

LIFE AS UNIQUE AS THE HORSE

# CHROME



# DEPARTMENTS



## Spirit

**9 Colorful Character**  
Running at full-throttle, Taylor Earnhardt Putnam's creating a new chapter in the Earnhardt family legacy.

**17 Keepin' It Fresh**  
*Chrome* equine advisor Kalley Krickeberg helps tune up your horse's brakes and acceleration with a few simple exercises.

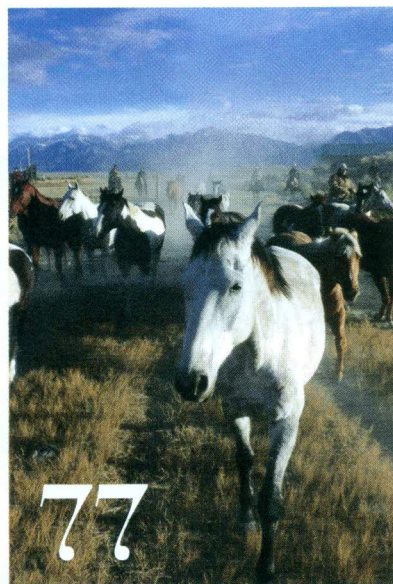
**21 To the Dogs**  
*Chrome* canine advisor Hilton Butler shares the importance of having the right tools for the job when it comes to dog training.



## Attitude

**25 In Design**  
Find your next pair of boots with our exclusive *Chrome* style quiz.

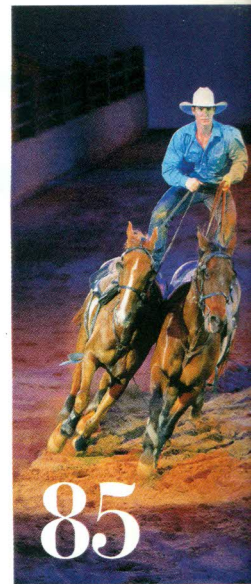
**31 At Heart**  
The right supplement can help you—and your four-footed companions—feel your best.



## Place

**77 The Rural Life**  
Colorado's sprawling Zapata Ranch preserves both land and tradition.

**82 No Fences**  
Bridget Napier found a lifetime of love in her flashy rodeo Paint.



## Journey

**85 Wanderlust**  
Experience Australian culture at these eight spots.

**91 Have Horse, Will Travel**  
A living-quarters tour of the comfort of home on wheels.

## Culture



69

### For The Soul

Holding true to her roots while marching to the beat of her own drum, Chelsea Bain is making a splash in the country music industry.



74

### Discover

Mallory Beinborn takes equine portraits to the next level with her creative flair and inventive style.



### On the Cover

Karly Furnas of Bowling Green, Kentucky, strikes a pose with Smokin On A Mercedes [pending], a 2012 sorrel overo mare owned by Hershel and Shannon Reid of Pilot Point, Texas. Karly was one of the grand-prize winners of *Chrome's* inaugural APHA member model search—our APHA models are featured in "Working 9 to 5," which starts on page 34.

