

Kathy Myers & Mr Maajistic (“Blue”)



2008 AERC Decade Team



Region: SW

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? My husband and I were visiting Jackie Bumgardner and she had him for sale. Instead of eating with the other horses, he was more interested in hanging over the fence to visit with the humans and beg for pets. Knowing I needed a new endurance horse, my husband said “What’s wrong with this one?”. Nothing. I was unemployed, but had a bit of money set aside to pay taxes. The taxes didn’t get paid on time and I bought him.

What is your horse’s breeding? Blue is a straight Egyptian Arabian by Maajestic Moon by El Hilal, out of SA Miss Surrene by Ansata Shah Zam

Sex: gelding

DOB: 4-9-92

Horse height: 14.3 hands

Approx. Weight: 800#

Color: Grey

Shoe size or Easyboot size: 1

Why did you decide to purchase this horse (or if you didn't purchase, why did you choose to use this horse in endurance)? He was 6 years old, had nice straight legs, a nice straight back, a sweet personality, and he'd already successfully completed 350 endurance miles including all 4 days at Death Valley.



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

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? 5

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Not currently, but I did a few small local shows and dressage tests a while back with my old TB. Blue and I placed 3rd in the advanced class at a trail trial once without knowing what we were doing. Does marking trail count?

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? Since the age of 3... if we count model horses. I've had my own real horses for 15 years. I did my first endurance ride in '78 or '79, but was away from the sport between '82 and '95. (Went to school, got a job, etc.)

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested?

Besides the fact that I was born addicted to horses (my mother would say I did my first endurance rides on one of those horses on springs every night of the week... it was impossible to keep me off it... I'd get up after everyone had gone to bed and ride... when I was too big and broke it, I was very sad) I didn't have my own horse until I was 31. However, when I was in high school, Maryben Stover took me riding on her horses and then to my first endurance rides. I used to train and show dogs with Maryben, and Becky and Courtney Hart. Maryben told me about Tevis one day and I was in love! She also told me about a crazy guy who would run the whole trail instead of ride.

Endurance fits my idea of having fun while riding... beautiful trails and beautiful country from the back of a horse, riding all day long, and great people.

How old was your horse when first started? First ride? I don't know when he was first started under saddle. I heard he was ridden bare back in a halter around the ranch by the time he was 4. I was his 5th or 6th human by the time he was 6. Blue did his first endurance ride at age 5.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? (list w/ distances) Blue did 3 50 mile rides our his first season, 2 LD rides and 7 50 mile rides his second season, and 3 50 mile rides his third season.

What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.) His first ride was a 50 mile endurance ride.

How long till you top tenned or raced? (if you did) We just top tenned the first day of the Ft. Union Pioneer. We were 9th out of 11 finishers. We've come in 11th twice over the years. I guess we kinda tried to race one ride his 3rd season, but we backed off and ended up 12th. We've mostly ridden with friends, ridden with and mentored a new rider, or ridden with a rider on a new horse.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? Anywhere from 2 to 5 months depending on my schedule.

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?

We entered 1 100 and didn't finish. 7 weeks before the ride we did a 50 mile training ride since I couldn't take him to a sanctioned 50 mile ride and he hadn't yet done a 50 that season... (and since I needed to GPS the trail for our Caja ride that year anyway). 3 weeks before the ride we did a 30 mile training ride and a short mid-week ride. After that I backed off and only did 1 or two short rides per week. We also did one short night ride 2 weeks before the 100 during an almost full moon. That's where I think he tripped and put a little strain on his right front when he caught himself. The strain didn't show up until we were riding the 100. I would have given him a month off, but he got 2 months off and then came back with a couple of training rides and did a slow 50 three and a half months later. The leg has been fine ever since.

In 2010 we completed Tevis. I started conditioning in January with 18 mile training rides focusing on downhill. In April we completed the Indian Springs 60 and 50 back to back. It's a good tough trail. I used these two rides as conditioning for Tevis. I did the same thing riding 2 days of Ride the Divide over Memorial Day weekend. Then Blue had down time to relaxed, recover, and put on weight until we landed at Auburn the Sunday before the ride. We did 12 miles down to Lower Quarry on Monday and then 17 miles of the California loop on Tuesday.

