior Rodeo scholars
<b>Exhibitor:</b> \$600,000.....	30, \$20,000 scholarships
<b>Hildebrand Family:</b> \$300,000.....	approximately 15, \$20,000 scholarships
<b>School Art:</b> \$300,000.....	15, \$20,000 scholarships
<b>Military:</b> \$100,000.....	5, \$20,000 scholarships

### FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS

<b>Vocational Scholarship Funding:</b> \$200,000.....	funds awarded to colleges/institutions for disbursement
<b>Texas A&amp;M University College of Veterinary Medicine:</b> \$96,000.....	six, \$16,000 scholarships
<b>Texas Christian University Ranch Management Program:</b> \$10,000.....	four, \$2,500 scholarships



### GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Angelo State University  
 Sam Houston State University  
 Stephen F. Austin State University  
 Sul Ross State University  
 Tarleton State University  
 Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University – Commerce  
 Texas A&M University –  
 Kingsville, Texas State University  
 Texas Tech University  
 West Texas A&M University

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM GRANTS

AFA  
 Alley Theatre  
 Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation  
 Baylor Research Advocates for Student  
 Scientists  
 Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star  
 Books Between Kids  
 Borderlands Research Institute –  
 Sul Ross State University  
 Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Houston  
 Boys and Girls Country  
 Breakthrough Houston  
 Brookwood Community  
 Camp For All  
 Children's Museum of Houston  
 Council on Recovery  
 Crime Stoppers of Houston  
 Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School  
 of Houston  
 Glassell School of Art  
 H.E.A.R.T — Housing, Entrepreneurship and  
 Readiness Training  
 The Hearing Institute  
 Houston Ballet  
 Houston Community College  
 Houston Grand Opera  
 Houston Police Foundation  
 Houston SPCA  
 Houston Symphony  
 Houston Zoo  
 King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management  
 Medilife Houston  
 Memorial Park Conservancy  
 Miracle Farm  
 NASA – Texas Aerospace Scholars

Neuhaus Education Center  
 Prairie View A&M University  
 The Rise School of Houston  
 Sam Houston State University  
 Schreiner University – Western Art Academy  
 Workshop  
 SIRE Therapeutic Horsemanship  
 Small Steps Nurturing Center  
 Teach for America – Houston  
 Texas 4-H  
 • State 4-H Congress  
 • State 4-H Leadership Conference  
 • Striving for Leadership  
 Texas A&M University  
 • Beef Cattle Short Course  
 • Bush School of Government and Public  
 Service  
 • Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans  
 Texas FFA Association  
 • National Career Development Event  
 Support  
 • Leadership Development Events  
 • State Leadership Conference and Area  
 Conferences  
 Texas Ranger Association Foundation  
 Texas Tech University  
 Texas Wildlife Association Foundation  
 Theatre Under The Stars  
 • Community Engagement Programming  
 • The River Performing and Visual Arts Center  
 The University of Texas at Austin – UTeach  
 To Educate All Children – TEACH  
 UTHealth  
 Writers in the Schools  
 Yellowstone Academy



# Breakaway Roping

**W**omen's breakaway roping will debut at the RODEOHOUSTON® Super Series in 2022. Breakaway roping, sanctioned by the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPRA), is an all-women's event that has recently been added to professional rodeos across the country. At the National Finals Breakaway Roping in Arlington, Texas, the 2020 WPRA World Champion was crowned.

"Breakaway roping is the fastest-growing event in rodeo, and we are thrilled to feature our second women's rodeo event at RODEOHOUSTON in 2022," said Chris Boleman, Rodeo president and CEO. "Like women's barrel racing, breakaway roping is fast-paced and requires strong horsemanship skills, and it's an event that promises to keep rodeo fans on the edge of their seats."

Breakaway roping will be held seven nights during the 2022 RODEOHOUSTON Super Series, a tournament-style competition that crowns an event champion in bareback riding, bull riding, saddle bronc riding, steer wrestling, tie-down roping, team roping, women's barrel racing, and now, women's breakaway roping. RODEOHOUSTON will offer equal pay in the breakaway roping event. Champions in all events earn \$50,000 on top of their Super Series earnings.

"This is truly a monumental day for the women in breakaway roping," said Jimmie Munroe, WPRA President. "Not only will they have the opportunity to compete and showcase their talent on one of rodeo's largest stages, but they will do so with equal prize money. The WPRA has had a long-standing relationship with RODEOHOUSTON and we are excited to expand our partnership to feature a second all-women's event at this historic rodeo."

The top two athletes from each performance will advance to the Semifinal round, for a total of 10 athletes.

The top four athletes from the Semifinal round will advance directly to the Championship Shootout Round on Saturday, March 19.

