

# JAZ RANCH

## A past of dedication, a future of preservation

By Abigail Whitaker

In the early 1980s, Brent Jensen and Gail Zscheile began a search for a riding horse bearing the rare grullo color. They never dreamed that search would lead to a life of breeding and preserving the foundation-bred American Quarter Horse.

### Finding "the horse"

Jensen and Zscheile had a few horses at their ranch in Lamoille, Nev., but decided they wanted to buy a good saddle horse. Their specifications went beyond just a good riding horse though, they also wanted that horse to be grullo, the second-rarest color for American Quarter Horses

next to the newly-introduced bay roan. Their quest seemed tedious at first; they had a hard time finding any grullo Quarter Horses, and the ones that they did find failed to meet their expectations.

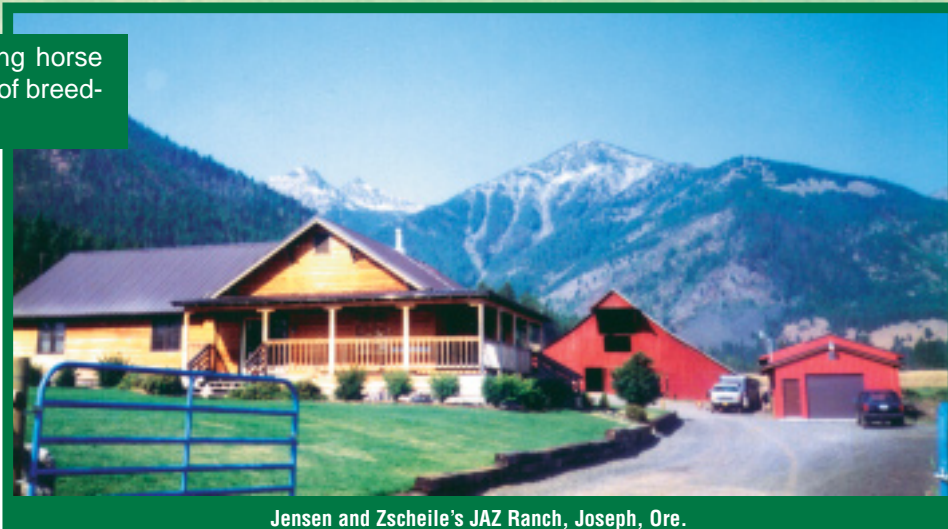
The duo then met Troy Rose of Rose Ranch, Slick Rock, Colo. At the time, Jensen and Zscheile were living in Utah and traveled to the southern part of the state for a dispersal sale hosted by Rose. Rose was selling grade grullo horses as well as a few mules.

"When we went down, we really went to buy a grullo horse for Gail and to buy me a mule," Jensen recalled. "I didn't get my mule but we bought our first grullo horse from Troy."

That first encounter led to a lasting friendship with the Roses. After their first meeting, Jensen and Zscheile were introduced to Pocos Gray Comet while visiting the Rose Ranch. The Roses bought the then yearling from breeders Gary and Janet Lorence, Union, Neb. By Poco Blunder (by Poco Bueno) and out of Miss Gray Hick by Rain Hick, the 1984 grullo stallion was just what Jensen and Zscheile were looking for. Unfortunately for them, the Roses had no desire to sell their new-found stallion prospect.

A few years later, the Roses contacted Jensen and Zscheile and said they would sell "Poco," but only if the duo would buy the stallion and 14 broodmares as a package.

"The last thing in the world that we wanted was 14 mares



Jensen and Zscheile's JAZ Ranch, Joseph, Ore.

Compliments of JAZ Ranch



Brent Jensen and Gail Zscheile bought Pocos Gray Comet from Troy and Ione Rose of Rose Ranch, Slick Rock, Colo.



Pocos Gray Comet's amiable disposition and willingness to please initiated the JAZ Ranch breeding program.

and we had no clue what we were going to do with them," Zscheile said. "I can remember sitting down at the Pine Lodge there in Lamoille, Nev., with our neighbors who were cattle ranchers saying, 'What will we do. Do you think we can sell these babies for \$500 a piece and somehow support these mares?' We were clueless!"

Jensen figured it would cost about \$400 a year per horse to keep all 14 broodmares. They thought if they could sell each baby for \$500, they should go ahead and give it a try.

