



Main: John Hutcheson and PKR Primavera Brio at the Gab Creek waterfall. Inset: The Gab Creek sign.

A MATTER OF HONOR

The Way of Vaquero Horsemanship at Colonel John and Joyce Hutcheson's Gab Creek Farm

The greatest horsemen are most often those who don't proclaim themselves as such, but who carefully guard the secrets passed down by masters before them, and who freely share what they have learned with others, giving credit to these masters who taught them as a matter of honor. Retired Army Colonel John Hutcheson of Gab Creek Farm, Dahlonega, GA, is one of these modern day masters. Following 30 years of service in the infantry, John and his wife Joyce retired in 1998 to land owned in Joyce's family for five generations. John cleared the land and built Gab Creek Farm, where they raise old style Western working Morgans, which he starts himself using the traditions of Vaquero horsemanship.

By Brenda L. Tippin

JOHN'S BACKGROUND

John M. Hutcheson, or "Hutch," as many of his friends call him, was raised, as he likes to say, "on guns, dogs, and horses" in Douglas County, GA, where his family had lived for seven generations. He grew up with Quarter Horses, and at the age of 12, began working at an operation which had over 200 head of horses three miles from his home. This place was owned by Mr. Mac Abercrombie, Sr., born in 1903. "Mr. Mac" was the retired sheriff of the county and had raised and trained the first mules to go down into the Grand Canyon on a contract to the Harvey Mule Company. He continually kept 200-300 head of horses for sale, some of which always needed riding or schooling, so Hutch became an exercise rider, and Mr. Mac became his first



Far left, top and bottom:
PKR Primavera Brio;
Right three: *Gab Creek
Golden Vaquero* (junior
stallion at Gab Creek)
and *John Hutcheson*.
(Photos by Laura Behning).

mentor. Hutch had a run-in shed and corral at his home to house a horse, and would ride to work on the weekends. He continued this job through the age of 20. "From Mr. Mac I learned to 'have an eye' for how a horse should be put together, as well as how to ride and train stock horses," Hutch explains.

Hutch attended historic North Georgia College in Dahlonega, which began as a land grant and military school six years after the end of the Civil War, and is the second oldest university in the state. He was commissioned as an Infantry officer from North Georgia College in 1969, meeting his wife Joyce during his senior year there, and went on to command at all levels. As a young Captain, he served as Adjutant for then-Colonel H. Norman Schwartzkopf, followed by four years in the 101st Airborne as a Major. Known as "the Screaming Eagles," the 101st Airborne is a U.S. Army modular infantry division trained for air assault, and is one of the most prestigious and decorated divisions of the U.S. Army. As a Lieutenant Colonel, John Hutcheson commanded in Berlin before the wall came down, and his battalion suffered casualties during the La Belle Disco bombing of 1986. As a Colonel, he served as the senior trainer for Infantry at the National Training Center in the Mojave Desert, first Chief of Staff of the Joint Readiness Training Center and Ft. Polk, Chief of Staff of the Alaskan Command, and finally, he served as Chief of Staff of the 5th U.S. Army at Fort Sam Houston.

GETTING STARTED WITH MORGANS

Through all of his tours of duty, Hutch notes that he managed to keep his hands on a horse. He had ridden Tennessee Walkers, Arabs, and registered Quarter Horses, but although he had been on thousands of horses, he had never seen a Morgan in his life. By some curious chance he can no longer recall, he picked up a *Morgan Horse* magazine somewhere, which happened to be during the time frame in the late 1980s when several articles on the Morgan Stock Horse began to appear. Hutch fell in love with the deep-bodied substance of what he came to learn was the old style Morgan, and subscribed.

"As a kid my mentor had an own son of King P 234," Hutch notes. "My stallion Brio reminds me of him a lot. I began to discover the Morgan stock horse and to learn that the finest cow horses ever were probably the trigger-reined stock of Roland Hill trained by the last of the Vaqueros in California in the early part of the 20th century. The realization that I could have this baroque-looking horse with the famous disposition that could do what a Quarter Horse could, launched me into looking for a special Morgan stallion. The Morgan stock horse articles by Brenda Tippin mentioned a horse named Primavera Valdez bred by Dick Nelsen, who bred some of the best of that type of horse in the late 1970s, and who was owned by Bob and Carol Simpson of Yuba City, CA.