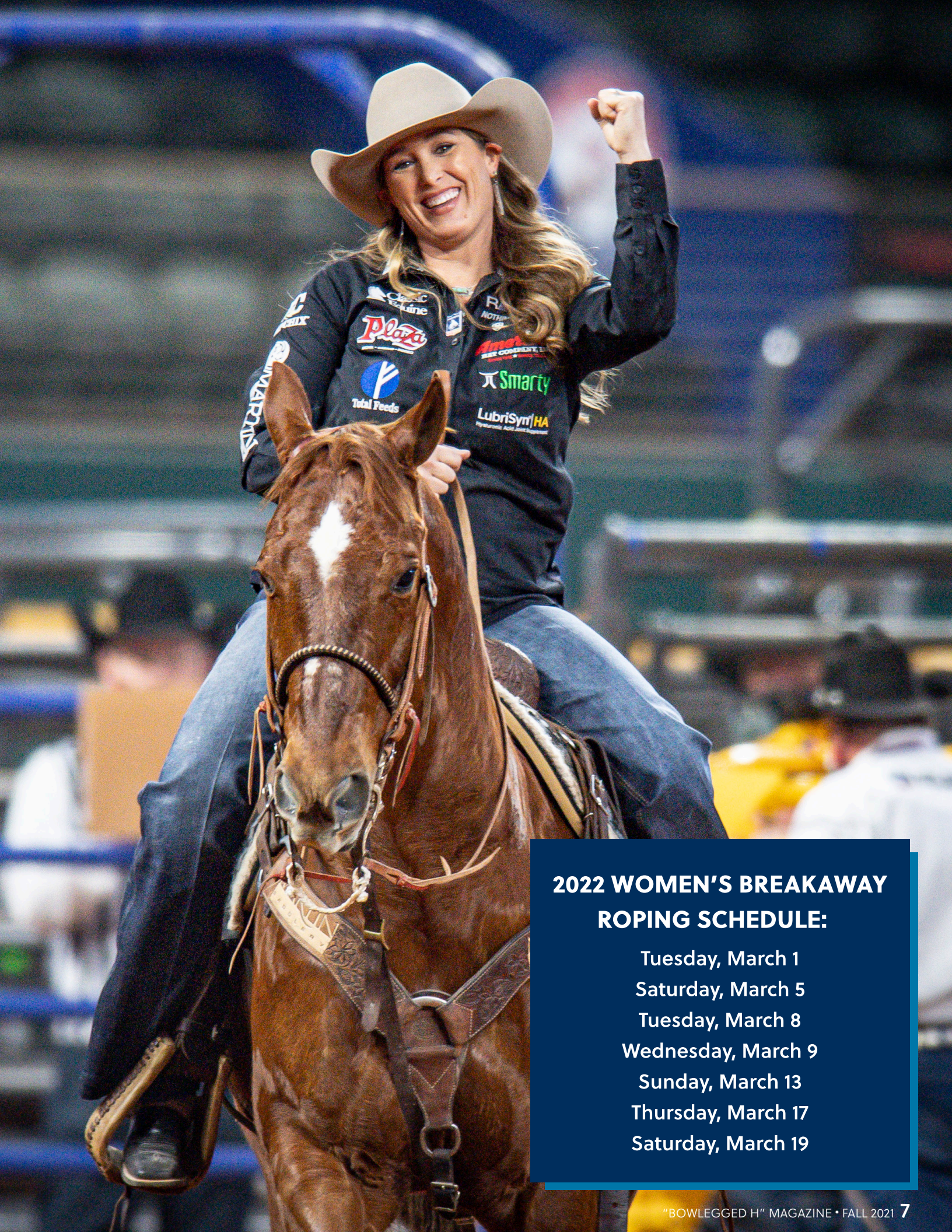
"It's been great to see breakaway roping have the success it is having at PRORODEO® events across North America," said Tom Glause, PRCA CEO. "RODEOHOUSTON welcoming the ladies of breakaway is yet another example of that."

RODEOHOUSTON has been a WPRA sanctioned event for decades, with earnings from the RODEOHOUSTON Super Series counting toward qualification for the NFR and the WPRA World Standings.

"The WPRA is very pleased and excited that RODEOHOUSTON has decided to add breakaway roping to the line-up of their iconic rodeo for the 2022 edition," said Jolee Jordan, WPRA Roping Director. "It is awesome that WPRA members will have the opportunity to compete at the largest rodeo in ProRodeo, and we look forward to growing the ropers' relationship with RODEOHOUSTON in the future." 🤠







## 2022 WOMEN'S BREAKAWAY ROPING SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, March 1  
Saturday, March 5  
Tuesday, March 8  
Wednesday, March 9  
Sunday, March 13  
Thursday, March 17  
Saturday, March 19





**T**he room was silent as the audience gathered. On cue, the speaker, well prepared and passionate about the cause, turned on the microphone and described the mission and magic of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™. This virtual gathering, sponsored by the Speakers Committee, was a different take on a familiar theme due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The format was new, but the message continued to focus on agriculture, education, entertainment and Western heritage.