"We were not thinking about doing it as a money-making thing or whatever," Zscheile explained. "We were just thinking about the only way we can get Poco is to buy all of these other horses and somehow we've got to make them pay for themselves. We can't just have 14 extra horses to support."

The couple already had a few broodmares of their own and had been raising horses as a hobby since the 1970s. Their bloodlines included Three Bars, Impressive, Lucky Bar, Otoe and Skipper W, among others.

When Jensen and Zscheile were looking to buy a grullo horse, they weren't looking for a stallion. In fact, the stallions they had been around were too much for them to want to handle. Poco was different though. His disposition was laid back, he was sweet, he was willing. His owners could pull him out of a pasture, away from

his broodmares, and he was perfectly OK with it. Once they learned of his amiable demeanor, their outlook on stallions changed completely.

"After we got him," Zscheile recalled, "our whole direction changed from just trying to get some good saddle horses with a neat and unusual color to finding out about the original Quarter Horse - the bulldogs, the steeldusts."

"We just fell so in love with him and he was so different than all of the other horses that we had ever been around. His disposition and his personality were completely different. He was a different breed."

Jensen and Zscheile bought Poco in 1990. They started researching the horse's bloodlines and talked to others who owned Poco Bueno-bred horses. They realized that their stallion's sweet disposition may have something to do with the bloodlines. Zscheile said she began to understand that there was a huge difference in a horse that had very little Thoroughbred blood, than one that was predominately Thoroughbred.

"That's when I realized that a lot of Quarter Horses were a real high percent Thoroughbred," Zscheile said. "It never occurred to me."

Once Jensen and Zscheile came to that realization, they began to do even more research. They decided rather than breeding their mares to Poco, they would prefer to find mares with Poco Bueno-breeding for their stallion.

Fran Brown, 1990

Fran Brown, 1990

### JAZ Ranch stallion lineup

Name	Foal Year	Color	Sire x Dam x MGS	NFQHA %	Poco %
JAZ ACERO HOMBRE	1998	Grullo	Little Steel Dust x Poco Miss Feed x Poco Feed	100%	32.81%
JAZ BUENOS NOCHAS	2000	Black	Little Steel Dust x Poco Bee Quick x Poco Bueno Tom	99%	35.935%
JAZ MYSTIC STEEL	2002	Grullo	Little Steel Dust x Smokey Mystic x Poco Mystic	89%	32.025%
JAZ POCO CINQUENTA	1996	Bay	Poco Ojos Grande x Pocos Noble Miss x Poco Noble	97%	50%
JAZ POCO DYNASTY	2002	Grullo	Little Steel Dust x Pocos Tote Suite x Poco Papacita	99%	33.98%
JAZ POCO ENTERPRISE	1998	Grullo	Little Steel Dust x Twisty Enterprise x Poco Enterprise	100%	32.81%
JAZ POCO POWER	2001	Bay	Rickles Poco Bueno x Pocos Noble Miss x Poco Noble	97%	50%
JAZ POCO SILVERADO	1997	Grullo	Little Steel Dust x Poco Miss Smoky x King Poco Kandoo	100%	26.56%
JAZ STARZ N BARZ	2002	Grullo	Little Steel Dust x Miss Poco Doncella x Poco Ojos Grande	99%	40.62%
POCO BUENO MILAGRO	1996	Brown	Poco Ojos Grande x Poco Valentine Ann x Poco Feed	100%	37.5%
POCOS GRAY COMET	1984	Grullo	Poco Blunder x Miss Gray Hick x Rain Hick	100%	25.78%



The JAZ Ranch specializes in breeding National Foundation Quarter Horses with Poco Bueno pedigrees and grullo coats.



JAZ Miss Charro, a 1997 grullo Little Steel Dust daughter out of Smokey Mystic by Poco Mystic, with a 2003 foal.

Brent Jensen, 2003

Roger Clark, 2002

#### Mail order brides

Researching for Pocos ladies was no easy feat. In pre-Internet times, Jensen and Zscheile contacted the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) and requested a copy of get records which included all of Poco Bueno's sons. From there, the duo began tracking the daughters of those sons.

"We had somebody from Texas who

called and said there was a set of stud books in Seattle," Jensen said. "This lady said, 'I've had some people call about them but they wanted them for less money.' We said, 'What do you want for them?' She gave us the price and we said, 'We'll take them.'"

