

# Shining Spark

SHINER JOINS HIS MOTHER IN THE HALL OF FAME.

BY HEATHER LOVERIDGE

**A**T 22 YEARS OLD, SHINING SPARK SPENDS HIS days in comfort on Carol Rose's Gainesville, Texas, ranch, blissfully unaware of his celebrity status. His routine hasn't varied in years: morning turnout every day, the comfort of an air-conditioned bachelor pad, an occasional rendezvous with a mare, daily grooming, and lots of attention from Rose.

It's a comfortable lifestyle he's definitely earned; although if he could talk he'd probably say he hasn't worked a day in his life. What was work to many was fun to him. He was the consummate reining horse; utilizing his amazing talent to run flawless reining patterns and then passing that ability on to his foals. It's part of what makes him a legend.

In just two decades, Shining Spark has already made a lasting impact on the Reining industry. He's an NRHA Three Million Dollar Sire as well as fourth on the All-Time Leading Money-Earning Sire list. His get and grand get are incredible show horses, spanning reining, reined cow horse, cutting and other disciplines.

For legendary Quarter Horse breeder Rose, "Shiner" is undoubtedly her all-time favorite. She bred, raised, and owned his sire, Genuine Doc (who incidentally is 34 and still living on the ranch), and his dam, Diamonds Sparkle—an NHRA Hall of Fame horse as well.

"Other than Bob Loomis, there aren't many breeders who have owned the sire, owned the dam, raised the horse, had him be such a tremendous sire, and then had him inducted into the Hall of Fame," Rose said. "It's made his story even more special.

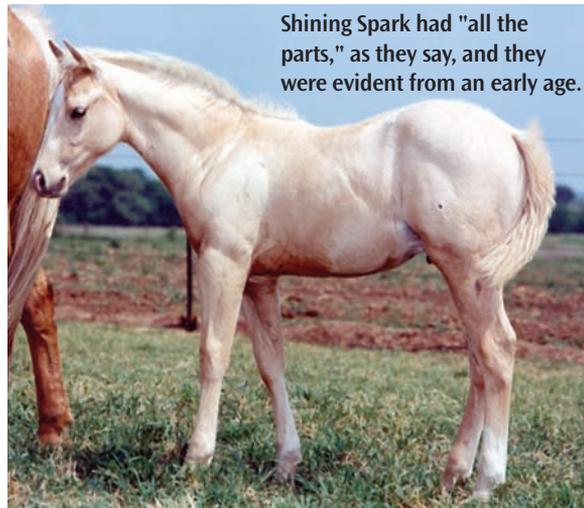
"When you're lucky enough to raise a horse as great as Shining Spark's been it's always a huge honor when knowledgeable people in the industry select him for the Hall of Fame. It's an honor I don't work towards; I just work at raising the best horse I can and promoting him to the best of my ability. It's a great honor, especially since his dam is also in the Hall of Fame."

## A Bright Future

Though Rose couldn't predict Shiner's future, the day the golden palomino colt hit the ground in 1989, Rose knew he had the looks that reiners like, but only time would tell if he was as talented as he was pretty. If his bloodlines were any indication, he had to at least be good. His dam, Diamonds Sparkle, had done well as a performance horse, winning the AQHA Superhorse and World Champion Senior Heading Horse titles in 1979. She also had AQHA points in reining, heeling, steer roping, halter, and western pleasure. Genuine Doc had also made his mark in the cutting pen, including winning the 1985 AQHA Senior Cutting Reserve World Championship.

"[When Shiner was born] we knew he was a beautiful, smart foal. We broke him late in his yearling year and we knew after the first ride how special he was and how special he would become if we gave him a chance," Rose said.

NRHA Professional Brent Loseke put Shiner's first rides on him, building a solid foundation that would set Shiner up for success. After starting him under saddle, Rose had