The Speakers Committee was established in 1970 to promote the Rodeo to the community. Fast forward 51 years, and the Committee now has 300 members who present the mission of the Rodeo to schools, businesses, Rotary Clubs and other civic, faith-based and community organizations. The committee is organized into seven teams: Administration, Recruiting and Training, Team Operations, School Events, Community and Special Events, Public Speaking and Leadership Development.

Speakers Committee Chair Stan Horton joined the committee in the fall of 1991. "Some of our members are naturals when it comes to engaging with school children, while others prefer talking to Rotary Clubs and businesses," Horton said. "Matching the skillset of a volunteer to a specific opportunity is the key to our success."

COVID-19, however, has impacted the team and how it delivers its message. "Before COVID, up to 30 speakers would spend Fridays at elementary schools delivering talks to bring our Western heritage to life," Horton said. "We described the history of the cowboy and provided roping exhibitions and line dance lessons for nearly 20,000 students each year. Our rodeo clowns also joined in to

talk about the roles of the bullfighters and rodeo clowns who protect the cowboys in the arena. This all-day school program has been our most requested format, and we have a waiting list of almost three years to get on that schedule."

The team was not able to transform the elementary school program into a virtual event due to scheduling and technical challenges. However, a virtual program was created to provide information on the Rodeo scholarship program to high school counselors and parent groups. "I am proud of the way our committee members responded to the challenges and successfully adapted the program so we could provide important information to students who are seeking Rodeo scholarships," Horton said.

Although talking to individuals and groups about the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is the committee's primary mission, the team also hosts the annual Rookie Boot Camp. This fun and informative program covers different aspects of the Rodeo for new volunteers. In 2020, the Speaker's Committee rented a studio and professional equipment, filmed the event, and staged a successful online Zoom meeting that attracted 600 rookie volunteers in a single evening.

The Speakers Committee also supports the Downtown Rodeo Parade, Armed Forces Appreciation Day, Lil' Rustlers Rodeo and Metro and Go-Texan events. It has also added to their list of responsibilities training on how to lead volunteers.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Speakers Committee remains laser-focused on its primary mission to spread the word about the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. You can count on them to deliver that message with a great deal of enthusiasm in person or online. †



BY SANDIE MARRINUCCI



# SUPER SCRAMBLE

## The Grand Championship of Calf Scramble

BY MELISSA MANNING



**T**he Calf Scramble event has long been a favorite at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, but it will be taken to the next level in 2022 with the debut of the Super Scramble competition on the final night of the rodeo competitions, Saturday, March 19.

The Super Scramble will invite the scramblers who made the “first catch” during each of the previous 19 Calf Scrambles to participate in the event that is being called the “grand championship” of calf scrambles.

Super Scramble competitors will attempt to

catch one of the nine calves released during the event, and each participant will be awarded a cash prize based on their performance. The total purse for the event is \$42,000, with the first-catch scrambler receiving \$10,000; the second-catch scrambler receiving \$6,000; and the third-catch scrambler receiving \$4,000. All remaining catchers in the RODEOHOUSTON® Super Scramble receive \$2,000, and those who do not catch a calf will each receive \$1,000.

“The Super Scramble event is an opportunity to bring together the best-of-the-best



# E TO DEBUT IN '22

## Ambls



RODEOHOUSTON Calf Scramble participants for a final grand championship competition, similar to the other rodeo final events fans are accustomed to seeing during our closing weekend,” said Amanda McGuire, calf scramble coordinator for the Rodeo. “With the cash-awards being so significant, we can expect a truly spirited competition and an exciting new event that both the scramblers and our Rodeo fans will love.”

The cash prizes will be distributed to winners upon successfully completing their Calf Scramble project and returning to the Rodeo

the following year. Texas 4-H and FFA members from across the state compete in the time-honored RODEOHOUSTON Calf Scramble, which takes place after the rodeo action on the NRG Stadium floor before the musical performance.

One of the most spirited, heartwarming, and unscripted events of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo experience, the Calf Scramble can be an unpredictable but exciting test of strength, endurance, and showmanship, as competitors often help one another corner a calf after an exhausting sprint across the large, dirt-filled arena. †



# The Sartwelle Family

## A GENERATIONAL LEGACY

BY TODD ZUCKER

**W**hen James Williams “J.W.” Sartwelle took the reins as the Houston Fat Stock Show and Livestock Exposition’s first president in 1931, he could not have foreseen how the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ would look 90 years later, but he surely expected his family and the livestock show to prosper together for decades. The Sartwelle family’s affiliation traces back generations.

