

## **Stefanie Daratony & Outrageous Cowboy**



### **2012 AERC Decade Team**



*Stefanie Daratony and Outrageous Cowboy at Wickenburg*

**Rider Name:** Stefanie Daratony

**Horse Name:** Outrageous Cowboy

**Region:** SW

**Current Rider Lifetime Mileage - Endurance:** 1445, **Limited Distance:** 315

**Tell us about your horse. When/how did you come to get him/her?** I was eventing with my Thoroughbred, but I wanted to do more distance riding so I was thinking about buying an Arabian. One of my friends told me that there was a 3 year old Half Arab gelding for sale on my street so I went to look at him, liked him, and bought him for \$800.

**What is your horse's breeding?** Half Arabian (3/4 Arabian, 1/4 Saddlebred)

**Sex:** Gelding

**DOB:** May 1995

**Horse height:** 14.3

**Color:** Bay

**Hoof boot size:** 0

**Did you do endurance with any other horses before this horse?** No.

**How many different horses have you ridden in this sport?** I've done a handful of AERC rides with my other 2 horses, a Thoroughbred gelding and an Arabian mare.

**Do you participate in any other horse sports or activities?** Yes, I am also involved at various times in hunter/jumper, eventing, and dressage.

**How many years have you been involved with horses?** About 24 **In endurance?** About 12.

**What got you interested in endurance riding?** I love trail riding and I got interested in distance riding when I did some CTRs in college. I originally didn't think I wanted to do endurance because even though I love competing, I felt that the rewards of racing wouldn't be worth the risks to my horse. But I tried endurance and found that completing 50 miles was a great challenge and I loved seeing new trails and making new friends. So even though it wasn't technically a competition for me, I was hooked.

**How old was your horse when first started?** I started him myself- I sat on his back some when he was 3.5, but really started riding him at about 4.5. First ride? He did his first distance ride, a 25 mile CTR, when he just turned 5.

**How many rides did you do the first, second, and third ride seasons?** I did 3 LDs the first year, then 4 50s and 2 LDs the second year, and 3 50s and 2 LDs the third year.

**How long till you top tenned or raced?** (if you did) I never raced and only Top Tenned a few times, usually because the ride was really small!

**What kind of tack do you use?** (saddle, pads, girths, bits, etc.) Finding a saddle that fit was a challenge. I went through quite a few until I bought a DeSoto, which I really like, and use with an Equipedic pad. I always used hackamores- a mechanical one at first, then usually an S-hackamore.

**What kind of shoes do you use on your horse? Pads? Barefoot? Barefoot and booted?** Cowboy had regular steel shoes up until about 4 years ago, and then I started trimming him myself and using boots. It has its challenges, but barefoot is working pretty well for us.

**What kind of problems have you encountered?** No problems really, although Cowboy was very spooky in his younger days and dumped me quite a bit when I first started him. Then he would run back to the house up the street where he used to live. His former owner would be walking him back to my house just as I was walking back on foot. But fortunately, we got through that stage!

**What was the worst or most severe injury your horse has had?** He bowed a tendon in 2004 during an endurance ride- I think it was because of the splint boots that I was using at the time. It healed up on its own fine, with about 6 months off.

**What was the worst or most severe injury you have ever had relating to horses or endurance riding?** Luckily, I haven't had many. I broke my wrist in 1998 when my Thoroughbred bolted and I fell off. About 5 years ago, Cowboy was stomping at flies and kicked me in the head when I was bending down to pick out his feet. I had a concussion and got some staples in my head, but nothing too serious.

**Describe the best ride you ever had on your horse?** It's hard to pick just one. I remember Descanso in 2006 and Man Against Horse in 2004 and 2008 as being just about perfect. They are both tough, beautiful rides and I remember that Cowboy felt super strong all day and we just cruised along, with no low points at all. It's one of the best feelings in the world to be on the last stretch of a tough 50 and have a ton of horsepower left.

**Describe the worst day you ever had with your horse.** The Old Warriors Water Hunt ride in 2007. Going up a relentless mountain in the middle of the ride, Cowboy completely ran out of energy and that had never happened before. We made very slow progress to the next vet check, where we got pulled for being overtime. The vet said that Cowboy was tired, but checked out okay, and he was eating and drinking as usual when we got back to camp, so I wasn't worried. But a few hours later, when we got back from the dinner, he was in distress and colicky. Luckily the vet was still on site and he gave Cowboy fluids. He quickly perked up during treatment with no further complications, but it was terrifying.

