

2002 Riders Choice Winner

Sadat

It was November of 2001 when Ken and I first started thinking of approaching Holly and Bob Egerer to see if our son Dylan could ride Sadat the following year in competitive trail rides. Holly had just put mile 2,000 on the little 20 year-old, half-arab/welsh pony, and said he deserved retirement. However, Sadat was still sound and energetic. Dylan was 12 years old, and while interested in horses and what his parents were doing about one weekend a month, he wasn't necessarily passionate about horses. However, riding seemed much more appealing than sitting around another year in horse camp. On one of those glorious November Saturdays of 2001, Dylan rode Sadat for the first time at Wild River State Park on the 20-mile Sunrise River Loop. It was there that Dylan decided riding through the woods was pretty cool.

It's now a year later. Holly and Bob said yes to our proposal, and Dylan and Sadat were a team from MnDRA I to Frostbite, collecting a fistful of blue and red ribbons and a couple other colors too. Sadat loves to travel first down the trail. This has given Dylan confidence as a rider. Sadat will also travel near the back of the pack, (but not last, that's for Ken and Sam.) Sadat rarely spooks as he's a 'been there and done that' kind of horse. He's an excellent horse for a fairly green rider, carrying Dylan safely and securely 300 miles in 2002. Sadat was such a good teacher for Dylan; because you don't just sit there, you do actually have to ride Sadat. He is half pony after all. Sadat likes to get close to branches and trees, and lie down in water, something Dylan found out the first time they went for water in a lake. Sadat taught Dylan you do have to pay attention; you can't be a mere passenger on the gentle, endearing horse with the airplane ears.

Dylan likes Sadat's energy and willingness to go down the trail with his quick trot. Sadat has patiently withstood beginning-rider awkwardness: his teeth have been banged with a bit while bridling, 90 pounds have been sometimes brutally plopped in the saddle, his rider has been unbalanced and unsteady at times (partly due to the six additional inches Dylan grew over the season, another tribulation for Sadat), and rider cues have not been reliably applied.

For all these reasons and more, Sadat is truly worth his weight in gold. Ken and I have kept our eyes and ears open for another Sadat, but he's a very, very rare horse indeed. Happy, sound, sensible, and steady; Sadat is a horse I'd love to have in my barn. Dylan wants to ride competitive again next year, need I say more?

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