J.W. began raising Brahman cattle after the turn of the last century. Unlike many cattle breeds, Brahman thrived along the Gulf Coast. According past Rodeo Lifetime Vice President James D. (“J.D.”) Sartwelle Jr., who sadly passed away shortly after this interview, “the proliferation of Brahman and crossbreeds, along with refrigeration and other developing technologies, transformed the cattle industry from Texas to Florida.”

In 1924, J.W. and others formed the American Brahman Breeders Association to promote the breed, and in 1931, he helped found Port City Stockyards, a terminal market east of downtown Houston. According to J.D. Jr., the market made for a more organized and competitive transfer of cattle from producer to consumer.

The Fat Stock Show was born from J.W.’s belief that Houston needed a public exposition to allow cattle ranchers to meet and discuss industry practices while educating the public. J.W.’s great-grandson, Rodeo Director James D. “Jim” Sartwelle III, stated “J.W. wanted the business community to see Houston as an agricultural center in addition to being recognized for industrial and shipping activities. The amalgamation of the Houston-based American Brahman Breeders Association as a marketing center, the Port City Stockyards as a terminal market and the Fat Stock Show as a public exposition showcased Houston as a leading cattle

breeding center,” he added.

J.W.’s son, James D. (“J.D.”) Sartwelle Sr., followed his father’s footsteps into the Fat Stock Show’s leadership in the 1950s, instituting the Junior Commercial Steer Feeding and Management Contest and the All Breeds Committees. J.D. Sr. also worked to create a commodity market for live cattle that transformed the industry. “It was kind of my dad’s idea to instigate trade on fed beef cattle — basically what we eat today — on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Before that, we had no commodity trading on beef cattle. We had it on corn and soybeans, but not cattle,” J.D. Jr. said. The breakthrough helped stabilize the market by allowing buyers to project future costs.

Although the Sartwelle family later moved their cattle operations out of Houston, their passion for the Rodeo remains. Lifetime Director William C. “Bill” Sartwelle, also son of J.D., has continued to devote time to Rodeo committees. Bill instilled his love for the Rodeo into his daughter, Director Elise Sartwelle, chair of the School Art Auction Committee, among other leadership positions. Numerous other family members have also actively supported the Rodeo through the years.

Jim’s son, James D. Sartwelle IV was elated that his son commemorated his 17th birthday by joining the Jr. Rodeo Committee. “The more you know about J.W. and his passion for providing farmers and ranchers an opportunity to market their produce at higher prices, and his burning desire to promote the City of Houston and the Gulf Coast, the more you understand why my family— five generations later —is still passionate about involvement with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo,” Jim said. “You might be able to find a family who loves the Rodeo as much, but you won’t find one who loves it more.” †



