

pointswest

A man with a weathered face, wearing a dark cowboy hat and a grey vest over a plaid shirt, sits on a dark horse. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus landscape with green fields and a cloudy sky. The horse's head and neck are visible in the lower right corner, and its tail is on the left. The saddle is made of brown leather with intricate stitching and a rope is coiled around it.

FALL 2022

Italy's Legendary Cowboys *of the Maremma*

INDIAN RELAY

HANDGUNS ON
HORSEBACK

FROM THE DESK
OF THE WEST

REBECCA WEST
Executive Director and CEO

My summers as a youth were full of activity when school let out. There was some work and some play. But in a family fascinated with the outdoors, and particularly



horses, it was always a time to get back in the saddle.

I remember my first encounter with horses at a summer camp, Camp Tippecanoe. My enterprising big sister realized how much I loved horses, and somehow, at age 8, managed to get the counselors to double my riding sessions. So began my years as an equestrian, and her career as an attorney.

Humans have had a unique relationship with horses from early contact. For Asian and European cultures, those encounters were much earlier than for Indigenous Peoples. Native Americans encountered Spanish horses (set loose during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt in Santa Fe, New Mexico) as they were brought north onto the Plains throughout the 1700s. These magnificent creatures were enticing, intimidating, and powerful, and quickly became enmeshed in the complex history of the American West.

I've learned important lessons from these beasts: how to work for their trust, care for their endless needs and injuries, and to be confident and calm in their presence. Sportsmanship, camaraderie, and lots of sweat and tears were part of the learning as well. The horse was never to blame for its "bad" behavior, even if it bit, bucked, or kicked. Inevitably, a human had a role in these undesirable actions, usually due to a lack of skill or character. Most importantly, even a seemingly well-trained horse retains elements of unpredictability rooted in its origins as a once-wild animal.

In this issue of *Points West*, our writers explore diverse traditions and skills associated with horse cultures of the American West, like thrilling Indian Relay races and pistol shooting on horseback. We'll also share traditions from beyond this continent with an exploration of Italian cowboys, or *butteri*, featured in a special exhibition opening October 8.

So as summer gives way to fall, wherever you find yourself when reading these pages, we thank you for hitting the trail with the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

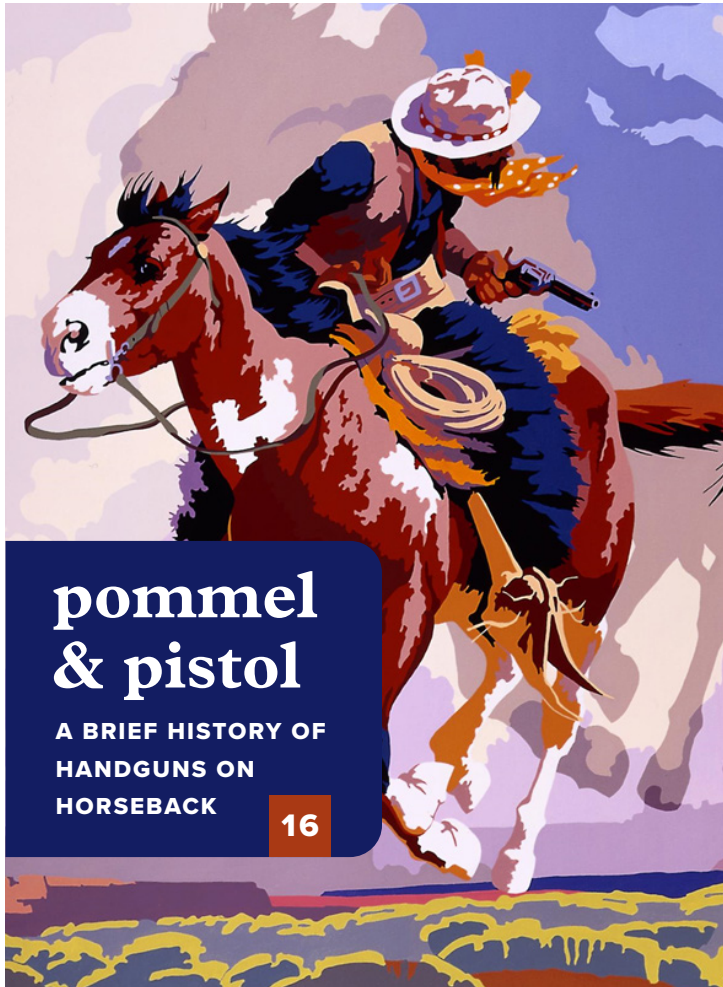
Rebecca West



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relay

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FIRST EXTREME
SPORT

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ABOUT THE COVER | *Buttero*, a 2016 photograph of an Italian cowboy, is part of Italy's *Legendary Cowboys of the Maremma*, a special exhibition by photographer Gabrielle Saveri. It includes *Riding Boots and Two Hooves*, left, and is on view starting October 8 in the John Bunker Sands Photography Gallery. All photographs ©Gabrielle Saveri. All Rights Reserved.

Points West is dedicated to connecting people to the stories of the American West as the membership magazine of the private, nonprofit Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

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BUFFALO BILL
CENTER
OF THE WEST



Butteri herding Maremmano horses at sunset



©Gabrielle Saveri

BY RUFFIN PREVOST

It sounds simple—almost silly, even. But “just showing up” can sometimes be the key to getting great shots for Gabrielle Saveri. “It was such a long day for me, and I didn’t really know what I was getting myself into. But all these magical things happen when I just show up,” recalls the writer/photographer of the moment she captured an iconic image of a trio of Italian cowboys driving two dozen horses across a field.

Saveri had traveled to southern Tuscany in 2015 to photograph the last few dozen remaining Italian cowboys, or butteri, who are struggling to maintain a way of life that stretches back centuries, but is threatened by a range of forces in modern Italy.

“I had been riding places on a rickety old bicycle, through dirt fields and huge tracts of farmland while carrying two cameras, trying to take pictures and not fall off my bike,” she recalled of her day near Alberese, a small, rural, agricultural community in a rugged, coastal region known as the Maremma.

Saveri was invited to attend a raduno in nearby Spergolaia, a festive gathering or rally of cowboys showing off their skills to an appreciative crowd of locals and visiting aficionados.

“I went out riding with the promoter and his wife just after sunrise.

As the day went on, all of a sudden these cowboys just showed up from all over the place,” she said.

“It was one of the most elegant events I’ve seen in my whole life. The Italians know their pageantry, and their horsemanship was amazing. They were herding cattle and horses, and it went on and on, and every single bit of it was beautiful,” she said.

