

# WYOMING: Cowboy Country

*If you don't believe this, just check out the buckin' horse on the license plate.*

*Photographs and text by Jay Dusard.*

Wyoming has its fair share of professionals, cyberjocks, artistes and urbanites—in short, “them that don't fork a horse” in their line of work. But every one of them damn sure has to shove this damn cool logo down the highway.



*Bob Douglas, Sheridan County, 2005*



I met Bob back in 1985 when we both worked on a Kenny Rogers' movie called “Wild Horses.” He's a first-call cowboy, ranch horse dealer, saddle maker, and purveyor of gear and tools for saddle makers and leather

workers. Bob raised Primo, who has adapted well to the old California style of equipment and is a top ranch horse.

*Ash Corlett, Bill Copeland and Steve Mecum, Diamond D Cattle Co., 2006*



The Diamond D headquarters is just north of Dubois. I caught up with the crew on their national forest lease country on the south end of the Absaroka Range. The boys have roped and stretched out a yearling for Bill, the jigger boss, to examine.

Steve is an extraordinary saddle maker from Crowheart, who was mentored by Bob Douglas and is a long-standing member of the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. Please note that Ash sits astride a finished bridle horse.

*Tom Filkins and Martin Norvell, Hoback Stock Association, 2007*



Tom is originally from upstate New York. I met him back in 1981, on my first trip through Wyoming. He was riding for the association then, and has continued for most of the

intervening years. I have twice had the pleasure of cowboy-ing with Tom. I met Martin for the first time on the day before this picture was made. Tom and Martin, along with



a number of other good hands, had turned out for a branding at one of the local ranches.

Neighboring is a year-round tradition in ranch country throughout the West. The high points of the “social season” are the brandings, where friends and neighbors form impromptu

crews to rope, wrestle, brand and doctor the new calf crop. Horsemanship, roping skills, and stock-handling finesse are perpetuated in an atmosphere of camaraderie—invariably followed by one helluva feast.

*Lennie Campbell, Campbell Ranch, 2008*



Lennie had been distributing alfalfa hay to his cowherd on the feed ground and just unhitched his pair of Percheron-Belgian crossbreeds from the wagon. Frosty and Jack were on autopilot most of the time while Lennie was busy separating and tossing flakes of hay from the ton-size bales. The Bondurant Basin gets plenty of snow, which means that draft horses often have to

draw a heavily loaded sleigh to service the feed ground. Until recently the Campbells put up mixed grass hay in the traditional way, using horsepower to mow, rake, and operate the beaver-slide stacker. Lennie still mows the meadows of timothy, redtop and alsike clover with horses, but he has bowed to tractor power for the rest of the deal.

*Jay Dusard has been photographing the working cowboys of the West since 1970. A 1981 Guggenheim Fellowship in Photography enabled him to visit ranches from British Columbia to Chihuahua and led to his acclaimed first book, “The North American Cowboy: A Portrait.” He is an acknowledged master of black-and-white portraits, landscapes and abstractions. Jay lives with his wife Kathie near Douglas, Ariz., where, between travels to photograph and teach workshops, he punches cows and plays jazz cornet.*

*Jay’s work may be seen at [www.tinysatellitepress.com](http://www.tinysatellitepress.com). His 2005 book, “Horses,” with essays by Thomas McGuane, is available at [www.rionuevo.com](http://www.rionuevo.com). A deluxe, leather-bound, limited edition of “The North American Cowboy: A Portrait” is available at [www.oldcowdogs.com](http://www.oldcowdogs.com). Jay may be contacted at [jbard@theriver.com](mailto:jbard@theriver.com).*