

## Carolyn Meier & KJ Mozart



### 2009 AERC Decade Team



**Rider Name:** Carolyn Meier

**Horse Name:** KJ Mozart

**Region:** West Region

**Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her?** Well KJ was my thirteenth birthday present from a very good friend, Dave Rabe, also our 2009 Hall of Fame person. I had been riding KJ because I didn't have a horse at the time and Dave gave him to me for my birthday. Best birthday present I've have ever received.

**What is your horse's breeding?** KJ is a Polish bred Arab out of VP Miss Petite by Karadjordje.

**Sex:** Gelding

**DOB:** 03/18/1987

**Horse height:** 14'2

**Approx. Weight:** 800-900 pounds

**Color:** Grey

**Shoe or hoof boot size:** 1

**Why did you decide to purchase this horse?** I didn't have a horse to ride when I was about twelve years old and Dave Rabe offered me KJ. He had about 2,000 miles when I started riding him and was twelve years old. I had an extremely rough first ride on KJ, but I fell in love with this adrenaline junkie and couldn't ever see myself not riding him.

**Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse?** I had a little mare named Tomi, but she didn't hold up, KJ has been my main horse for most of my life. I've gotten most of my miles on him along with most of his.

**How many different horses have you ridden in this sport?** I've ridden 10 horses throughout my endurance career. Only five of those horses I've rode once and all the others I rode multiple times, most of them being my own horses.

**Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities?** (if so, describe) Nope, endurance is my drug of choice.

**How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance?** I've been riding since I was 8 years old and I've been doing endurance since I was 11 and I'm now 23.

**What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested?** My mom, I got her back into riding when I showed an interest and we did a lot of trail riding and I guess I just decided that I wanted to do a fifty and we did one and I was hooked from then on. I love my horses, especially KJ. I understand the responsibility to keep him fit and ready for a ride if I am going to take him on one. He loves his job so much; I would feel guilty if I stopped riding him. He's getting more of a break these days because of his age, but I know he can still do it, he shows me every time I ride him.

**How old was your horse when first started? First ride?** KJ was 7 when he did his first ride with Greg Prior at Shine and Shine IV in 1994.

**How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons?** (list w/ distances) 2000 – I completed 490 mile my first season with KJ. 5- 50's, 1- 100, 1- 55, and 1- 75.

2001- I completed 605 miles in my second season. 9- 50's (all five days of Fort Shellbourne XP), 1- 100, 1- 55

2002 – I completed 225 miles in my third season. 5- 50's and 1- 75 miler

**What mileage distance did you start with?** (25, 50, etc.) My first ride with KJ was a fifty-five miler.

**How long till you top tenned or 'raced'?** (if you did) I never really raced KJ, but we did go fast a few times, I top tenned in 2001 at the Washoe Valley ride and in the same year I top tenned Virginia City 100.

**How much time off do you give between ride seasons?** I keep riding the horses, but no heavy training until the first ride comes around for the next season.

**If you have done 100's, how much time off do you give after doing one?** What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? I usually give them a month off after a 100 miler, I keep them ridden, just a walk here or there. The month before the ride they at least get one good training ride in and then just tuned up from there. I've learned that once you get a horse in good shape, it doesn't take much to keep them there or get them back to it.

**If you have done multadays, how much time off do you give after doing one?** What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? I'll give them a couple weeks off. I don't treat the month before much different than I would a fifty. That's really all they are doing, just a couple days in a row of fifty's. Just doing the multi day keeps your horse in shape. They may get tired after the first two or three days, but by the fourth and fifth, they feel like a new horse.

**What kind of tack do you use?** (saddle, pads, girths, bits, etc.) I've tried a couple different saddles on KJ, what seems to work the best is my old Traditional Orthoflex and a Freeform treeless saddle. He has pretty prominent withers and is very slab sided. We joke he's like riding a T.P. With the Orthoflex I'd usually use a woolback pad and with my Freeform I'll use half-pads or Skiot pads with a Supracore pads in them. I use blue Zilco tack, blue, because that's KJ's color!! Aaaahh, bits. I've tried quite a few on KJ. He's not the easiest horse to control. I've got some pretty strong arms because of him. I've upgraded him over the years and I've finally found, that my mom's old Pelham works best. He doesn't like it when he wants to go, but I know what's best for him!!