“Finally, at the end of the day, these butteri from the Tenuta were all of a sudden moving a huge herd of Maremmano horses towards us from the end of a vast, long meadow. They came galloping at us at full-speed, and you could hear the loud sound of the hooves in the distance,” she said. “They had it timed so the sun was just setting, and it was perfect and amazing.”

Saveri found an ideal spot and tried to capture the expansive, thundering movements of men and horses as the setting sunlight filtered through a cloud of dust.

“It took me back to being a little girl, and the romantic idea of handsome cowboys and stunning horses galloping across a field,” she said. “I had never seen anything like it. It was magical.”

Gabrielle Saveri is a writer, photographer, and videographer living in Northern California. Her photography exhibition Italy’s Legendary Cowboys of the Maremma is on view October 8 at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.



SHOT WITH
NIKON D3200

LENS
NIKON 70-300MM

LOCATION
TUSCANY, ITALY

ISO 200
1/400TH AT 5.3

Barnett named Whitney curator

After a stint in Billings, Montana, as curator for the Yellowstone Art Museum, Susan Barnett says she is happy to be in Cody, Wyoming, having joined the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in early August as the new Scarlett Curator of Western American Art for the Whitney Western Art Museum.

Barnett follows Karen Brooks McWhorter, who served in that role for seven years before being promoted to Collier-Read Director of Curatorial, Education, and Museum Services.

Along with McWhorter and curatorial assistant Ashlea Espinal, Barnett rounds out a trio of extraordinarily well-qualified women leading the Whitney into a defining new era of western art. Espinal joined the Whitney team in fall 2021 after



graduating with a doctorate in Native American Art History from the University of Oklahoma.

After Barnett’s position in Billings was eliminated during the pandemic, she moved to the Midwest looking for work and a more affordable community.

“So I was thrilled to get this position and have the opportunity to circle back,” she said.

Mountain biking has been an early outdoors priority for Barnett since her move to Cody, as well as exploring Shoshone Canyon, east of town.

“I’m kind of loving it here,” she said. “A friend of mine from Billings drew me a treasure map of places that I need to go, and I’m looking forward to following up on all those recommendations.”

“It’s easy to access really wonderful wilderness and outdoor adventures right nearby, and I’m really enjoying that,” she said.

Barnett said she’s looking forward to the quieter seasons of fall and winter to discover more of Cody’s small-town atmosphere without the bustle of tourists.

In the meantime, she’s working to get to know the Whitney collection more fully, after having previously visited the Center, where she met with McWhorter to discuss potential collaborations while Barnett was curator of the Yellowstone Art Museum.

“I went to school at Montana State University, and a lot of artists that have become icons in the field were my teachers back then,” she said. “So, it’s nice to see some of their work in this collection.”

Barnett has broad museum experience, having been executive director twice. She has held the positions of senior curator and collections manager, and has also worked as a gallery owner and a consultant specializing in exhibition curation, collections stewardship, nonprofit board development, marketing and design, and strategic planning.

Her career focus has been contemporary art, including contemporary art of the West, and her recent work has celebrated regional artists such as Will James, Tracy Linder, and Bill Stockton. Her research also includes Indigenous arts and cultures, studio craft, photography, and printmaking. With a background in studio art, Barnett has a strong understanding of materials and artistic processes.

Barnett said she looks forward to the opportunities the Whitney offers to juxtapose contemporary artists — including some she studied with, like Gennie DeWeese and Deborah Bufferfield — alongside historic greats like Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran.

“I’m thrilled to be working in a place where there’s a genuine teamwork atmosphere,” she said. “People have been incredibly welcoming and generous with their time and knowledge.”

McWhorter said Barnett and Espinal “are going to be a very dynamic duo!” “I anticipate Susan breathing new life into the Whitney and its offerings,”

McWhorter said, “and believe our visitors and community can expect to see art of the West in new and different ways through Susan’s perspective.”

Linda Spencer Murchison is a retired hospice social worker. She is Chair of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's Board of Trustees. She and her husband, Reid, divide their time between northwest Wyoming and the coast of North Carolina.



Linda Spencer Murchison

END OF WINTER

I enjoy visiting the Grainger Gallery. Each time I visit, a different piece contemporary of art catches my attention. Most recently, it was an oil painting by T. Allen Lawson titled *End of Winter, Old Yellowstone Highway*. The painting speaks to me of new life as spring approaches, as the grass is beginning to green up, and more light fills the days. Maybe it will be a year with good grass for the cows, maybe there will be good rain and not too much heat. Hope for possibilities.

LAMENTING

Another painting that invited me to stop and take a closer look is *Lamenting* by Robert Orduño. The painting describes a Plains Indian man's vision quest and sadness about the loss of the buffalo. To lament means to express grief or sorrow. Lamenting is used to navigate pain and suffering. The power of sadness and grief is strong to me in the Plain's man's face and the buffalo. The painting is calling me to lament all that has been lost, harmed, damaged in our country, our people, our world, our climate.

EVENING

Evening by Ron Kingswood is a picture of nature at a particular moment – serene at the end of the day as the light fades. The ducks are minding their own business as they swim through the marsh grasses, just trying to find their evening meal. They are not worrying about the past or the future, no schedule to keep, no place to be except right where they are. A lesson for me.

CANE TO HONOR SPENCER

Cane to Honor Harriet Stuart Spencer by Bruce Sarvis. Harriet was a trustee of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West for many years, chair of the Plains Indian Museum Advisory Board, and my mother. This reminds me of Harriet's deep commitment to the Center, her friendship with the artist Arthur Amiotte, and her dedication to the Plains Indian Museum. It invites me to honor my elders and the memories and teachings they have passed on to me.



T. Allen Lawson. *End of Winter, Old Yellowstone Highway*, 2008. Oil on linen. Museum purchase with funds from Carlene Lebus and Harris Haston, Alan and Ann Simpson, and anonymous donations. 5.11



Robert Orduño. *Lamenting*, 1986. Mixed media on board. 1.87



Ron Kingswood. *Evening*, 2014. Oil pastel on canvas. Gift of the Mary A.H. Rumsey Foundation. 8.14



Bruce Sarvis. *Cane to Honor Harriet Spencer*, 2013, far left. Wood, tanned hide, glass beads, rubber. Gift in Honor of Harriet Stuart Spencer. NA.203.1795

CRISPY FALL SALAD



This crispy potato and green bean salad is perfect for an easy fall lunch because all of the ingredients can be prepped ahead and kept in the refrigerator until you're ready. Go ahead and prep some extra, so you can get a few lunches out of it.

INGREDIENTS:

8 strips bacon
1 ½ pounds new potatoes, sliced
Kosher salt and fresh black pepper
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
½ pound green beans, trimmed
1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half
Dijon vinaigrette
Spinach
2 tbsp chives, snipped

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Place bacon on a foil-lined baking sheet and cook for 10–15 minutes or until crispy. Remove bacon and let cool before crumbling.