Top: *The Gab Creek barn. Insets:* *On the way to Gab Creek; the entrance; run and pasture; and Gary Napier on GabCreek Gay Mashanta and John Hutcheson on Gab Creek Rosado during his visit to Gab Creek Farm in 2009. (Photos by Gary Napier)*

Primavera Valdez, a powerfully-built, handsome buckskin, was the first Morgan to hold a Stallion Certificate as an Honor Roll Stallion in the National Reining Horse Association Sire & Dam Program. It was largely through Valdez and the efforts of the Simpsons that interest in the Morgan Stock Horse was renewed, as well as a healthy interest in breeding quality, colorful Morgans, both of which were very scarce in the breed at the time.

“In the summer of 1990, I was transferred from my post at Ft Irwin, CA, in the Mojave desert to Carlisle Barracks, PA,” Hutch continues. “We were driving cross country and stopping to visit friends along the way, so I called Carol Simpson and asked if we could drop by to see Primavera Valdez. We loved everything about this beautiful buckskin stallion, and that was the start of a lifetime friendship. Our goal was to look for a son of this horse when it was time for me to retire in a few years.”

In January of 1996, Carol Simpson called the Hutchesons in Alaska, where they were then stationed, to alert them that the only buckskin, ungelded son of Valdez was for sale in Tennessee and they should buy him. They were due to rotate to another duty station soon, having no idea as yet where that would be, so could not imagine how this was going to work out.

Joyce takes up the story, “When our high school senior daughter decided to visit a college near Lexington, KY, in March, it seemed reasonable that I could go see the young stallion in person. John was raised with horses; I had collected Breyer models and read *Black Beauty* and *National Velvet*, but I had absolutely no real-horse experience. I reported back to John with such rich,

meaningful comments as, ‘He’s really sweet, and so pretty.’ The few pictures I took that turned out were so awful that no one in their right mind would consider buying the horse in thick winter coat with a rubbed-out mane.”

John was rather taken aback when he saw the pictures, and called Carol, repeating the question, “Carol, are you SURE?”

Carol recalls, “Joyce had gotten back with the photos but I hadn’t seen what John was referring to. I said, ‘Yes, John, Brio is going to be a really nice stallion.’ Then the photos of Brio arrived that Joyce had taken with him in his full winter coat. I’ve never seen anything so unattractive! But, when I’ve made up my mind about a youngster before they hit that “Oh my God” stage, I stand by my judgment.”

As it turned out, John’s next assignment was at Ft. Sam Houston, TX, which proved to be an excellent place to keep a horse. The Hutchesons committed to buy the colt, PKR Primavera Brio (Primavera Valdez x Rose Hill LaPapillon), on Carol’s word that the bloodlines were solid and he was a good representative of a versatile Morgan, worthy of being a stallion.

John concludes, “We moved him to San Antonio, Texas, where I started him when I was 50 years old. He was everything Carol had promised, and more. We put him with a great young reining horse trainer, Brad Jewett, and with just seven months under saddle he placed at the Grand National up in Oklahoma City. I truly believe Brio is my ‘horse of a lifetime.’ I know I will never again know a horse like this one and have been privileged to be his keeper.”



Top: A view of the Gab Creek barn from the pasture.

Insets: Mecates and hackamores; harnesses; a saddle; and saddles and bridles. (Photos by Gary Napier)

HISTORY OF GAB CREEK FARM

In 1998, John retired from his military career, and the Hutchesons moved to Dahlonega, GA, to clear and build their farm. Joyce inherited 16 acres from her grandmother, land which had been in Joyce's family since her great-great-grandfather Abner Waters settled there in the 1830s. They purchased adjoining land for a total of 190 acres. Most of this land had originally been settled by some other early settlers, the Lingerfelt family, whose original homestead may be identified by the abundant yellow jonquils that bloom there each year. The farm lies in Lumpkin County, formed in 1832, shortly after gold was discovered, and began America's first Gold Rush, which continued through the 1830s. It is just 2-4 miles from the Chattahoochee National Forest, and is little more than an hour from the Rich Mountain Wilderness.