**What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots?** When I was riding KJ a lot I would pad him and put Easyboots on. Now I just put shoes on and Easyboots over to give his sole some protection.

**What kind of problems have you encountered?** KJ is quite the adrenaline junkie, and he's scared me a couple times at the vet checks when he let down and didn't look so hot. I've never been pulled for a metabolic problem, he takes pretty good care of himself. I've been pulled once, in over the 4,000 miles I've ridden on him, for a lameness.

**What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had?** I've been extremely lucky and fortunate with KJ. He's never really been hurt badly. He's had a bad abscess in a hind hoof and he's gotten pretty sick after a ride that had strangles at it, but for the most part he's been a healthy horse.

**How did you work through it?** With the abscess, I just pulled the shoe and packed his foot to draw it out. He came around quickly. He just needed time off when he got sick from the strangles at the ride. He never got full blown strangles, but he didn't feel well.

**Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse?** The best ride I ever had on KJ, and it's hard to chose, would have to be The Tevis Cup in 2005. I ended up having to finish the ride by myself and KJ did everything I asked him to do. I had to leave my mom before Michigan Bluff and I was hauling butt to make the cut off time. He went faster every time I asked him going down into the canyon before Michigan Bluff. When I came up Bath road into Forrest Hill KJ looked like a million bucks. He was prancing and looked like he hadn't done anything. Everyone was cheering, it was such an awesome experience. I was terrified to leave Forrest Hill and ride the California Street loop in the dark by myself. I had only heard horror stories of what happens on those trails at night. When I was leaving the vet check there were two ladies in front of me walking on the trail leaving out. I asked to pass them and they kept up with me because I said KJ had done this ride twice before I we were making time while we could. KJ didn't take one bad step the entire way to Francisco's. He extended to miss the rocks and stopped to drink at every water we crossed. He took such great care of me and I couldn't have been prouder to have him in my life.

**Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse?** I'd love to be able to say I've never had a worst day with KJ. I can't think of any days in particular, but I would have to choose any ride I had on KJ where he was running away with me and pulling on my arms. We've had some pretty rough times together.

**What was your most humbling experience?** Probably the few times when KJ has colicked on me. It makes me realize that he isn't invincible, despite how tough he can be. I've been lucky he's only colicked twice the whole time I've had him, but it makes me realize how much I love him and how lucky I am to have him in my life.

**What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important?** One of the biggest lessons I've learned is conservation with your horse on the rides and in training. If you let them go all out all the time, they probably won't last very long. I have this awesome horse who is now 23 with over 6,000 miles and I'm still riding him because he's still sound. I let KJ go on some rides, but for the most part I held him back and I think that is what has made him last as long as he has.

**Where does your horse live?** (pasture—# acres, dirt lot, paddock, etc.) Board? At home? Full turnout? KJ lives in a paddock at my parents house. We have a little grass for him to eat when we turn him loose and we have a bigger turn out for when the horses get rowdy.

**What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life?** I'm not sure where KJ lived with Greg and Cindy Pryor, but he lived in a pasture with all of Dave Rabe's other horses until I got him. I'm sure he misses it, but I know he's happy and loved where he is.

**What are your horse's strengths?** KJ is tough. One of the toughest horses I've known. When I talk to my mom Gina Hall and our friend Connie Creech, I love hearing about the old time endurance horses who did the job and kicked butt because they were tough and solid. I think KJ emulates those horses, he is so solid and tough out on the trail and I know I can always rely on him for a great ride. KJ is extremely strong and has a great attitude going down the trail. He's always ready to go and excited for the work to come. Weaknesses? KJ is quite the adrenaline junkie. He wants to go, go, go down the trail. When you get to the vet checks he lets down, and doesn't always look so hot. The second you get back on him he's all plugged in and ready to go, go, go again. KJ has pretty thin skin and gets chilled very easily. He gets cold at the rides even with tons of blankets on him. We like to call him "Mr. Shake'n'Bake."