Add green beans to baking sheet, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and roast in bacon grease for 8–10 minutes.

Meanwhile, slice potatoes in thin rounds, place on baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and roast for 20–25 minutes (flipping halfway through) or until golden and crisp. Add parmesan during the last few minutes of roasting.

Slice tomatoes in half, place spinach in a large bowl, and add all of the ingredients. Toss with your favorite vinaigrette and enjoy!



Courtney McRae lives on a ranch near Cody, Wyoming, where she runs 2 guest houses with her husband. When she's not hosting guests, you'll find her in the kitchen cooking and baking with her goldendoodle dog by her side, waiting for crumbs.

PHOTO + RECIPE by Courtney McRae | holdingcourt.com

INDIAN RELAY

AMERICA'S FIRST EXTREME SPORT



Riders compete in an Indian Relay race in June 2005 at the Wind River Reservation in Ethete, Wyoming. Ken Blackbird photograph.

BY HUNTER C. OLD ELK

Deep rivalries run through the blood of Indigenous men and women when it comes to racing. The sport of Indian Relay exemplifies a desire to achieve athletic perfection for rider, horse, and teammates. Indian Relay combines horsemanship, athleticism, and tribal competition—setting the stage for an exhilarating experience for rider and spectator that has often been described as America’s first extreme sport.

Let’s set the scene. It’s a hot and grueling Sunday afternoon in June, wrapping up the annual Crow Native Days celebration. The location is Crow Agency, on the Crow Indian Reservation in southern Montana. A crowd has gathered at the rodeo grounds, seated high in the grandstands. This place is special because it is a monument to horses and cattle.

On a typical evening at other such venues, it is not uncommon to see relay teams looping horses and practicing their mounts. Other nights, this could be the setting for a jackpot team roping or barrel race practice in tribal-operated arenas throughout Indian Country. Fans anxiously look to the West for signs of racehorse pageantry. A buzz of anticipation brings questions. Could it be time? Will there be an injury? Who will be crowned champion?

Kennard Real Bird is a member of the Crow Tribe and a traditional Camp Crier (announcer) for Indian Relay. A professional stock contractor, he has the distinct role of broadcasting details about the teams and races. He’s done this for decades. He draws the crowd’s attention to the west, where teams pace down the track. In every color and pattern, tall, young thoroughbreds fill the arena.

Riders have warmed up their horses and decorated them with special paints and decorative motifs. Each group organizes with pride in bright and vibrant regalia through a gathering of tribal nations. Over the loudspeaker, teams are announced representing the Crow, Colville, Omak, Blackfeet, Shoshone-Bannock, Lakota, and Hidatsa Nations. Champion teams included in heat lineups are Old Elk Relay, White Tail Express, Mountain Crow, Awa Dah Hey, Carlson Relay, and Murray Relay. The announcer yells “Go!” and they’re off!

In a revolutionary turn of events beginning nearly 350 years ago, horses came to the Great Plains, leading to the origin of the Indian Relay. The horse was introduced in the American West after the 1680 revolt of Pueblo peoples against Spanish rule in what is now Santa Fe, New Mexico. Following the Pueblo revolt, horses escaped and roamed the plains.

The late Crow scholar and founding Plains Indian Museum Advisor Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow reported that the Crow first received horses in 1725, near the Green River of Wyoming. But numerous tribal accounts describe horses as always belonging to tribal cosmologies, world views, and belief systems.

Tribal people considered the introduction of the horse not as an



Indigenous artisans created objects to honor their horses during times of war, celebration, and the movement of camps. For protection, horses were adorned with feathers, ceremonial amulets, and masks, like this one from the Blackfeet Tribe.

expedient convenience, but as a gift from the First Creator. Indigenous Peoples forged unprecedented relationships with the animal in an almost instantaneous connection. Travel, hunting, and war became immeasurably easier with horses, tasks previously accomplished on foot or with the help of domesticated dogs.

Images of horses decorate clothing and personal items. Artisans also created objects to honor their horses during times of war, celebration, and the movement of camps. Horses were adorned with feathers, masks, and ceremonial amulets for protection. This tradition lives on in Indian Relay with the adornment of traditional breach cloths, feather bonnets, eagle feathers, and painted symbols on thoroughbreds.

“As Native Americans, we’re a horse culture,” said Kendall Old Horn, a member of the Crow Tribe who has competed in Indian Relay since 1978. “From the time we’re walking, we’re involved with horses in one way or another. Horses are a big part of our culture.”

“For us, it’s a sporting event to show our horsemanship skills,” said Old Horn, who has competed as a rider and a team owner. “Back in the day, we went to battle with different tribes and counted coup. Now, Indian Relay is kind of a way to count coup. You try to come out on top.”

Indian Relay teams are judged on how well they can manage a trio of 1,000-pound thoroughbreds as riders gallop bareback at full speed down a dirt track. Relay has varying origins among Plains tribes, including its use in war games and during gambling among competing tribes. Other accounts say races were used to chase and hunt buffalo. Relays also enabled riders to track and outrun wild horses.

Modern Indian Relay races have been run throughout the past century, and were first officially organized as a sport on the Shoshone-Bannock Reservation in Idaho. Indian Relay competition now has governing associations, detailed rules, and significant prize money for championship events.

Races are broken into heats, with 4 – 6 teams lined up on a half-mile racetrack. Each team has three racehorses, one relay rider, two horse holders, and a horse mugger. The mugger is responsible for catching incoming horses between exchanges, while holders calm the horses before and after runs. The rider’s job is to race all three of a team’s horses without injury or penalty.

“With 24 guys and 18 horses on the track at the same time, it’s just three minutes of organized chaos,” said Old Horn. “The pure enjoyment of the sport and the level of competition is so exciting, and probably one of the biggest reasons so many teams stay in it for so long.”

The rules are determined by the governing organization and sponsoring event staff. Teams draw for their lineup, with spot number one as the coveted space because it is closest to the west side of the track. Relay has two types of starts. A standing start is when riders are mounted at the starting line. A start from the ground is when the rider must have both feet on the ground before mounting.

Relay riders mount their first horse bareback, running full speed around the track. Riding without the benefit of a saddle means that despite exceptional skill and determination, even the best riders can sometimes be involuntarily and unceremoniously dismounted mid-stride. The rider completes the first lap and gallops into his respective area to mount the



Dancers gather during a series of events that included Indian Relay races in June 2005 at the Wind River Reservation in Ethete, Wyoming. Ken Blackbird photograph.

second horse. A third and final exchange happens, then the race is completed. The heat winner is the first rider to cross the finish line without penalty. Penalties include:

- ☐ Failure to pay racing fees.
- ☐ False start.
- ☐ Rider falls off.
- ☐ Mugger fails to catch a horse in exchange.
- ☐ Loose horse on the track.
- ☐ Rider dismounts in another team’s area.
- ☐ Striking another team’s horse.

