

# SANTA HILL RANCH

## Bringing the best of training & breeding to New York

From his meager beginnings as a hack-horse owner in the rolling hills of New York, Bob Santagata has become completely consumed with the sport of Reining.

Bob Santagata's Santa Hill Ranch, located in scenic Campbell Hall, New York, is a beautiful full-service training and breeding facility focusing on the reining industry. Santagata's fascination with all things Reining began very humbly. "I always loved to ride," Santagata explained. "I would rent horses at the hack stable and trail ride. When I bought my property in Campbell Hall, I bought a hack horse for myself and brought him up here with me." Santagata began hearing about this event called Reining and discovered that one of the neighboring ranches was involved, so he and his brother Steve paid them a visit to learn more about it. "Things just rolled on from there," he said. "We dove right into the sport and have been rolling ever since." Today his sprawling state-of-the-art facility is home to resident trainer, NRHA Professional Dean Brown, and freshman sire, Friday Night Shiner.

When Santagata purchased Friday Night Shiner as a futurity prospect in 2006, he was looking for a show horse with no real thought he might become a sire. The handsome buckskin stallion was shown by a variety of trainers over the next eight years, but it was Dean Brown who found the most success with him. They racked up a series of open class wins that really made people sit up and take notice. What was even more impressive was the fact that in 2014, "Sparky"

as he is known by fans, was also being shown by Bob's wife, Arlene, in the green reiner and rookie classes and earned a trip to the Silver Spurs Equine Rookie of the Year finals.

Friday Night Shiner's breeding career began in 2012 when Bob decided to breed him to a few of his mares to see what kind of a breeding horse and sire he would be. "None of us ever really had great expectations for the resulting foals," Santagata said. "But when Dean started riding them as 2 year olds, he was cautiously optimistic. You really have no idea what you've got until you start showing them."

The first foal crop by the young sire hit the show pen in 2015 and claimed the winner's circle from the very first show. The maiden voyage for the first two Sparky foals was the Pink Ribbon Reining in Sorel, Quebec, Canada. Brown won the Futurity's Level 4 Open division aboard Sparkys Shining Doll with an incredible 153 score. He also earned the Reserve championship riding another Friday Night Shiner offspring, Shiners Gotta Whiz, with a score of 151. Both Bob and Dean were no longer cautiously optimistic, but they were now really excited.

"His first foal crop totaled six and they were all out of different types of mares," Santagata explained. "We didn't know what to expect from the other four but we knew the first two were show horses at that point." Santagata couldn't be more proud of the year-end results from this tiny foal crop out of his personally-owned mares. "Sparky was a 100 percent producer from his first crop, with all six becoming money earners and bringing home over \$80,000 in 2015. They included two NRHA Level 4 Open finalists and an NRHA Non Pro finalist."



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Santagata is justifiably excited about the sire record of Friday Night Shiner and looking forward to the next group of futurity horses to hit the show pen in 2016. In addition, the handsome stallion has attracted the eye of other serious breeders and will be courting outside mares this year as well.

From his meager beginnings as a hack-horse owner in the rolling hills of New York, Santagata has become completely consumed with the sport of Reining. From his training and breeding facility to his support of the industry, Bob loves everything about the sport. "I never do anything half way," he said with a grin. And that is evident when you meet him, visit his facility or watch his horses show.

Santa Hill Ranch is spread over 390-acres of prime New York real estate just 40 miles outside of New York City and features a 125' X 250' climate-controlled indoor arena, a 150' X 400' outdoor arena and 36 12 X 12 climate controlled padded stalls.

The breeding barn is camera-supported with 17 stalls. This includes three birthing stalls, six mare/foal walkout stalls and designated stallion stalls. The lighting system is computer-controlled for mare cycle optimization. The state-of-the-art lab includes a nuclear-sperm counter, microscopes, centrifuge and ultrasound machine.

NRHA Professional Dean Brown has been working for Santagata for the last six years and offers training, showing, coaching and lessons. Brown's arrival was a game changer for Santagata's horse program. For the last three years Bob has been among the NRHA Top 20 Owners, and Dean has made the NRHA Top 20 Riders list as well.

The Santa Hill Ranch team travels to all of the NRHA major events as well as many regional and local shows throughout the year. Santagata's breeding hopes don't rest totally with Friday Night Shiner. Several years ago he had the opportunity to purchase Smart Little Prize, the dam of NRHA's second-highest money earner and NRHA Futurity Open Champion KR Lil Conquistador. Santagata wasted no time in getting her in the right hands to manage her breeding career and sent her to the best stallions in the industry. "Dean is currently riding a 3-year-old stallion by Topsail Whiz out of this mare, and we are very excited about his future. We are shooting to make her the NRHA's all-time leading producing mare!"

For more information on Santa Hill Ranch and the programs they offer please visit [santahillranch.com](http://santahillranch.com), or visit them on Facebook at Santa Hill Ranch. ♦