Photograph by Moses Olmos



95 *mychromelife.com* Online Exclusive

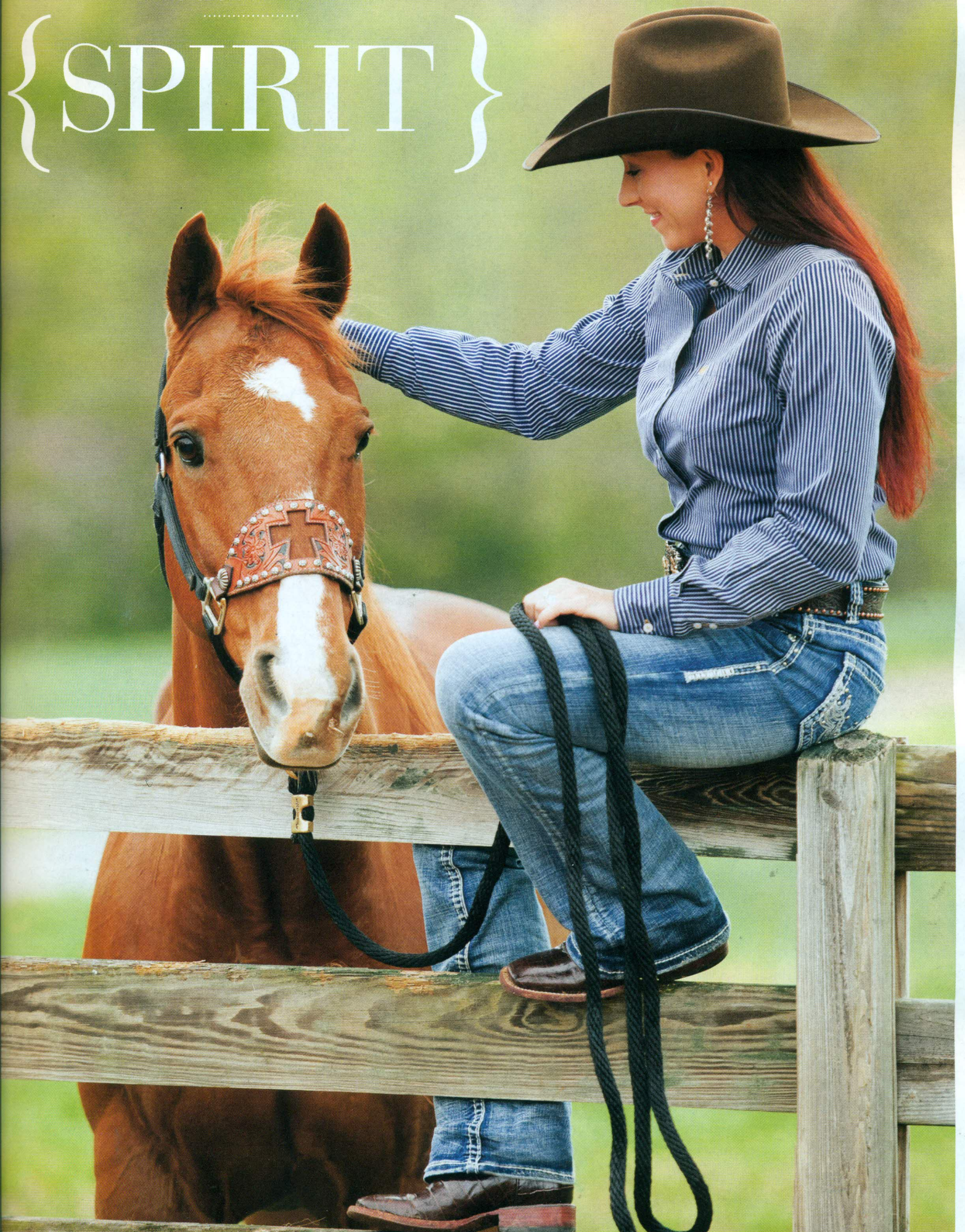
95 Advertising Index

96 Home Place

APHA Executive Director Billy Smalley shares lessons as a boy to the rhythm of a hammer.

COLORFUL CHARACTER

# { SPIRIT }





# Horsepower

By Jessica Hein

*Running at full-throttle, Taylor Earnhardt Putnam's creating a new chapter in the Earnhardt family legacy.*

Think "Earnhardt," and it's almost impossible to not conjure images of speed, adrenaline and winner's circle triumphs.

The youngest of NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt's four children, Taylor Earnhardt Putnam made the decision long ago to trade the steering wheel for the saddle. An avid barrel racer, Taylor's burning up the cloverleaf instead of the racetrack and forging a new chapter in the Earnhardt legacy with her own kind of horsepower.

## Family Tradition

Taylor spanned two worlds from a young age: thrust into the public eye as the daughter of the seven-time NASCAR champion, Taylor was just a typical kid, one who loved animals, scurried from one after-school activity to the next, and could often be found exploring the peaceful oasis of the family's farm in Mooresville, North Carolina.

An avid outdoorsman, it was Dale who fostered Taylor's love of horses.

"My dad really liked riding; he liked being in the outdoors. When he went elk hunting, they always rode horses and packed in," Taylor said. "He started getting horses when he started having cows, and it just kind of grew.

"When I was younger, he'd bring horses from the barn up to the house and pick me up, so I'd just jump on and we'd ride all day. I got my love from that. It was my escape from being in the house and cleaning my room."

