

2008 Hall of Fame

SR Magic Man

2008 IQHA Hall of Fame Horse

Ever so often when Doc Koch was at a Michigan horse show, his eyes would land on this big-for-his age halter gelding. The first couple of times, he had to check it out, but soon he knew the horse every time he saw him. It was SR Magic Man, sired by Precedence and out of Readys Misfit, a daughter of Ready Royal. He was bred by the Shelton Ranch in Texas.

Doc liked the colt, so when he got a call from Jeff Alexander at the World Show, he knew the horse Jeff was talking about when he reported that SR Magic Man was for sale to dissolve a partnership.

Just like the words to "Sentimental Journey," Doc packed his bag and got his reservation. It doesn't take long to handle a hot horse shoe, and it didn't take Doc long to look at that horse and write a check.

Sr Magic Man was shown and went fourth, and a few days later, he was waiting at his stall door for somebody to pick him up and take him to Illinois. Mary Hannagan got the privilege of bringing him to Illinois, and she remembers looking at her little cotton lead rope and thinking, "That's a really big horse."

That really big horse had been standing in that World Show stall for several days, and he was ready to leave it in a big way. There was nobody around when she loaded him, and she still remembers Magic taking her down the street a lot faster than she wanted to go. But all's well that ends well and Magic arrived in Illinois safe and sound.

When the Kochs got him home, they quickly became suspicious that the horse had been mishandled—if not abused—somewhere along the line. And they quickly agreed you had to be careful. He never really bit, but it seemed he was always trying to taste somebody. You really had to watch him.

One day Jeff Alexander was working on Magic with Lea Ann holding his lead. She was not only holding his lead...she was eating a chocolate chip cookie. And as Magic looked and sniffed, he got really interested in that cookie, so Lea Ann carefully gave him one.

It would be great to say that one cookie changed that horse's total attitude. It didn't work that way, but it did lead those who worked with Magic—in the ring as well as outside and at home—to always have something handy to pop in his mouth for safety's sake. And it worked. Soon he got with the program and was an easy horse to work with. But Jeff and everybody who hauled him or showed him were certain their pockets were loaded when they were dealing with Magic.

Something worked. When Magic's career was over, he was the All-Time Leading Amateur Halter Point-Earning Gelding with 788.5 points, and that was enough to make him third in the All-Time Open Gelding competition. And during his entire campaign with Doc and Lea Ann, Magic was only sick once and only missed one class when he got a little colicky with some new hay he was fed. He was sound every day and was still sound when he died..

And Magic's career had some stellar highpoints during the years he was shown. Probably the best indicator was the World Show. He was World Champion Amateur Aged Gelding once with Lea Ann and was Reserve another time. He was also High Point Open Gelding twice and High Point Amateur Gelding once. In addition, he was Reserve Grand Amateur Gelding at Congress and had a string of circuit championships.

Much of his career unfolded in Illinois, but he was also shown in Michigan, Virginia, Alabama, Arizona and Colorado. And given the number of points he won, he won almost everywhere he went.

Lea Ann had a great run with Magic, but she is well aware that any horse that wins at Magic's level has a team of important people who made the entire campaign happen. She thanks her dad for finding and buying the horse; Jeff Alexander and Mike McMillan his trainers, and Bill Rose their long-time horseshoer. It does take a team to make successful campaigns happen.

After Magic retired, he had a good two years with the Kochs there on the north side of Highway 34 on the west edge of Oswego. They found him dead one day as a result of a heart attack, so he had a good life until the day he died.