**What was your most humbling experience?** See above. Short of staying home, I don't think that there was any way that I could have prevented that from happening. It was a very difficult trail, very hot that day, and we'd traveled quite a long way to get there, but we'd done other rides in those conditions with no problems. I was riding very conservatively and Cowboy had gotten all As at the first vet check. I also want to say that the vet was really wonderful- I was so scared for Cowboy, plus I felt so ashamed to have a horse on fluids, but the vet was so nice and caring, especially when he had been on site all day and I'm sure really wanted to go home!

**Where does your horse live? Full turnout?** My 3 horses live together on about a half an acre in my backyard.

**What kind of environment did your horse spend the first few years of its life in?** Cowboy lived in a small corral next to another horse for his first 3 years and as far as I know, didn't get a whole lot of exposure to anything or the chance to move around very much. Definitely not what's considered an ideal upbringing for an endurance horse!



*Stefanie Daratony and Outrageous Cowboy on the Western States Trail*

**What are your horse's strengths?** He is great climber in the mountains, very surefooted, and can really

move with ease in rocky areas- I think because he has a really strong and powerful hind end. He is very balanced. He also has a great mind. People who ride me with on the trails at home would never believe it, because he can act so silly and spook at simple stuff, but when he is on endurance rides and on tough trails, he is very trustworthy. He also takes good care of himself- eats and drinks well and doesn't get too concerned with what other horses are doing.

**Weaknesses?** He doesn't have many! The only one really is that he has crooked front legs and he interferes- he has to wear splint boots or he would tear up his left front ankle. Early on, I worried about that impacting his long term soundness, but he is still going strong at age 16.

**What advice do you have for new riders?** To put your time in to condition properly and don't go faster than your horse is ready for. Always put your horse's welfare first. Taking riding lessons is a good idea too, since a lot of endurance riders haven't ever done that.

**Looking back, what would you do differently?** Nothing really!

What do you feel you did right? I always rode very conservatively and wanted Cowboy to look as good the day after an endurance ride as he did the day before it.

**What was your highest goal for your horse?** I wanted to become a Decade Team since I first heard about it and I did. Another goal was to complete Tevis but we were only able to try it once and unfortunately didn't finish. At this point, it's unlikely that we will try again, since Cowboy is getting older and I'm planning on focusing on other horse sports in the near future.

**Describe your horse's personality?** Cowboy is just an overall nice horse to be around and to ride- he has a good attitude and is very people oriented and friendly. He is very willing to do anything I ask of him. On endurance rides, he likes to go, but is very rateable and cooperative. How is it like or unlike yours? I'd like to think that my personality is similar to his J

**What kinds of rides do you enjoy the most?** I like 50s, especially the ones that are single loop rides and very scenic. I've only tried one 100- the Tevis. I think I would have tried more 100s if they were single loops or point to point, but the idea of coming back into camp again and again, using the same trails didn't appeal to me for 100 miles. But I wish that I'd completed one, since I'd like to be able to say that we did it and I believe that Cowboy is a 100 mile caliber horse.

**Describe your electrolyte protocol.** I've used different types of electrolytes, and sometimes didn't use any, and never really established a protocol. I can't say that I noticed any difference when I gave them. I think the most important thing is that your horse is eating and drinking sufficiently.

**Is there anything special about your nutrition program you attribute to your success?** No, I just keep it really simple- lots of Bermuda hay and some alfalfa. I've fed different types of grains and supplements at different times but I can't say that I ever saw any difference in how Cowboy looked or felt. When I was doing a lot of riding and hauling, I did up the feed a bit to help keep weight on.

**Do you give any kind of joint products?** No, I haven't felt the need for any.

**How far do you usually travel to rides?** Most of the rides I've done were within 75-300 miles, but I did travel further too.

**Do you go to many rides outside of your region?** Yes, I live in the SW region, but I've done rides in the PS, MT, and W regions. I love being able to see different parts of the country.

**Name three people involved in the sport of endurance that you look up to, and why.** Three ladies who I rode with a lot on conditioning rides and endurance rides when I was getting started- Wynne Brown, Heidi Vanderbilt and Adele Youmans. They are all experienced endurance riders, take great care of their horses and are fun to ride with!

**In choosing your next horse, what would you look for?** A horse just like Cowboy would be good!