

# Completing the Picture

Placing in showmanship takes more than being an expert showman.

Story & photos by *Cara Bieroth*

**Y**ou made up your mind that this year was going to be your year. You will wow judges and parents alike with your showmanship skills, and you dream of walking away with the champion showmanship buckle at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

It has taken months to get ready for the big show, and you've spent hours practicing your technique.

After anxiously awaiting for July to come, you've made it to the big dance. Having won a few showmanship classes, including your state's finals, you are confident in your abilities as a showman. You get to the orientation meeting and draw your number. By a stroke of fate, it's one of the 10 numbers that your fortune cookie from the night before promised would bring good luck. The ball is in your court, and you have done everything that you can to prepare for the big event. ... Or have you?

## Judges take notice

The moment you step into the ring, you make an impression on the judge, be it good or bad. "First impressions are critical, regardless if you are in the showring or anywhere else," says Jane Satree, Montague, Texas. "You will have a lot to overcome later on if you don't make a positive impact on me in the beginning."

Scott Foster, Niles, Mich., says for him, appearance can account for as much as 25% of a showman's overall performance. "In my first look, they have to look presentable," he says. "Then, once I have decided that they are dressed properly, we are ready to move right on to how they handle the animals and get them set up."

Both Satree and Foster were on the three-person panel that judged the 2003

National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest during the NJAS in Louisville, Ky.

## The look

If you want to stand out from the crowd without being too flashy, here is a list of foolproof apparel Satree and Foster suggest considering.

► **Shirt** — It's important to wear a shirt that has a collar (exceptions to this rule in Texas), that's buttoned up (not halfway down) and that's tucked in, the

► **Shanna Boyett, Reidsville, Ga., demonstrates the proper look during the 2003 NJAS in Louisville, Ky.**



experts say. Never show in a T-shirt or a tank top. Foster says that, as a judge, he is more likely to notice a person in a brightly colored shirt, although any color will work as long as it is pressed and neat.

► **Boots** — Boots are ideal, but try to wear some type of shoe that can take the abuse of being stepped on by cattle. And make sure your shoes aren't covered in manure. Foster notes that sometimes you can't get around what was left by the heifer in front of you, but judges will overlook an 'accident' like that. Never wear tennis shoes.

► **Dark jeans** — Select either blue or black jeans for the contest. Pressed jeans look nice, but are not a necessity.

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The judges agree that you can't help but notice someone who has taken pride in his or her appearance. "They stick right out," Foster says. "When a person is spit and polished, pants creased, shirt starched, clean, and looking good, you can't help but notice him or her."

Satree says, "You really finish out the appearance of your exhibit. It isn't just about the animal. You are presenting it, so you need to put yourself in that best light, too."

She clarifies by adding that it is important not to give too much creative slant to your showring attire because that can be as detrimental. Case in point — tank tops. "You are still supposed to be about exhibiting your animal, not yourself," she says.

Being well-kempt, clean and appropriately dressed completes the picture of a winning entry, Satree says. "You don't diminish the impact of your animal. It is the whole picture, and you are part of it."