Owners, riders, and trainers work year-round to perfect their techniques. Throughout Indian Country, more than 50 teams compete for tens of thousands of dollars and the title of Indian Relay National Champion.

Indian Relay teams compete at annual races at many of the top tribal festivals across Indian Country. The sport has also joined the official lineup at Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association-sanctioned rodeos like the Calgary Stampede and Sheridan WYO Rodeo. The sport grows each year, with stricter competition and increasingly faster teams from Idaho, Montana,

South Dakota, North Dakota, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Wyoming, and Canada.

Old Horn said he expects the sport to continue growing, but he’s not sure if it will become a part of most major, mainstream rodeo events. While more prize money would be nice, he said, the teams are in it for the love of the sport and the competition among tribes.

“We’re very competitive, but also very helpful to each other, except for those three minutes during the race,” Old Horn said. “After the races, you see everyone shaking hands because you make some of the greatest friends in your life in Indian Relay.”

With its roots in a range of unique activities stretching back centuries, Indian Relay represents all the best things about intangible cultural celebrations. And on a hot summer day in the West, it is also undoubtedly the most exciting three minutes of action you will ever witness, and an unbroken connection to America’s first extreme sport.



Hunter Old Elk (Apsaalooke/Yakama) is the curatorial assistant for the Plains Indian Museum. Between fly fishing and creating art, she enjoys social justice and activism.



BACK IN THE DAY, WE WENT TO BATTLE WITH DIFFERENT TRIBES AND COUNTED COUP. NOW, INDIAN RELAY IS KIND OF A WAY TO COUNT COUP. YOU TRY TO COME OUT ON TOP.”
— Kendall Old Horn

Portrait of Two Riders,
Pitigliano, 2016,
©Gabrielle Saveri

ITALY'S LEGENDARY COWBOYS OF THE MAREMMA

BY RUFFIN PREVOST

PHOTOS BY GABRIELLE SAVERI

On October 8, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West opens a special exhibition of photographs of cowboys. The images capture hardworking men (and a few women) who are expert equestrians, toiling in a rugged landscape, tending to cattle and horses that are part of a legacy dating back many years.

Their connection to the land is impassioned and inspired. But modern bureaucracy, changes in the beef industry, and waning interest from younger workers are all threatening their cherished way of life. These authentic working cowboys — widely admired, and sometimes even imitated — are becoming increasingly scarce.

If that all sounds familiar, you might be surprised to learn that the cowboys in these photos don't live and work in the American West. They are *I Butteri* (pronounced *ee boo-teh-ree*, meaning the cowboys or the mounted herders), the legendary Italian cattle breeders and horsemen of the Maremma, a rugged coastal region that stretches from the plains of northern Lazio to the beaches and inland

areas of the southern Tuscany.

Some of the similarities between the two cowboy cultures were clearly apparent to photographer Gabrielle Saveri. There's also the historic connection that comes from a legendary meeting in 1890 between William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and a group of Italian cowboys (see Buffalo Bill and *La Sfida*, page 15).

Saveri grew up in California, but lived for years in Rome, working as a journalist there

before returning to Northern California, where she now lives and works in the Napa Valley as a photographer, videographer, and writer. Italy's cowboys share a lot with those in the American West, she said.

"They love their horses and their cows, and they truly love the land," Saveri said. "I think we should pay homage to these cultures that respect nature and the natural world. Wyoming is like that, and I hope people see and appreciate

the connection these people have to their history and their land."

Saveri's father's family was from Italy, and she visited the country frequently as a child before working there as an adult. But her route to photographing the famous butteri of the Maremma was circuitous and unexpected.

"When I was young, I loved horses and loved to ride. I even dreamed of being a jockey. But life kind of took me down different paths," she said.

"Living in Rome as a reporter, I kept hearing about these Italian cowboys, but I didn't know how to find them. Things were busy, and I left Italy and never realized that goal."

More than 20 years later, a random conversation in a California restaurant helped connect Saveri to a ranch in Italy.

The next summer, in 2013, Saveri traveled to Alberese, a small, rural, agricultural community where one of the last large-scale

“

*They love
their horses
and their
cows, and
they truly
love the land.*

—GABRIELLE SAVERI

cattle ranches of the Maremma endures.

Pedaling at sunrise on an ancient, rusty bike in her riding gear, Saveri joined the local *butteri*, who took her out to move a herd of young horses. The *butteri* asked that she not use her full frame camera gear on horseback, citing safety concerns, so Saveri had to use a basic point-and-shoot camera from the saddle.

After a plunge on horseback into the sea as the grand finale of her ride on her first day, Saveri came away with only 10 usable photos after her camera got wet in her saddle bag.

"But we got to gallop all over the hills and olive groves, and it was such a great experience for me," she said. "It was a dream come true."

Saveri returned every summer until the COVID-19 pandemic to take more photos of Italian cowboys, all while sharpening her skills as a photographer, which was a relatively new trade for her after writing for *Newsweek*, *People*, *Business Week* and other outlets.

Her photos "offer an insider's perspective on the everyday activities of the *butteri*, which, bathed in golden Tuscan sunlight, somehow seem so much more than mundane," said Karen Brooks McWhorter, the Center's Collier-Read Director of Curatorial, Education, and Museum Services.



Portrait of Buttera Margherita Barco, Alberese, 2017, ©Gabrielle Saveri.



Performance at the 1st National Raduno (Butteri Rally), Spergolaia, 2015, ©Gabrielle Saveri.



BUFFALO BILL & *La Sfida*

Cowboys had been working the land in what is now Italy, tending to horses and cattle, for more than 20 centuries before William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody first climbed into a saddle.

But that didn’t stop the legendary showman from issuing a brazen challenge when the Wild West made five stops in Italy in 1890.

“Buffalo Bill had a real habit of making bets with locals when touring, to raise money and generate some press for shows,” said Renée Laegreid, a professor of history at the University of Wyoming who is writing a book about Cody’s encounter with Italian cowboys, drawing on a decade of research in Italy and from the *Papers of William F. Cody* at the Center of the West.

Laegreid has also consulted archives in Florence and Rome, and interviewed dozens of Italians about “*La Sfida*,” which translates to: challenge, contest, or competition.

La Sfida is so well-known that it has become a proper noun,” Laegreid said. Many people in Italy know the story of Buffalo Bill and the Italian cowboys.

