

Katie Gun



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When it comes to hot mamas in reining, few are more sizzling than Katie Gun. At Reining By The Bay in July, Spooks Gotta Gun worked his way to a smoking 229-point score with Andrea Fappani for the Derby Championship. This was just the latest in a long line of wins, memorable babies and a reining legacy that's sure to last. According to American Quarter Horse Association records, the 21-year-old Katie Gun has 18 registered foals. Of those, 11 have earned \$383,017 through June 2008 and have 515.5 AQHA points on record.



Gunner

Of course, Katie Gun's most popular offspring is Colonels Smoking Gun, better known as "Gunner." This fellow, bred by Katie Gun's owner, Eric Storey, Henagar, Ala., was an impressive performer in his own right and last year was celebrated as an NRHA Million Dollar Sire. Gunner was ridden by Clint Haverty to the 1996 NRHA Futurity Open Reserve Championship, and the two also tied for second at the 1998 National Reining Breeders Classic. Bryant Pace rode Gunner to the prestigious 2001 United States Equestrian Federation Reining Championship. As for ownership, Gunner was purchased as a 2-year-old by Paul and Pam Rohus, Royse City, Texas, and sold in December 1996 to Dr. Kim Sloan and his wife, Debra, Polk City, Fla. In April 2004, Tim and Colleen McQuay bought Gunner and added him to their McQuay Stables' impressive stallion roster.



Dun Gotta Gun and Tim McQuay

Her second most successful foal is Dun It Gotta Gun, the handsome fellow with one glass eye, a stallion for which owner Jerry Kimmell, Grandbury, Texas, has put \$1 million on the table. Any foal by Dun It Gotta Gun that wins the NRHA Futurity, NRBC and NRHA Derby wins the whole deal, a million dollars. Dun It Gotta Gun has \$61,665 in lifetime earnings that includes the 2001 NRHA Futurity Non-Pro Reserve Championship with Mandy McCutcheon in the saddle.

As for Katie Gun today, she spends her days at Carol Rose Quarter Horses in Gainesville, Texas. She's had one heck of a history, the likeness of two of her foals cast into celebrated Breyer Horses (Gunner and Dun It Gotta Gun), and there's mostly likely a good deal of success to come for her future performers. But for right now, let's take a look back at this mare's rich history.

A smokin' topside

In 1977, One Gun was the Junior Cutting Reserve Champion at the AQHA World Show. The next year he wound up eighth in the AQHA high-point cutting standings and made the Senior Cutting finals at the World Show. With \$16,351 in total NCHA earnings, One Gun won his last check in November 1986 at the age of 13 while owned by R.H. Clements Jr., Montgomery, Ala. When One Gun died in the 1990s, he belonged to Hill and Dollie Clements, Pine Level, Ala.

John Gun was bred by Paul and Beverly Hope, Peachtree City, Ga., and passed through one set of hands before ending up at Gus Pounds' place in 1984. The horse was shown by Sam Shepard through 1986 and then for six years did not earn one penny. In 1991, Tony Still, Buford, Ga., purchased the 10-year-old John Gun.

Never seriously promoted, John Gun sired only 43 AQHA-registered foals, five of which became performers. A mare named Gun Dancer (Jessi x Holum), also owned by Storey, earned a little NRHA money and made AQHA point records with 22.5 in reining, 11 in cow horse and 2.5 in trail. The other four were: Angies Little Girl (Angie Flower x Bar Flower) who earned \$14,461 in NCHA money; Remedy Gun (Mis Uno Remedy x Doc's Remedy); Mr John Pine (Miss Solano Pine x Doc's Solano); and of course, Katie Gun.

Recently, Still sold John Gun to Dave Ladet from Lawrenceville, Ga.

"I'll never own a horse like him again," Still said. "When I read articles about Gunner and his attitude and his demeanor, he sounds so much like his granddaddy that it's unbelievable."

John Gun was trained and steered through his aged career by Sam Shepard, Magnolia Spring, Ala. He rode the horse to eight finals including a ninth place at the 1985 NCHA Breeders Cutting Derby and a 12th-place finish at the Summer Spectacular the same year. By the end of his fifth year, John Gun had \$32,192 to his credit.

Six years later, the horse returned to the show pen with Steve Pickett in the saddle. They hit the weekend circuit, and a year or so later, Still started cutting on John Gun in the non-pro and amateur classes. In total, John Gun accumulated \$37,469 in NCHA earnings.