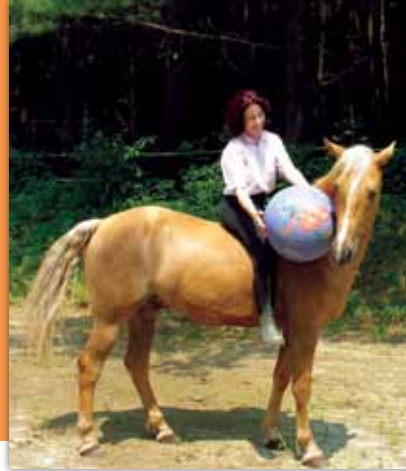
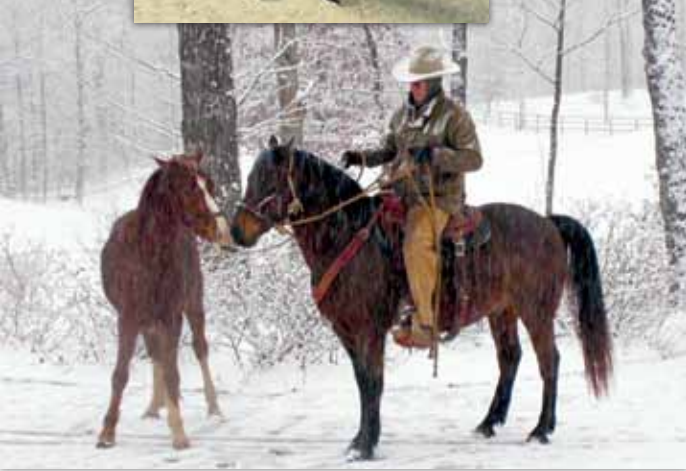
The area has a colorful history with much of the land originally belonging to the Creek Indians. It was part of the territory explored by Spanish conquistador Hernando DeSoto in 1541, and is less than 16 miles from beautiful DeSoto Falls where a plate of armor from this expedition was discovered in the 1880s. Later, as early white settlers began colonizing the northern parts of the country in the 1600s, this pushed the Cherokee Indians south and west onto Creek land, and the territory became the scene of bitter Indian wars. During the Gold Rush years, early mining operations were so successful that the US Government authorized the building of a mint in Dahlonega, which produced over \$6,000,000 in gold coins between 1838 to 1861.

Hutch patiently set about to clear the land, and designed and built everything on the farm himself, all while caring for the stock.

He spent his last two years on active duty visiting a different horse facility each Sunday afternoon to get ideas for the designs he would build. He notes, "I fenced the corn field, turned it into a hay field, rode the bell mare down there morning and evening for turn out, began to clear land, build trails, built the main horse barn, hay barn, house, run-in sheds....I cleared 35 acres for pastures."

GAB CREEK FARM AND VAQUERO HORSEMANSHIP

Gary Napier of Rolling Acres Farm in Pritchard, WV, who visited Gab Creek Farm in 2009, writes, "I have visited hundreds of farms over the years (I worked for a number of large animal vets) all in varying degrees of efficiency, safety for humans and horses, fancy to impoverished, etc. Even so I have never seen a more efficient, safe and practical set-up for horses. I have seen fancier but even they lacked in safety and efficiency. My real reason for going to Gab Creek Farm was to learn training techniques from Hutch. He is a master of the Californio style riding beginning with a hackamore and ending with a finished bridle horse. After a more than six hour drive in the pouring rain, I arrived at Gab Creek and was welcomed by John and Joyce into their lovely home with a steaming bowl of homemade soup, cornbread and fresh apple pie. I knew it would be a good week ahead with my feet under Joyce's table. Not only was I impressed with the facilities, I was blown away by the level of training each of the horses have. When Hutch enters a stall, the horses turn to face him and promptly stick their nose in the halter.