Cody issued the challenge while “hob-nobbing with some of the royalty around Rome before a show,” Laegreid said. Cody and an Italian nobleman, the Duke of Sermoneta named Onorato Caetani, debated whose cowboys were more skilled.

Caetani provided several wild colts from his estate, and Buffalo Bill bet that his cowboys, along with the Indigenous Peoples riding in his show, could mount and ride the horses, and that the Italians couldn’t.

If Buffalo Bill won, he got to keep the horses. If the Italians succeeded, Buffalo Bill would donate a huge sum to the poor, with accounts ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 Lira. Regardless, “that was a lot of money,” Laegreid said.

The Native riders succeeded, as did Buffalo Bill’s horsemen, although the Italians complained that the Americans were too rough, “and basically thought they were barbaric in how they did it,” Laegreid said.

The Italians were doing well when their turn came, Laegreid said, but Buffalo Bill stopped the contest just as it was concluding, claiming the *butteri* had taken too long.

Buffalo Bill didn’t pay, nor did he keep the horses. American and Italian newspapers erupted in a firestorm of controversy “with everyone hurling insults, and it was really quite amusing, and it remained ‘unresolved,’” at least from the American perspective, Laegreid said.

But most Italians figured they had won, and had no choice but to become gracious winners. “The cowboys themselves absolutely believe they won, and it has become a point of pride in the region,” she said, with Italians today still recalling stories of family connections to *La Sfida*.

“The unresolved aspect of *La Sfida* remains fascinating, not so much because Buffalo Bill may have tried to weasel out of paying a debt,” Laegreid said. “But because it is about how both cultures viewed their cowboys and traditions. It was less a contest between men and horses, and more a contest of traditions between the new world and the old.”

“Part of what drew me to this was that it was so spectacular visually,” said Saveri, whose photos are full of sumptuous colors, lavish textures, and dappled sunlight.

“The colors and textures of the landscape and the clothes are wonderful,” she said. “And they are out working early in the morning and late in the day, so the light is a beautiful, golden light that’s just perfect.”

The workdays are long and difficult, and the pay is low. Which is part of why ranches are having trouble recruiting new cowboys. A few years back, the Tuscany regional government launched a vocational training program for new cowboys, even accepting for the first time female applicants for the typically male-dominated spots.

Saveri said only about two or three dozen full-time working *butteri* remain in the region — others put the number even lower — not only because of a series of economic recessions in Italy, but also as a



A Buttero Demonstrates Roping Skills, Rispescia, 2017, ©Gabrielle Saveri.

result of changing European Union regulations on the beef industry.

Some small horse and cattle ranches remain, subsidizing operations with agriturismo revenue from hosting guests. But the large-scale ranches that dotted the landscape centuries ago are virtually gone now, with the government working to support and even administer the remaining major operations.

“They’re trying so hard to preserve it, because this is such an old culture,” Saveri said. “The *butteri* say they were the first cowboys in Europe, dating to the spread of agriculture from Etruscan times,” some 2,500 years ago.

“I just hope they prevail,” she said. “If the *butteri* disappear, that will be a real tragedy.”



Ruffin Prevost is a freelance writer from Cody, Wyoming, and editor of Points West. He operates the Yellowstone Gate website and writes for Reuters News Agency.

POMMEL & PISTOL

A brief history of HANDGUNS ON HORSEBACK



The Model 1805 was the first pistol made at a national armory in the United States, in Harper's Ferry, Virginia. It remains on the insignia for U.S. Army Military Police today.

BY DANNY MICHAEL

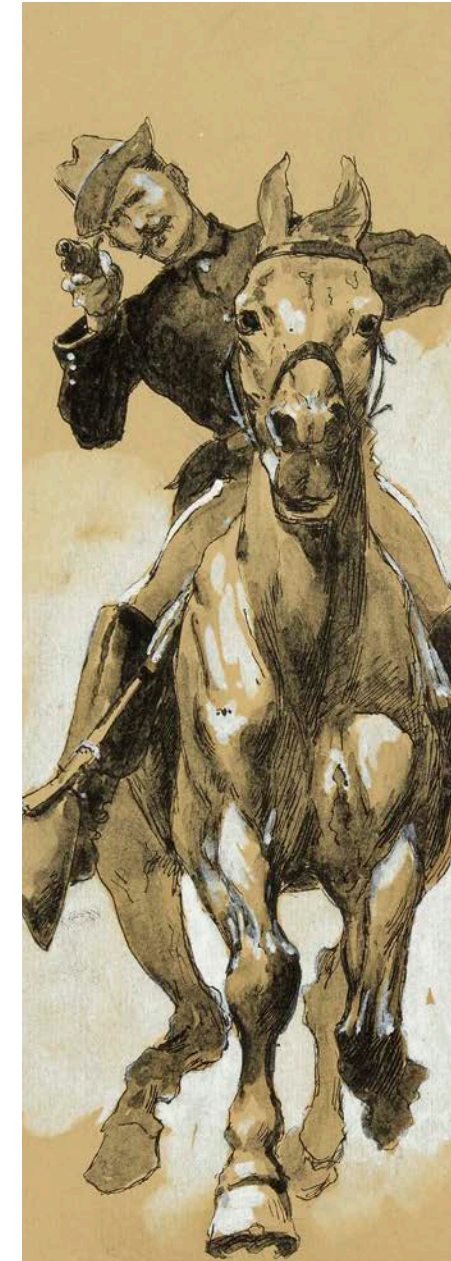
Since the invention of firearms (or at least shortly thereafter), people sought to use them from horseback. Riding and shooting separately are each accomplished disciplines that require skill and practice. Doing both at the same time has been a skill that has helped determine the fate of military powers, and continues to captivate modern sport shooters.

The earliest firearms were simple tubes that required the user to hold a match to a touchhole. Matchlocks simplified the process, but keeping track of a match lit at both ends—along with spare gun powder and your horse—also kept these earliest firearms from being widely adopted for mounted use.

The first wheellock firearms emerged near the beginning of the 16th century. They proved much more complicated than their predecessors, but the guns were largely self-contained once loaded. Instead of a match contacting gunpowder directly, the wheellock could be loaded and primed, and it stayed in that state indefinitely, until the user fired. Wheellock shooters could keep them loaded and in a holster, or wear them on a belt until needed, and

could then easily draw, cock, and fire them.