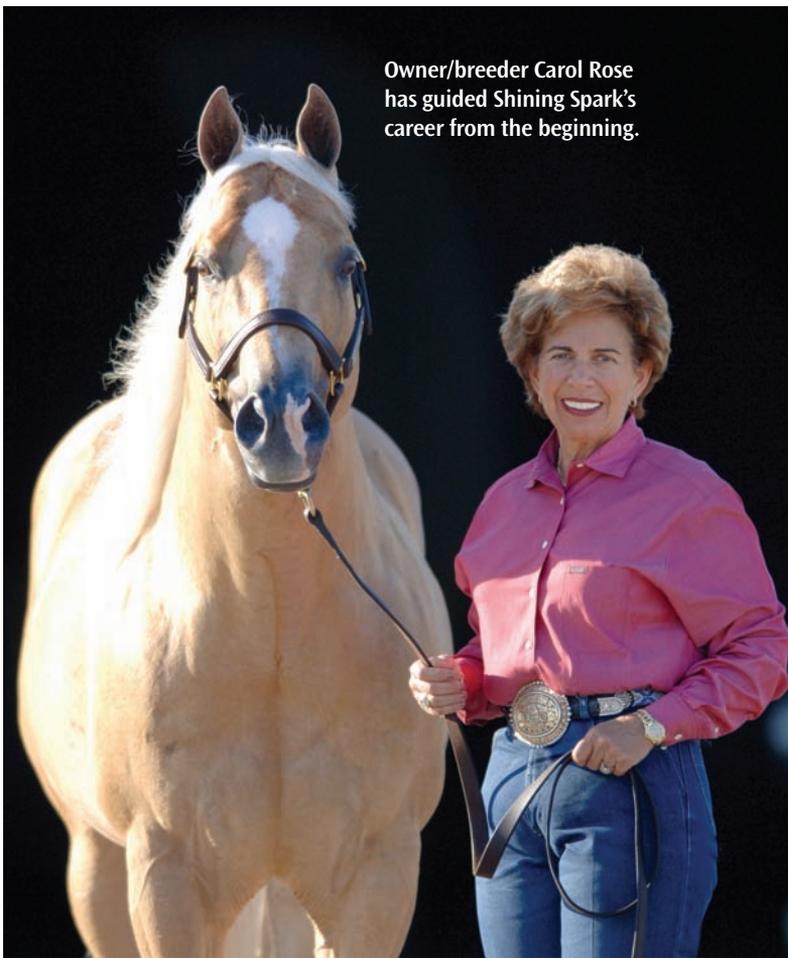


Shining Spark had "all the parts," as they say, and they were evident from an early age.



Shining Spark has had a tremendous impact on the sport of Reining—first as a Two Million Sire and now as a Hall of Fame inductee.

Owner/breeder Carol Rose has guided Shining Spark's career from the beginning.



CAPPY JACKSON

Shiner enjoying the "good life" he deserves.



CAPPY JACKSON

a hard decision to make: would Shiner be a cutting horse or a reining horse?

"It was a huge decision. In the end, the only reason we didn't go with cutting was that we didn't think the cutters would take his dam's bloodlines seriously," she said. "Then, I had to decide whether to send him to Tim McQuay or Bob Loomis. At the time, Hollywood Dun It's first foals were the same age as Shiner, and I figured Tim would be putting all his eggs in Hollywood Dun It's basket so I went straight to Bob. He stayed with Bob from April of his three-year-old year to April of his four-year-old year, and Bob did a wonderful job training him."

Though Loomis has ridden a number of great horses throughout the years, he'll always remember Shiner.

"You know, you get attached to a few horses—he was one of those horses. He was the first horse I rode every morning, and when I stepped off of him and took him back to the barn he always felt better than he did the day before," Loomis, also a Hall of Famer, said.

"The riding that was done on him as a two-year-old couldn't have been any better. When I got him he was started so beautifully that I could just step on him and go," he continued.

Loomis got Shiner's show career off to a great start that year, coming in sixth at the 1992 NRHA Futurity and winning the reserve championship at the 1993 Lazy E Reining.

"He was one of those horses that just kept getting better as he got older. That's the sign of a great horse—he was a show horse, he wanted to be shown," Loomis said.

**When she introduced the Genuine Doc-Diamonds Sparkle combination to the sport, Carol Rose brought an important new bloodline to Reining. Pictured here with some Shining Spark youngsters.**



CAPPY JACKSON



Famed horsewoman Carol Rose brings Shiner to a sliding stop on her Texas breeding/training facility.

CAM ESSICK

When Rose decided to switch things up and send Shiner to McQuay, it was bittersweet for Loomis.

"I hated to lose him but I was just in a transition era with him. I was very comfortable with him going to Tim; he's a wonderful horseman," he said.

"Carol is a great manager and she knew where to send that horse, and I don't think he ever had a bad hand on him," said Loomis. "I've seen a lot of great horses that weren't managed correctly and they never got the opportunities they deserved. Shining Spark never had anybody on him who didn't do a good job. He just has had a great team his whole life."