THE GAB CREEK BREEDING PROGRAM. Get of Longstreet Serenata by PKR Primavera Brio (top row, left to right): *Gab Creek Carmen* and *Susan Visi*; *Gab Creek Golden Halo* and *Melissa Starr*, *Georgia Ladies Aside*, 2009 Old Soldier's Day parade; *Gab Creek Golden Halo* offspring *LV Golden Honey* (by *Windhover Warlock*) owned by *Theresa Alford*. (Bottom row, left to right): *Gab Creek Tio Moro* (out of *Althea Moro*) and *Gab Creek Soldado* on a Winter's day; *Gab Creek Currahee* and owner *Alice Ridgway*.

"I got to watch Hutch ride their junior stallion, Gab Creek Golden Vaquero, who won the five-year-old snaffle bit/hackamore class at the 2008 Grand National and placed in two other classes. I was impressed at the finger light touches he used to control this horse, but was not expecting his offer to let me ride him. I got to experience the feel of 'spinning' on a reining horse; although it took a few tries because the horse had no idea what this greenhorn wanted him to do. I'd be remiss not to tell you if you like Primavera lines, you need to check out their horses. These horses are using horses and the blend of several old lines. They have one mare with lots of Lambert blood that has produced two exceptional colts when bred to Brio. This was certainly a cross that nicked; beauty, substance, keen mind and highly trainable with the added bonus of color! It was a rigorous week in terms of me being in 'student' mode and trying to absorb so much info, and would take volumes to pen what I learned about so many aspects of horses, training, management and tack but certainly was time well-spent. If I only retain a fraction of what I learned, my horses and I will benefit from it for years to come."

As Hutch explains, a "bridle horse" is both a "process" and a "result" which takes five years to train. The horse needs to be able to flex in the third vertebra to develop the unique carriage/neck set of the "Finished" or "Signal Bit Horse." The incentive to put this much effort into training is the strong rapport that develops

between horse and rider, almost as if the horse literally reads the rider's intent telepathically through his light touch on the rein, rather than through any pull or signal.

Lucy Ray, owner and breeder of the buckskin filly LER Charli's Angel (PKR Primavera Brio x Charli Girl) writes, "The Hutchesons are just wonderful people. Besides having an awesome breeding program and a herd of old style 'using' Morgan horses, they go out of their way to make you feel at home when visiting their farm. I first met the Hutchesons when I was at graduate school at University of Georgia (UGA). I found the website by doing a search on 'Morgan Stock Horses' and called them up and talked for 30 minutes. They invited me up to visit and I took my nine-year-old cousin up with me. We had a blast!

"We kept in touch and my second year in graduate school I was assigned to teach the 'breaking and training' course at UGA. Technically it was Equine Operant Behavior & Conditioning. Hutch offered to come down and do a class on making a bridle horse. He very considerably drove down, hauled Shanta with him, talked about the intricacies of the Jaquima A Freno method and demonstrated what a horse that was started in the hackamore should look like. In addition, he worked individually with the students to let them see what a soft feel should be like on their own horses and how to ask a horse to properly carry himself and give his face vertically. That patience and kindness



THE GAB CREEK BREEDING PROGRAM. Get of LBF Gay Enchantment by PKR Primavera Brio (top row, left to right): Gab Creek Rosado with John and Joyce; Gab Creek Golden Vaquero; Gab Creek Azucar Marron. Left: Gab Creek Gay Mashanta (full sister to PKR Primavera Brio) and Althea Moro with Dr. Scott Hancock. Get of Althea Moro by PKR Primavera Brio (above, left to right): Gab Creek Tio Moro; Gab Creek Motilla.

came to the surface again with both the students and the colts. Hutch certainly impressed my students and I was very grateful for him putting that kind of time and effort into such a wonderful program! It was great to watch what actually could be achieved through these techniques.”

