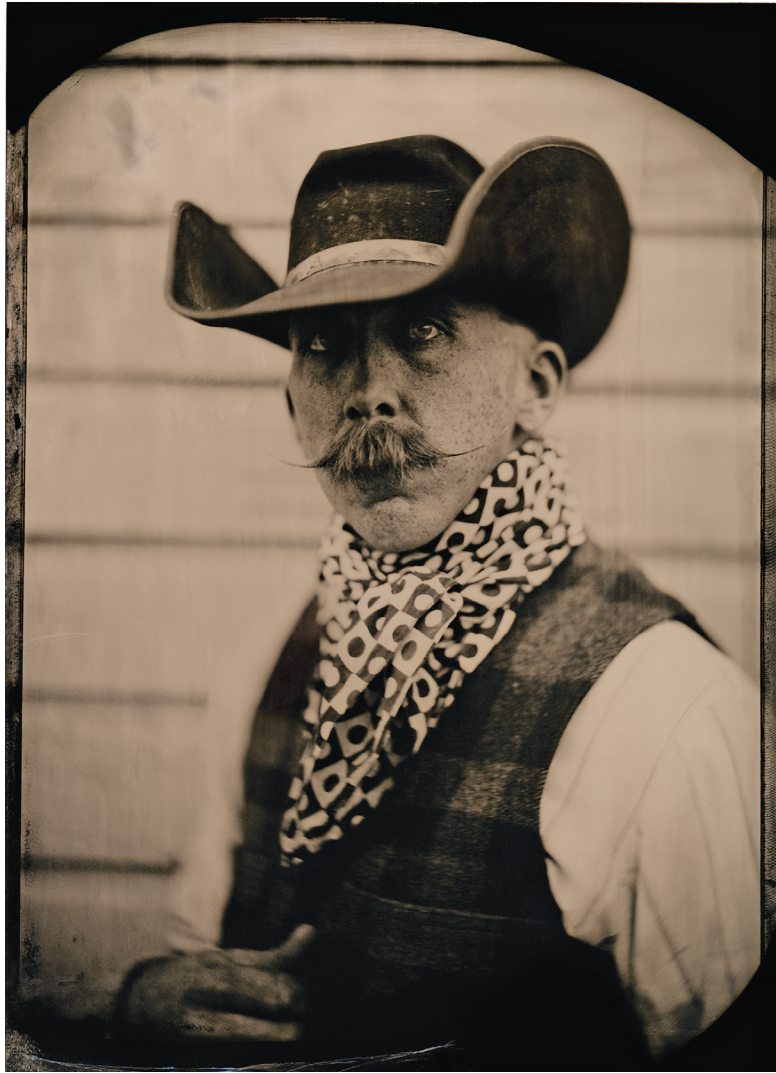


# Hats

*The cowboy's ultimate symbol.*

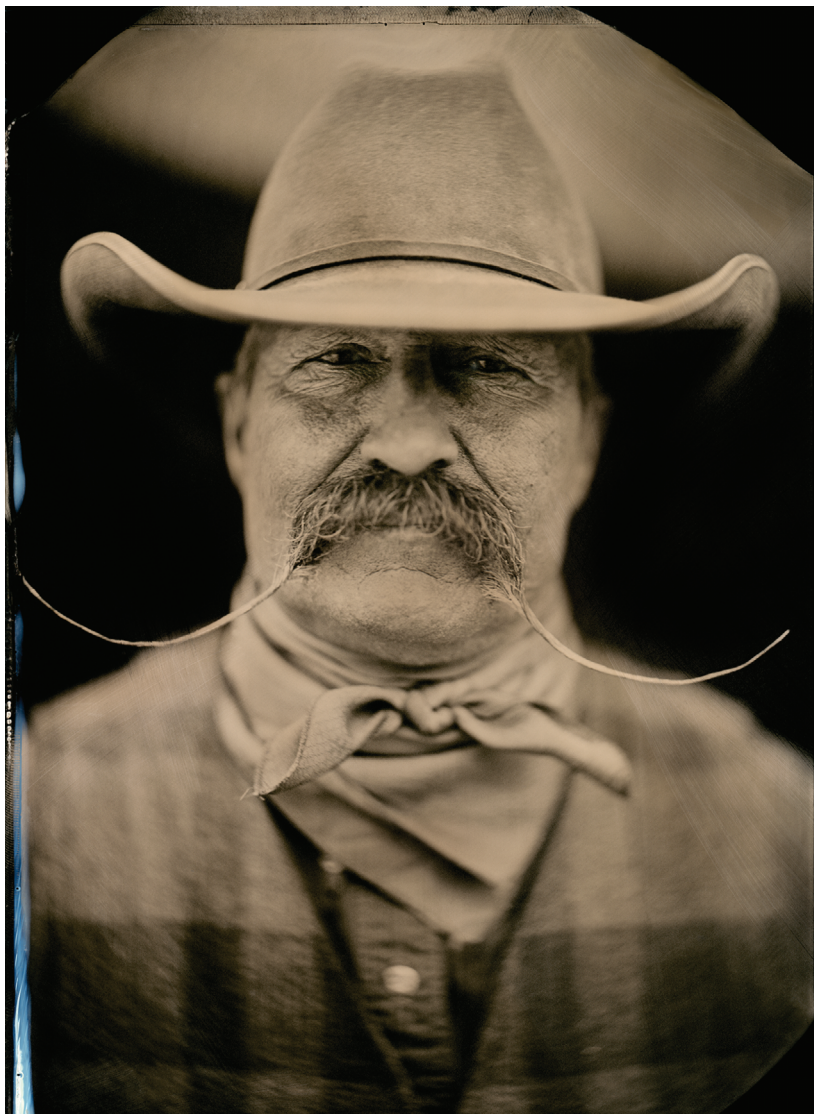
*By Robb Kendrick*



**Cliff Foster, JA Ranch, Texas**  
*“Frosty” is sporting the “taco hat” with high sweeping sides, contrasting wide crown band and two-toned edge on the outside brim. There is a crown crest on the front and sides, making a statement as unique as the cowboy wearing it.*

**T**he one piece of gear that a cowboy needs that shows his individuality is his hat. It provides shade, protection from the elements and warmth. All horsemen who wear a cowboy hat put their own spin on it by the shape they choose and the tweaks they apply. Cowboys might also attach ribbons, feathers, braided leather or horsehair, even burning the ranch brand into their work hats.

With the passing of time, the wide sombreros of the vaqueros, where the cowboy



*ABOVE LEFT:*

**Monk Maxwell**

**Hooks & Horns Livestock, Arizona**

*Monk sports a tall crown and flat-brimmed hat. Protection from the sun is a hat's most important job in the Grand Canyon State.*