Still remembers the first time he saw John Gun, a short time after Shepard returned with the horse from Texas.

"I got a chance to ride him and I was totally mesmerized," he said.

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A mare named Katie Gun

The filly was the 1987 product of a matching of Still's John Gun and Pounds' Bueno Katie. Katie Gun was a rather small filly with lots of chrome – two white pasterns, two white socks and a bold blaze.

The filly stayed at Pounds' ranch until, as a 2-year-old, she was sold to Storey for around \$2,000. Kentucky trainer Charlie Hutton, who would later train and show Katie Gun, acted as the go-between for the deal.

Hutton started Katie Gun and ran immediately into a major hitch.

"You could not touch her left ear," he explained.

For five months, the trainer took the bridle apart, threaded it up over her head and reattached the buckle on the left side.

"She was already doing some really pretty things under saddle before you could bridle her," Hutton recalled with a laugh.

Dangling carrots wound up winning the mare's trust. She would be too busy chewing to notice the increasing contact Hutton made with her ear. After about six months of consistent bribery, bridling was no longer an issue. Hutton later discovered that as a yearling, Katie Gun had been wire cut and needed veterinarian attention. The then un-halter broke mare was subdued using her left ear. It took her a long time to forget.

Storey was pleased with the progress Katie Gun made early on.

"When we were breaking her, it was evident that she could stop right away and turned around easily," he said. "She showed a lot of cow and could have easily been a cutter – she had that much cow ability."

Hutton agreed.

"She was very, very cowy and was one of the easiest and most intent horses I've ever started on cattle," he said.

As a 3-year-old, Katie Gun hit the show circuit. In May, she won her first Open reining out of a class of 10 exhibitors in Muscle Shoals, Ala. Forty times that year, Katie Gun placed in the top three of her reining class. Of those, 36 were either Champion or Reserve finishes.

"She was real quick-footed, a good stopper and loped around real quiet," Storey said.

But there was a definite spark to her demeanor.

"She was very intelligent and kind of an overachiever," Hutton added. "She was always very sensitive and quick."

The mare started winning cow horse classes as a 4-year-old. In June of that year, she topped her

inaugural open cow class with 11 horses entered.

“She was really explosive on a cow and good on the fence,” Storey said.

With his own time on Katie Gun in the Amateur division, Storey described the mare as quite a handful.

“She had a lot feel to her and a lot of power,” he said.

As an early 5-year-old, Katie Gun entered a new phase when Vicki Merck, the very successful all-around rider who still rides horses for Storey, showed her. Merck added another note to the mare’s repertoire with a cluster of top-three finishes in trail and Western riding while maintaining a winning presence in the reining and working cow horse.

Then it stopped. With 68.5 points on her AQHA account, 53 of which were earned in reining, Katie Gun left the show pen in March of her fifth year and went to the breeding barn.

Little did anyone know, she was about to forever change the face of reining – lots of white, floppy ears, glass eyes and all that incredible talent.

Katie Gun’s Money-Earning Foals

(earnings through June 30, 2008)

1. Colonels Smoking Gun (93S/Colonelfourfreckle) \$177,669
2. Dun It Gotta Gun (98S/Hollywood Dun It) \$61,665
3. Spooks Gotta Gun (2002S/Grays Starlight) \$48,847
4. Heres Your Shine (97S/Shining Spark) \$39,768
5. Night Time Nic (2003S/Nic It In The Bud) \$30,432
6. No Guns Please (2001S/Chic Please) \$18,096
7. Baddabing Baddaboon (03G/Boonlight Dancer) \$2,743
8. Shiny Paint (PT) (96M/Shining Spark) \$1,960
9. Guns R Reddy (04M/Nic It In The Bud) \$1,681
10. Guns Or Diamonds (1995M/Zans Diamond Dude) \$83
11. Gun Spun (94G/Zans Diamond Dude) \$73

More Katie Gun Babies To Come

3-Year-Olds and Younger

(according to AQHA registration records)

- Pistolera Nic (05S/Nic It In The Bud)
- Stick Em Up Nic (05G/Nic It In The Bud)
- The Cocked Gun (05S/Gallo Del Cielo)
- This Guns For Nic (07S/Nic It In The Bud)
- Nics One Up (07S/Nic It In The Bud)