THE GAB CREEK BREEDING PROGRAM

The Gab Creek program carries on the rare sireline of Primavera Valdez and is focused on solid, old style Morgan bloodlines through Government, Brunk, Hill, Sellman, and other lines noted for producing Western working and sport Morgans. Hutch admits, “Honestly, starting out I did not have a clue about bloodlines. Whatever I know now, I got from Carol Simpson, Brenda Tippin, and Ina Ish. In Brio the only three surviving Black Hawk lines (from the Ethan Allen sons Daniel Lambert and Honest Allen) are united with Sherman Black Hawk through Morgan Champion, Knox Morgan and Billy Root through Billy Roberts and united, again, with the Woodbury family through the sons of Peter’s Ethan Allen II, to Gifford through White River Morgan, to the Golddust family through Winterset and to the Bulrush family through Midnight Sun. In the 20th century the horses behind Brio include Artemesia, Bennington, Mansfield, Gay Mac, Red Oak, Allen King, Denning Allen, Knox Morgan, Senator Graham, Welcome, Captor, Linsley, Jubilee King, Jubilee De Jarnette, Knox Morgan, and Flyhawk. All

horses of type, blood and substance. I also didn’t and still don’t much care about color. To me it is all about how the horse is put together and his mind. But Brio has the cream dilution gene, so color is part of my life now.”

Although Primavera Valdez, foaled in 1979, left a strong core of dedicated fans, 66 offspring, and several good sons, most sons have either been gelded or are not being used for breeding due to the difficult economy, and this rare and talented sireline hangs by a thread. Hutch’s Brio remains the most prolific son with a conservative 24 foals to date, including his beautiful palomino son, Gab Creek Golden Vaquero, the junior stallion at Gab Creek Farm. Vaquero will stand for outside mares for 2011. These lines represent pure old foundation blood with no outcrosses and excellent examples of original Morgan type. Horses talented in Western working and sport disciplines are intensely popular in the international market. There is a keen interest in colorful Morgans among international breeders, as well. Hutch, along with many other breeders, is hoping the economy will improve and allow more breeding of these lines, as this is important to the preservation of the breed.

In addition to PKR Primavera Brio, selected as their foundation stallion and the focal point of their breeding program, the Hutchesons carefully chose a few mares, adding LBF Gay Enchantment (H-Ken x LBF Gay Enchantment), purchased



as a foal from breeder Polly Smith in January 1998, and later that year, the mare Longstreet Serenata (Greenbay Ragtime x Whippoorwill Aemilia) bred by Ina Ish.

Longstreet Serenata

Serenata was the mother of the first foal to carry the Gab Creek prefix, the beautiful dapple palomino Gab Creek Currahee now owned by Kevin Noll and Alice Ridgway of Noll-Ridge farms in Northfield, CT, foaled in 2000. Alice describes her horse:

“When visitors meet Gab Creek Currahee (a.k.a. Curry) his looks are what everyone notices first. His shiny, golden coat is striking. The comments then quickly switch to his confident and curious temperament. Curry came to us already trained using natural horsemanship, courtesy of John’s tall frame and gentle manner. At only 5’2”, the opportunity for Curry to test our relationship was always possible but he never tried. Instead we continued using natural horsemanship techniques and now I only bother with tack if I’m leaving the farm. Curry jumps and does figure eights with just a hay bale string around his neck. His ground manners make everyone, including adults with developmental disabilities, immediately calm and secure. What a gift!”

Serenata also produced three more full siblings, Gab Creek Golden Halo, Gab Creek Soldado, and Gab Creek Carmen. Carmen, born the day Ronald Reagan was buried, is known as “Nancy Reagan,” and was sold to Bill & Susan Visi of Flyhawk Farm in Clarksville, GA. Golden Halo, known as “Becky,” is owned by Melissa Starr of Alpharetta, GA, who often rides her sidesaddle in parades for the Georgia Ladies Aside. The two will be appearing in the 129th Atlanta St. Patrick’s Day parade, which is expected to be the largest since the very first one held in 1858.

Soldado or “Soldier” has a unique story. Hutch says, “Soldier is my kindest, stoutest horse. He was bred, foaled (premature by 30+ days), and raised here. His first three days of life were tenuous. He lived in my lap under a heat lamp and I would pick him up dead weight to nurse as he did not have the strength to stand. I named him Soldier because he had to fight for life. Joyce took up the dog blanket to

make it small enough. His legs were all askew. He grew out of all that. When he was six months old, if I sat in the middle of a stall he would lie down and try to get in my lap. In the fall of his two-year-old year I did the ground training and in the spring of his three-year-old year I started him. I felt like crying when I saw how much trust he had. I sent him to a Mark Wilcher for 120 days of professional training and brought him back that summer. I have never offered him for sale.”

