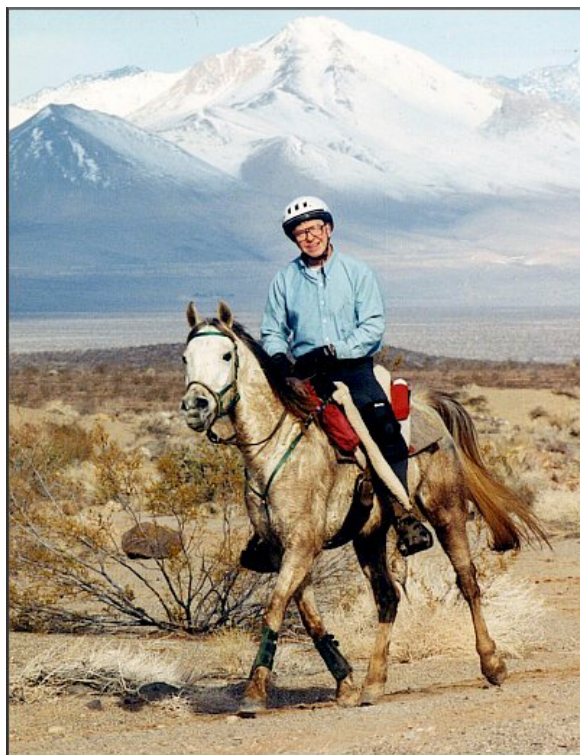


Mike Maul & Monterey PF (Thor)



American Endurance Ride Conference

AERC Decade Team



Region: CT

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her?

I moved to California to work in Silicon Valley and joined the Quicksilver Endurance Riders Club. I met Maryben Stover and was looking for a horse to ride/lease. She introduced me to Thor who was being boarded at her place and not being ridden. I leased him for a year and ultimately talked his owner into parting with him.

What is your horses breeding? Crabbet Arabian

Sex: Gelding

DOB: 03/11/1993

Horse height: 15 2

Approx. Weight: 930

Color: Grey

Shoe or hoof boot size: Easy boot 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 had a good mind, really liked to go, no bad habits, had done some endurance, and we seemed a good match.

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

Two other horses

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport?

Five for a reasonable amount of time. Another 10 but just for one ride each.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? (if so, describe)

I participated in a form of Competitive Trail Riding called ECTRA on the east coast for four years before trying endurance. I didn't start riding until I was 50 and found CTR to be good training for a rider who was self-taught.

We have also done a little Ride and Tie. Thor loves this sport and I've loaned him to a few ride and tie teams. He competed with a team from Spain in the 2003 World Championship. I crewed for the team.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance?

Almost 20 years with horses and 15 in endurance

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

Moving to Texas got me started where endurance was more available than in New Jersey where I began riding. I wanted an activity where I could spend a lot of time with my horse. I boarded at a stable where there were a number of endurance riders near Houston.

Things keeping me interested include seeing new places, making good friends, and riding my horses in places where we depend on each other to get to the finish.

How old was your horse when first started? First ride?

Previous owner started him in LD at 4 in The Mustang Classic 25 in California.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? (list w/ distances)

His previous owner did one 25 in the first season, then two 50 mile rides in the next season (finishing in the bottom quarter), and 4 rides in the third season – still bottom quarter. In the third season I also rode Thor in two rides with one being Tevis which we completed.

What mileage distance did you start with? (25, 50, etc.) 25

How long till you top tenned or ‘raced’? (if you did)

Thor finished top ten toward the end of his 4th season and had done 11 rides before that

How much time off do you give between ride seasons?

Where I live now – there is no snow and we ride all year. The longest time off is in the summer where there might be a month between rides.

If you have done 100’s, how much time off do you give after doing one?

We have done very few 100s so there’s no set amount. It would be about 3 weeks if we did.

What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride?

Just normal conditioning which is riding 1-2 times during the week for 10 miles and a longer 15 mile ride on the w/e.

If you have done multiday, how much time off do you give after doing one?

For a five day ride – 2 weeks. Less if it’s a 3 day ride.

What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride?

Just normal conditioning which is riding 1-2 times during the week for 10 miles and a longer 15 mile ride on the w/e.

What kind of tack do you use? (saddle, pads, girths, bits, etc.)

Genie Stewart-Spears Sports saddle. Thor and I work well together with only a nose band for control. Neoprene girth, biothane halter and breast-collar, and fleece saddle cover.

Regular steel shoes. Usually classic Easyboots when rocky.

What kind of problems have you encountered?

Thor was completely rateable until he started RAT. He loves to run and that’s a part of RAT. He’s become a little less rateable now but we still get along well together.