Hunting proved another opportunity for daddy-daughter bonding time, bolstered by fond memories of her father, Taylor still enjoys hunting today.

"From a young age, he taught me about animals, how to recognize the signs and about conservation," she said. "He would take me hunting with him—I wouldn't have a gun; I would just sit and watch and spend time with my dad. Later, he taught me how to shoot, and we'd go dove hunting every year."

On February 18, 2001, Taylor's world came to a screeching halt when her father was involved in a fatal crash on the final lap of the Daytona 500.

In the midst of coping with the devastating loss, Taylor found comfort in horses; along the way, she discovered a particularly alluring attraction to barrel racing.

"One of my friends invited me to go and watch her barrel race," she said. "The night before, her granddad offered to let me borrow a horse—I tried it and I loved it. I came home, pulled one of the trail horses out of the pasture



Taylor Eshardt

nd tried to figure out how to make him do it.

“Barrel racing gave me something to focus on. I had always been in sports and theater and always had plenty of after-school activities, but barrel racing was the thing I could do on the weekends and during the week, too. I loved riding horses, and I could go fast and not get in trouble for it! It gave me something to focus on and helped me grow up a little bit.”

### *Fit to a ‘Tee’*

Delving deeper into barrel racing and hungry to learn more about the sport, Taylor borrowed seasoned horses from friends—the family’s trail horses didn’t really share Taylor’s aptitude for speed, she discovered. Finally progressing to the point of needing her own fleet-footed companion, the search for a new mount—led by her mother, Teresa, and her trainer at the time... and unbeknownst to Taylor—commenced.

“The guy who was helping me with my horses back then said, ‘I have a horse you need to try.’ I tried him at a barrel race—I just exhibited him—and he was so automatic and so easy to run, but he had so much heart and grit and would get down and turn so much harder than any of the other horses I had ridden before,” Taylor said. “I didn’t know it at that point, but my mom had already bought him; she didn’t tell me for about a month—I think he wanted me to really want this horse before she told me he was mine.”

That horse was Lightening Twister, a 1995 bay overo gelding by Blue Twister and out of Miss Shomont Te (QH). A seasoned barrel horse, “Tee” was somewhat of a quirky personality, Taylor discovered, but he proved to be just the mount she needed to step up her game.

“He has the same personality now as when I bought him: grumpy, ornery, gonna grunt and kick up every now and then when you’re riding him. But he’s such a great horse. He was such a great horse for me to learn and progress on because he did everything I needed him to do,” she said.

With Tee as her teacher, Taylor progressed from local competitions to bigger events along the East Coast sanctioned by the National Barrel Horse Association, Southern Rodeo Association and International Pro Rodeo Association. Now 20, Tee is in semi-retirement, though he’s still as sharp as ever, Taylor says.

“He’s such a great horse,” she said. “I don’t run him every weekend like I used to because of his age, but I do haul him when I need that reliable horse that I know is going to go work for me or if I know I’m going to a pen that he really likes. But he could still handle it if I wanted to—he’s still in great shape. The vet can never find anything wrong with him.”

Over the years, Taylor’s added a few more Paints to her string: Heza Packin’ Too, a 1999 sorrel solid gelding nicknamed “Pacman,” and a 2010 buckskin solid Paint-bred gelding named NN Cook County Peter.

“Pacman’s a great horse. He’s won a lot at rodeos here in the South,” Taylor said. “He’s 15 this year; he actually wasn’t trained until he was 7. They bought him from Wyoming off the track. He’s really trained well now—it’s just me learning how to ride him.

“The buckskin horse is a 4-year-old; he’s pretty much all halter- and pleasure-bred. He has one of the same bloodlines as Tee, and as a baby they looked exactly the same. My husband bought him for my birthday as a 4-month-old. He’s been the easiest horse to ride. I can put kids on him or I can go rope calves and steers on him. He’s my practice horse; I get on him if I need to work on me because I know he’s going to do whatever I need him to do.”

Though she runs some Quarter Horses too, Taylor says there’s something extra special about her Paints.