Though it was almost 20 years ago, McQuay won't ever forget when the talented palomino entered his life.

"Carol met with Colleen and me and we talked over show-

ing him. I asked her if I could just ride him, and she said yes," the Hall of Famer, Million Dollar Owner and Two Million Dollar Rider said. "Colleen told me later that when she watched me ride him she knew I was going to take him home. She said, 'You fit him like a glove' and he did, he fit me.

"Bob had him very broke. I just had to tweak a couple little things to make him fit me but other than that he was ready to go. He was just a super, super nice horse to show, and he was a major player everywhere I went."

Together, McQuay and Shiner won the 1993 AQHA Junior Reining World Championship along with the 1994 NRHA Derby open championship.

"You don't come around those kinds of horses very often. I got to be the leading money-earner in the NRHA, and he was a major player in that. If I had him now, God only knows how much money he would have won just because our purses are so much bigger," McQuay said.

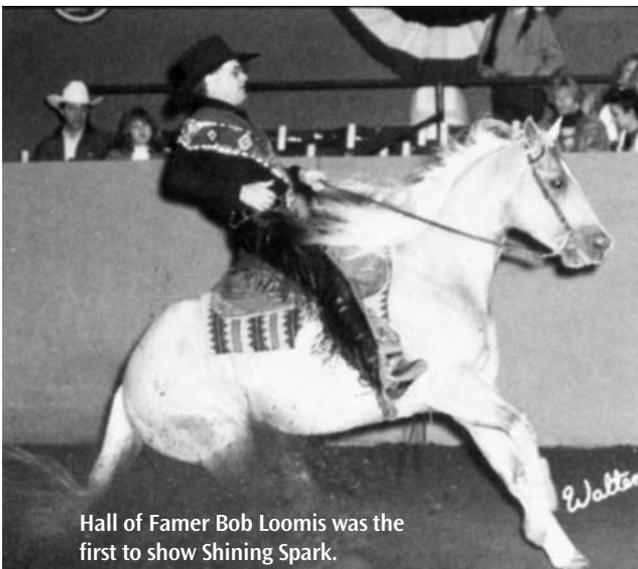
"Carol protected him from the time he we was born.

She knew he was special to look at when she had him as a baby and then when she saw the guys start him he didn't weaken, stayed just as sassy. Those guys all bragged about how nice he was to train. He was just the same all the time. When you went to show him he said, 'Okay, let's go show. Where do you want to go and what do you want to do?' You could sure count on him."

### Change in Plans

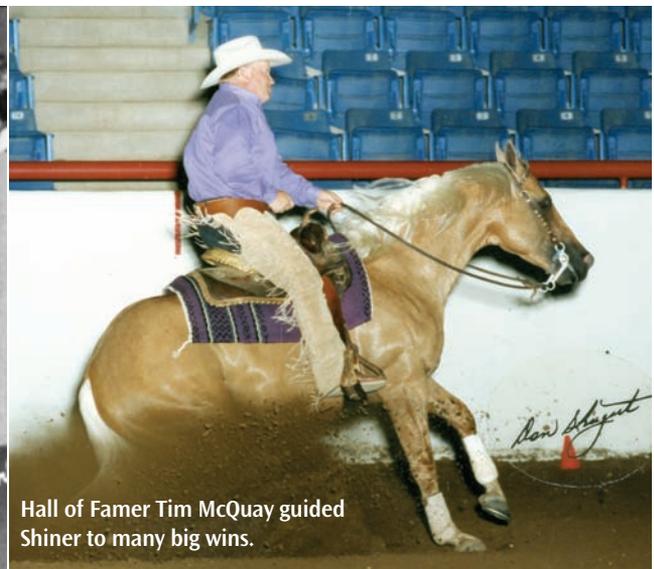
Rose was counting on keeping Shiner's show career going but that ended abruptly when he developed chondritis, an upper airway disease.

"We hadn't planned on retiring him and were in fact going to do some reined cow horse but on June 3, 1999, he got very



Hall of Famer Bob Loomis was the first to show Shining Spark.

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Hall of Famer Tim McQuay guided Shiner to many big wins.

DON SHUGART

sick. We were preparing him for the National Reined Cow Horse Association's (NRCHA) World's Greatest Horseman at the time and were forced to retire him," she said. "It's a battle he's fought ever since."