**What advice do you have for new riders?** Get to know your horse. The better you know them, the better you know what they can or can't handle. Sometimes when our horse tells us they can go fast and handle it, that doesn't always mean you should let them. We all know these endurance horses love to go down the trail in a very forward motion, sometimes a little faster than they need to. I know how fun it is to do well on a ride and top ten, but I think it's even more fun to ride the same horse for years on end. There is nothing quite like the bond KJ and I have created all these years and miles we shared going down the trail.

**Looking back, what would you do differently?** Nothing, KJ and I wouldn't be where we are today if I hadn't done the right things, and made the mistakes I did along the way.

**What do you feel you did right?** Not letting KJ go all out all the time. Some years I did more mile than others and I think he needed those years with less miles. I don't ride him hard or a lot for training, because he already has his base and all he needs is a tune up now and then.

**What was your highest goal for your horse?** Getting his 5,000 mile medallion on his third Tevis in 2005 when we were 18 years old. He only needed five more miles going into the ride, but he had to do 100 miles of some of the toughest trail to achieve it.

**Did you achieve it?** Yes!!

**Describe your horse's personality?** When I first got KJ he wasn't a very affectionate horse, but after he had a little 13 year old girl giving him attention all the time I think he came around and has become one of the most affectionate horses we own. When you turn him out to run around, he just wants to stand next to you and be loved on. He's a little goofy at times. He still gets all excited when you go to take him out of his corral and he stands there and dances with his front feet in place and barges through the gate once it's opened. He is quite the sparkplug.

**How is it like or unlike yours?** KJ and I are both stubborn. We fought each other a lot going down the trail. He will pull on me and I'll pull right back because I don't want him flying down the trail. KJ can be very affectionate and sweet, and it not hard to return it.

**What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most?** (multidays, 100's, 50's, etc.) I enjoy fifties the most.

**Describe your electrolyte protocol.** We give Endura-max with applesauce and Pro-CMC to help coat their stomach. We give it the night before the ride and after every time they take a good drink. We also feed the E-Lytes in their mash before, during and after the ride. They'll even eat it right out of our hands.

**Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success?** We don't let them stay fat, but they get whatever they want at the rides. I'm sure all the supplements we feed them help as well. I think our training and just letting them eat and be a horse is what keeps them going.

**Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem?** KJ get joint supplements in his grain, which some people will say doesn't work, but I know I felt the difference when I started feeding it. We also give Adequan to the older horses with more miles, I think they feel good on the rides with it on board.

**What kind of supplements (if any) do you use?** We feed Vitamin E and Selenium because we're deficient in this area. They also get ABC plus for the pro biotic in it and it helps maintain good hooves and helps them absorb nutrients in their feed better.

**Do you give any kind of joint products?** (describe) I feed KJ Equinyl CM. When I was younger he used to get Hyluronic Acid when I was doing a lot of miles on him.

**How far do you usually travel to rides?** We're lucky there are enough rides here in Nevada, we can stay pretty local. We usually only travel less than 100 miles on average for our local rides. We have traveled farther for a few rides maybe once or twice a year.

**Do you go to many rides outside of your region?** Not usually. We can go all year doing rides only in our region.

**Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why?** Well, of course my mom Gina Hall. She has taught me everything I know. I think I've done so well with KJ because of her advice over the years. Dave Rabe would be another individual I look up to. He gave me KJ and does a lot for other people and for the sport. He's one of the toughest people I know and loves to travel and ride new trails. I also look up to Connie Creech. I've been riding with Connie and sponsored by her since I was 11 years old. She has done well and has a lot of experience.

**Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them.** That would probably be my mom at first. I learned pretty much everything from her. Once I wasn't a junior any more, I rode KJ a lot on my own. KJ had a base before I got him and he taught me a lot too. I think I learned most of what I know from my mom, Connie and Dave (refer to above question). I learned a lot from KJ also.

**In choosing your next horse, what would you look for?** Well proportioned and good conformation. I know what I like and what I think looks good and looks like it can do the work. You never really know until you start them down the trail. Horses can surprise you who don't look like they can do it and some who look like they would be amazing will disappoint and not perform to your expectations.