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

He had a mystery lameness several years ago and three lameness exams by different vets didn't come to any conclusion.

How did you work thru it?

I gave him a year off and that has helped.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse?

Finishing Tevis at 4 AM in the morning.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse?

I was riding with a friend with Thor in his usual nose band. We ended up in front at the end of the ride and when a third rider blew by us on the way to the finish – there was a flat out race with no control. Camp was on the other side of a cattle grate with a narrow opening at the side and across a busy highway with big trucks. We made it through the gate and across the highway without becoming road-kill but it was just plain luck. All the horses stopped fine when we got to camp.

What was your most humbling experience?

Doing a 32 mile Ride and Tie with Thor in the Sierras. At the finish when the RAT people asked me which part I liked best, I said the riding...

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

Don't over condition. When I first started riding – I would condition 5-6 days a week. Now I ride 2 times a week at most and less than that if rides are only 2 weeks apart.

Find a good farrier and stay with them.

Where does your horse live? (pasture—# acres, dirt lot, paddock, etc.) Board? At home? Full turnout?

We have twelve acres at home for 5 horses with coastal Bermuda grass turnout 24 hours a day

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life? (pasture, w/ a herd, etc.)

In a pasture with other horses according to the person I got him from.

What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses?

Strengths: He loves to go, very surefooted, competitive, fast, and has a lot of personality.

Weaknesses: He has not adapted well to the really hot and humid days of east Texas as well as my other horse. He's good on the lower humidity times of the year or in more arid region rides.

In the early part of learning endurance, I used to condition regularly with a rider who liked to trot all the downhill. I think this was not a desirable thing to do. He's had some lameness problems that the vets here have not been able to figure out. Only time off helped.

What advice do you have for new riders?

Take things slow and get to know your horse well under a variety of ambient conditions at different rides. Work on simply finishing for your first year.

Find someone to ride and condition with if you can.

Looking back, what would you do differently?

Much less downhill trotting and condition no more than 2-3 times a week.

What do you feel you did right?

Learned to ride conservatively in the CTRs that I started when first learning to ride.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it?

To have a sound horse that competes happily for a good number of years. So far but hopefully we have a number of years to go yet.

Describe your horse's personality? How is it like or unlike yours?

Thor loves to run and occasionally throws his head up and down, sideways or gives a little buck when he doesn't get his way on this. He's good both in groups and by himself.

He is often competitive if there's a horse next to him and looks fierce but never does anything. He charges hills and simply loves to go. He really likes Ride and Ties because he gets to go fast there. OTOH – I like a regular trot and just want to finish.

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

50 mile rides and multiday rides. They finish early enough that you still have time to take care of your horse and socialize with other riders.

Describe your electrolyte protocol.

About 2 oz of Endura-max just before the ride given with fruit flavored active culture yogurt followed by the same amount at each vet check.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success?

No.

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?

Switching to a beet pulp based feed with additional shredded beet pulp was a good way to get extra water into my horse. Plus I feel it evens out the blood glucose level changes that cereal based foods produce.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use?

About 4 oz of flax seed that I grind at the time of feeding

Do you give any kind of joint products? (describe)

5 cc of glucosamine that I give in a shot once a month

How far do you usually travel to rides?

About 300 miles on the average with a low of 100 and a high of 950 miles.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region?

Only two a year and they are 3-6 day rides in the SW region

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why?

Becky Hart – One of the outstanding endurance riders that I've been privileged to know well and ride with a few times. She cares deeply about our sport and has achieved greatness in it.

Steve Rojek – one of the nicest, most considerate riders I've ever met as well as being one of the best endurance riders in the US. He has more mileage in completed 100 mile rides than I'm likely to acquire in my lifetime of riding 50's.

Julie Suhr – For all she has done for the sport of endurance riding and AERC. She is a person who has made endurance a part of her life and achieved a great deal. I hope I'm able to still enjoy it as much as she does late in life.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them.

Not really – I taught myself to ride using a 27 year old mare that was a companion horse that a friend owned. No one in my area of NJ rode endurance when I started. When I moved to TX, I boarded at Darolyn Butler’s stable and did learn more about endurance with her group.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for?

Good recovery, good mind, Arabian/half Arabian, some experience in endurance, likes to go, and a horse that I can bond with.

Add any additional comments or stories that you can think of:

Thor loves to run flat out but I never let him do that. One day we went to the beach near the Gulf with my GPS. I let him go and watched our speed on the GPS. At 35 mph he was still accelerating. I decided that was fast enough for me. I’ll never know how fast he can go but that’s not the challenge of endurance for me anyway.