LBF Gay Enchantment

The first foal of LBF Gay Enchantment, or “Mandy,” was a dark chestnut filly, Gab Creek Rosado (x PKR Primavera Brio), foaled in 2002. Hutch says he made the mistake of picking “Rosie” up every day for three weeks when she was a foal and fell in love with her, so could not bring himself to sell her. He took her to a Bob King Cow Work clinic in the Spring of 2008 as a very green horse who had never seen a cow—yet riding her into the herd, she hooked onto

Hijo de Valdez (Primavera Valdez x Kizan’s Sonita)
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 Owned by Gerry Paiva, gerrypaiva@yahoo.com

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OUTSIDE BREEDING. Get by PKR Primavera Brio (top row, left to right): *LER Charli's Angel* (x Charli Girl) (owned by Lucy Ray) with Ray's 4H student MaCauley Buffer; *Wirraway's Trademark* (x Fox Brush Custom Design) (owned by Diane Howard) at his 1st show in Australia with Shane Burgess. (Bottom row, left to right) *Ensigns Amazing Grace* (x Statesmans Lady Grace) owned by Kathleen Farris; *Sand Hawks Buckaroo Brio* (x Sand Hawk) owned by Steve and Susan Suber of Sugar Shack Farms.

a cow the first try, leaving Bob King with the impression that John must have a lot of experience with livestock. Hutch notes, "She is a special one. She would come into the house and make herself a peanut butter sandwich if she had hands."

Mandy's second foal was the striking golden dapple palomino, Gab Creek Golden Vaquero, a full brother to Rosie and the junior stallion at Gab Creek Farm.

Vaquero reminds Hutch of the beautiful Spanish horses ridden by the conquistadors such as Cortez, and is the living reincarnation of Dick Nelsen's great palomino stallion Californio (Tio Lalo x Sissey). Californio was closely related to the dam of Vaquero's grandsire, Primavera Valdez, and Vaquero also traces directly to him in five generations through his dam. After starting Vaquero himself, Hutch put him in training with noted reining horse

trainer Mark Wilcher. Vaquero then won the five-year-old snaffle bit/hackamore class at the 2008 Grand National in Oklahoma City.

Hutch says, "This is the long-awaited linebred cross of Dick Nelsen's Primavera lines of Gay Vaquero and Valdez with Ab Cross' H-Ken. H-Ken was all cow horse, born in Dubois, WY, on the Cross Ranch. As a weanling he was sold to Reed Allen of Wyoming as payment for an old war debt. After 14 years there, he went to Colorado Springs with the Bruhn family, then to North Hero, VT, at age 20. Polly Smith bred her Gay Enchantress (a Gay Vaquero daughter) to Ken, and LBF Gay Enchantment (aka Mandy) was the offspring. Primavera Brio on Mandy has given us Vaquero. There are very few horses now with this much of Dick and Phyllis Nelsen's Primavera lines."

The third and most recent of the



literally golden cross of Brio x Mandy produced the stunning 2008 brown buckskin filly, Gab Creek Azucar Marron, or "Sugar." Hutch has a very lucky buyer lined up for this lovely young mare.

Gab Creek Gay Mashanta

Gab Creek Gay Mashanta, a full sister to Brio, was added in 2001. "Shanta" produced Gab Creek Traveler in 2004, a son of talented sport horse Funquest Erick owned by Robert & Joyce Quigley, Fox Brush Morgans. Traveler was also sold to Bill & Susan Visi. Shanta's second foal was Gab Creek Gay Jazz, by Sereno Vermont Jazz, adding a concentration of old California lines going back to the Jubilee King son Red Vermont. Shanta, in addition to proving herself as a broodmare, is one of the mares who accompanied Hutch on his memorable 2008 pack trip into the Cloud Peak and Platte River Wilderness areas of Wyoming, and the Pryor Mountain wild horse range along the Montana border.