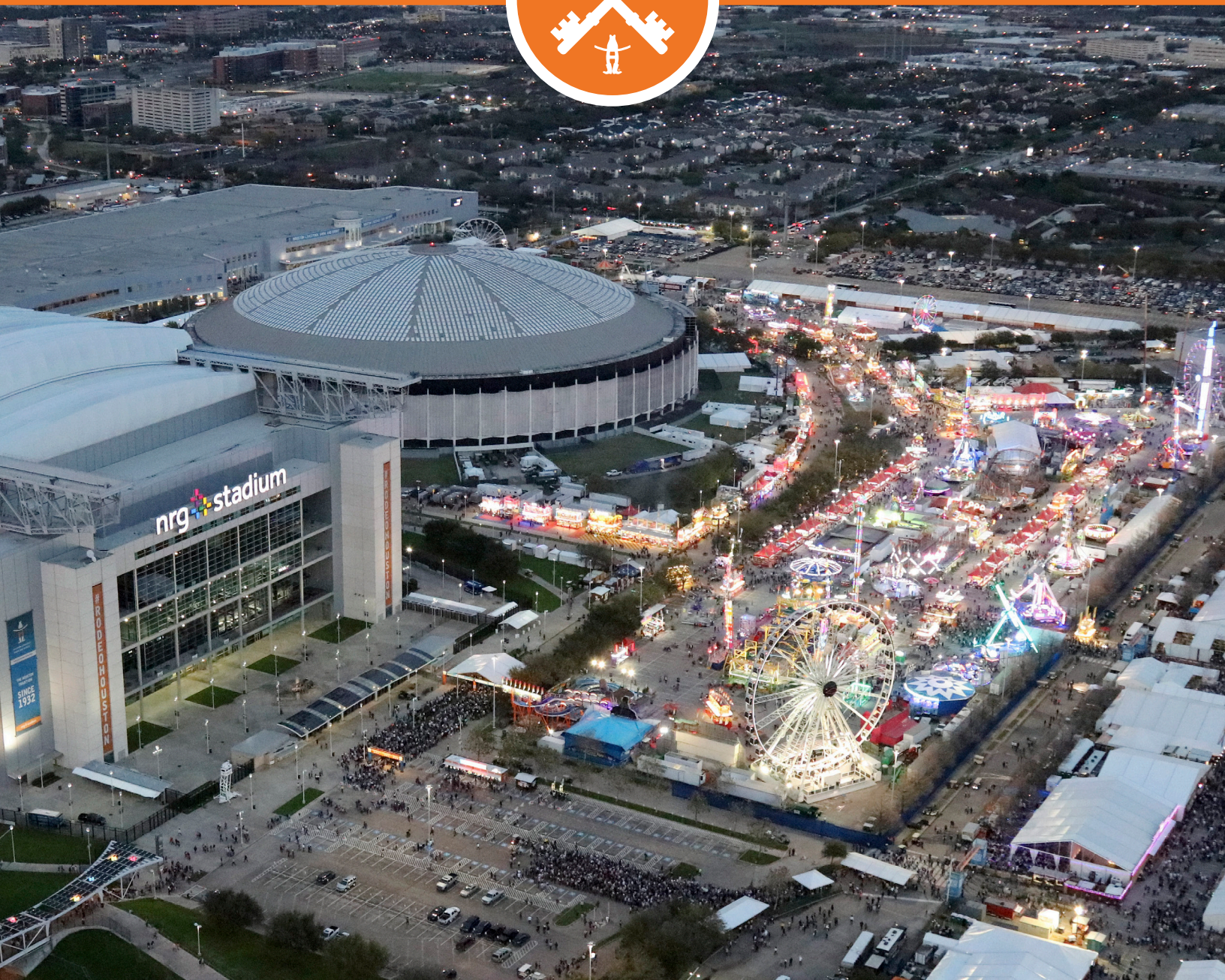


Top Photo, Left to Right: James D. "J.D." Sartwelle Jr., James D. Sartwelle IV, James D. "Jim" Sartwelle III  
 In the Frames, Left to Right: James D. "J.W." Sartwelle, James W. Sartwelle



# The Keys to Success

BY MARY BETH MOSLEY





A new committee is making its debut at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ this year—but don't call members of the Locks & Keys Committee rookies! Most of them have been volunteering for years. "More than 20 years ago, we were created as part of the Corral Club, a subcommittee of a subcommittee that was set up to take care of the padlocks and keys for the clubs, to lock up the bar rails and the beer boxes," said Robert "Bobby" Jones, Locks & Keys committee chair.

Since those early days, the job has grown exponentially. "Today we are responsible for the physical locking systems for Rodeo," said Jones. In the weeks before the Rodeo, they have the daunting task of re-keying all the locking doors in NRG Stadium, NRG Center and NRG Arena—up to 200 doors—sometimes on just a few days' notice. "We are there to take care of anyone's locking and key needs associated with Rodeo. We work with pretty much anybody who needs us."

It is a big job but a small committee. The two dozen or so volunteers represent many different areas of expertise in security and safety. Members include licensed locksmiths, hardware specialists, construction and building engineers, and CCTV and computer system experts. They all have been carefully screened, then trained on any areas outside their skillset.

Professionalism is "key" to the Locks & Keys Committee approach. "We look at the committees we serve as clients. We treat them just like if they were a paying customer in our professional lives. We prioritize customer service," Jones said. Committee members take their jobs seriously and understand the need for urgency. "We have had instances in the past where keys have been lost or stolen, and we've had to re-key those sensitive areas, all in the same day," said Jones.

It truly is a year-round job. "During the off-season, our focus, our main 'customer,' is Buildings and Grounds and the Rodeo. During the Rodeo, it's Corral Club."

Throughout the Rodeo, members of the committee are onsite daily, solving problems and dealing with emergencies. "A couple years ago, someone drove a piece of equipment into a door frame, tearing up one of the door brackets in the floor. My team, they got it fixed with the materials we had on hand in our shop."



Locks & Keys Committee Chair Robert "Bobby" Jones

Jones expects their services will be even more in demand as awareness of the committee grows. But don't look for the Locks & Keys Committee members to wear vests or jackets with the committee logo during the Rodeo. They like to work under the radar.

