

The Best In The West show was held Labor Day weekend at Brookside Equestrian Park. Sponsored by the [Seven Counties Paint Horse Club](#) (7CPHC), the atmosphere was fun and relaxed, in spite of the late summer heat.



Jennifer Barbee, of Sanger, CA, and her eight year old AQHA/APHA Gelding, Fancy Dot Com, earned two High Point Amateur All-Around awards at their fourth show of the year. Jennifer trains with Melissa Sachs of [TS Paints](#) in Morgan Hill, CA. "Sometimes working with amateurs who have been riding a long time isn't easy, but Melissa knows when to push me and when to allow me to work through an issue on my own. The TS Paints crew is fantastic, supporting each other all the time."

Jennifer purchased Fancy Dot Com, barn name "Cruiser," in September of 2006. The pair have been working to become a team, focusing a lot of energy on making Cruiser happier to do his job. "Melissa noticed he wasn't happy when we went to the first Rancho show back in April. She came up with a really creative idea for a custom fitted saddle pad and that made all the difference in my horse's willingness to perform! Melissa is a kind and patient trainer. She's very innovative and always considers the horse's perspective first."

"I am very fortunate to have a husband who shares my passion for horses and is supportive of me. It's not easy!" said Jennifer. Coming to the show with no expectations, it was actually her husband, Scott, who first mentioned the possibility of trying for the All-Around Amateur award. "I was a little nervous when we got to the show on the second day and found that my horse had escaped from his stall to wander the grounds all night. Good thing his name was on his slinky so everyone knew where he belonged." The overnight adventure turned out okay – Jennifer and Fancy Dot Com won or placed high in their Amateur classes of Showmanship, Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Equitation and Horsemanship.



"Cruiser loves Showmanship. He really likes to be the center of attention. Until recently, it was my most difficult class, but he makes me look smooth and confident. Sometimes he'll try to switch a pivot foot just to keep me sharp. He's such a character," Jennifer said of her horse.

Jennifer has been riding competitively for almost thirty years. She is a lifetime certified equine appraiser and her firm, [Sterling Equine Appraisals](#), values approximately 200 horses of all types per year. Actively competing helps Jennifer keep current with what's happening in the Industry. Home to the Nation's most accomplished Paint horses and exhibitors, Jennifer feels the competition in California is fierce, making each placing an honor.

Her favorite thing about the show was getting to meet fellow competitor Sue Merchant. Sue is currently leading California for High Point Amateur All-Around. "Sue was very friendly and gracious during the show, exemplifying the encouraging environment that 7CPHC created. It was nice to really get to know one of my other competitors. It's good to have friends who share your dreams."

The next show for the pair will be the Western Paint World in Bakersfield, CA, in mid-October. Cruiser may have a companion if he manages to sneak in some more nighttime marauding. "We're also taking Scott's horse, Charlie Black," said Jennifer.



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Thank you Melissa and the TS Paints crew!