Zscheile said that was probably the most expensive \$800 they've ever spent, but very well worth it.

Using the stud books and get records,

Zscheile made a list of mares that would fit the breeding requirements that they envisioned. They essentially wanted exactly what the historic Waggoner Ranch in Electra, Texas, had been breeding for years - bloodlines of Poco Bueno, Red Dog, Blackburn and Beaver Creek. They also wanted mares with black points, hoping to also capture that rare grullo color.

"We made, over a couple of years, hundreds of calls to people that had these horses registered in their name," Jensen said. "That's when we realized these horses had either been passed off, they had been sold and people hadn't transferred them or they were sent to the killers during the big horse depression."

They then realized that Poco Bueno-bred horses were a dying breed. After hundreds of calls made over two years, Jensen and Zscheile purchased 10 mares, sight unseen and not listed as being for sale, from all across the United States. Those 10 mares were referred to as Jensen and Zscheile's JAZ Ranch "mail order brides."

"After that we'd pick up one here and there. Eventually we ended up with 17 granddaughters of Poco Bueno," Zscheile said. "The first ones were the ones that were 100 percent National Foundation Quarter Horse and all the Waggoner Ranch breeding."

Those mares included Poco Lady Fran, a 1980 brown mare by Poco Bevo out of Pocos Miss Madam by Poco Feed; Miss Poco 013, a 1986 black Poco Cuff mare

out of Poco Miss Four by Poco Bain; Poco Miss Dimple, a 1976 black mare by Poco Bevo and out of Poco Miss Admiral by Poco Admiral; and Poco Miss Feed, a 1979 dun mare by Poco Feed and out of Madam Beaver by Nifty Pep.

Once the mail order brides arrived, JAZ Ranch began to focus on preserving the bloodlines that they worked so hard to find, instead of just raising a few horses for themselves, which was their original plan.

#### Serendipity

While researching the mail order brides, JAZ Ranch stumbled across the name Little Steel Dust. They noticed his name in a few pedigrees and decided they should contact his owner and try to add him to their program.

Little Steel Dust, a 1974 grullo stallion by Poco King Tuck (by Poco Bueno) and out of Pretty Sparkle by Poco Light (by Poco Bueno), was bred by William and Eva Steward, Fort Collins, Colo. He was owned by Jose Luis Bonilla, New Cuyama, Calif.

Luis Bonilla owns Rancho Bonilla, an amazing Old World Mexican-style village called Asi es mi Tierra, or Village of Dreams. When Jensen and Zscheile first contacted Rancho Bonilla, they ran into a road block. They couldn't seem to catch anyone who spoke English.

"I'd call and I'd call and I'd call; it got really discouraging after a couple of weeks," Jensen recalled. "We couldn't find anybody to tell us if Luis Bonilla was a human or not. They spoke no English at all, other than to say they didn't speak English."

But somehow the couple knew to keep calling. Finally they were able to speak with Bonilla's daughter, who was about 9 at the time, and she spoke English. They were told that Bonilla was in Texas and therefore couldn't be reached. So, they asked Bonilla's daughter if her father had any gray horses, thinking the young girl



Roger Clark, 2003

	Poco Bueno	King
Poco King Tuck		Miss Taylor
	Lady Illini 25	Illini King
Little Steel Dust		Miss Bee 25
	Poco Light	Poco Bueno
Pretty Sparkle		Smokey Lee
	Sparkle Buck	Rudy Buck
		Sparkle Duster

**Little Steel Dust - AQHA 0996064**  
1974 - 2003



Troy Withington, 1993

	Poco Bueno	King
Poco Blunder		Miss Taylor
	Lady Beaver 21	Beaver Creek
Pocos Gray Comet		Waggoner Mare
	Rain Hick	Hicky One
Miss Gray Hick		Sisty Rain
	Miss Red Bubbles	Leck's Jasper
		Bubbles Adair

**Pocos Gray Comet - AQHA 2196378**  
1984

**B**rent Jensen, 61, and Gail Zscheile, 54, have raised horses since the 1970s. Because of the years spent researching their own horses, Jensen and Zscheile founded the National Foundation Quarter Horse Association (NFQHA) in 1995. Their passion for the National Foundation Quarter Horse has developed not only their breeding program, but has also led to the certification of more than 23,000 National Foundation Quarter Horses.