"We roll in; we get the job done; we roll out. We prefer it when people don't know we've been there. They just say 'hey, it works now!'" For the new Locks & Keys Committee, customer service, professionalism, and expertise make up the right combination. ‡



# Kaylee Welch

• Calf Scramble Donation •

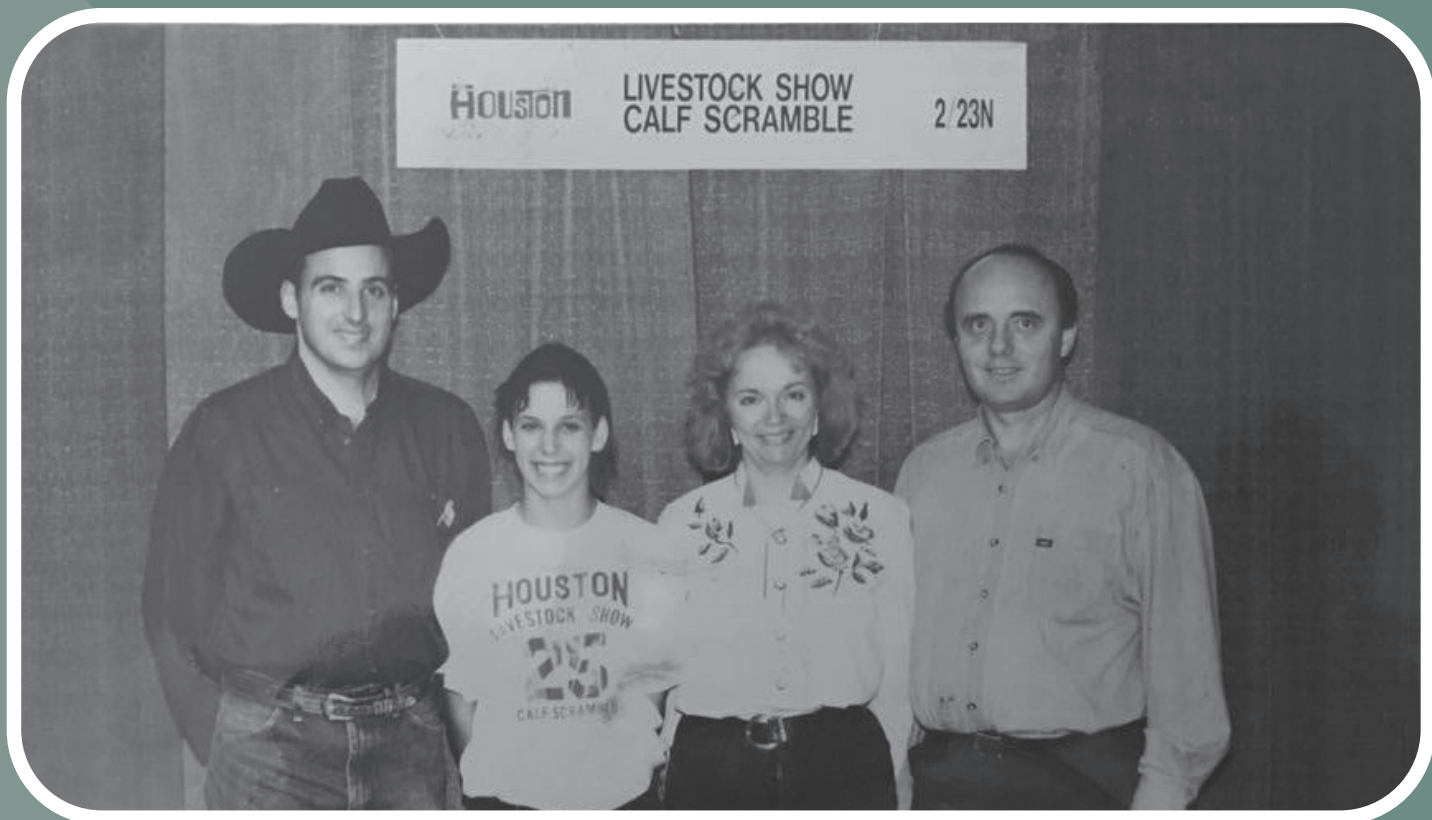
BY SUSAN EMFINGER SCOTT

Photos courtesy of Natalie Amendt



**E**ver since she was a little girl, Kaylee Welch had a goal of becoming a livestock exhibitor. She could not wait to start working with her first calf, including the early mornings, late nights and endless chores that come with raising an animal and getting it to show quality. Her dream was being in the ring.





Kaylee went to rodeos and livestock shows her entire life. Her father, Joel Welch, took her to the Houston Livestock Show™ each year for Junior Market Show week, and her mother, Natalie Amendt, shared tales of her own experience showing heifers, lambs and pigs.

"In 1996, I was a Hard Luck Scramble winner in Houston, and Kaylee loved to see the photos and hear my stories," Amendt said. "She understood both the hard work and benefits that come from a life in agriculture, and she was ready."

Unfortunately, in 2020, three days after Christmas, the 14-year-old tragically passed away in a utility terrain vehicle accident.

Kaylee was a quirky, silly and fun-loving girl. She was an above-average student and a considerate friend who stepped up for strangers when they most needed help. With beautiful hazel eyes, Kaylee loved making others laugh and smile. She enjoyed shopping, singing, dancing and playing volleyball. You could find her enjoying the outdoors hunting and fishing, but only if the fish were biting. But it was animals and agriculture that excited her the most.

