

I lost my Lipizzaner after four years of continual injuries and health issues and \$40,000 in vet bills. Obviously, I loved him dearly. I still had four horses to ride but I had always wanted a Lip. Being over 70, I did not want to spend much money on another horse. I followed the Lipizzan Rescue Foundation site and most of the horses that were up for adoption were older horses that were not totally sound or were broodmares. Finally, I decided to apply, never expecting to get one. I got a call about a 14-year-old gelding that had had good handling until he was four, and then became a "trust funder," living the life of Riley with no job except to be sweet, eat, and hang out.

Thinking I was crazy, I said, "okay," and acquired Favory II Deia, aka *Sir*.

Sir came from sea level, so the first month he just hung out in his corral and stall because altitude sickness can be a problem in Colorado. He had never left his home and was terrified of everything and would not even take an apple, which he loved, from my hand. After a month he decided to stop being stoic and started taking the apples and sugar. I began lunging him gently because of his age, lack of fitness, and the altitude.

I lunged him all winter and began sacking him out, blanketing and saddling him, all with no problems. He was, however, petrified of **everything**, such as the sawdust bin which changed daily, equipment parked in a different place, a horse with a rider, and so much more.

He continually knocked me around trying to avoid things (I am 100 pounds). I started switching sides and if I "fed myself to the lions" he became braver. This went on for about one-and-a-half years, until he began trusting me.

I had planned on starting him under saddle that spring, but my coach felt I should have help, taking into consideration his age, never having to work, and my age, which was now 74.

Sadly, however, my coach was severely injured, ending all prospects of starting him that year. I continued working with him, laying on him, etc., for that year and he became braver and accepting. The next year, I separated my shoulder four times and tore my rotator cuff. Another year lost to training.

The following spring, at age 16 and 76, I was ready to get on him, but my coach refused to help me. Another coach from California told me not to get on him because he might take offense to having a job.



by Lynn Vransy

I trained show horses for years, so I was not a rookie. I wanted to train him in the classical style, however, which was a method to which I was unaccustomed. I spent a couple of months taking her advice into consideration but there was no one over in my area that dealt with hot horses, and I felt he would not like being forced or pushed. He also had a temper, and I did not want him to learn its power. Sir made the decision for me. I had him turned out in my arena and something frightened him; he was frantic. I went in to catch him before he hurt himself thinking I was in for a long, difficult time. Sir saw me, trotted up to me, and waited for me to halter him and save him. It was obvious he trusted me, so I was the one to start him.

The next decision was who would help me since I was 76 and 100 pounds and needed a "safety net;" something quite new to me. After much thought, I decided to have the gentleman that has helped me on my property for 12 years. He was quiet, didn't try to take charge, and liked animals, but had no knowledge of training a horse. I was confident that he would not try to take control. It worked like a charm; Sir fell in love with him.

Sir was quiet, calm, attentive, and loved having a Sugar Daddy for instant rewards. All through the process (we are trotting now), Sir has taken care of me. If he got puzzled or scared, he stopped and let me reassure him. He has never made a bad move with me under saddle. He is hot, attentive, willing, calm, loving, smart, beautiful – what more could you ask. He has developed a huge personality, is very clear when he has done well, and has a lot of funny little mannerisms that are endearing.

The following is an example of our relationship.

Sir has the habit of sticking his nose straight up in the air, not because he is head- or ear-shy, but "just because." He will drop his head for the bit after much patient work, but then sticks it in the air making it next to impossible for me to get the headstall over his ears the preferred way. So I said to him, "My shoulder is bothering me, and it would be nice if you would keep your head down." He dropped his head and continues to do so!

He is a very special boy, an incredible mover, very jealous of me, and careful of me. It took a long time, but patience and moving at a snail's pace have paid off.

He loves to work, with a lovely extended trot and passage. I chose not to invoke his temper by using gentleness, patience, and understanding instead of strict structure and dominance. I am afraid without the patience and trust I spent a long time gaining, he could have been what my two coaches predicted: *horrible*. Instead, he is an extraordinary horse!

TO SIR WITH LOVE. Sweet 17 and finally ridden. Thanks, Cele, for the privilege of finally owning Sir.