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 give Blue 2 weeks off after a multi-day. We do normal training for 50 mile rides the month before and a bit of interval training focused on increasing his aerobic stamina. I don't peak his fitness before the ride.

What kind of tack do you use? (saddle, pads, girths, bits, etc.) Blue has a Stubben Kerry LD, an equipedic pad, an old Ulster waffle girth, and a French-link snaffle bit. We always ride with a biothane breast collar and halter / bridle combo, pommel and cantle packs, spare easyboots, and a sponge. I also use a butt-rug and carry a rain jacket during winter or monsoon season. All of Blue's "stuff" is green.

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots? Blue has been barefoot since 2001. I used to foam on easy boots. Now we mostly use epics.

At Tevis in 2010 EasyCare installed glue-ons complete with goober glue packing for cushioning. I think they had a lot to do with Blue successfully completing Tevis.

What kind of problems have you encountered? Blue's pulls are almost all directly related to owner problems. I've made mistakes foaming on easyboots (once foamed the heal strap partly under one heal, once foamed the boot on with more foam on one side, once used boots that irritated his heels and caused him to move unevenly which then caused a muscle cramp, etc.), or he's had cramps caused by trailering him in an old borrowed trailer with a shot suspension.

Blue's had one metabolic pull. Thankfully we were in camp just after the 2nd loop. The barometer had dropped that day and a ride that hadn't had treatments in years had 7 that day. When banamine didn't work, he was immediately given 10 liters of fluids and had excellent treatment and care. It was a long and scary night, but fortunately he was OK by morning. I gave him 3 months off after being treated, and 6 months off from competition.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had?

One morning I went out at 6 am to bring him in from the pasture and he called to me, but didn't move. I knew he was hurt bad because he comes running if he knows he's going to get goodies in a bucket. He'd been kicked, had a nasty wound on his left shoulder and he was 3 legged lame. I thought his shoulder was broken and thought I would be calling the vet to put him down, but after a few hops he put a little weight on the leg. A mare had kicked him and broken 3 pieces of bone off of the ridge that runs along his scapula. The wound was infected for a long time and took a few months to heal up.

He's also had a strain to the outside of the right rear tendon sheath.

How did you work through it? The strain was diagnosed by ultrasound. I used the UC Davis tendon rehab program and it healed fine. Blue hasn't had any issues related to the strain since then.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse? Gotta be Tevis. The whole ride was just wonderful.

Before that, riding the last Castle Rock 50 in 2000 was one of our best days ever. It was a tough trail and that year it was hot and a bit humid. Humidity was unusual for us. It took us 11.5 hours to finish, but the whole way was magical. Castle Rock was a ride I'd always wanted to do. I'm glad we got to ride what ended up being the last year.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse?

Standing at a ride with my horse hooked up to an IV, knowing we couldn't afford surgery. There was a sand storm that night and we huddled on the lee side of the trailer. Blue was already cold from the fluids. I had 4 blankets on him and it didn't seem like enough. There was St. Elmo's fire everywhere from the wind and sand. One or the other of the vets and the ride manager came every couple of hours to check on Blue. It was a very long night. Fortunately his gut sounds returned, he pooped at 5:30am and started eating grass hay. He was OK after that... because of the excellent vet care he received.

What was your most humbling experience?

On Day 3 of the Santa Fe Trail ride, Blue stepped between a steel ranch bridge and the dirt road with his left rear leg. There was just a split second knowing when his left rear dropped that he could snap the leg and knowing that I could have and should have gone around the bridge. Fortunately he avoided serious injury, just cut the front of his cannon.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important?

Listen to your horse. Ride your own ride. Try different things and find out what works for you and your horse. Don't over condition, R&R is as important as conditioning miles.

The trail and your horse are the reward, everything else is gravy. There's always another ride another day. Stay conservative. Walk through the rocks.

Where does your horse live? 3 acres of hilly rocky dry pasture with 2 other geldings and access to stalls. He's on turnout 24 x 7.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life? I don't know.

What are your horse's strengths? Blue has a steady 4 cylinder engine. At Tevis we were leap frogging with Dave Rabe for a while. After the 4th time or so, Dave dubbed him "a putt-putt horse!". That is an excellent description.

