



## HORSE TALES

# Girl Power: Dottie carries Cowgirls into the Record Books

by Doreen Shumpert  
photos courtesy Diane Purcelli



Diane Purcelli and her horse Dottie.

If you like a good story about tough females, you're in for a fun ride. And this one may be better than the legendary tales of Belle Starr or Calamity Jane, as all of it can be proven true.

Diane Purcelli of Darby, Mont., and Kenda Lenseigne of Ellensburg, Wash. (a current CMSA world-record holder), are no strangers to mounted shooting enthusiasts; both have shot their way to multiple Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association (CMSA) titles on different horses. Now, they've done it again—this time on the same horse. They call her "Dottie," and she's a dynamic, bold, black and white, ace-in-the-hole mare. She can't shoot a gun, but she hasn't needed one to blow away age-old stereotypes about mares and their competitive fire, stamina and versatility. When it comes to barrel racing, team roping, and of course, mounted shooting, Dottie's proving she can do anything the boys can do and along with two cowgirls, dominate in a male-dominated sport.

The 8-year-old, 15.1 hand, 1,100 pound registered APHA (American Paint Horse Association) mare, officially named Cowboys Q Ton Doc, stems from the lines of the immortal Doc Bar on the bottom side (American Quarter Horse Association legendary sire of cutting horses and Hall of Famer) and on top she's by APHA stallion Texas T Wild Thing who stands on the Townsend Ranch in Darby, Mont. Diane and her husband, Ernie, initially ran across her as they were searching for another mounted shooting horse. Diane explained how the partnership began.

"Some fellow mounted shooters had her and her half-brother for sale, and something kept drawing me back to her in the photos," Purcelli explained. "I kept thinking the last thing we needed was a green-broke horse, especially a mare. When we first went to see her, we still lived in Illinois and ironically, she was in Darby, where we now live. So we went out and looked at her and some other horses, and ended up buying her in 2003 when she was 4."

Little did the Purcellis know what a competitive, reliable gem they had just added to their line-up. Ernie put the finish on her under saddle, then the couple started hauling her for two years to barrel races and shooting competitions to season her.



Kenda Lenseigne and Dottie are a record-setting team.

Her first claim to fame came as a successful barrel horse. In 2004, Dottie ended up as a top-three barrel racing futurity winner in the Montana States Breeder Incentive Funds, in the top 20 of the ultra-tough Fizz Bomb Futurity Classic in Gillette, Wyo., and she was in the top 15 at the Sharon Camarillo Eastern & Western Classics. En route, she was slowly introduced to mounted shooting and took to it like a duck to water. Not surprising, seeing as how the Purcellis have a talent for finding and training versatile horses. They own eight head, and you can run, rope and shoot off all of them.

You could say Dottie's mounted shooting career started off with a bang. She and Diane were the first female team to win the Futurity at the CMSA World in Scottsdale, Ariz., where there's two go-rounds and the fastest time wins. And the victories kept coming for the duo (see sidebar) until a horse fell on Diane as they were rounding up team roping steers, injuring her knee and requiring surgery.

At that point, Purcelli contacted Kenda Lenseigne, who already had a world title in mounted shooting under her gun belt. She agreed to ride Dottie at the 2006 World Finals in Nevada in the Maturity, even though she had only been on the horse one time prior. Apparently, the two formed an immediate understanding, and went out to win the first two go-rounds, the overall Stallion Incentive Program (SIP) maturity division—and they placed in the pro class.

"Dottie's the only horse to win both the Futurity at age 5 and the Maturity at 7 within the CMSA, and she did it being ridden by two girls!" Purcelli said.

Both women have won numerous additional titles on the mare, including an impressive third-place Superhorse finish in June with a now-healed Purcelli. Horses must breakaway two steers, sort two steers, run two pole patterns, and finish with two go's of mounted shooting. Not only did Dottie place, she was completely penalty-free.

Speaking of steers, the girl's got cow, too, and is lovin' her newest event, team roping, and it matters little which end, although Purcelli primarily heads.

Dottie's accomplishments have caused many folks, including her owners, to re-consider some misconceptions about mares.

