

# Santa Hill RANCH

## A TRAINING AND BREEDING DESTINATION



**B**ob Santagata's Santa Hill Ranch, located in scenic Campbell Hall, New York, is a beautiful full service training and breeding facility focusing on the reining industry. Bob's fascination with all things reining began very humbly. "I always loved to ride," Bob explained. "I would rent horses at the hack stable and trail ride. When I bought my property in Campbell Hall, I bought a hack horse for myself and brought him up here with me." Santagata began hearing about this event called Reining and discovered that one of the neighboring ranches was involved, so he and his brother Steve paid a visit to learn more about it. "Things just rolled on from there," he said. "We dove right into the sport and have been rolling ever since." Today his sprawling state-of-the-art facility is home to resident trainer, NRHA Professional Dean Brown, and stands the stallions Friday Night Shiner and The Kids Gotta Gun, who is new for 2017.

When Santagata purchased Friday Night Shiner as a futurity prospect in 2006, he was looking for a show horse with no real thought he might become a sire. The handsome buckskin stallion was shown by a variety of trainers over the next eight years, but it was Dean Brown who found the most success with him. They racked up a series of open class wins that really made people sit up and take notice. What was even more impressive was the fact that in 2014, "Sparky" as he is known by fans, was also being shown by Bob's wife, Arlene, in the green reiner and rookie classes and earned a trip to the Rookie of the Year finals.

Friday Night Shiner's breeding career began in 2012 when Bob decided to breed him to a few of his mares to see what he could sire. "None of us ever really had great expectations for the resulting foals," Bob said. "But when Dean started riding them as 2 year olds, he was cautiously optimistic. You really have no idea what you've got until you start showing them."

The first foal crop by the young sire hit the show pen in 2015 and claimed the winner's circle from the very first show. The maiden voyage for the first two Sparky foals was the Pink Ribbon Reining in Sorel, Quebec, Canada. Dean won the Futurity's Level 4 Open division aboard Sparkys Shining Doll with an incredible

## *Friday Night* **SHINER**





# The KIDS Gotta Gun

153 score. He also earned the reserve championship riding another Friday Night Shiner offspring, Shiners Gotta Whiz, with a score of 151. Both Bob and Dean were no longer cautiously optimistic, but they were now really excited.

“His first crop of foals totaled six and they were all out of different types of mares,” Bob explained. “We didn’t know what to expect from the other four but we knew the first two were show horses at that point.” Bob couldn’t be prouder of the year-end results from this tiny foal crop out of his personally owned mares. “Sparky was a 100 percent producer from his first crop, with all six becoming money earners. His offspring earnings now total more than \$93,000 with a total of eight foals of show age that include two NRHA Level 4 Open finalists and an NRHA Non Pro finalist. His largest foal crop to date arrived in 2016 and Bob is anxiously awaiting the 2017 foals.

The new “kid” on the Santa Hill Ranch stallion roster for 2017 is The Kids Gotta Gun, a 2010 sorrel stallion sired by Spooks Gotta Gun out of Melimelo Kid. He began his career in 2013 with Brown and they handily won their very first outing at the Darling 888 Ranch Futurity. This talented duo finished third at the Quarter Horse Congress Futurity and then wrapped up their futurity season as NRHA Open Futurity finalists. Kid went on to earn NRBC Open Finalists berths in 2014 and 2015. In 2016 Bob’s wife, Arlene, took the reins and dominated the Non Pro aged event competition across the country. The Kids Gotta Gun closed out the 2016 show season with earnings of \$97,208.19. The Santagatas are very excited to see what he can do in the breeding shed.

From his meager beginnings as a hack horse owner in the rolling hills of New York state, Bob has become completely consumed with the sport of Reining. From his training and breeding facility to his support of the industry, Bob loves everything about the sport. “I never do anything half way,” he said with a grin. And that is evident when you meet him, visit his facility or watch his horses show.



A colt out of Dun It Won It  
sired by Friday Night Shiner



Santa Hill Ranch is spread over 390 acres of prime New York real estate just 40 miles outside of New York City and features a 125’ X 250’ climate-controlled indoor arena, a 150’ X 400’ outdoor arena and 36 12 X 12 climate controlled padded stalls.

The breeding barn is camera supported with 17 stalls. This includes three birthing stalls, six mare/foal walkout stalls and designated stallion stalls. The lighting system is computer controlled for mare cycle optimization. The state-of-the-art lab includes a nuclear sperm counter, microscopes, centrifuge and ultrasound machine. The facility offers a full spectrum of breeding services including foaling, semen freezing, collecting and embryo transfers.

NRHA Professional Dean Brown, has been working for Santagata for the last six years and offers training, showing, coaching and lessons. Dean’s arrival was a game changer for Bob’s horse program. For three of the last four years Bob has been among the NRHA Top 20 Owners.

The Santa Hill Ranch team travels to all of the NRHA major events as well as many regional and local shows throughout the year. Bob’s breeding hopes don’t rest totally with Friday Night Shiner and The Kids Gotta Gun. Several years ago he had the opportunity to purchase Smart Little Prize, the dam of NRHA’s second highest money earner and Open Futurity Champion KR Lil Conquistador. Bob wasted no time in getting her in the right hands to manage her breeding career and sent her to the best stallions in the industry.

The first foal she produced for Bob, the 2013 stallion Whiz Gata Prize, was sold in 2016 and ended up in the capable hands of NRHA Five Million Dollar Rider and Hall of Fame inductee Shawn Florida last year. They were named the 2016 NRHA Lucas Oil L4 Open Futurity Co-Reserve Champions and Bob couldn’t be prouder of this accomplishment as a breeder. “We have a 3- year-old full brother to Whiz Gata Prize and I hope we have as much success with him this year.” As the grand dam of his breeding program, Smart Little Prize has provided Bob with many years of futurity dreams to come. He also co-owns another 3-year-old filly out of her by Hollywoodstinstown, which is also showing great promise. There are several more foals out of her waiting in the wings to follow in the footsteps of their older siblings.

For more information on Santa Hill Ranch and the programs they offer please visit [www.santahillranch.com](http://www.santahillranch.com) or visit them on Facebook at Santa Hill Ranch. ♦

