



Lester and Holly Meier

By Tooter Smith

After Carroll and I married and I moved to Fredericksburg where he worked, one of the first people that Carroll introduced me to was Lester. At that time he was still riding a few bulls but was already beginning to put his Rodeo Company together. He always had a smile on his face and was always friendly. It would be years later that we would once again run into each other at a rodeo he was producing and I was in the ladies breakaway calf roping. He still had that same friendly smile.

Lester Meier Rodeo Company's 2004 series will include at least 16 open pro rodeos throughout the Texas Hill Country with a combined attendance of more than 100,000 people.

Trey Meeks rides his bull as Champion Bullrider, Tuff Hedeman (with hat in hand), looks on. Rodeo events include bullriding, bareback bronc riding, ladies barrel racing, ladies breakaway calf roping, team roping, tiedown calf roping and steer wrestling.

Two thousand four marks the thirty-first anniversary of the Lester Meier Rodeo Company, which produces open pro rodeos, youth rodeos, bullridings and convention rodeos. Lester, himself, competed as a bullrider for seven years before deciding to build the largest, award winning, and fastest growing open rodeo company in the state of Texas.

Texas cowboys regard both the bucking horses and bulls as



double tough. Each head of stock has seen plenty of action having bucked many times previously in contest arenas throughout the state. Lester's rodeo bulls have also garnered national attention through a Reader's Digest article called "A Cowboy's Last Chance". Each of the rodeos produced by the Lester Meier Rodeo Company, whether they be full fledged open pro rodeos or youth rodeos carry the same hallmark — top stock, fast and efficient production and a personal dedication to working without sponsoring rodeo partners to insure success.

Lester, a native of Fredericksburg, Texas, is the father of three daughters Tiffani, Charity and Elizabeth-Ann. Lester is also a full time rancher caring for 200 mother cows and managing 4,500 acres of Gillespie County ranch land. He is helped in his endeavors by his wife Holly.

After high school, Lester went to work for then President, Lyndon B. Johnson on his now famous LBJ Ranch in Stonewall, Texas. With the title of herdsman, Lester started his connection with the show world. Lester custom fit cattle for show and spent many years on the road racking up successes in the show ring with wins at just about every major stock show in the United States.

The rodeo side of Lester started when he was 9 years old in Stonewall, Texas where he and his family attended the annual rodeo. Sitting in the stands watching Sloan Williams produce the rodeo, Lester decided right then what he wanted to do. At 16, he got on a bull at the Harper, Texas youth rodeo on a bet and won a \$12 trophy. That was the beginning of Lester's bullriding career.

In 1976, Lester's first big rodeo was in the newly built arena at Leakey, Texas. He had been producing youth rodeos for the West Texas Junior Rodeo Association but now was branching out into bigger things. Twenty-eight years later the Lester Meier Rodeo Company is still producing the Leakey 4th of July rodeo without interruption. In 1978, Lester added the Blanco County Fair Rodeo in Johnson City, Texas, and is still producing that rodeo.

Bulls like "LM2," "Undertaker" and "Rodeo Trash" were like pets to Lester and his family and these bulls helped him get his start.

Lester has also been very successful in training bulls for the PRCA and PBR ranks. He has sold numerous bulls to Neal Gay of Mesquite Rodeo fame including the now famous "Dodge Dakota" to which Joe Wimberley rode for the \$17,000 bonus at the Mesquite Rodeo many years ago.

Today, Lester is still helping with the Gillespie County Fair Auction and collects donations for the kids to add additional funds to purchase their animals. Lester has a sparkle in his eye like he did 30 years ago when he started with his business.