Not only did the disease affect his show career, it also affected his breeding career.

"What he's done for us is continue to breed under very adverse conditions. He was a very sick horse, and he pulled through, with help from the excellent vets he had around him. But it's been an ongoing battle ... he's such a trier.

"So far this year we have a couple mares pregnant and we're thrilled. We have 12 foals by Shiner due in 2011 and a couple mares due next year and we're just thrilled to have them," she said.

Though his breeding has been limited, compared to other stallions, Shiner has more than made up for it in quality. He's sired an impressive list of horses, including Sailing Spark (\$94,282), Just Gotta Shine (\$103,925), Miss Rey O Shine (\$159,714), Shining N Sassy (\$224,447) and A Shiner Named Sioux (\$112,333 NRHA and NRCHA).

"When I was riding Shining Spark I said this horse will be a great sire if his foals are like him, or even close to like him. And he's done it. In fact, I had the pleasure of winning the 2008 NRHA Futurity on one of his daughters, Shining N Sassy," McQuay said. "There's no question he belongs in the Hall of Fame. He's been a great sire, and I think his daughters are proving to be very, very good broodmares. I think he's going to be the same as Hollywood Dun It and have his mares dominate—mares by him are going to be worth money. There's nothing he's not going to be famous for."

Echoing McQuay's opinion, Loomis has also seen firsthand what a great broodmare sire Shiner has become.

"He just has a great mind, great trainability. I've had some of his daughters that I've bred and those mares are producing the same kind of minds," he said. "Crossing Topsail Whiz on Shiner mares has been phenomenal for me because they're the

two greatest-minded horses I ever rode. I think one of the magic crosses in the reining horse industry is 'Whiz' on Shining Spark—they're both horses that were genuine stallions and proved it in the breeding shed.

"Shining Spark was a wonderful show horse, and he's become a great breeding horse. I'm very happy to see him inducted and think it's overdue. He will go down in history as a great broodmare sire."

## Like Father, Like Son

Though Rose always said she'd stay in the business as long as Shiner was still around, one of his sons may keep her in for the long run.

"Scoop Vessels, one of my dearest friends, always said the true test of a great stallion is that he should have a son better than he is. And A Shiner Named Sioux (Shining Spark x Docs Sulena) is more like Shining Spark than any horse I've ever been around. When they're out in the pasture I have to go look out my front window to see for sure which one's which," she said. "And, this is very difficult to say, but we've bred A Shiner Named Sioux to the same mares we've bred Shiner to for years and the conformation and looks of 'Sioux's' foals are better. Sioux has some big shoes to fill but just looking at his babies I'm ecstatic ... I kinda want to see what they're going to do.

"He's probably the most prolific sire I've ever seen in my lifetime and that's a long time and looking at lots of babies."

One of Rose's favorite memories from this year so far involved Shiner and Sioux.

"At the beginning of March, during the AQHA convention, they brought a tour here. Jay McLaughlin, our trainer, was going to give a demonstration on A Shiner Named Sioux, and I said 'Hey guys, saddle Shiner and let Cutter (Jay's little boy) ride him.'

"Cutter had never been on him and he started loping circles, changing leads and stopping him. There were probably 100 people watching. Then I heard Jay ask Cutter, who's seven, if he could spin him to the right. So Cutter started spinning him to the right, and Jay, who was just a little way away on Sioux, started spinning Sioux to the right. It was incredible to watch those two stallions spin in unison. If that didn't bring tears to your eyes, nothing does.

"The older Sioux gets the more he looks like Shiner. It was a pretty emotional moment."

For Shiner and Rose, the future is certainly bright.

"He's the best horse I've ever seen and owned. His ability to not only sire great sons but also great broodmares is phenomenal. He's the leading broodmare sire in the NRCHA and the NRHA," Rose said. (According to Equi-Stat)

"In fact, on April 6, I got a text at 3:17 p.m. from Dr. Kurt Harris that our mare Docs Sulena, the mother of A Shiner Named Sioux, has an embryo by Shining Spark with a confirmed heartbeat! That will be a full sibling to A Shiner Named Sioux. You think we don't have a lot to look forward to?" Rose said excitedly. "We're thrilled about what the future will bring." ♦



Tim McQuay showed Shining Spark's daughter, Shining N Sassy, to the 2008 NRHA Futurity Championship.

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