Before JAZ Ranch, Jensen worked in real estate development while Zscheile worked in accounting. Now, Zscheile helps to maintain the NFQHA office in Enterprise, Ore., as Jensen and his wife Ellen oversee the JAZ Ranch horse program.

"We've seen so many people that have a lot of different types of bloodlines, all of their mares would be nice but there would be totally no common threads to it," Zscheile said. "We felt like there was nothing to identify them as far as a program."

When JAZ Ranch began, Jensen and Zscheile knew they needed specifics in their breeding program. They started their "specialty, within a specialty, within a specialty" breeding program, breeding National Foundation Quarter Horses with the original Waggoner

Ranch breeding and the rare grullo color.

The JAZ Ranch program consists of 11 stallions, seven of which are grullo; 45 broodmares, including 22 grullo; and several young horses and retirees.

"Everybody that knows anything about JAZ ranch, they know immediately what we do," Zscheile said. "There are very specific things that they identify us with and I guess that's part of being obsessed with a single idea."



Roger Clark, 2002

Gail Zscheile with Dakota



Roger Clark, 2001

Brent and Ellen Jensen

would understand gray better than grullo.

Jensen recalled their conversation, "Does your dad have a lot of gray horses?" "Oh yes, my dad has a lot of gray horses!"

Excited about their new discovery, Jensen and Zscheile continued to try to reach Bonilla. Once they finally did, they learned those gray horses were 80 Andalusian broodmares. Bonilla raised Spanish Andalusians, but had a few Poco-bred horses as a hobby. As a young child in Mexico, Bonilla's family had Poco Bueno horses, but Bonilla found that he could make more money with Andalusians.

Bonilla and Zscheile's first conversation lasted for approximately two hours. Zscheile asked if Bonilla would be interested in selling his stallion. Noting that he wasn't using the horse for breeding purposes, Bonilla decided he might be willing to sell "Steel Dust." But at the end of the two-hour conversation, Bonilla changed his mind.

"He thanked me," she remembered. "Thank you, thank you so much. Talking with you has just reminded me of how wonderful these horses are. I can't sell him."

That initial conversation led to a friendship and ultimately a business relationship. Bonilla decided to buy a few horses from JAZ Ranch, so Jensen and Zscheile loaded up and headed to California.

"When we got down there we stayed for a couple of days," Jensen said. "I just worked and worked and worked trying to get him to sell us this horse. Of course he brought the horse out and Gail and I just drooled."

After the third day, Jensen and Zscheile thought they had Bonilla convinced to sell the horse. He asked if the couple would like to see the stallion under saddle.

"Stupidly, I said, 'Yeah, that would be great!'" Zscheile said.

Bonilla saddled Little Steel Dust with his big Mexican saddle and donned all of his Mexican regalia, sombrero included, and reminded Jensen and Zscheile that the horse had not been ridden in more than two years.

"So he then gets on the horse and rides him around inside his coliseum arena," Jensen said. "He comes over and gets off, then says, 'I'm sorry, I can't sell him.'"

"It was like a bad dream!" Zscheile commented.

They said their ride back to Nevada was the most discouraging. They kept thinking of other stallion prospects but nothing even came close to comparing to Little Steel Dust. Feeling defeated, JAZ Ranch received an unexpected call about six months later. Bonilla said he had been thinking about the breeding program at JAZ Ranch and decided that Little Steel Dust needed to be in a program such as theirs, where he could be bred to Poco Bueno granddaughters.

"The next morning the cashier's check was in the mail overnight, express, and we were in the truck headed down to his place," Jensen said.

They pulled into Rancho Bonilla and were determined to get in, get the horse and get out. Bonilla asked for them to stay awhile but after three hours Jensen and Zscheile decided they should leave before Bonilla changed his mind a third time.

#### A change of plan

Little Steel Dust arrived at JAZ Ranch in 1992. At the time, the stallion was 18 years old. His first foal crop arrived in 1980. From 1980 through 1990, the stallion sired 64 foals. Poco was promptly retired and Little Steel Dust's next babies arrived at JAZ Ranch in 1993.

