

# HORSIN' AROUND

The Fancy Clothes of Horseback Riding



By Abi Peguero





Christian Toy and Walker (CP Olenas Diamond) smiling in the sun while waiting for their turn for the photoshoot. Courtesy of Abigail Peguero 2022

**A**t 8 a.m. on a Thursday morning, most Cal Poly students are either asleep in their beds or running to their in-person 8:10 a.m. classes.

But out at the Oppenheimer Equine Center, it's a brisk 46 degrees and students are already taking out tacks, brushing through manes and saddling up horses.

Bundled up in their coats, it seems like any other morning for them, but as the sun starts to rise over the unit of barns, pens and outbuilding, the coats come off. Big shiny belt buckles and colorful patterned button downs are revealed. A photographer watches the students ride and care for the horses with camera ready, taking snapshots every so often.

Picture day at the Equine Unit is not like other

school picture days. For the Quarter Horse Enterprise class, it is a bit more complicated. It's not just a person that is getting dressed up and posing in front of a camera, there's a horse who needs to look good too.

Agricultural systems management senior Teresa Job participated in the Quarter Horse Enterprise class for the past four years, first as a rider and then as a student manager. With her help, the picture days at the Equine Unit became what they are today.

"My very first photoshoot, I think I woke up at 2 a.m. that day," Job said. "They had a professional makeup person there and they did our hair and makeup and it was this huge ordeal kind of thing."

During the two following years, Job was a student manager and wanted to make sure they had better



# SO WHAT DOES TIME IN THE HAIR AND MAKEUP CHAIR MEAN FOR A HORSE?

There's the choice of washing or not washing a horse on picture day

marketing for the horses and scheduled more photoshoots. The photoshoots started to happen every three weeks.

Washing the horse means that their coat will be shiny and pristine looking for pictures if the horse dries in time. Not washing the horse means the horse will be dry, but their coat might need some extra attention so that it doesn't look like it is covered in dust, dirt and other grime.

Animal science junior and current student manager of the Quarter Horse Enterprise Christian Toy chose not to wash her horse, "Walker" (Registered Name: CP Olenas Diamond), on picture day.

"I use a shedding blade and it just breaks up the dirt," Toy said, "Then I use a soft brush to brush off the dust after. It makes him nice and shiny."

Her hands moved expertly along the horse while she explained the process. Toy then used a conditioner detangler spray across the horse's coat.

"It's like magic," Toy said as she admired her handiwork.

The sun had risen high enough to show the shine of the horse's black coat, gleaming as if it were freshly washed.

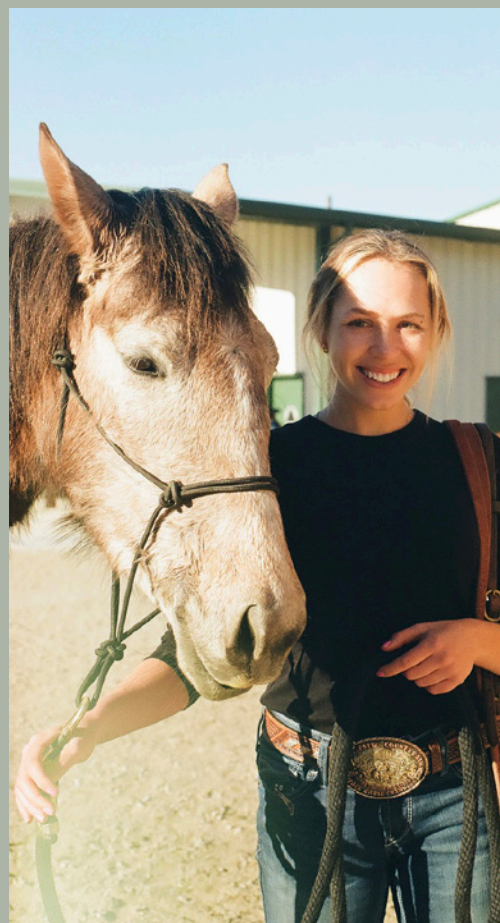
With their natural coats doing most of the work to make the horses look beautiful, there isn't much more you'd want to use to cover it up. However, there are pieces that are helpful for both the horses' and the riders' safety.

The tack set up is what the horses have on their backs and in their mouths when they are dressed to be road.

Students usually start with two solid pads that go over the bare back of the horse. Some will also use blankets.