*ABOVE RIGHT:*

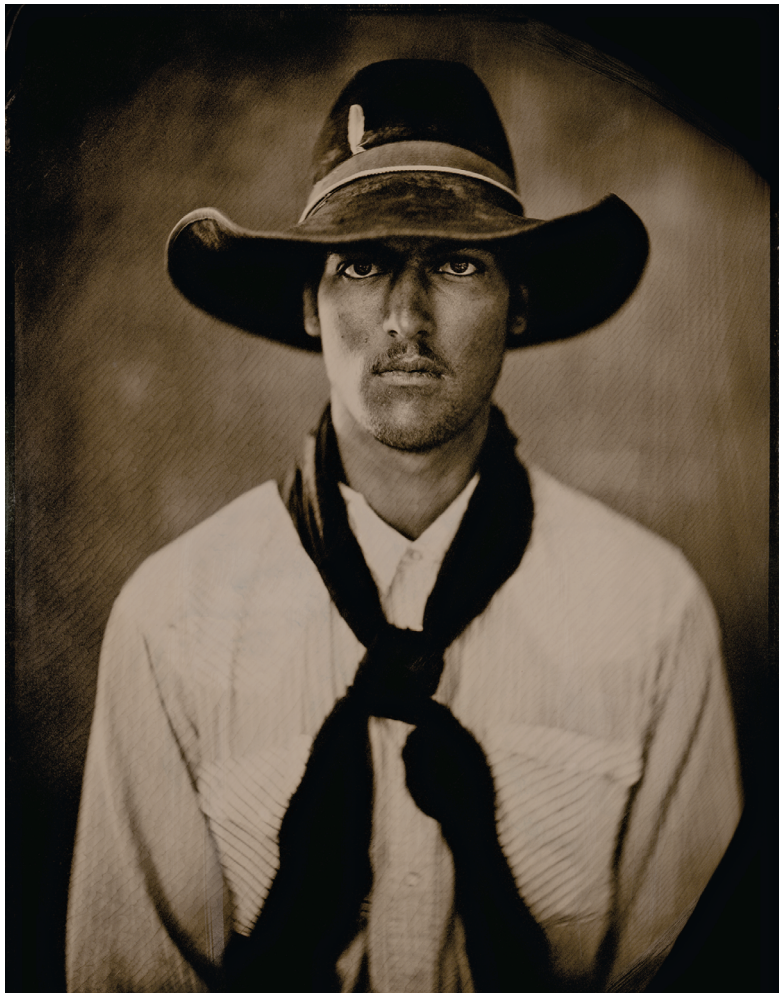
**Stephanie Hagenbarth**

**Hagenbarth Ranch, Idaho**

*Stephanie is wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat with leather band. The slight turn at the front and the creases in the crown make it her own.*

**Bret Reeder, Reeder Ranch, Utah**

*Bret's hat has a medium brim with two-tone banding on the outside edge and a simple band on the crown.*



**Tyrel Tucker, Babbitt Ranch, Arizona**  
*Tyrel's hat definitely fits working in Arizona. Its flatter brim provides protection from the sun and his special touch is the wide two-toned band and feather.*

**Kyle Stone, ORO Ranch, Arizona**  
*Kyle's hat is definitely simple with no extras other than a plain band. The swept-back brim is approaching the Texas taco hat, but not quite there.*



story begins, quickly evolved to take on regional looks. Cowboys of the Southwest prefer large-crowned hats, Great Basin buckaroos choose flat brims, while cowpunchers in the Texas Panhandle claim the taco hat.

Many cowboys I know are very particular about why they wear what they wear and the influences that impacted their decisions, but like most things the look evolves over many years and is in a constant state of fine-tuning. Most can tell you what they like or don't like about another cowboy's headgear, but seldom have I heard anything like, "That looks silly." Respect is the norm, other than the taco hat that does get a bit of ribbing for its drama and the fact that it does *not* shade the ears. But that



kind of joking is usually met with a grin.

When you watch a Hollywood western depicting cowboys of the late 1800s every outfit seems to have a different version of cowboy hat. Not sure if 30 cowboys on an outfit from 125 years ago had 30 wide-ranging styles, but I guess it's possible. Whatever the case, the cowboy hat is the one iconic piece that cowboys and wannabes use to express their fashion sense and individual flare. ■

*Robb Kendrick lives near Austin, Texas, with his two dogs, Hoot and Jelly Bean. He loves to cook, bike and be outside, hates social media and has never participated in it. For more of his brilliant work, go to [www.robbkendrick.com](http://www.robbkendrick.com).*

**Casey DePaolo, Butte Creek Ranch, Oregon**

*Casey is wearing a flat-brimmed hat with a flat crown typical of Great Basin buckaroos. It finds its roots in the early days of vaquero culture which still lives on in buckaroo country.*

**Andrew Dean, New Mexico**

*Andrew's hat is a classic cowpuncher with his own personal rolls. A large band of the same color adds subtle personal flare.*