He's smart. He's sound. He has straight legs and a nice straight back. He has a nice deep heart girth. His pasterns are short and match his shoulder angle. His shoulder angle is balanced with his hip angle. He has a long forearm and short cannons. He has 7.5 inches of cannon bone / tendon circumference and decent sized hooves. He is very sure footed and knows where his rear feet are. He doesn't have joint problems. He's a bit wimpy so he alerts me early when something just isn't right. He eats like a horse, drinks like a fish, and loves new trails. He's unflappable and anyone can ride him. He has a sense of humor.

Weaknesses? He's straight through the shoulder and hip so he can be a rough ride unless collected and he has a fairly short stride.

What advice do you have for new riders?

Hook up with a good mentor and listen to them. Learn how to pace your horse without electronics. Learn how to judge distance. Learn how to take a pulse without a HR monitor or stethoscope. Take a few dressage lessons. Try to learn how to ride balanced. Learn how to leave something in the tank at the end of the ride. Don't over train your horse. You and your horse might be ready to race a 50 with a 4 year base and after a slow 100. Relax, have fun! Never stop learning.

Looking back, what would you do differently?

I would not worry so much about riding in the dark... our training ride in the dark didn't really match up with riding in the dark on a 100 anyway. I would not have turned him out with an evil mare with shoes. I would have learned how to disengage the rear feet instead of pulling on the mouth a lot sooner. I would

have put him in a kimberwicke sooner instead of sticking with a running martingale so long. I would have spent the time and money to go to more clinics and lessons a lot earlier. I would have learned how to properly interval train earlier, and trained at the canter earlier. I really wish we could have gotten to more rides over the years. I would not have crossed that bridge!

What do you feel you did right? Cross training with dressage lessons really taught Blue to use his rear end and taught me how poorly I was riding.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? Tevis. Yes! I didn't think Blue and I would finish, but he did it.

Describe your horse's personality? How is it like or unlike yours? Blue is a bottom of the herd type. He's a very easy going horse. I could learn to be more easy going. We both can be a bit ADHD.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? (multidays, 100's, 50's, etc.) I'm hooked on 100's. I'm really enjoying the multiday endurance rides too.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. I only give about 1/4 dose at a time when he needs them. I adjust for the weather and how hard Blue is working. It's rarely humid here in NM, but when it is I try to remember to electrolyte a little more often. I rinse Blue's mouth with water after syringing electrolytes. I've been using Lyte-Ryte electrolytes.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? A good broad spectrum multivitamin. I'm also a big believer in joint supplements for endurance horses over 10.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program (ie, changed from one hay to another, added something special) that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? When we moved here to NM, I needed to start supplementing selenium. I can tell he does better with selenium supplementation.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? United Vet Equine Mega-Mag vitamins, Brookside vitamin E / Selenium supplement, United Vet Equine Coflxn joint supplement, Injectable glucosamine. Sometimes I use APF and / or BC2A.

Do you give any kind of joint products? (describe) United Vet Equine Coflxn. Injectable glucosamine.

How far do you usually travel to rides? About 4 to 7 hours.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? Very few.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why? Maryben Stover, Becky Hart, and Julie Suhr

Maryben because she's a great no-nonsense mentor and really knows the sport of endurance. She's put in a lot of ground hours to make the sport great.

Becky Hart because she's an excellent world class rider who always makes sure her horse comes first.

Julie Suhr because she's truly the first lady of endurance and yet she's the most kind and down to earth human being you'll ever meet.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. Maryben. She taught me how to take a pulse with just my hand, when to trot and when to walk. She taught me that the horse comes first, the horse gets taken care of before the rider, the horse eats before the rider, the horse drinks before the rider, any issues are the rider, the rider doesn't whine... the rider shuts up and rides.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? Another Blue horse. Possibly with better conformation and a longer, easier stride, but I'd be quite happy if my next endurance mount was just like him. I'm hoping we have a few more years together.

Add any additional comments or stories that you can think of: It's OK to start a ride and not complete – learning something can be as important as a completion. It's OK to pull if you and your horse are just not having fun. There are probably a lot more 100 mile horses out there than their owners give them credit for (I was one!). There's no point in putting additional stress on yourself by creating your own artificial demands. Relax, enjoy the trail, and ride within the parameters the day throws at you, even if it means modifying your original goals. Don't wait too long to try those things you really want to try.