Althea Moro

Althea Moro (Cameron Of Quietude x Misty Morning Dew) was added in 2004 and has produced two beautiful Brio foals (Althea was the second mare who accompanied Hutch on his 2008 pack trip into the Wyoming wilderness where she firmly established her reputation as his favorite pack horse.). These are the palomino Gab Creek Motilla, who is the third Gab Creek horse owned by Bill and Susan Visi, and the chestnut sabino Gab Creek Tio Moro, or "Timmy," who reflects the strong Lambert blood of Criterion through his dam. Of Timmy, Hutch says, "Timmy has wonderful length of neck, laid back shoulder and drape of stifle. Based on his full brother being 15h at three years, we believe this colt will be 15.2h+.

"Timmy's dam Althea Moro is a mare of real substance, exceptional bone and short cannons. Lots of people talk about how many crosses their horses have to Jubilee King, but few have him top and bottom on the actual registration paper as Althea does. The concentrated Brunk breeding in Primavera Brio has nicked with the Jubilee King blood in Althea Moro to throw an exceptional colt who would have been stallion quality. He has the frame to

be a successful hunter or jumper. This colt is very kind, fearless and will be a pleasure to start."

Outside breedings have also produced some special horses. Kathleen Farris of Ensigns Grace Farm has Ensigns Amazing Grazing (PKR Primavera Brio x Statesmans Lady Grace), a 2009 palomino filly. Kate has signed her up for lifetime USEF membership and plans to send her to Ange Bean for training and competition.

Wirraway Trademark (PKR Primavera Brio x Fox Brush Custom Design) aka Brikki is owned by Diane Howard of Queensland, Australia. For several years Diane, who breeds sport horses, had followed the impressive careers of the stallion Funquest Erick, owned by Robert and Joyce Quigley of Fox Brush Morgans, and the mare BoWood Elusiv Dream, owned by MaryAnn Schafer of Stormswept Morgans, both in Florida.

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WILDERNESS PACK TRIPS.

(Top row, left to right): Cloud and his band of wild horses; Shanta and Althea entering Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range; Loading in the morning above 10,000 ft. (Bottom row, left to right) John fixing coffee; John on Shanta back from scouting for Edelman Pass as the weather changed; The snowfall got heavier all day—they were wet from their knees down.



Erick was the first Morgan ever to be branded as an approved sire by the American Warmblood Society with a score of 83%, putting him in the top 10 of all breeds tested. Erick and Dream were the second and third horses respectively to win the Morgan Sport Horse award. Bred to Erick, Dream produced another talented mare for MaryAnn, Fox Brush Custom Design, aka Rikki. Diane was interested in buying this mare, but MaryAnn offered to lease her for breeding instead, and Diane bred her to Brio to produce Brikki. Later, MaryAnn made the decision to send Rikki to Australia along with her foal in a co-ownership agreement with Diane. As a yearling, Brikki placed third to two mature stallions in hand at his first show.

LER Charli's Angel (PKR Primavera Brio x Charli Girl) is a 2009 buckskin filly bred and owned by Lucy Ray, who is a UGA Cooperative Extension Agriculture Agent in Jasper County, GA. Lucy says, "One of my duties is coordinator of our 4-H Horse Club which is open to youth from 9-19 years of age. I coordinate monthly meetings, coach teams for Horse Judging, Horse Quiz Bowl, Hippolyg, etc. I use my horses for a lot of the demonstrations since I can trust them to react appropriately in a wide variety of situations—kids running around them, dogs in and out, strange folks handling them, etc. We used Angel to demonstrate fitting a saddle. Angel had never had a saddle on her before...I hadn't even thrown a saddle pad over her back. She behaved wonderfully. Not only did she let us fit a western saddle tree and an English saddle on her, she did it with six kids and multiple parents walking around her from all sides, messing with the saddle, petting her, playing with her mane and forelock...you get the idea. If that type of situation doesn't make a young horse feel claustrophobic, I don't know what

will. The kids chose Angel as the one they wanted to take a picture with at the end of the demonstration."