"Since she was in fifth grade, a life involving livestock was all she wanted," Amendt said. "We lived in an apartment when she was little, and she asked if we could keep a calf — in the apartment."

After the accident, word quickly spread of

Kaylee's passing throughout her hometown of Willis, Texas, and the surrounding communities. Offers of help and financial donations were soon extended to her family. Amendt accepted these monies because she knew exactly what to do with them and where her daughter would want them to go — to help Texas kids live out their agriculture dreams. And with this, the Kaylee Welch Teal Sunflower Foundation was born.

In 2021, the foundation presented \$11,250 to the Rodeo's Calf Scramble Committee. This gift gave five scramblers a certificate to purchase a registered beef heifer or market steer to show in Houston in 2022. The foundation intends to match this donation each year if funds allow.

"Her father and I, along with her bonus dad, Corey Amendt, know Kaylee would be so proud of this contribution to Calf Scramble," Amendt said. "She was the kind of person who helped when help wasn't needed or asked for, lent a hand when she didn't have to and had the biggest heart for animals and people."

Shortly before her accident, Kaylee realized she soon would be heading into ninth grade and could show animals. She texted her mom "all of my dreams are coming true." Her dreams are coming true — if they aren't for herself, she would want to help others. ‡



## AGRICULTURE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

# Emphasis on School Involvement

BY STEPHANIE EARTHMAN BAIRD



**C**onnection to people is one of the greatest assets of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ and fundamental to the Agriculture Education Committee's (AEC) new charge. Connecting with students at Houston-area schools became their primary focus in 2020. Committee volunteers step into the classroom to introduce young students to the Rodeo, while supporting its mission through their educational presentations.

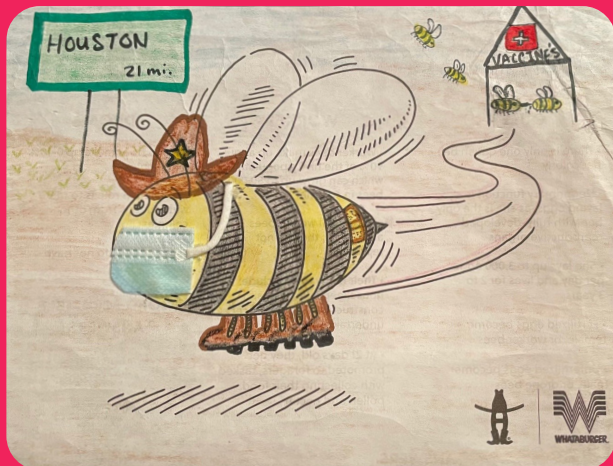
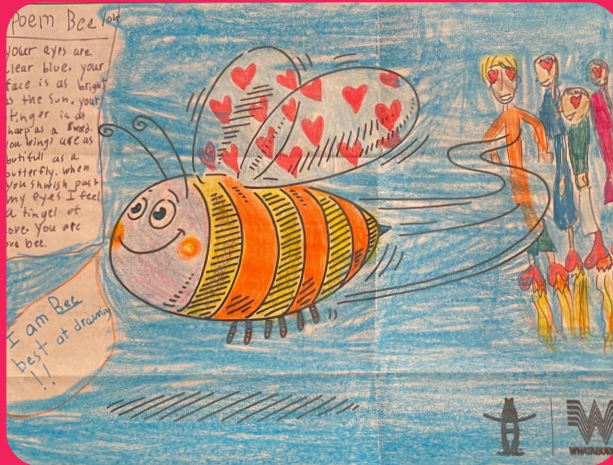
Though the committee's history stretches back more than 50 years, 2019 pivoted the volunteers in a new direction under a new name. "We've evolved from on-site activities during the Rodeo to bringing AGVENTURE to the classroom,"

Chair Jennifer Lamb said. "We also welcomed men to our committee. No man stepped in to volunteer under our former name, Ladies' Go Texan. All of the changes are very exciting."

Five themed programs — "The Buzz on Bees," "Animals in AGVENTURE," "Literature in the Garden," "A Day without Agriculture," and "Tour of Texas" — provide pre-K to fourth grade students with hands-on activities designed to introduce them to various aspects of agriculture. "Our programs are a combination of facts and fun activities," Lamb said. "We send volunteer teams into the classroom to bring agriculture to life through challenging, interactive lessons."

"The Buzz on Bees," one of the committee's





popular programs, explains the crucial role bees play in the food chain and engages third-grade students in a bee dance. Students also learn how bees see color differently than themselves. Volunteer Regina Garceau has a favorite classroom experience. “I remember getting all the students up to do the bee dance,” she said.

