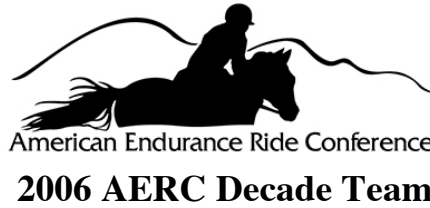


Prue Critchley & Fort William+



Rider's Name: Prue Critchley

Horse's Name: Fort William+

Region: Midwest

Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her? Wills was born here - foaled from my Morgan mare out of an Arabian stallion.

What is your horse's breeding? Wills is a Morab. Egyptian/Domestic on the sire side, Waseeka/Government on the Morgan dam side.

Sex: Gelding

DOB: May 22, 1992

Horse height: 15 hh

Approx. Weight: 1000 lbs

Color: Chestnut

Shoe size: Wills has always been ridden in Flex-Step shoes - size 3

Why did you decide to purchase this horse purchase? I used Wills mother (a Morgan) in competitive trail and endurance for a number of years prior to retiring her for breeding. I had also used Wills' half brother, a purebred Arabian (same sire) for over 10 years in competitive trail and endurance - I felt that Wills would be ideal.

Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse? Yes, as mentioned above, I used Wills dam and his half brother.

How many different horses have you ridden in this sport? Three horses.

Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities? Competitive Trail.

How many years have you been involved with horses? In endurance? I've been involved with horses - that is owning my own - for 23 years. Riding limited distance since 1989 and endurance since 1990.

What got you interested in endurance riding? What was it that kept you interested? I read an article in a Morgan magazine written by Nancy Beacon and this really started my interest. I love accumulating miles - and it's the long term relationship with the horse that is important to me.

How old was your horse when first started? First ride? First limited distance ride at four years old.

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

How long till you top tenned or raced? (if you did) I've never really raced Wills - we aim to complete in good shape and for me to have enough horse left to ride again the next day - and the day after that!

How much time off do you give between ride seasons? Wills starts his holidays at the end of October/early November and isn't worked again until March/April depending on the weather.

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 give about three weeks off after a 100 mile ride. I try to do a couple of 50 mile rides in the preceding month with very light conditioning in between.

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? Wills has done one multi day ride. This was at the end of the ride season and he had already completed 10 competitive trail/endurance rides.

During the month prior to the ride he had two conditioning rides in the hills each about 10 miles long and one endurance ride (50 miles) 16 days before the multi day. His last conditioning ride was a slow 10 miles a week before the multi day.

What kind of tack do you use? (saddle, pads, girths, bits, etc.) Orthoflex Officers Patriot saddle - western saddle blanket fairly thin - bootees on the saddle. Neoprene girth Polywebbing halter bridle. Kimberwicke bit with copper roller.

What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had? Wills had an accident in the pasture - he cracked a rear hoof wall and has a bone chip in the hoof.

How did you work through it? This was misdiagnosed for some considerable time and eventually an Xray of the hoof showed the bone chip. He received treatment in the form of antibiotics steroids and so far - touch wood - he has had no further problems with it.

Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse. Riding the Owyhee Canyonlands Multi day ride in 2004 was the best ever! He certainly got stronger every day and we had a great time!

Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse? I honestly can't think of one - nothing that stands out in my mind as being awful! All my rides with Wills have been pretty good!

What was your most humbling experience? Everything about riding horses is somewhat humbling. Someone told me years ago that horses have the brain the size of that of a turtle's my horse outwits and outsmarts me on every ride we do... I wonder where that puts me on the intelligence scale!!

Today was quite humbling. This past weekend we traveled to a ride 9 hours drive away. The ride was a 50 miler through quite rough country with lots of climbs - on top of that after so much cold weather here, the temperature soared to above 100 degrees in the shade. With this unaccustomed heat and tough terrain Wills put in an extremely hard day on the trail. We drove home - another 9 hours yesterday.

Today I needed to take Wills up to the vet clinic in the trailer for blood to be drawn for a coggins test. I went out to the field, halter in hand. He lowered his head for me to put the halter on and then followed me out of the field and loaded straight onto the trailer. It's really something when a horse will give you this totally unconditional co-operation. No wonder I love Wills!