"I have my normal one and then I have this black one to make it look nice," Toy said, pulling the pads over the back of Walker.

The saddle comes next and has two cinches that are fastened. Not all saddles have a back cinch.



A horse and student rider ready and waiting for their close-up.  
Courtesy of Abigail Peguero 2022

**"It just kind of became part of the drill, like, 'We're gonna have a photographer out today so make sure you're looking good and make sure your horse is looking good and here we go'."**  
**- Teresa Job**



Left:  
The Oppenheimer Family Equine Center entrance sign leading up to the horses getting ready for their photoshoot.  
Courtesy of Abigail Peguero 2022

“Ours do, just in case our horses go buckin’ and our saddles don’t come off,” Toy said.

She tied the back cinch into a Texas T knot while Walker stood calmly, waiting to be finished being dressed.

The bridle piece is used to control the horse. At the Equine Center, students use normal snaffles, which means there is a straight metal bit in the horse’s mouth with rings on either side of it. The bridle sometimes has a noseband to keep the horses from opening their mouths too wide.

Polo wraps are a possible addition to the horse as a layer of protection. These wraps protect them from

hitting themselves with their feet and offer some tendon support.

What the horses wear is relatively standard, but when it comes to the students who ride them, their outfits show more of their individuality.

The Western wear style of fashion that influences how the students at the Equine Center dress has been around since the 19th century in the United States. Long sleeve sturdy shirts, leather cowboy boots and wide brimmed hats all have practical uses and lend more to the classic look than dramatic flair when they are riding.

“The long sleeve shirts are nice so

**“My grandmother went to Cal Poly in the ’60s and she majored in home economics because at the time, women couldn’t get a degree in agriculture. So I just like to have a little piece of her with me.”**  
- Taylor Glines

Vintage silver belt buckle with scallop edge and turquoise heart inlay and Ariat jeans. Courtesy of Abigail Peguero 2022

# FAVORITE BRANDS

AT THE EQUINE CENTER

ACCORDING TO THE STUDENTS

Wrangler

12



10

STETSON

20



ROPER  
WEAR THE WEST

18



KIMES RANCH

9



RANCHWEAR

10



that you don't get sunburnt," animal science sophomore Raven Loffland said about her light pink shirt, "When I work out at the ranches, it could even be 100 degrees and you still want to be in a long sleeve, otherwise you get badly burned."

There are staple brands that the students of the Quarter Horse Enterprise swear by. Wrangler. Ariat. Stetson. Roper. Kimes Ranch. CR RanchWear.

Most of the cowboy boots at picture day were Ariat brand. Jeans differed between Ariat, Wrangler and Kimes Ranch. Ariat and Roper shared ownership of the colorful button downs and the brimmed hats were usually Stetson.

"This is proper Western attire for the nice pictures, you don't really want ratty t-shirts and jeans, which is what I wear on normal days," animal science senior Emily Phelps said.

Another piece of the Western

fashion on picture day adorned the necks of some of the students. Full neck scarves, commonly known as wild rags, were tied around their necks to offer some protection from the sun and dirt.

**D**urable fashion that is made to last can be passed down through generations. Agricultural business senior Taylor Glines said that her spurs were her grandmother's.

The rest of Glines' outfit consisted of Ariat jeans, Ariat boots, a Wrangler jean jacket, an Ariat cactus covered long sleeve button down and matching cactus earrings.

"I really like cactuses so I try and spruce it up a little," Glines said. "And you can't go wrong with a Canadian tuxedo." (A Canadian tuxedo is an ensemble where both the pants and top are made of denim.)

Safety is important, but sometimes an effort to make safety work with

fashion results in something ugly. Like the Resistol hat helmet, which is a cross between a riding helmet and a cowboy hat.

Animal science junior and current student manager of the Quarter Horse Enterprise Tori Schamber described the Resistol helmets as "not the most fashionable statement." She said she would prefer to wear a regular riding helmet if she is worried about safety as she worked with her horse in a riding pen.

By 11 a.m., the sun is shining bright and it's decided that enough pictures have been taken and enough dirt has been kicked up for the day. The horses are fed circular cookies that they love while the students remove their tack. Backs are brushed and faces are affectionately patted.

The students lead their partners back to their pens, but only until the next day, when training will recommence without the fancy clothes.

Vintage brown leather tackle with floral pressing and silver embellishments on the back of Walker. Courtesy of Abigail Peguero 2022

