

Cathryn Giannini Rice & Epyc



2019 AERC Decade Team



Rider's name: Cathryn Giannini Rice

Horse's name: Epyc

Year of First Endurance Ride (first year in the decade): 2010

Region: Northeast

Current rider lifetime mileage? 4360

Endurance: 4055

Limited Distance: 305

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? He was bred in VA but I bought him in Florida by a friend who saw he was for sale.

What is your horse's breeding? Dr. Tom Sayvetz, Asgard Arabian He is a Russian Arab

Sex: gelding

DOB: 4/25/2001

Horse height: 15'2"

Approximate weight: 1090

Color: chestnut

Why did you decide to purchase this horse? I wanted an endurance horse that could handle the hard terrain we have here in VA and could be a quality endurance horse. He is an Asgard and they have a reputation for success. His half-brothers include Heraldic, Mercuric (decade horse), Lojic (decade horse), Elecktronic (decade horse), Synthetic (decade horse), Theatric and many other successful endurance horses.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? I have owned two others and I have ridden a few others for friends.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? I did dressage lessons for 8.5 years with Epyc and now I am down to once in a while.

How many years have you been involved with endurance? With horses in general? I started endurance in 2004 and I have been riding horses seriously since 1990.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? My mom got me into pleasure trail rides and then competitive trail and then it morphed into endurance. I love this sport, where else can you cheer on and help your competition. The volunteers and ride managers are amazing of their time. I love meeting people and have made so many friends.

How old was your horse when first started in endurance? 5 years old with another owner and I got him when he was 9.

How many rides did you do your first three ride seasons? With Epyc we did 4 rides first year, 7 the second, and 5 the third.

What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.) We started with 25 miles and then up to the 50 mile rides.

How long until you top tenned or raced (if you did)? I Top Ten right away but I never planned a ride to Top Ten. I ride to the day, how he feels and how I feel. Sometimes it happens and most times I finish in the Top 20. I never raced my horse. I always ride to finish successfully and placing was a secondary bonus. I care about finishing strong and that he could continue if we wanted to.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? About a few weeks and I ride lightly for a couple of months before starting to train again. He is so seasoned it doesn't take long to get him ready. I try and take it easy the first couple of rides.

Do you use any special type of tack or shoeing with your horse? I use pads in the front for support when I do rocky rides. He has flat front feet and we are always mindful for road founder. He wears balancer shoes for support and am considering the rubber shoes in the front to help with all the concussion he has had through the years. My farrier, Steve Heishman and Shane Hamman, is a major reason why I have been so successful. His expertise has kept my horse sound.

What kind of problems have you overcome with your horse? He is an insecure horse and he does better in a quiet and controlled environment. Obviously, endurance riding isn't always like that. He has put me in the hospital and left me on trail a few times. Getting back on and finishing has been rewarding. I am sure others can relate.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. Every single time I finish a ride with him and he has completed with all A's.

What was your most humbling experience? There have been many. He is a beast and I have had to learn how to stay with him. We have slowed down the pace so he doesn't get upset and spooky. He does great when he is calm and with good company. Coming off and having to get right back on is very humbling. I praise God I have not been seriously hurt.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? Listen to your horse they are always talking to you. The competition is a partnership. No one cares if you come in first place or last. We all seem to support each other.

What advice would you give to new riders? Pace yourself and listen to your horse. There is always another day to ride.

Looking back, what do you feel you did right? I try to be open to good advice and suggestions from

people who have been doing this along time. There are many different ways to compete successfully. There is no one way but I try to do what is best for my horses. And the saying “less is more”.

What would you do differently? I would have been a little tougher and braver with him.

What was your highest goal for your horse, and did you achieve it? I wanted to do a 75 and we have done a few. I really wanted to be a Decade Team and we have now accomplished that!! We are close to his 3000 miles and I am so looking forward to that milestone. I always wanted him to be my long-term partner.

Describe your horse’s personality. How is it like or unlike yours? He is such an amazing athlete that this is the perfect job for him. He competes effortlessly. He is so strong and stoic. He has a naughty personality. He can’t be trusted, he spooks over the leaves, covert pipes, and logs on the ground but could care less about a bear. He exaggerates his fears and makes a hard mount to stick with. He is an insecure fella even with all the miles! Then again, he will spook for sport if he is bored. He is so lucky he is CUTE!!! On the ground he is a complete prince. He loves to be with another horse. He will go down the trail all day long happy as can be with a good friend.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most (50s, 100s, multiday, etc.)? My favorite rides are the 50 miles.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? He gets low sugar, higher protein

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program (i.e., changed from one hay to another, added something special) that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? He is on a maintenance program for ulcers and he gets Fibreforce and a gastric pellet when competing. He started showing symptoms in 2018 of discomfort in his stomach and has been fantastic with the Abler omeprazole product.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? Myoguard and balancer pellets

Do you give any kind of joint products? Adequan monthly

Describe your electrolyte protocol. I start preloading about three days prior and then give to him depending on the weather conditions, heat etc.

How do you choose which rides to attend? I look at the ones that are closest to me and which ones will be good for him. He excels in the mountains so we have a lot of options around here.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? I have but it isn’t a regular occurrence for me. I prefer to not tax him with a hard ride and traveling far.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why. That is hard to pinpoint to just a few. There are so many people I admire for different reasons. I have a wonderful core group of friends that we train/ride with in season and out. Nancy Kain, April Dobson, Emily Richardson, Heather Davis, Deb Gravatts. I love riding with Dawn Engle Hillard. Then there are riders that have been doing this so long -- Mary Coleman, Claire Godwin and have had so much success. I like to learn and am always open to what will be helpful to my horse. I respect riders that take care of their horses. It is easy to get caught up in the ride and there is nothing wrong with that, as long as it isn’t at the horse’s expense.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. My mom, Jeanette and Nancy Kain were the first people I was trail riding with and I learned the basics from them. I can’t say enough for competitive rides, like ECTRA, to teach pacing and taking care of your horse.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? I would like a horse that will be suited to me as I am not in my 20’s anymore. Maybe a Morgan/Arab. I hope to continue enjoying this sport with Epyc for many more years.