

# A cut above

by **SUE MAYFIELD GEIGER** on MARCH 25, 2017 *Coast Monthly*



PAM GUIDRY KEEPS HER TWO PALOMINOS, TRIGGER, LEFT, AND VINNY, ON HER 22 ACRES IN DICKINSON THAT SHE CALLS COPPERLEAF FARM. GUIDRY HAS OWNED, SHOWN OR COMPETED IN VARIOUS DISCIPLINES, FROM BARREL RACING, TO REINING AND CUTTING HORSES, SINCE SHE WAS A TEEN. PHOTO BY JENNIFER REYNOLDS

## Competitive rider is living her dream

At 6:30 a.m. each day, Pam Guidry begins work on her 22-acre property she calls Copperleaf Farm on Humble Camp Road in Dickinson. It's a lot of work, but she relishes it. Guidry is living the life she always dreamed of and credits her association with the 4-H organization for planting the seed. She got her first horse when she was in the eighth grade, but it was joining 4-H that got her interested in showing horses for competition, she said. "It wasn't enough for me to just have a horse," she said. "I had a deep desire to train my horse to do something, and I began to recognize all the amazing things that horses could do."

Guidry started spending time at an arena — now Walter Hall Park in League City — and practiced timed events, like barrel racing, pole bending and obstacle courses. She soon was participating in judged events and winning trophies. Adamant and encouraged, she worked at baby-sitting and mowing lawns to earn money to afford the upkeep of her horse and the entry fees. It was at this time that Guidry began to understand the spirit of horses, she said.

"They always teach you something," she said. "I began to learn from them." Guidry continued to compete in just about every equine competition possible and somehow

found time to earn a degree in biomedical sciences from Texas A&M University, become a registered nurse and work at several full-time jobs.

She has won belt buckles, saddles, plaques, ribbons, ample amounts of cash and an occasional six-pack of Coca-Cola. Most recently, she's been in cutting competitions, in which a rider on a saddled horse works at separating cattle from a herd. It's a vigorous and skilled sport that takes a lot of practice. Her competition attire consists of a hat, long-sleeved shirt with collar, belt, buckle, jeans and a pair of chaps. But the color yellow is a no-no.

"It's unlucky in the ring," she said. Her favorite hat is Shorty's brand and favorite boots are Rios of Mercedes. At last count, she owned 15 pairs of boots, 12 hats and several pairs of spurs. Guidry mainly competes in Brenham and Gonzales, Texas, through the National Cutting Horse Association, but also at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo.

Her two cutting horses are Metallic Playgirl, a red roan, and Blues Honky Cat, a dark bay. They are presently with their trainer in Hempstead, which keeps their momentum going, which is important because Guidry is constantly competing with them. The horses that live permanently on her property are two palominos, Trigger and Vinny, plus five American Miniature Horse Association minis — Curly, Flirt, Rocky, Star and Thunder — Guidry used to show. And there's plenty of roaming space for a few farm dogs.

Aside from Guidry's house, the property includes a 9,000-square-foot covered riding arena and a seven-stall horse barn with hospitality apartment. It also includes a separate garage that houses a four-horse gooseneck trailer, a John Deere tractor with mower deck, front-end loader, arena drag, tiller, manure spreader and her Ford F-450 truck.

Her early morning ritual consists of feeding the horses and dogs, spreading manure, putting clean water in the trough, cleaning stalls, sweeping, haying, washing the horses as needed, keeping their mane and tails clean, and checking to see whether they require medical attention. "I go through a bale of hay, a half bale of alfalfa and 20 pounds of feed daily," Guidry said. "I rinse the horses every time I ride, and in the summer, I scrub them down with soap once a week."

Her most meaningful competition occurred when she was in her mid-20s, she said. It was for Western Pleasure at the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. "In the Western Pleasure horse class, the horse is judged on its performance, conformation and condition," Guidry said. "They evaluate the horse on its calm, responsive manner and relaxed gait."

Guidry has competed in Nevada, Ohio, Tennessee, California, Arizona and New Mexico, among other states. She's usually in bed by 11 p.m. each night, dog tired, but happy.

"I thank my lucky stars every night," she said. "I owe a great deal to 4-H, where it all started, and I owe a great deal to the horses. Many people have a misunderstanding of horses and don't understand that they develop behavior as to how they've been treated. They are smarter than we give them credit for, and most will learn to do what you want them to do."