Jensen and Zscheile originally thought they should retire Poco because of the age difference. Because Little Steel Dust was older and had such few foals, the breeders thought they should retire Poco to give the older stallion a chance to become a great sire. They also threw around the idea of breeding some of the granddaughters to Poco and some to Little Steel Dust. That thought led to more research.

The duo contacted the AQHA and ordered the master ownership record for all of Little Steel Dust's offspring and Jensen returned to making phone calls. He was able to reach about 30 people who owned Little Steel Dust offspring, all of which agreed their colts were the best of the best. Each person commented on their horse's great disposition, willingness to work, gentleness with children, light rein and extreme cow sense. Because of that report, JAZ Ranch decided to breed Little Steel

Dust to all of the granddaughters. Poco was bred to a few mares for friends and was also bred to the last of the Rose Ranch 14, which JAZ Ranch put up for sale. Other than that, the younger stallion was retired.

"That was tough to do; we had a great stud there that we knew was good," Jensen said. "We just retired him."

Actually, Poco was for sale for a few weeks in 1993. JAZ Ranch thought he might be better suited for someone else's program since he was retired at their ranch.

"We put a price tag on him back in 1993 for like \$25,000 or so and it wasn't but after a real short time, it scared the hell out of both of us," Jensen explained. "We took him off the market."

After realizing Poco's true value, JAZ Ranch decided to keep the stallion to breed back to Little Steel Dust's daughters once they reach breeding age. Poco had 16 AQHA-registered foals during his first two JAZ Ranch breeding seasons. Once Little Steel Dust arrived, Poco sired only five colts, from 1993 to 1995. His schedule picked up once Little Steel Dust's daughters came along and since 1998, the horse has sired 49 foals.

#### The future of JAZ Ranch

JAZ Ranch, which relocated to Joseph, Ore., in 1996, has spent years perfecting its breeding program. Their cross of Poco on Steel Dust daughters is so much more than they ever expected.

They've realized that the thing that makes a breeding program truly valuable is the power of the broodmares. Jensen believes that the mark of a great stallion and a great mare is that they each have the ability to out-produce themselves. Jensen and Zscheile are positive that their horses do just that.

"I see it in print all of the time you know, 'Beyond our wildest expectations,' and blah blah blah. The cross is really that for us," Zscheile said. "These babies that we are getting are just absolutely phenomenal. The disposition is, and their ability to learn is even greater than the Steel Dust babies."

The majority of JAZ Ranch's customers are repeat buyers. Although their horses

are found predominantly in the Northwestern states, JAZ Ranch has customers all across the United States, Canada and even Germany. Their colts excel in National Foundation Quarter Horse Association (NFQHA) events, as well as AQHA, National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) and National Reined Cow Horse Association (NRCHA) competition.

In October of 2003, JAZ Ranch said a sad good-bye to senior stallion Little Steel Dust. The 29-year-old stallion sired 211 AQHA-registered horses, 147 of which are JAZ horses. He is the sire of multiple NFQHA champions which has earned him first place on the NFQHA Leading Sires List for number of point earners and sixth place on the NFQHA Leading Sires List for total points earned.

Although Little Steel Dust is gone, JAZ Ranch still owns 34 of his daughters, which are being crossed on Poco, and seven sons. Those seven sons are standing at JAZ Ranch as part of its new stallion station.

For the first time in the history of JAZ Ranch, Jensen and Zscheile are standing 10 stallions to the public. Those include six grullo Little Steel Dust stallions; one black Little Steel Dust stallion; one brown stallion by Poco Ojos Grande; and two bays, one by Poco Ojos Grande and one by Rickles Poco Bueno. The only stallion not standing to the public is Pocos Gray Comet.

JAZ Poco Silverado, 7, the oldest of the stallions standing to the public, has an ROM in reining. JAZ Acero Hombre, a 1998 Little Steel Dust stallion, is currently in roping training with Kurt Pylman in Yamhill, Ore. JAZ Ranch hopes to send several other stallions into training this spring, concentrating not only on NFQHA events, but also those disciplines outside of the foundation organization.

"We really are thrilled with the way things have gone and what we've been able to produce," Zscheile said. "To breed a horse that's an all-around horse, a horse that's a pleasure to be around and a pleasure to use, we feel like we definitely have done that."

For more information about the JAZ Ranch, visit [www.jazranch.com](http://www.jazranch.com) or call (541) 432-6032. ■