



Personality Profile: Marilyn Lucas- Appaloosa Sport Horse Magazine Advertising Representative



Marilyn Lucas and Koko Misty

The first time I picked up Appaloosa Sport Horse Magazine, I said to myself, "Oh, another horse magazine." To my surprise, I couldn't put the magazine down. The articles hit home and I found them down to earth which extremely interested me. When I came to the end, "Make New Friends And Influence People," well that was for me! I can talk horses from sun up to sun down, even on Sundays. I might as well have a phone for an ear. Talking on the phone is easy and this seemed like a good opportunity to meet horse people from all over. All those ears to bend!

What starts out to be a routine phone call turns into much more. I'm truly interested in what that person thinks of ApSHA, and why for the good or bad. I want to learn all I can about their horses and lifestyles. I relate my lifestyle with horses to theirs. This is no longer just a phone call, it's one friend talking to another. I've made friends from Florida to Virginia. I'm in the midwest, Illinois. I feel very close to a lot of people over the phone. I have invitations to visit horse lovers from all over the nation and I hope to visit as many as possible. There is a special rapport, a binding relationship you acquire talking to people. I hear about the good times, great shows, fantastic horses and also the sad times, injuries and bad luck in some cases. My heart pours out to them as if I had been part of their lives from start to finish. I feel lucky to be meeting so many new people. I'm thrilled to have met all of you. You've brightened my life! I'm glad to know I have so many friends in the World of horses.



Dressage, the Perfect Sport for "Ko Ko Misty", by Marilyn Lucas

Dressage riding has certainly made quite a difference in me and my Appaloosa mare. She has a natural ability; a nice way of going. There are times her stubborn streak shows up which makes it difficult training and communicating with that "let me do it my way" kind of attitude. This is where dressage makes the difference.

Let me give you an idea of my background so you will understand why I respect dressage. For as long as I can remember, combined training was my love. Eventing placed me in a 3-point position, shorter stirrups which brought my thigh forward toward the horse's shoulders which sat me on my larger muscles of my thighs. The weight of my lower leg came down through my heels which was always ready to support me when my seat left the saddle in a 2-point position for cross-country or fences. I needed to change my position. Like anyone who's been riding in one field it's like starting from scratch in another. I can only hope to apply some of my old skills!

Dressage isn't new for us, but it takes all my concentration and determination. As well as a dressage

saddle which was first on the list. To make the new way of riding feel normal to my body as the old had been, I ride every day. I keep fighting the tendency to hang on with my calves because of security reasons. Everytime I tighten up, I lost the new feeling of sinking into the saddle and going with the horse's motion that the softer, longer leg gave me. Once I get Ko Ko's motor going I stress the importance of flexibility and suppleness in the neck, throatlatch, and jaw. To supple the front end of Ko Ko I use exercises like flexing the jaw and shoulder - yielding. We spend an enormous amount of time on basics right now. This is where her stubborn streak comes in, and my frustrations. We compromise by warming up with a long hunter frame on the bit using circles and bending exercises at the walk and trot. We continue working right into a more rounded frame and getting a good feel.

We have to develop pace, balance, and rhythm. A suppleness in the jaw and true bending are required for any movement in dressage. You must think about corners, turns at center, leg yieldings, shoulder-in,



haunches-in, a two-track. All these movements require a true bend in the horse to execute the movements correctly. When Ko Ko becomes stubborn, I pick up a posting trot turn her sideways and show her bending and moving sideways will supple her and make the movement effortless and soft. Most of all, correct! By moving her sideways and bending the neck to the stiff side, I teach her to bend and also started two-tracking. There is another exercise, diminishing and enlarging the circle. This too will encourage suppleness and start two-tracking. You sit the trot, keep your rib cage tall and by turning her head to the outside and using your



legs to move her into and out of the circle while staying on the bit and soft thru the mouth and jaw. You gain ground by being persistent with these exercises and soon they become easy. You get obedience and communication with your horse.

Ko Ko Misty is coming along great! She has a power and beauty of movement which gives me a feeling of accomplishment. We have good days and bad, but that's what it's all about. I find my Appaloosa more rewarding to work with. She can be stubborn and strong, but with a little convincing, she becomes obedient, powerful, and beautiful. Her temperament is willing, quick learning and forgiving. Ko Ko Misty is 1/2 thoroughbred and 1/2 Appaloosa which gives her the best of both worlds! She's 12 years old, stands 16.2 hds. and weighs roughly 1300 lbs. Last October 1985, I noticed a problem in Ko Ko's eyesight while jumping a course at a show. In the last eight months Ko Ko has gradually lost her vision. Just recently, she has been classified clinically blind by three veterinarians. No hope with surgery or any change in the future. At first I panicked, then decided we would just keep working together around this obstacle. She's physically and mentally sound and I can be her eyes. I would just have to work harder at riding. I had to gain her trust and communicate better than before. Dressage has made a difference in her attitude. She's become more willing to try new movements. Ko Ko has become more obedient and calm about new environments. Also, using dressage techniques she has gained confidence and we are on the road to better communication for our goal as a TEAM!