"Dottie has shown me that a good mare has more try than a gelding. Before, I didn't want to own a mare to compete on, but she's changed my opinion and I'd sure buy another," Purcelli admitted.

Besides the speed and talent, Dottie is driven by willingness and an abundance of try—sometimes too much.

"There's no half-way with her. I'd say it's all or nothing, but there's no 'nothing' in her," Purcelli laughed. "It's cool how she can go into fifth gear for Kenda, then slow back down for me."

She describes the mare as arrogant, confident, often playful under saddle and spooky when she chooses, yet docile enough to run with the geldings and help with some summer camps. Overall, she's most impressed with the horse's quickness, natural rate and cow ability.

Purcelli's plan is to keep competing on Dottie in all three sports, and she'd be honored if Lenseigne would continue with her at the pro level.

"Kenda and Dottie have a unique bond, and she takes Dottie to a new level. I don't know if I'll ever get there, but that's fine with me. My personal goal is to win the World on her Ladies Level 4, and I hope to knock on the overall title," Purcelli said. "I also think Silver Lining Herbs are a major force in Dottie's success. I'm in contact with them constantly, and they have helped me choose all-natural supplements for her that keep her at peak performance and attribute to her jockeying two riders—even for 12 runs in the California heat. It didn't seem to phase her," Purcelli added.

For more information on the Purcellis and their horses and their work with the therapeutic riding program, visit them at [www.nevadajoe.net](http://www.nevadajoe.net).

### Dottie's Bio

#### 2007

Will Lantis Memorial L4 Champion – Spearfish, S.D.  
Will Lantis Memorial Colt Eliminator 1st Go Round Winner – Spearfish, S.D.  
Will Lantis Memorial Pro Class Top 5 – Spearfish, S.D.  
Seven Down Super Horse 3rd Place – Spearfish, S.D.  
Rundown for Life Master's Champion \$10,000 Winner – City of Industry, Calif. (with Kenda Lenseigne)  
Rundown for Life Master's 8th Place – City of Industry, Calif. (with Diane Purcelli)  
Townsend Ranch Shootout L4 Champion – Darby, Mont  
Top 10 Eliminator – Darby, Mont.  
National Finals L4 Champion – Tunica, Miss. (with Diane)  
Reserve National Colt Eliminator Champion – Tunica, Miss. (with Kenda)  
Top 5 Pro Class – Tunica, Miss. (with Kenda)  
Festival of the West Reserve Pro Class Champion – Rawhide Pass, Ariz. (with Kenda)  
Biggest Little Shoot Top 10 Eliminator – Marana, Ariz. (with Kenda)  
3rd Place L5 – Marana, Ariz. (with Kenda)

#### 2006

World Finals SIP Maturity Champion – Las Vegas, Nev. (with Kenda)  
Top 5 Cowgirls Overall Fiesta Days – Spanish Fork, Utah  
Western US Championships Top 10 Colt Eliminator – Gillette, Wyo.  
Townsend Ranch Shootout L3 Champion & Top Overall Cowgirl – Darby, Mont.  
National Finals L3 Champion – Tunica, Miss.  
3rd Place Colt Eliminator – Tunica, Miss.

#### 2005

World Finals Reserve L3 Champion – Scottsdale, Ariz.  
Western US Championships Reserve L3 Champion – Gillette, Wyo.  
Reserve Champion Colt Eliminator – Gillette, Wyo.  
South Dakota State L3 Champion – Spearfish, S.D.  
South Dakota State Top 5 Eliminator & Pro Class – Spearfish, S.D.  
National Finals L3 Champion – Tunica, Miss.  
Top 5 Colt Eliminator – Tunica, Miss.  
Top 5 Pro Class – Tunica, Miss.

#### 2004

World Finals Futurity Champion – Scottsdale, Ariz. (First Woman to Win the Futurity)  
Fizz Bomb Classic Barrel Race Futurity Top 25 – Gillette, Wyo.  
Sharon Camarillo Western Classic Barrel Race Top 15 – Reno, Nev.  
MT Breeders Futurity Top 3 – Helena, Mont.  
National Finals 4th Place Futurity – Rapid City, S.D.