

BIG CHEX TO CASH

They are the stuff of dreams. He is one of the most recognizable horses in the reining world. He is ridden by one of reining's top trainers. The partnership between Big Chex To Cash and Andrea Fappani is one of the most effective, successful and watched partnerships ever. Each and every time this pair step into the arena, there is a special kind of anticipation in the crowd. Their reputation for drama, for performance is unequalled. Every go round, every final, guarantees a performance in every sense of the word.

To date, Big Chex To Cash has earned over \$220,160 and major NRHA titles to spare. However, the partnership continues to thrive and so does the success. Andrea explains the chemistry that sets them apart. "I've been around him five years now and we have a lot of miles together. He is so talented, and like no other horse I have ever ridden. His heart is in it every time." In many ways, the connection between Andrea Fappani and Big Chex is an example of everything about the Fappani program. Andrea and Tish Fappani run their barn, their business, their breeding program, with a unique ground rule; that every client, every sale, every horse is never a single event. Each is part of a life's commitment to integrity and honor. Nothing is left behind. Nothing is left aside. The clients have learned over time that there is that one single rule at work in every transaction and it includes honest exchange and productive advice. There is no revolving door at Andrea and Tish Fappani's barn. There is only a list of people wanting to be part of this outstanding program.

He is bred to be a show horse. This flashy stallion carries some of the best genes in the industry; from Nu Cash to Colonel Freckles to King Fritz, each line of his pedigree reads like the Who's Who of the performance horse world. Tish Fappani tells of the early days. "In the beginning, he was purchased to be a show horse. With his success in the show pen, the dramatic palomino color and an ad campaign to put him in the spotlight, he became more than just a show horse. He became a fan favorite and a breeding stallion." Big Chex To Cash has conformation, extraordinary athleticism, blazing good looks and almost as an afterthought, an intelligent blue eye to set off his naturally magnetic personality. According to Tish Fappani, an accomplished horseman in her own right and a partner in this venture in every way, "Big Chex is like family. He is not just another horse! I am so attached to him. In many ways, we work for him and it's been an easy job. There is no 'selling' Big Chex to mare owners. He has such a following. Where I come into it is fun; I stay in touch with the mare owners, keeping it personal and hoping that our breeders understand that they are part of the program. People that breed to him stay connected to him and to us. Our ads are exciting, our horse is exceptional and we feel grateful."

When Fappani and Big Chex hit the road, it is a pleasure not just for the fans, but for the horse and rider. Fappani could easily have retired the stallion several years ago. His record as a reining star was well established and his success in the breeding barn was already well started. But this is not an every day horse and an every day trainer. Their connection is so deep, so obvious that showing seems something they do together for the sheer pleasure of it. According to Andrea, "I've learned that he wants to do the job right, but from the beginning he is different. I have to

work with him and give him time to figure out what it is I want. Even now, when he is super broke, he is still fresh when we work, when we show. He is not the type of horse that ever gets bored. He is always thinking and he loves to work, so it is such a pleasure to ride him. He never gets sour.”

Five long years together have just cemented their relationship. Andrea says, “When he was just a two-year-old, we took it slow and easy and he loved to learn. Some horses, you can muscle around and get them to do the job. Not Big Chex! We worked it out. I could never be aggressive with him, but just gave him time to think about it. Now we have the benefit of all that time. He’s so smart! He knows so much and never makes mistakes, never cheats. If he has any problem, it’s that he gets ahead of himself sometimes and we have to spend some time slowing down. I never have to get after him, just have to let him figure out what I want and he does it. As I have said so many times; he is like no other horse I have ever known.” The partnership of this horse and this rider is a threat to be reckoned with each time they enter the arena. From his early debut at the NRHA Futurity through his aged event career, Big Chex has never failed, has never said ‘no’ to a pattern. And a pattern in the hands of this pair of superstars is always a performance in every sense of the word. Big Chex is one of those rare and wonderful horses who remain as dramatic, as exciting to see as he was as a youngster.

The first year in the stallion barn, there could have been changes in Big Chex’s attitude. He could have become ‘studdy.’ But both Andrea and Tish describe him in almost the same words; he’s everything they could have hoped for, sensitive and quiet, good legs and great conformation, a strong personality and most of all, a horse who loves his job. According to Andrea, “He had an intense breeding season the first year. We were showing him and collecting him in between. We are very lucky that we could show him hard and still collect year-round. He just has it all; cooled semen that ships well and freezes during the off season. There aren’t a lot of studs that can handle what we’ve asked. His book has grown tremendously each year, but he remains exactly the same. A show horse when we want him to be one, and a breeding stallion when that’s what is expected of him.”

Now the first crop of two-year-olds is in the barn. This is the time when the true measure of a stallion is taken. “We were careful about what mares we bred to him that first year. We wanted mares that were a little hotter because of his quiet demeanor. And conformation is so important to us. Big Chex has never had to have fancy shoes, has never needed a lot of vet work. He was always exactly what I wanted in a stallion. Now we can see in these first foals his legs and conformation have passed on. And his great mind is there too. These first babies, two years old now, are all straight and balanced. I love these colts and fillies. There seems no difference between them. They are all easy to handle, all handle the pressure, all so level minded. So far I am seeing so much of Big Chex in every one of them. They remind me every day of him, and that’s what we were hoping for.