

Lipizzan Rescue Foundation Presents: A Volunteer Show and Tell

By Dayle Matus

I knew of the Lipizzan breed from the Spanish Riding School, but never in a million years dreamed that I would have the opportunity to ride one, let alone a few. Thanks to Dr. Dawn Wietfeldt and Lyn Schaeffer, of the Lipizzan Rescue Foundation, my dream came true. Dawn and Lyn work together in rescuing, nourishing back to health, and rehoming Lipizzans. When my thoroughbred mare came up lame one week before a show, Dawn was kind enough to allow me to ride Delphinia, a 15-year-old Lipizzan mare. Delphinia, aka *Ellie*, was rescued a few years ago and is now a member of Dawn's herd.

The schooling show was at Black Horse

Stables in Simpsonville, Kentucky, and even though I was only doing Dressage Intro A and B, it is testament to the character of the Lipizzan breed when I had only one week to prepare. Ellie had previous show experience and had been off the property for lessons with Dawn. And now, for me, someone new to her, she handled everything - including the show grounds - quite well. We performed better than I expected. We won a 2nd Place in Intro A and a 1st Place in Intro B with the judge remarking, "It's time to move up." Little did the judge know that I had only ridden Ellie for the first time the week of the show.

My experience with the Lipizzan rescue doesn't stop there. Soon after, another Lipizzan came into the LRF, with

whom I was afforded the opportunity to work. After a clean bill of health, I proceeded to ride and help train Daley, a 15-year-old gelding, in preparation for his rehoming. Daley was sweet, kind, and tried to please everyone every time. But he needed one person to love him and be his leader. He was sensitive but giving.

When a potential adopter came out to meet him in person, he performed very well. The adopter had her daughter drive up to take videos and ask questions during this meeting. They wanted to see Daley go over trot poles, so the week prior we practiced trot poles in hand. During the session they wanted to see me ride him over trot poles, which I had not done before, but he performed that task perfectly. Then they asked to see him go over a small jump. And again, taking it slow in his training, we had not practiced this previously. But I placed a tiny x-rail in the arena for him, which he could trot over if he wanted to. Yet again, without hesitation, he looked and went over it with not a care in the world.

These are just some of the experiences that I have had with the breed and of course, the Lipizzan Rescue Foundation. The LRF is very methodical in ensuring healthy horses find and adopt their perfect human.