WILDERNESS PACK TRIPS

Hutch says, "I have a yearning that won't let go of me to be in big open country on a horse." He has ridden Morgans in the Golden Trout Wilderness of the Sierra Nevadas, and in the Big Bend of Texas. On his most recent 2008 trip, featured in "View From My Saddle" in the January/February 2009 issue of *The Morgan Horse*, he rode in the Cloud Peak Wilderness and the Platte River Wilderness in Wyoming, as well as riding alone among the Mustangs on top of Pryor Mountain, Montana. Accompanied only by his two Morgan mares, Gab Creek Gay Mashanta and Althea Moro, he rode up into the high country and came right up on the wild stallion Cloud, made famous by the documentaries of Emmy Award winning filmmaker Ginger Kathrens. Kathrens discovered and began documenting the striking pale palomino when he was foaled in 1995, naming him Cloud. Often film crews have searched for him for weeks without finding any sign, and sometimes Kathrens has not been able to locate him for years at a stretch. For Hutch it was an immense thrill to come right up on this magnificent stallion, a proven descendant of the original Spanish horses, and have Cloud voluntarily walk out and show himself just so he could have a better look at the Morgan mares. Among several foals in the small band with Cloud was also another pale palomino colt, the image of his sire.

Hutch is planning a similar pack trip for Fall 2011—hopefully minus the extreme weather which changed on the last trip without warning, with a sudden 60° drop in temperature and dumping a



**WILDERNESS
PACK TRIPS.**

(Top row): John on Shanta with Althea packing at the trail going in and at the west end of Solitude Lake; (Bottom row) John on a 2006 cattle drive in the High Sierras on one of Jo Johnson's Morgans.

foot of snow, making much of the trip an actual challenge to survive the elements.

A MATTER OF HONOR

Hutch credits two mentors for much of what he has learned of the old Vaquero ways: Ray Ordway, and the late Al Grandchamp who lived to be 103. Born in 1907, Al rode until he was 96. He was a master rawhide braider, who learned from other masters before him and painstakingly made at least a couple hundred hackamores, all of which he gave away. He taught for more than 25 years, having a Master's Degree in Education Administration from the University of Chicago, and taught Advanced Horsemanship well into his 90s. He loved sharing what he had learned and corresponded with Hutch for several years.

Born in 1924, Ray Ordway has known and worked with Morgans all his life, riding and practicing the vaquero methods for outfits all across California. He is still very active and was the Honored Vaquero at the August 2010 Vaquero Heritage Days celebration held at the San Juan Bautista Mission, an important part of Vaquero tradition. Ray also recently participated in

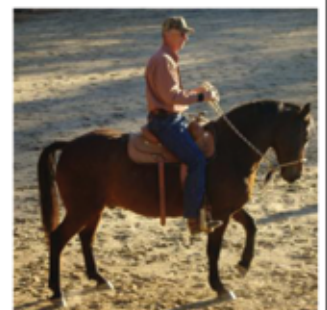
riding and roping for the newly released documentary film, "The Gathering." This in-depth documentary on the Legacy of California Vaquero produced by Essential Image Source Foundation will premiere this month in numerous showings across the country, scheduled here: www.vaquerofilms.org/Film-Premieres.html

Hutch concludes, "I have grown to prefer what I guess you'd call natural horsemanship. In my second horse life I have studied Tom Dorrance, Ray Hunt, Buck Branaman, John Lyons, Clinton Anderson, Dennis Rees, Brad Jewett, Brian

Dees, Jo Johnson, Herman Wingruber and many others. And I will never forget my first mentor, Mr. Mac Abercrombie. I loved him like a second father. They say values are caught not taught, and I was lucky to have known his example and his love. In 1969 I went to Gold Rush in Dahlenega dressed as a river boat gambler and borrowed a pair of his boots. I was 22 and could fill them physically but after 30 years of service in the Infantry, serving all over the world and commanding at all levels in the Army, I still can't fill his shoes. I have never met anyone who could." ■

Significant blood and treasure on my part has gone into preserving the rare and valuable Valdez sire line. To carry on this work, I am willing to consider breeding shares, or possibly lease or sale of my champion stallion Gab Creek Golden Vaquero to an experienced horseman and committed breeder only. Excellent young horses with these lines also for sale, or you may "order" a foal that has not yet been bred. Please contact me to discuss details. Serious inquiries only.

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Gab Creek Soldado
 Photo by Susan Sentinella