Diamond in the Rough

Buyer beware. Deal locally. Never wire funds.

Horse shopping on *craigslist.com* is not for the faint of heart. The warnings posted on the website are enough to make even the savviest buyer think twice before buying.

But for folks like Emma and Bill Reil of Mechanicville, New York, if you've got a good eye and are willing to do your homework, ask a few questions and take a risk, the payoff can be rewarding.

Raised around horses and spending his youth giving trail rides aboard his father's string of trail ponies, Bill vowed as an adult that he wanted no part of the expense or the labor that comes along with horse ownership.

But when he met Emma in 2007, Bill was persuaded to reconsider his stance.

At that time, Emma was riding an off-the-track Thoroughbred, and Bill hadn't owned a horse in years. The couple soon learned about an event new to Upstate New York: cowboy mounted shooting. Attracted to the event's combination of speed and precision, they thought it might fun to train for the event together. The search commenced to find a horse for Bill in 2009.

An online search returned a posting on Craigslist offering a 2-year old sorrel overo gelding named Reminics Oaklynn for sale about 25 miles from their home in Mechanicville. Bred by Mary Jansma of Tioga, Texas, the fancy colt had the pedigree to perform.

"I didn't know a lot about bloodlines, but I knew enough that he could be a diamond in the rough because his grandsire is Reminic (QH)," Bill said.

The couple arranged to see the bald-faced overo gelding. Despite the likelihood "Remmy" would only mature to about 14.2 hands—a bit too

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short for Bill—the couple decided he was worth the $500 gamble.

Once home, it was Emma who stepped in and started working with the gelding.

"He wanted to be doing something all the time," she said. "He's full of personality: he's let himself out of his stall, and he's stuck his tongue in a fan before to play with the blades."

Emma had the patience and time to train the gelding slowly. Purchased in the spring, Remmy spent most of 2009 in the pasture, maturing and settling into his new home. The next spring, Emma began working with him under saddle, riding the gelding around the couple's property and trucking him to clinics.

"We took him to a cow horse clinic featuring Russell Dilday," Emma said. Though it was Remmy's first time with cows, he chased after them like it was second nature. "Russell told everyone at the clinic, 'See that? You can't train what you're seeing—that's breeding.' "

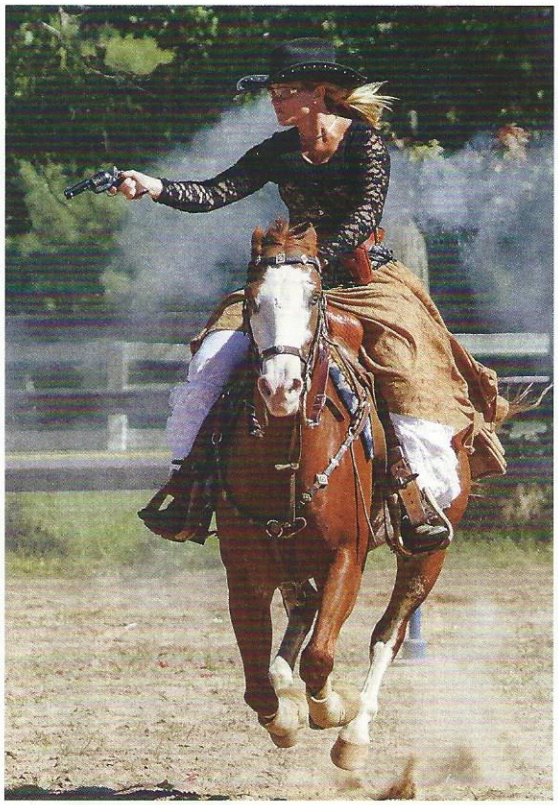
Emma's patience paid off. In 2012, three years after purchasing Remmy, Emma entered him in his first mounted shooting event, making their debut at Level 1. By the end of the year, they advanced to Level 2 and claimed several mounted shooting honors, including the Northeast Regional Overall Cowgirl title.

Since then, they have advanced to Level 3 and have traveled twice to the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association's Eastern U.S. Championships in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and to the CMSA National Championship in Tunica, Mississippi, four times.

"Lately I've been running the times the top people are, but I am not shooting clean," she said.

Finding competitions to hone their skills is challenging. With New York State's tough gun laws, Emma and Bill are forced to travel to nearby Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Maine to stay involved in the sport.

"Nobody else around here in Eastern New York does this, so we joined the Connecticut Renegades," Emma said.



Emma is eager to showcase her Paint at mounted shooting events dual-approved by both APHA and CMSA.

"We have him enrolled in the association's rewards program for CMSA, and we take his papers with us to each event," she said.

When the couple isn't on the road traveling to mounted shooting events, Remmy is used as a roping horse at local rodeo events and is learning to barrel race. His athleticism, quick-footedness and willing disposition has made him a good candidate for other speed events. Looking back, Emma says the couple has no regrets about their Craigslist gem.

"This horse we bought for $500 could have easily sold several times for $12,000 or more," she said, "but I really love him and don't know what I'd do without him."

–Katie Navarra

Reminics Oaklynn	Da Nicaloo (QH)	Reminic (QH)	Doc's Remedy (QH)	
			Fillinic (QH)	
		Dee Bars Boogaloo (QH)	Doc's Dee Bar (QH)	
			Sparky Carioca (QH)	
	Lynn	Bonnies Stranger	SMF Lenas Award (QH)	
			Bonnie Smoke	
		Sr Hickory Lynn (QH)	Doc's Hickory (QH)	
			Oaklynn (QH)	

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