By the 1540s, European armies began to integrate firearms into mounted formations. Germanic and Polish cavalry adopted wheellock pistols to arm formations of horsemen known as “Reiters.” They were typically equipped with a pair of pistols, and



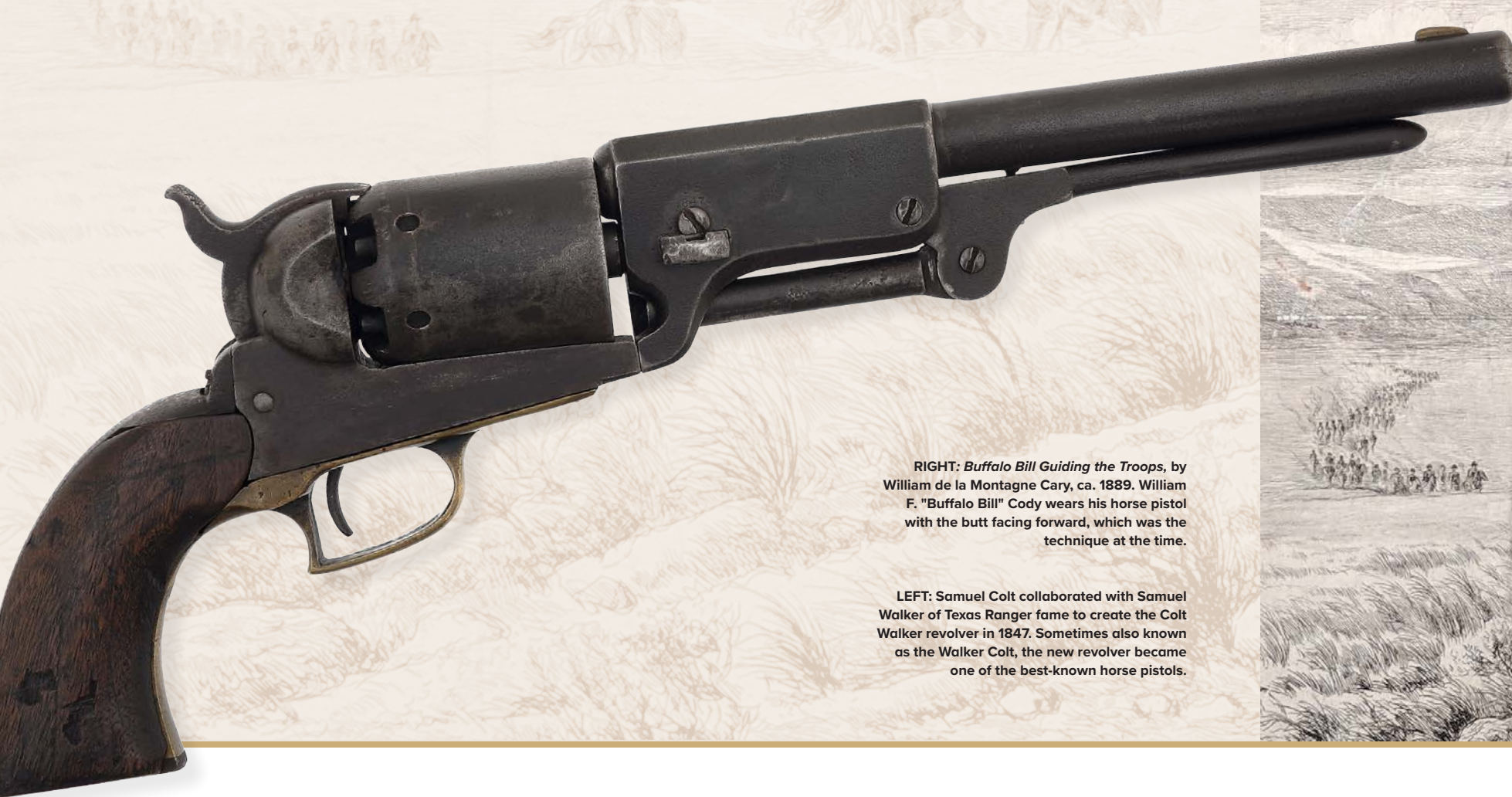
A Steady Goer, by Frederic Remington, ca. 1890. This drawing illustrated “Breaking a Horse to Stand Fire” in *Harper's Weekly*, February 15, 1890.

sometimes a long gun, in addition to wearing armor and carrying melee arms.

Reiters also set a precedent of carrying a pair of pistols in holsters affixed near or on the pommel of their saddle. One of their preferred tactics was the “caracole.” In this maneuver, horseman would advance in ranks toward an enemy formation, turn slightly to one side as they rode into pistol range, and fire a pistol. They would then turn toward the other side and fire their second pistol. After firing the second pistol, riders retreated to the rear of the formation to reload and then cycle back to the front. This tactic allowed Reiters to maintain a nearly constant fire on the enemy, and they could charge home with melee weapons to break the enemy’s line if they began to waver.

As firearms became more effective and more infantry started using them, Reiter-style cavalry began to fall out of favor. Cavalry in European armies began to split into distinctly melee-armed shock troops like lancers and cuirassiers, or firearm-armed troops like dragoons.

Fast forward to the early American Republic and consider the first years of the new national armories at Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harper's Ferry, Virginia. The War Department formed its own dragoon units in the years prior to the War of 1812. To equip these mounted units, Harper's Ferry Armory produced the Model 1805 pistol. This model was the first pistol made at a national armory in the United States, and it remains on the insignia for U.S. Army Military Police today. Relevant to mounted troops, the Model 1805 was made in and serialized as pairs. So, each Model 1805 bears the serial number of its twin, which presumably would have been issued together to the same mounted trooper to be carried in saddle holsters. The government first issued 1805s for the War of 1812, and the Regiment of Light Dragoons and various state-raised cavalry units used them.



RIGHT: *Buffalo Bill Guiding the Troops*, by William de la Montagne Cary, ca. 1889. William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody wears his horse pistol with the butt facing forward, which was the technique at the time.

LEFT: Samuel Colt collaborated with Samuel Walker of Texas Ranger fame to create the Colt Walker revolver in 1847. Sometimes also known as the Walker Colt, the new revolver became one of the best-known horse pistols.



The 1994 oil painting, *A Flight from Destiny*, by Bill Schenck, shows a fleeing cowboy wielding a horse pistol as he checks behind for pursuers.

Following the War of 1812, the U.S. government disbanded the Regiment of Light Dragoons, and the country went without any mounted units for the Army until the 1830s.

By the time of the Mexican American War (from 1846 – 1848), each of the U.S. dragoons carried a pair of percussion pistols, a Hall carbine, and a saber. Samuel Colt's collaboration with Samuel Walker of Texas Ranger fame meant that some U.S. cavalry, namely the Regiment of Mounted Rifles, received the new Colt Walker revolver late in 1847. Sometimes also known as the Walker Colt, the new revolver became one of the best-known horse pistols. Revolutionary for its day, the mounted rifle troopers fortunate enough to get a Walker received a 6-shot revolver with a rifled barrel, while most cavalry members carried single-shot, smooth-bore pistols. The gun inherently had much more firepower than its predecessors and was accurate at much greater distances: 100 yards compared to 10 or 20.

