

Story Book STABLES

HOME OF WIMPYS HIGH BID AND STAR SPANGLED WHIZ

Set upon 15 acres, Story Book Stables is located in the heart of Rio Verde, Arizona. For owner Brenda Joyce, Story Book Stables is a dream come true.

“I was born in Brooklyn and raised in New York City in an apartment on the Upper East Side. I remember very clearly that, as a child, I desperately wished I lived on a ranch out west with horses.”



Marco Ricotta
and Shine Plum Shine

A best-selling author of 54 published novels, Brenda moved to Arizona in 2003 and stumbled upon reining by chance. Indulging her love of horses, she purchased an Arabian reiner, and

decided to try reining. “Learning to ride—I was an absolute beginner—and learning to rein at the same time was the toughest and most challenging sport I had ever attempted to master,” she said. “It became



Wimpys High Bid (Wimpys Little Step x Lucky Little Jewel), \$154,200 LTE

Acquiring ‘High Bid’ from Vaughn Zimmerman in 2014 began to change Brenda’s focus. “He had been an open horse, successfully shown by [NRHA Professional] Jason Vanlandingham as a 3 year old and 4 year old, and had earned \$142,000. I was just a Level (L)1 rider, and not a very good one at that.

High Bid took care of me. We were always in the money. Plus, he was the horse that I had dreamed of owning as a little girl in NYC. He is beautiful, athletic, strong, sound—my boyfriend at the time (now husband Frederick Christen) - had Dr. Carter take 40 X-rays and nine ultrasounds when we bought him, and there was nothing wrong! Nothing! But most of all, he truly has a great mind.

I began to think about how easy it had been for me to jump on him right after Jason and go show! How many open horses will let a non pro do that? It became a no-brainer: one day, I wanted to give him a chance to reproduce all of those qualities, especially his mind! And then we bought Star Spangled Whiz.”





Star Spangled Whiz (Topsail Whiz x Sheza Shady Slider), \$175,000 LTE

Story Book Stables acquired Star Spangled Whiz in the spring of 2016, and suddenly Brenda was in the stallion business.

"I had bought a 3-year-old colt the year before, See U Saturday Night (Star Spangled Whiz x Wimpys Rose), a 2015 NRHA Open Futurity Finalist for us. I was so impressed with him that I researched his sire—and fell in love. Star Spangled Whiz has to be the most underrated stud in the business, and until now, the most under-promoted. He is amazingly athletic, beautiful, and has a great mind. And he stamps his get! When he came up for sale, I had to buy him." Star Spangled Whiz is currently a 2016 Equi-Stat Leading Junior Reining Sire, with Produced Earnings over \$227,000. He has a huge show record, which includes being the 2009 NRHA Open World Champion, and to this day, he holds the highest score ever marked in an European NRHA approved event—236. He is also the sire of Firstjabacoffeewhiz, last year's Italian Reining Horse Association Open Futurity Champion. Both Star Spangled Whiz and Wimpys High Bid are now standing at Tom McCutcheon Reining Horses in Aubrey, Texas.



both a passion and an obsession, and at first, I was just a non pro with too many horses and a very expensive hobby."

After winning the US National Arabian Amateur Reining Championship, Brenda acquired several quarter horses in 2011, and everything started happening very quickly after that.

"I was just a non pro in love with reining, and [NRHA Professional] Tracer Gilson made the NRBC and Derby Open Finals on my mare, Surpriseinadarkalley (Jerry Lees Surprise x Foxy Ali Cat), and then [NRHA Professional] Arno Honstetter showed her successfully the following year at the NRHA Derby, making the Open Finals. He was an Open Finalist on another one of my mares, A Shining Sidekick (Starbucks Sidekick), at the NRBC, and then Honstetter won the Intermediate Open Derby on my gelding, Colonels Splashy Gun (Gunner x BH Splash). And then, at my first Futurity in 2014, we made the NRHA Open Futurity Finals on Mizzfire (Gunner x West Coast Mizzen). " From that point on, there was no going back.

EXPANDING THE PROGRAM AND THE RANCH

Last year Story Book Stables acquired another five acres adjacent to the original ranch to accommodate its rapidly growing breeding program. Currently a high end, state-of-the-art mare motel is being completed, along with additional turnouts, a casita, hay storage and living quarters.

"I truly believe that there is a significant market for open caliber horses that are good minded enough for a non pro to show and win on. My goal is to produce an open horse who is always in the money, and then, when a non pro like myself gets on, we go mark a big score every day of the week.

"Of course, I am more than happy to

produce that all-time open champion, too!"

Early next year Brenda will begin construction of a 42 stall show barn, covered drive-through, covered round pen and walker, and a 280 x150 covered arena. The facility will be completed by the end of 2018, when Ricotta Performance Horses will move in.

"I have had so much success in just a couple of years, and this year has been topped off with [NRHA Professional] Marco Ricotta and Shine Plum Shine being the NRHA L3 Open Futurity Co-Champions! In the five or six years I have been in the NRHA, during the first two I was exclusively a non pro competitor, with no interest in open competition," she said. "Since 2013, we have had so many NRHA Open Derby Finalists, and in the four NRHA Futurities I have gone to, we have made the L4 twice, and now we won the L3 Open Co-Championship. That success has fueled my passion in so many ways. I am determined to breed great horses, and more importantly, to contribute productively to the NRHA as a breeder and an owner. But there's more.

"After all of these years, I no longer feel like a girl from New York City—like someone better at riding the subway than a horse. I feel like a part of the NRHA community. That all being said, I now have a burning desire to support the NRHA, and the industry as a whole—its owners and trainers, my fellow non pros, and its horses. This is my life for the next 20 years!" •