“Paint Horses are the best,” she said. “After Tee, I believe it. I can really see the difference between the Paint Horses I have and the Quarter Horse I run. The Quarter Horse does it all—he has grit, he has run—but the Paint Horses just have something extra.”





“Paint Horses are the best ... The Quarter Horse does it all—he has grit, he has run—but the Paint Horses just have something extra.”





### *New Chapter*

With rodeo playing such a big part in Taylor's life, it's fitting that she met her husband, Brandon, there too. Members of the same junior rodeo association for most of their young lives—Taylor was even good friends with Brandon's sister—the two never connected until a serendipitous rodeo matchmaking effort.

"We were at the NBHA North Carolina State finals, and I knew his sister—I've known her for years, but I didn't know she had a brother," Taylor said. "I was there to run, and we had all gotten there early because we were with the state directors setting up: putting stickers on barrels, putting banners up and all that. The announcer and secretary were conspiring to get me in the same place as him—we ended up talking all weekend."

Hitting it off, Brandon and Taylor went on a couple dates—all the while, Brandon had no idea of Taylor's tie to NASCAR royalty. Brandon finally made the connection when he found himself at the Dale Earnhardt Inc. headquarters to pick Taylor up for their third date.

"I never told him my last name; I just told him my name was Taylor. He says he knew there was a Taylor Earnhardt, but he never put two and two together," she said. "Once he got down to the house and I introduced him to my mom, he kind of put it together; he asked me afterward 'Is your last name Earnhardt?' We'd already been on two dates before that, so I couldn't say he was dating me because of my last name."

Six years later, in June 2012, Taylor and Brandon tied the knot. A calf-roper, Brandon shares Taylor's love of speed and competition, and the pair hit rodeos almost every weekend. He's also responsible for Taylor's foray into roping—a new, but exhilarating, hobby for the horsewoman.

"He convinced me to start roping the dummy. I kind of figured that out, and I liked it," she said. "It's just something else I can do if I need to stop thinking about barrel racing for a while."

Though she has yet to apply for her Women's Professional Rodeo Association card, Taylor has dreams of one day qualifying for the National Finals Rodeo.

"I've still got to find that right horse before that happens, but I'm actively looking for a horse I can make a run to the NFR with," she said. "I'm not even going to attempt to do it until I'm ready."

Even though she's not yet made it to rodeo's biggest stage, Taylor's is no stranger to dealing with celebrity status.

"The announcers always play it up for the crowds, and a lot of times people will come up to me and want an autograph or a picture—it does not bother me at all," the horsewoman said. "I feel absolutely no pressure being an Earnhardt running barrels; I feel a lot of pressure from running against my sister-in-law and friends. I'm under those normal pressures more so than the name pressure."

### *Continuing the Legacy*


Growing up Earnhardt, however, has made Taylor keenly aware of her father's influence, not only in the world of NASCAR, but also in the lives of others. Almost 15 years after Dale's tragic accident, support for No. 3 is still alive and well.

"He was such an icon and such a down-to-earth person that people could relate to him and still relate to him today," Taylor said. "I've talked to fans who saw him race, and they show videos of him racing to their kids or grandkids and talk to them about him and what he was about. He was such a pivotal icon in the sport, and so relatable. It's great to see there's still so much support for him."

Seeing Dale's impact on the lives of others led to Taylor's involvement with the Dale Earnhardt Foundation; established in 2002, the foundation seeks to continue Dale's legacy through charitable programs and grants. The foundation's programs are broad, but all share the common threads of children's education and environmental/wildlife preservation—passions that were central to the foundation's namesake.

"Those are the main focuses because that's what was important to Dad," Taylor said. "He was very passionate about the outdoors and the environment and animals and conservation, and of course children and education. That's the main goal: to continue the legacy and the legend."

Though she's making a name for herself in the world of rodeo, Taylor is quick to credit her past for helping shape her future.

"My dad was very pivotal in the way I am today," she said. "Sometimes you have to miss a rodeo to do something really important, but it's worth it to see the impact and happy people." 

---

#### For More Information

Learn more about Taylor Earnhardt Putnam online at [taylorearnhardt.com](http://taylorearnhardt.com)

For more information about the Dale Earnhardt Foundation, visit [daleearnhardtinc.com](http://daleearnhardtinc.com)