

Patricia Verheul & Razda



2013 AERC Decade Team



5515 Miles, 110 ride completions
First AERC ride: 1988 Region: W

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? Razda was purchased from my veterinarian who received the horse as part of a vet bill. At the time I was looking for an endurance horse and Razda captured my heart when I saw him running free across the meadow. His ability to run proved to be a problem when it came time to bring him home. After escaping the lasso of a cowboy I hired to catch him, my endurance buddies and I built a trap in a redwood cathedral. We covered all the exits from the circle except for two. We ran part of the herd into the cathedral through one opening. Then we herded Razda and another horse into the trailer at the other opening. We let him out at home into the corral and went to work from there. Over a period of more than a year he visited three trainers. Eventually I built up enough courage to start riding him in endurance rides.

What is your horse's breeding? Razda is not registered but is reported to be 15/16 Arabian.

Sex: Gelding

DOB: Unknown, but believed to be late 1979.

Horse height: 14-3

Approx. Weight: 750

Color: Bay

Shoe size: 0

Why did you decide to purchase this horse (or if you didn't purchase, why did you choose to use this horse in endurance)? The price was right and he looked like one tough horse, compact and agile.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes, I did a few rides on a Morab, Czer that I bought for my daughter and I had the privilege of riding Kadine, owned by Diane Luternauer, on the Swanton Pacific in 1986.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? 12, but Razda and his stable buddies, Prince Shabar and Razznan account for most of my miles.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? I grew up on a farm where my brothers had horses. Sometimes I was allowed to ride their horses. We raced through the peach orchards dodging tree limbs, galloped for miles on dusty farm roads and swam the horses in the river on hot days. After I married and moved to Santa Cruz County my husband and I participated in the local parade on horseback and at Christmas a group of neighbors would get together for caroling on horseback. Before I started endurance, my horse Drifter and I did some NATRC rides back in the early 1970s. I am also a member of the California State Parks Horse Patrol in the Santa Cruz County division.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? My earliest memory of horses is waiting for our pony to be delivered when I was about five so you could say over 50 years of horse involvement. I started riding endurance in the early 1980's, about 20 years ago.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? I always loved getting out and riding as far as I could even back in the days when I borrowed my brother's horses. A friend of mine, Linda Hogan, introduced me to N.A.T.R.C. and then started telling me about our neighbor Julie Suhr and endurance riding. We live near Barbara McCrary and volunteered to drag ride the Castle Rock 50. At that time they were still starting with all the horses in a line across a large meadow. At the sound of a gun shot everybody took off at the same time. Horses ran away, people got bucked off and it looked like the glorious old west was alive and well. I couldn't wait to be a part of it. But by the time I got into action, I realized that the start might be the end for me so I waited until the front runners started and then sedately crossed the start line with a good buddy beside me to steady Razda. What kept me interested was how much fun it is, seeing the countryside, the sense of accomplishment when completing another 50 miles and the great horses and people out there sharing the trail and their stories.

How old was your horse when first started? First ride? Razda was at least six years old when I first bought him. It took a couple of years to really get started. Razda was probably eight when we did our first ride.

How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons? We started slow. Razda and I did Castle Rock in 1988, 1989 and 1990. In 1990 we added a second ride, the Tar Springs 50.

What mileage distance did you start with? Razda started with 50 miles and all of his rides have been 50 except once when my daughter rode Razda on a 40 mile ride after he was retired the first time.

How long till you top tenned or 'raced'? We only top tenned once and that was on a multi-day ride when there were only two of us who finished all five days. Razda took the fastest overall time and Trilby and Red took the best condition for five days. Other than that, Razda and I competed to the best of our ability on any given day, but never raced.

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? We take very little time off. We kept going year round during the years when we covered the most miles. I would try to take Razda's shoes off for a month or two each season. The last few years he has spent the winter in pasture, barefoot, running free with the other horses like he was when I purchased him.

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? No 100's on Razda.

If you have done multiday, how much time off do you give after doing one? What is your schedule in the month leading up to the ride? Razda generally had about a month off between multiday rides. While we didn't compete for a month or two, he still got out for short trips just to keep his interest up. Once Razda was conditioned and had a couple thousand miles we took it easy and gave up hard conditioning rides. We just went out for regular two or three times a week ten or so mile trips.

What kind of tack do you use? We had a lot of saddle problems with Razda because he is so short backed. We tried a variety of saddles from forward seat English saddles to Orthoflex. The Bighorn saddle works fine for Razda as well as our other horses. I like a sheepskin pad next to the skin and use a supercor pad between that and the saddle. Razda started out in a bit but after the first few competitions we went to a rope halter and that is all we use on him.

What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Now I use regulation shoes with Equithane. When Razda did the bulk of his miles, it was just plain shoes.