“The laughter and energy was so fulfilling. After dancing, the students were asking all kinds of questions about bees. When they left the room, some students were still doing the bee dance.”

Invested in student education, volunteers participate in a formal training program. Lamb explained that they are also equipped with PowerPoint presentations and props. Students can touch wool and cotton while learning the difference between them. Colorful fruits and vegetables are accompanied by an explanation of their progression from farm-to-table.

The year-round programs are also a valuable tool for teachers. Lessons align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state grade-level learning standards. Thus, the AEC presentations are advancing students’ performance on standardized tests.

Amid the chaos of the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee successfully presented lessons to more than 25 Houston-area schools, with some requesting all five programs. The virus did not halt their efforts. The outreach touched more than 700 schools when factoring in the activity book distribution around Houston, and as far away as Brenham and Cold Springs. True to their committee motto, “bee flexible,” volunteers adapted two programs to online presentations for a virtual summer camp hosted by national nonprofit, Common Threads.

Though the committee transformation is recent, sights are set on the future. Expansion plans include reaching an additional 75 schools near term and broadening programs to upper grade-levels.

Curriculum in agriculture education that imparts basic facts while inspiring a student’s connection to food, animals, and other natural resources is a formula for success. “I love to see the faces on children when they hear where everyday items come from,” Garceau said. “I am proud to serve on AEC because I know I am helping people become better.” 🐝



# Red Blends

## For Fireside Drinking This Winter Season

BY NAN MCCREARY

**W**ith winter right around the corner, it's time to give up those white, crispy porch wines and turn to something that warms the body and nourishes the soul. For most of us, that would be a red wine. And for many, the red wine of choice would be a red blend.

Red blends, wines made from two or more red wines, is one of the fastest growing categories in the American wine industry. Red blends are not new. Blended wines such as Bordeaux, Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape, Amarone and Chianti have defined European wine regions for hundreds of years. But only recently, in the past decade or so, have American winemakers discovered the synergy that can be created by various grapes working together.

According to some experts, the red blend category started taking off with the introduction of two wines: M n ge   Trois, now owned by Trinchero Family Estates, and Apothic, owned by E. & J. Gallo. The real trendsetter, however, was the Prisoner, created in 2000 by Orin Swift's winemaker Dave Phinney. Phinney's first release was a mere 385 cases. The wine quickly developed a cult following and Phinney sold the Zinfandel blend and a few other labels in 2010 to the Prisoner Wine Company for \$40 million. The Prisoner is now considered by some to be the "first true American red blend." So why are red blends so popular? There are many reasons, actually.





Red blends appeal to a wide range of audiences. Bottles below \$15 tend to be sweeter and richer and easy-drinking; bottles above \$15 generally have more structure and less residual sugar, and appeal to more serious wine drinkers. Some of the high-end red blends can stand among the world's best.

Red blends can be greater than their individual parts. A skilled winemaker can combine the best aspects of two or three grape varieties into one masterpiece, offering the consumer an opportunity to taste more complexity that is not present in a single variety. For example, Cabernet Sauvignons are known for their black fruit, but a wine maker may want to add some red fruit, so he/she will blend in some Merlot. In a Cabernet-Zinfandel-Syrah blend, Cabernet provides the framework with acids and tannins as well as distinctive black current; Zinfandel gives an additional layer of jammy red and black berry fruit; and Syrah provides additional dark fruit flavors of blueberry and plum along with cracked black pepper. The result is a delightful combination of black fruit, red fruit, earth and spice.

Red blends are generally predictable. Many brands want to produce a house-style wine that is not only easy drinking, but consistently reliable. Since vineyards do not produce the same wine every year, this may require selecting grapes from different vineyard or vineyard blocks, plus some tinkering in the cellar. With a skilled winemaker at the helm, you can be reasonably certain that the next bottle you buy of your favorite brand will meet your expectations.



Red blends can be very food friendly. Red blends vary in flavor, body, acidity, and alcohol content, but as a general guideline, they are most likely to pair with richer entrées and meat dishes. Need a wine pairing for your barbecue, steak, or ribs? No problem:

Choose a red blend. Serving a platter of fajitas or a bowl of pasta? Again, buy a red blend. However, when pairing red blends, avoid light dishes such as seafood and salad, as the wines will generally overwhelm the food.

According to experts, red blends will maintain a sizeable market share well into the future. And why not? The category offers well-crafted wines across a broad range of prices. The wine pairs with most foods, yet also stands alone. Plus, they appeal to just about anyone who likes red wine or to beginners who are looking for easy-to-drink options. And, for today's innovative winemakers, the category is open territory in choices for expressing both the art and science of their craft. So, stock up. The shelves at your local wine store are filled with red blends...and cool weather is on its way! 🍷



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