

Amateur Horse of the Year-Prince Of Cat

An unexpected find leads to a Horse of the Year title.

By: Jessica O'Connor

Sometimes the horse we need is not necessarily the horse we're searching for. That scenario played out in the best way possible when Rob Kuiper stumbled upon 2017 gelding Prince Of Cat, by Smooth As A Cat and out of a Dual Rey mare named Call Me Queen B.

The little gelding's big stops and tremendous effort at such a young age made the purchase an easy decision for Rob.

"We were at Beau Galyean's to try three year old's," he recalled. "They were working two year old's when we caught a look at him and said 'We need that horse.' Beau told us that he was only that price today, and if we left the property and came back he would be way more. Needless to say, I bought him that day."

Rob barn named the gelding "Beau," and under the guidance of Russ Elrod the pair began their journey in the pen during Beau's four year old year. Crowned reserve champion in the derby limited at their first show, the 2021 Breeder's Invitational, the gelding continued to prove time and again what an outstanding aged event and amateur mount he was. Rob and Beau made the finals at every major aged event in 2022, including being named champion in the 5/6 amateur at Cattlemen's and reserve in the same class at the Ike. Approximately \$70k of Beau's \$115,906 lifetime earnings was won last year alone.

"Beau was just so honest, tried so hard, and hit his big stops," Rob said. "He was really special that way. Always dead accurate-accuracy was his big thing. Even if I were to make a mistake and ask him to do the wrong thing at the wrong time, he wouldn't go. Beau was the same every time. The same consistency, the same accuracy, the same effort, every time. He's straight business, in and out of the pen."

At this time, Rob has tentative plans to let Beau make another rider's dreams come true due to his excellence in the amateur pen. In final reflection on a banner year he said, "I'd like to thank Russ and Julie Elrod for believing in my dream for this horse, and Ryan Elrod for getting him ready for me. I'd also like to thank the people that helped Beau and I during every run. Lloyd Cox, Clay Johnston, and Sean Flynn-your encouragement, support, and guidance mean more to me than you can ever imagine."