This usefulness came at a price, though. All prior horse pistols would be considered large by modern standards, but the Walker took it to an extreme. Each Colt Walker weighed 4.5 pounds and needed to be carried in a pommel holster on the saddle, with a gun on each side of the pommel.

Refinements to the Walker would bring

about some of the final American horse pistols: the Colt Dragoons. They were built slightly smaller than the famous Walker, but not by much. The overall weight was trimmed to a spry 4.25 pounds, and the barrel length drew down to a mere 7.5 inches. These were intended to be used as the Walkers were—still carried in pommel holsters on the saddle despite the reduction in size. The Regiment of Mounted Rifles used these Dragoon models, and the manufacturer also sold them to civilians in the years prior to the American Civil War.

Unfortunately, the revolution that Colt and other manufacturers brought to handguns in the mid-1800s would begin to diminish the need for horse pistols entirely. As materials and manufacturing improved, the guns could be made smaller and lighter yet retain the firepower of the larger pistols. Guns like the Remington New Model, Starr 1858, and Colt 1860 fired the large .44 caliber projectiles like the Walker and Dragoon did. But these newer models halved the weight of the gun, making it reasonable to carry in a belt holster.

By the time of the American Civil War, cavalry had largely abandoned pommel holsters in favor of a single revolver worn in a belt holster. To the dismay of quick-draw fans everywhere, cavalry wore their pistols on the right side

with the grip forward and were trained to draw right-handed. The saber would be on the left, and drawn "cross-draw," while the shooter would rotate the pistol as he drew it. This was not the fastest way, but cavalry units were not meant to fight "High Noon" style. Following the Civil War, pommel holsters virtually disappeared, ending the centuries-old class of "horse pistol."

But the story doesn't completely end there. The increase in popularity of action shooting sports has given fresh legs to mounted shooting traditions over the last few decades. Cowboy Action Shooting, Single-Action Shooting Society matches, and Cowboy Mounted Shooting created a need for horse pistols of sorts. In these competitions, shooters ride horses or mules in a pattern with 10 balloon targets. They must break the balloons with blank rounds fired from a pair of single-action revolvers. The blank rounds do not fire a projectile, but will still break a balloon and allow the competitors to ride and shoot safely. Of course, riding and shooting requires holsters, and the exact style and placement are left to the competitors' preference. They can be worn on the rider's body or on their saddle. While most competitors use smaller guns that some would call "belt-sized" or "holster-sized" firearms, they can be mounted from the pommel like the horse pistols of old.

Finally, horse pistols occasionally find a home on the silver screen today. At least one major Hollywood Western made in the last several years used horse pistols in their truest sense (despite most movies and TV series depicting mounted shooting with inaccurate firearm models). In the 2010 movie adaptation of the novel *True Grit*, viewers see Jeff Bridges' version of the character Rooster Cogburn drawing a pair of Colt Dragoons from a pommel holster for the final showdown. Set in the late 1870s, when metallic cartridge guns were readily available, this is not an entirely implausible scene. Percussion revolvers and cartridge conversions of them lingered on even as more modern firearms became common. Although, historically speaking, the main users of pommel holsters and large horse pistols—the cavalry and horse-mounted soldiers—were not trained to charge home while firing both guns and holding the reins in their teeth.



Danny Michael is curator of the Cody Firearms Museum and holds a Master of Arts from the University of Louisville. He doesn't shoot cowboy mounted matches, but does enjoy action shooting sports and learning about military history.



***Custer's Last Fight*, by W.J. Wallack. The painting may have been for a cover illustration of a dime novel called *Custer's Last Shot*, ca. 1894.**



**BANG FOR
YOUR
PHILANTHROPIC
DOLLAR**

BY CAROLYN WILLIAMS

Did you know that if you give appreciated stock to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, neither you nor we have to pay capital gains taxes? “Cha-ching!” You just saved 15 percent!

By having your IRA custodian send your gift directly from your traditional IRA, the distribution will not be included in your taxable income for the year. “Cha-ching!” Your income tax liability will be less, and you don’t have to itemize to get this benefit. The distribution also counts toward your required minimum distribution for that year.

Make your estate charitable contributions from assets that will be taxed if left to

your heirs, like traditional IRAs and some other retirement accounts. Charities won’t have to pay the taxes, and by receiving their inheritance from your other assets, your heirs won’t pay income tax either. “Cha-ching!”

Tax laws offer several ways for you to save when you donate to charity, even if you don’t itemize. How are you to know the ins and outs of tax-savvy charitable giving? Your financial advisors can help you find the answers.

Help them help you. Tell your advisor what you would like to accomplish. Remember, their job is to help you maximize your money, so it’s unlikely they are going to approach you with philanthropic suggestions. However, if you tell them you want to give

(or leave) a certain amount to charity, and you want to do it in the most efficient way, they can advise you how to best accomplish your goal given your particular situation.

The IRS isn’t going to give you a “do-over,” so use your advisors to ensure you make your gift according to IRS guidelines and get the biggest bang for your philanthropic dollar.

If you have questions, philanthropic advisors at the Center of the West can help. Please contact Carolyn Williams at carolynw@centerofthewest.org 307-578-4013 or Amy Sullivan at amys@centerofthewest.org 307-578-4014. You can learn about planned giving options at plannedgiving.centerofthewest.org.

**A VOLCANO,
A FIRE, AND
ORPHANS**

BY REBECCA B. MCKINLEY

On April 18, 1906, a massive earthquake struck San Francisco that left an estimated 3,000 dead. Fires burned for days, destroying more than 80 percent of the city. Only days earlier, Mount Vesuvius had erupted near Naples, Italy, killing more than 100 people.

What do these two disasters have in common? They both caught the attention of William F. Cody, and prompted him to give generously to relief efforts—about \$190,000 in today’s dollars.

Cody also gave what we call “in kind” gifts. He often offered orphaned children and other disadvantaged youths free admission to the Wild West, numbering in the thousands over the years the show toured. Of course, Cody was a businessman, and wanted to sell tickets. But he also wanted disadvantaged children to experience the same excitement and joy the Wild West brought to children whose parents could afford to take them to the show.

Annie Oakley’s final tribute to William F. Cody, after his death, recounts his generosity, as detailed in the *Park County Enterprise*, January 31, 1917. Oakley recalled leaving one of their shows and finding 20 – 30 “down and out riff-raff” outside the arena.

“It was snowing, and everyone else was rushing for shelter. But Cody stopped and made the habitual movement into his pockets for the money. It wasn’t there. So he turned and said ‘Butler [Oakley’s husband, Frank], how much have you got with you?’ Between us we scraped up \$25. ‘Lend it to me.’ With that he turned and said in the most cheerful and wholehearted manner: ‘Here boys, here’s a dollar apiece. Go get a square meal and a bunk. It’s too rough for a fellow to cruise around out here in the blizzard this night.’ Of course he paid it all back in the morning.”

