

# *Craig Cameron*

## **Double Horn Ranch—The Making of Great Horses & Horsemen**

### **HORSE CRAZY**

So you want to be a cowboy? You have the desire to buy a horse. You want to get involved. Some inspiration usually brings an individual to this point; perhaps you went to the rodeo, a horse show, saw a movie or just old desires that long to be fulfilled seem to surface. You have been bitten by “the bug”, the horse bug. Your friends think you are crazy. Remember that things people do not understand; they are usually against. I say, “Go for it!” Achievements are started with dreams and dreams are the substance of achievements. Friends will say, “You don’t have the time.’ Heck, who does? We never find time; we can only make time. Make time for your dreams and make them come true.

The question I get asked most is, “How and where do I start?” My answer, “At the beginning would be a good place.” Don’t be bashful, ask questions. Go to your local feed stores, western stores, local roping events, and stables. Find who is reputable in the business and start by just going, and watch people ride or take lessons. If this pricks your curiosity for more, again, “Go for it.” The internet, bookstores, and trade magazines are full of all kinds of information. Read up, and then get ready to ride up. Sign up for your first lesson. Go by reputation and word of mouth. Locate a local horse trainer to learn and work with. Find a teacher who will inspire and not defeat. They are out there. I feel correction is good, but encouragement is better. Find that teacher. Do not be afraid; have faith in yourself.

People and horses both learn through repetition. It is like working out. The first time is the hard and almost defeating. Hang in there! Give yourself a couple of months, with lessons twice a week or more. At the end of those two months, I think you will be surprised at how well you might be doing.

When you decide to take the big step to buy a horse, do not get in a rush. Owning a horse is a big responsibility. Shop around and most importantly, find a horse that fits you and your goals. Make sure the horse is sound and well broke. Bad chemistry is the green horse and the inexperienced rider. Use your common sense – in this case, use some good old horse sense.

Have a good place to keep your horse. It does not have to be fancy, but I sure recommend that it be clean. Horses like to room to roam and run, to be warm in winter, and cool in summer. Horses are herd animals and like to be around other horses. Again, use common sense. With horses come vet bills, farrier bills, feed bills, stall bills, and expect unexpected bills. Warning – horses are an addiction. So be forewarned!

Some of the things that are involved with this addiction called horses are trail rides, horse shows, blue ribbons, prize money, clinics, horse trailers, clothes, trucks, saddles, parties, traveling, and some of the greatest and most fun-loving people you will ever meet, be around, or be apart of. Last, but not least, this addition will put you in direct contact with one of God’s greatest gifts to mankind, the horse. The horse, if you will let him, will teach you as much about life an anything can. The horse will teach you about mind, body, and spirit. The horse will show you that you only get what you give – good or bad. The horse is a master in patience and forgiveness, and shows us over and over that gentleness is not a vice of the weak but a virtue of the strong. The

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whole idea in horsemanship – or the bottom line as they say – of having a horse is to have fun, not only for you, but also for the horse. Like anything, if you work at it I know you will have the time of your life.

So do you still want to be a cowboy? Or do you just think you've gone crazy. I say don't worry, its okay. Join the crowd, you're only "horse crazy."

—*Craig Cameron*