What kind of problems have you encountered? Razda sometimes got foot sore on multi-day rides, but that was before Equi-Pak. He also had a few bouts with scratches.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had? Razda has had to be treated twice for metabolic problems after completing rides. In both cases, although he was fine at the finish, his condition began to deteriorate as the evening wore on. After receiving fluids close to midnight, in both cases he recovered fully and continued to rack up the miles.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse? There were so many great rides on Razda, but one of my favorites was my first time on the Applegate Lassen when I rode with Trilby and Red. The last day Trilby kept saying it was an easy day and we had lots of time. When we were about 10 miles from the finish Alex Higgins, our driver and crew, found us and told us we were 10 miles from the finish and we had one hour. This was 240 miles into the ride. I asked Razda to trot out, and bless his heart, he flew that last 10 miles as if it were the first and we arrived at the finish line with minutes to spare.

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? The second day of my first Pony Express ride which was a point to point from Cold Springs to Schellborne. Razda fell about seven miles out from the start as we trotted along next to Bob and Julie Suhr. When he stood up he couldn't put any weight on his right front foot. I thought he was severely injured, but it was miles to the first road crossing so I asked him to try just a little way. He stopped limping after about 100 feet and we continued to where Julie had told the Duck to wait for us. By then Razda could trot sound so we finished the day with ice on his ankle at lunch and in the evening. I was black and blue but elated that he had recovered. He finished all five days of that ride.

What was your most humbling experience? While preparing for a ride I gave Razda a bath and then put a sheet on him. I accidentally threw the sheet over Razda and the hitching rail then fastened it. I return to the house and hear quite a commotion. The sheet strap was acting as bucking strap and Razda was doing his best impersonation of a bucking bronco. Bob grabbed a knife and cut the sheet and no harm was done except to the sheet and my ego.

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? Never take anything for granted. Even if your horse appears fine after a ride, keep an eye on him or her. Ride for the sheer joy of it, there is no other reason to be out there for me.

Where does your horse live? At home. Since his unofficial retirement three years ago he has spent the winters in the large pasture where he was originally purchased. That pasture now has a housing development in it, so this winter he will stay home.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of it's life in? Razda's early history is pretty sketchy. From bits and pieces I have picked up here and there I think he spent the first few years of his life in a corral with other horses. He was halter broke, but only handled when he was gelded at about 18 months. He didn't move to the large pasture where I bought him until he was four or five.

What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses? Razda's strengths are his great heart and courage. He has had very few physical problems other than the two metabolic failures mentioned above. He is allergic to alfalfa hay if given too much, and requires close monitoring. The main difficulty I had with him early on was his ability to spring into the air like a deer, turn and take off. He still doesn't like butterflies, moving ferns or dead logs.

What advice do you have for new riders? Take your time, get to know your horse and ride each ride with your horse first in your thoughts.

Looking back, what would you do differently? Knowing what I do now, there are times I would have wrapped his legs as we started doing serious mileage (1000+ miles per season) and I would have used Equithane earlier if it were available.

What do you feel you did right? I built Razda up to high mileage over a period of years.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? My highest goal for Razda was to complete each ride as it came along. Yes, I think that we achieved my goals. I once told Nancy Twilight that I wanted to complete 3000 miles on Razda. She pointed out that Razda didn't understand mileage goals. She was right! Thank goodness Razda just loves to go down the trail with his buddies.

Describe your horse's personality? How is it like or unlike yours? Razda is rather high strung and nervous. He has mellowed slightly in his old age, but he is still on the lookout for danger and always interested in what is up ahead. I think Razda and I are alike, as we like to know what is around the next bend or over the next hill.

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? Multi-days.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. We have used electrolytes very little, mostly on multi-day rides in his feed, but not during the actual ride.

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? Razda started out on straight alfalfa hay, but gradually developed intolerance to it. He also had difficulty with wheat hay after being on it for about two months. A diet of oat hay with supplemental All-in-One and Equine Senior works very well for Razda.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? These days Razda gets Platinum Performance, Cosequin and Source and we have always been good customers of Purina Equine Senior.

Do you give any kind of joint products? We use Glucosamine, the powdered form. At one point we used the injections, but find the powdered form easier to administer. Just sprinkle it on his All-in One and Equine Senior.

How far do you usually travel to rides? Razda and I went to the Renegade Ride several times in New Mexico. This ride is about 18 hours driving time from Scotts Valley.

Do you go to many rides outside of your region? Yes, whenever we can.

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why? Julie Suhr ñ Julie is a thinking rider who loves the sport. She always puts the horse first. But she loves to compete and rides each ride to get the most from that day's horse. I admire and enjoy so many of the people who do multi-day rides that it is hard to select just three.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? There were several. My friend Linda Hogan who introduced me to competitive trail riding, Julie Suhr who introduced as both to endurance and Gerry and Diane Luternauer who took me to my first multiday ride and with whom we spent many miles conditioning.

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? A horse like Razda only comes along once in a rider's lifetime. I guess I would look for a horse with a similar build, the same kind of heart and love for the trail, maybe not quite so skittish. But perhaps if such a horse existed, it wouldn't be as much fun.

Razda was a difficult horse to make friends with. He didn't trust humans at all. The first time he rubbed his sweaty head on my shoulder I felt like we were finally beginning to bond. I offered to sell him to my friends several times, but they all knew about my trials and tribulations - the sore neck from sudden stops, jumps and turns. As there were no takers we just kept going and finally made a team.