Oakley went on to say, “William F. Cody was the kindest-hearted, broadest-minded, simplest, most loyal man I ever knew. He was the staunchest friend. He was in very fact the personification of those sturdy and loveable qualities that really made the West, and that are the final criterion of all men, East or West.”

It is fitting that Buffalo Bill was a generous man, since his namesake, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, relies on philanthropy. General operations, special projects, capital needs, and the endowment are all funded in part or in full through the generosity of our many supporters. Thank you for following in Buffalo Bill’s footsteps!



William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody sits astride a horse on a beach in San Francisco. Cody gave generously to relief efforts there after the 1906 earthquake.



William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody is dressed as Santa Claus with a group of children near a mining project in Arizona that he was involved in.

Rendezvous Royale

SEPTEMBER 19 – 24

Rendezvous Royale is an annual celebration of the arts held the third week of every September in Cody, Wyoming. The weeklong affair includes the Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale, as well as the annual Patrons Ball, hosted by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Organizations and individuals in Cody collaborate on numerous events for patrons of the arts, including workshops, lectures, art and craft classes, studio tours, and more.

BUFFALO BILL ART SHOW & SALE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Organized by the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce, the Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale supports established and emerging western artists, while engaging art collectors and patrons. It benefits the Chamber and the Center of the West.

Enjoy cocktails and conversation starting at 5 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner. A riveting and fast-paced live auction of original western art starts at 6:30 p.m. and includes dozens of works by acclaimed visual artists and sculptors.

An exhibition of works to be auctioned, along with items from a Buy-It-Now Sale, hangs in the John Bunker Sands Photography Gallery for viewing from now until September 23 at 3 p.m. Visit rendezvousroyale.org for details.

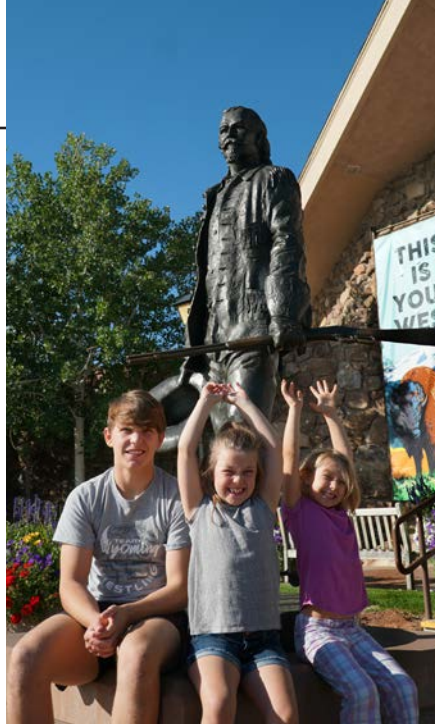
PATRONS BALL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

One of Wyoming's signature social events of the year, and a major fundraiser for the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, this western formal features live music by Music City Groove and exquisite cuisine by Bravo Catering. The Patrons Ball is a chance for patrons from near and far to gather to renew friendships, network with leaders of industry and government, and make new acquaintances.

Immersed in western art, culture, and the history of the West, this event starts at 6 p.m. with cocktails and includes a seated dinner and dancing until midnight, allowing patrons to enjoy companionable conversation and kick up their heels!

All proceeds benefit the programs and public activities of the Center of the West. Tickets are \$375 per person. Table sponsorship is available and reservations are required. Visit centerofthewest.org/patronsball for details.



WyoGives Funds Free Youth Admission

Thanks to your support for our WyoGives campaign in July, Park County youth up to 17 years old will now get free admission to the Center. This pilot program has been generously funded by more than 85 gifts from donors and friends, with matching donations from The Homestead Foundation/John and Meredith Sullivan, the Thomas & Elizabeth Grainger Family Charitable Fund, and the Hughes Charitable Foundation.

Bob Richard Heart Mountain Talk

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

The September installment in the "Local Lore with Bob Richard" series of free presentations hosted by the McCracken Research Library takes place September 15, noon – 1 p.m. Bob relates the story of the Heart Mountain Internment Camp between Cody and Powell.

With a wealth of knowledge about the Cody and Yellowstone National Park areas, Bob has a lifetime of stories to share. The "Local Lore with Bob Richard" series continues monthly throughout the year.



Charlie Russell and the Silver Screen

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

This lunch and lecture, from 12:30 – 2 p.m. on September 22, is part of the Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale's slate of events during Rendezvous Royale, and is also a Peter Hassrick Public Program series event. B. Byron Price, Director of the Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of Art of the American West, discusses Russell's influence on western cinema and how western movies influenced his art. Registration is required at rendezvousroyale.org.

TikTok Viral Success

Less than 2 months since its launch, the Center's TikTok account has logged more than 8 million views, received more than 1.4 million likes, and gained more than 32,000 followers. This popular social media platform allows the Center to reach a new, younger demographic, engaging them with our raptor program, educational offerings, collections, and lively personalities. Follow us at www.tiktok.com/@centerofthewest.

Date Night: Tapas and Sangria

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

"Tapas & Sangria" Date Night takes place September 9, 6 – 8 p.m. in the Center's beautiful Braun Garden. The chef serves up a tempting array of tapas and a cash bar offers sangria, beer, and wine. The John Roberts Jazz Trio provides live, Latin-inspired music throughout the evening.

This event is family-friendly, so all ages are welcome and attendees are invited to bring a picnic blanket and enjoy the music and outdoor setting. Tickets are \$20 per person for adults, \$17 for members and for youth ages 6 – 17, and free for children 5 and younger.



I love what I do. Walking into the forest and finding the perfect fallen tree that I can rearrange into something beautiful is very rewarding. It fills me with a sense of wonder when I look at a finished chair and remember that just a short time ago it was, essentially, growing out in the wild. In a way, I have given the tree a new life; something that will be enjoyed for generations to come."

Michael Douglass »



CUSTOM ASPEN CHAIRS



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each

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**BUFFALO BILL
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OF THE WEST**

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WIN *this* CAR!

1959 Corvette Convertible



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\$25 EACH | 5 FOR \$100 | 30 FOR \$500

Drawing: Monday, October 17, 2022 | All proceeds benefit the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

Need not be present to win. Any applicable taxes and fees are the responsibility of the winner. Void where prohibited by law.
Must be 18 or older to enter. Vehicle is raffled as is and must be collected within 30 days of the drawing at the winner's expense.
Raffle tickets are not tax deductible. May not be exchanged for cash.