What lessons have you learned along the way that you feel are the most important? Riding my own ride at my own pace. Only riding with other people who want to ride the same way as me. I've learned how miserable it is to ride behind other horses who are going at irregular paces - cantering - walking and running down hills... all my horse wants to do is get past and he gets excited and pulls and of course while he is doing this he doesn't watch what he is doing with his feet! Much more fun to trot at a steady pace and the occasional canter to relieve the monotony for his muscles - and even more fun when doing it with a compatible horse rider for company.

Where does your horse live? (pasture--# acres, dirt lot, paddock, etc.) Board? At home? Full turnout? Wills lives at home. He has pasture turnout 24/7 with his horse family. They have a run in shelter.

What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life? (pasture, w/ a herd, etc.) Wills has always lived in the pasture with his mother, half brother and more recently younger half siblings!

What are your horse's strengths? Weaknesses? Very willing strong with a good disposition. An amazingly fast trot. Wills is not too happy about traffic - vehicles on the highway and ATVs in the bush! (and nor am I!)

What advice do you have for new riders? Take it easy - don't do too much too quickly - enjoy the riding and making new friends - forget about competition until you have a couple of years at least of learning the ropes. Ride your own ride - don't get caught up riding with people going faster than you ride when conditioning at home.

Looking back, what would you do differently? Nothing

What do you feel you did right? Starting him out slowly and just enjoying the trails and his company.

What was your highest goal for your horse? Did you achieve it? Originally it was the Legion of Supreme Honor awarded by the Arabian Horse Association - and he did achieve this. Now they have a higher level and we are working towards that!

Describe your horse's personality? How is it like or unlike yours? I suppose now I come to think about it we are quite similar! I hadn't thought of this before! He is perhaps a bit more competitive than I am - but he's equally as determined!

What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most? (multidays, 100's, 50's, etc.) I loved the multi day and would like to do lots more of them. Also enjoy 50's. Not too keen on 100's as ultimately we get less miles in a season as I would give him more recovery time off between rides.

Describe your electrolyte protocol. I electrolyte the night before a ride - in the morning prior to the start of the ride - again at each vet check and then again at the end of the ride. I electrolyte prior to the trailer

ride home.

Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success? Wills just gets plain food nothing very fancy - he gets the same at rides as he does at home - no changes. At rides he gets his regular ration before a ride and at each vet check, so basically he gets the same volume as a regular meal but much more frequently. He is never presented with huge bowls with larger quantities of unaccustomed food at rides.

Are there any major changes you've made to your nutrition program that you feel made a noticeable improvement or solved a problem? Wills does not travel wonderfully well and I encourage him to eat his hay by adding small amounts of alfalfa hay on top to make it more interesting.

What kind of supplements (if any) do you use? Wills gets a regular multi vitamin/mineral supplement and a small amount of flax daily.

Do you give any kind of joint products? (describe) No, Wills is not receiving a joint supplement.

How far do you usually travel to rides? Generally anywhere between 3 and about 9 hours drive - but there are exceptions!

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

Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why. Louise Riedel - the epitome of the energizer bunny. She did so much for the sports of competitive trail and endurance in the Midwest. Nancy Beacon - did an incredible amount of work in establishing endurance and competitive trail in Canada. Told fascinating stories of rides and generated much interest in distance riding. Julie Suhr - who has completed the Tevis so many times! She noticed I was having difficulties with all my tack and holding my horse when weighing in for Tevis. She came over and helped me - and even held my horse for me while I got my things organized. She didn't know that I knew who she was - she was so nice and genuine. She must be one of the most respected endurance riders of all time.

Did you have a mentor or first trail partner? Tell us about him/her/them. I rode the first few rides with some members of our local club. They rode competitive trail, not endurance. They showed me that I could do this!

In choosing your next horse, what would you look for? I am hoping that Wills baby brother will be my next distance horse. He should be a good size with good bone and a sensible disposition - at the moment he seems to have everything I want!