



Hylton Quarter Horses

Dedication to the welfare of the horse, breeding excellence is always at the forefront of this Quarter Horse program

Text Kristy Vanderwende Photos Shane Rux & KC Montgomery

A passionate horsewoman who believes in giving back to the Quarter Horse industry, Cecilia Hylton of Gainesville, Virginia has taken her Hylton Quarter Horses to new heights as not only a premier training but also a breeding operation standing World Champion stallions Invitation To Flash and Slip Slydun Away.

After the death of her father in 1989, Hylton turned to showing Quarter Horses full swing.

"Showing was something my father and I had done together," she says. "I always loved the Quarter Horse because they can do so many different disciplines and I don't believe there is another breed that can do that."

One of Hylton's first horses who carried her to big wins was Doctor J Flash by Flashy Zipper, an AQHA World Champion that has sired many World Champions that Hylton later owned.

Over the years, Hylton has owned many great horses by



Flashy Zipper and it was a love of his lineage that led her to purchase Invitation To Flash in 2005.

A 2004 bay stallion by Invitation Only out Ms Flamin Flash, a granddaughter of Flashy Zipper, "Forrest" had the looks and movement Hylton was looking for in a future breeding horse. The versatile stallion was crowned the 2008 World Champion in Performance Halter Stallions and was the AQHA High Point Green Western Pleasure Stallion the same year.

Will Knabenshue of Whitesboro, Texas and wife, Elizabeth, manage Cecilia's horses in Texas including the breeding operation. They live about a mile from the breeding facility, McEquine Enterprises owned by Rick McDonald where Invitation To Flash stands.

"He is a very good minded, balanced, just really a nice all-around horse," Will Knabenshue says of the stallion. "He's a great



"He just loves peppermints," Hylton says. "I think he would give up breeding a mare for them."

At the World Show this year, Hylton Quarter Horses will be presenting rising star, 3-Year-Old Western Pleasure horse, Gettin Pretty, under the guidance of Donnie Dickerson Quarter Horses and shown by Taft Dickerson in Green and Junior Western Pleasure as well as up and coming stallion, Doya Think Im Flashy, sired by Flashy Zipper and out of Widow Rider, in Senior Ranch Horse Pleasure and Performance Halter Stallions.

Last year, Doya Think Im Flashy was the AQHA High Point Junior Ranch Pleasure Horse and the National Snaffle Bit Association's Reserve World Champion in Ranch Pleasure. In addition, he placed in the Top 10 at the 2013 AQHA World Show in Performance Halter Stallions and was fourth at the 2012 AQHA World Show in Amateur Performance Stallions with Hylton. He is also an AQHA Champion.

Hylton's fascination with equine genetics and dedication to donating to equine reproduction research started

back in 1999 when a foal was able to be conceived after her daughter's youth horse, Jaguars Bar Bee Doll was euthanized due to founder. Interestingly, DoYa Think Im Flashy is a product of some of the advances in equine reproduction as both of his parents were deceased when he was conceived.

"Cecilia has given so much to our industry," Will Knabenshue says. "I am just really glad to be a part of the program and am dedicated to making it as good as it can be." In fact, over the past decade Hylton has donated well over \$1 million to Colorado State University which has helped advance techniques in embryo transfers and splitting semen straws. As a result of fractionating straws to inseminate mares, Hylton was able to use more frozen semen from her late stallion, Flashy Zipper. To this day quite a few of Hylton's broodmare band consists of his lineage.

Working for Hylton Quarter Horses for over a year now, Lucas Cash is the head trainer in Virginia. "She is just phenomenal to work with and I really appreciate her willingness to take my opinion into account," he says. "The horses and their care always come first." Cash says he sees a lot of potential and is most excited about what the breeding program is producing. "We have a really, really good set of yearlings this year," he says. "I can't wait to see what they can offer in the show ▶

out-cross on a lot of mares and we are really excited about some of his babies coming up."

In addition, Hylton Quarter Horses offers Slip Slydun Away to the public. He currently stands at Cedar Ridge Stallion Station in Whitesboro, Texas under the guidance of Casey Hinton. An AQHA Superior Reining horse with multiple Top 10 National Reining Horse Association finishes and earnings over \$37,000, he was brought back out of retirement to be shown in the Senior Reining at the 2008 AQHA World Show winning the class with Hinton aboard. Hylton is looking forward to watching some of his foals show in future Reining events under the guidance of Hinton.

The Hylton Quarter Horses breeding program is centered around Invitation To Flash (opposite page top) and Slip Slydun Away. Owner Cecilia Hylton (opposite page inset) is dedicated to giving back to the industry. Her children, are also very involved. Her son, George Markley, and youngest daughter, Jamie Hylton (pictured on this page showing at the AQHA Novice Championships-East) both help manage the horse business. They have several horses currently showing, including Doya Think Im Flashy in Ranch Horse Pleasure and Performance Halter (opposite page with Will Knabenshue aboard) and Gettin Pretty in Western Pleasure with Taft Dickerson (above). Head trainer in Virginia, Lucas Cash, says he sees a lot of potential in the foals coming out of the program, evident in the Invitation To Flash yearlings (top of this page). Photos Pat Coyne, Paige Olsen & Jordan Brannock



Cecilia Hylton (top) enjoys the breeding aspect of the program. She plans to continue growing in that direction and hopes in the future her children will take over. At the center of her breeding operation is Invitation To Flash (above), World Champion in Performance Halter Stallions and AQHA High Point Green Western Pleasure Stallion, both in 2008.

For all her dedication, Hylton was inducted into the Virginia Quarter Horse Association's Hall of Fame this year.

"I hope that it continues to grow particularly in young people joining the association because we need them to come on board," she says.

As for the future, Hylton plans to continue breeding and showing and hopes that one day her family will continue on with the horse program she has put together. Currently, both her son, George Markley and youngest daughter, Jamie Hylton help manage her horse business and have enjoyed showing horses through the years.

"It's not really something I set out to do," she explains. "It just came to me as a blessing that I appreciate all the time. It's been a good ride."

pen in later years. I think we will do nothing but produce better and better foals from our program."

For 2015, Cash is also looking forward to the Hylton \$50,000 Maiden 3 & Over Western Pleasure Futurity at the Virginia Classic in Lexington, Virginia. Last year the event ended up paying \$87,500 in cash and prizes with added cash bonuses for the high point Intermediate and Limited riders.

Between the \$50,000 Hylton Maiden, \$10,000 Hylton Green Western Pleasure class held at the Endless Summer Show in Williamston, North Carolina and her sponsorship of futurity classes at the Little Futurity in Raleigh, North Carolina, Hylton has succeeded in her vision of bringing big money Western Pleasure futurities to the East Coast.

"I did not like some of the young horses being pushed out there too early," she says. "I figured I would put money in maiden classes for older horses to hopefully lead people in that direction."