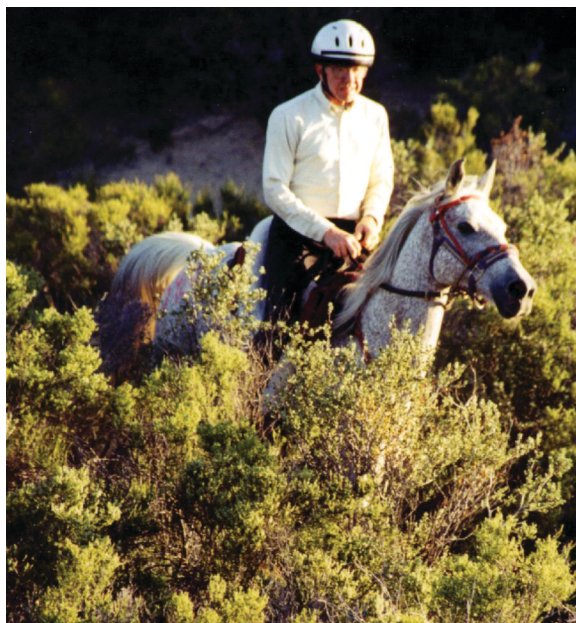


## **Mike Maul & Rroco-My-Sol (“Rroc”)**



### **2010 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 was at the 2001 Ft. Schellborne ride and was looking for a second horse when I saw Rroc. His rider hated riding him because he would spin, buck, and rear for the first 20 miles or so. Maryben and Jan Jeffers liked him so I bought him from Katey Geis. Barney Fleming did the prepurchase exam at the ride. A number of years later – he told me that he didn’t think Rroc and I would last 6 months together.

**What is your horse’s breeding:** Half Arabian with the unregistered part Standardbred

**Sex:** Gelding

**DOB:** 05/08/1988

**Horse height:** 15 3

**Approx. Weight:** 930

**Color:** Flea-bitten Grey

**Shoe or hoof boot size:** Easy boot 2

**Why did you decide to purchase this horse?**

He had finished 5 days at Ft. Schellborne, was the right size, and seemed a reasonable horse.

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

Three 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. I have also done a few Ride and Ties.

**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?**

Rroc was a pack horse and a fourth of July/Labor Day parade horse in Idaho until he started endurance at age 12. He did his first ride(50 miles) at Ft. Schellborne in 2000 with his previous owner.

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

His previous owner did 8 fifty mile endurance rides with him his first season. His second season was 11 endurance rides. Given that he was 12 when started – I believe this was alright.

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

50

**How long till you top tened or 'raced'? (if you did)**

Rroc doesn't top ten unless there are less than 11 entries.

**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 2 weeks if we did.

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

Just normal conditioning which is riding 1 time during the week for 10-12 miles

**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 time during the week for 10-12 miles

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

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

**What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Easyboots?**

Regular steel shoes. Usually classic Easyboots when rocky.

**What kind of problems have you encountered?**

Very few. Has finished 184 of 195 starts which most of the pulls my fault.

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

He colicked on the way to a ride in New Mexico and required surgery. He recovered quickly and was able to do a 50 mile ride 90 days after the surgery. He's done another 6,000 miles after the surgery.

**How did you work through it?**

Ponyed him to start before riding at 60 days post surgery.

**Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse?**

Pulling him at Tevis at Michigan Bluff and knowing I'd done the right thing.

**Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse?**

At the EHSC ride – I worried about getting lost out in the big meadow area so I followed someone who was riding faster than I wanted to ride. Rroc has a window of speed that he needs to be ridden in and this was too fast. At the next to last check – he didn't meet criteria at 30 minutes which was my fault.

**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 1 time 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? 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?**

In a pasture in Idaho – probably in a herd.

**What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses?**

Strengths: Very reliable. Adapted well to the heat and humidity of Texas in the summer. No vices

Weaknesses: Doesn't eat as well as I would like when away from home.

**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?**

Very reliable and really likes having other horses to lead. He feels it's his little herd and if one of them drops back – he tries to slow down or find a way to stop until they catch up.

**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) 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.

In California – he was on straight alfalfa hay and I think it made him a little too hot. Switched to grass and no problems

**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 IM 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.