

Shandi 1977 - 2004

Some sad news to share.

On October 2, 2004, Shandi passed away during the night. I last saw Shandi alive on Friday, October 1st when I fed at night and she was prancing around waiting for her supper. When I went to feed on the morning of Saturday Oct. 2nd I found her down in the run in shed with Silvertip (her friend and companion for the last 3 years) standing guard over top of her. My heart sank and I knew immediately she had passed away as Shandi in the last few years never did lay down. As I entered the shelter, Silvertip nickered softly and moved out as if he knew his vigil was over and he left her in my care watching from a respectful distance.



Shandi was featured in Horse Country magazine twice, the American Mustang Magazine once, a book written by Norma Bearcroft entitled 'Wild Horses of Canada', the Canadian Geographic documentary shown on Discovery Channel Canada 'The Last Wild Mustangs' and is to be featured in an upcoming book about Canadian human-wildlife interactions by Roxanne Willems Snopek a freelance writer and author based in Abbotsford, BC. Shandi also was known by many people as a 'poster horse' for wild horses in Canada especially Colonial Spanish Horses and the fight to preserve them, with her image and story being used by more than a few websites.

Unfortunately we never had a foal off of Shandi and Silvertip. Shandi was unable to conceive because of Equine Cushing's Disease, which she contended with over the last 4 years of her life. Her line and the possibility of a truly unique Canadian line of Colonial Spanish Horses dies with her unless others like her are found and preserved.

As I thought about it more then likely her greatest accomplishment while not in the show ring was her work career. In the first two summers I had her (age 8 and 9) she put on approximately 3000 miles each summer (approximately 6000 miles total in two years) as a guide horse. It wasn't until after I finished going over her life with a friend that we worked out the mileage and from her picture (Shandi late August 1985) you can see that she was fit. And in doing so she did what no other guide horse did and that was never miss a scheduled day of work.



(Shandi late August 85)

Shandi was also used on cattle both for fun and work, and while not as big as most roping horses she did have an innate sense of what to do. Which is why I started to probe into her background, I sort of thought maybe I had a horse who had lost her papers or maybe had a ranch history, how wrong I was and it was for the better.



Shandi did mostly promotional events after an injury to her right knee, the World of Horses and Rare Breed shows mostly, plus a few privately scheduled showings for classes, 4 H groups and such. Not to mention others using her on websites, books, one documentary and a few magazine stories.

I suppose her greatest legacy would be the response from the people running the Friends of the Nemiah Valley project and the Wild Horses of Alberta Society that because of her they got interested and motivated with their causes. And selfishly as I sit here and write this, weeks after burying her, I would almost trade that legacy for having her back. We have been privileged by having her enter our lives and utterly heart broken at losing her. She shall be missed.

'She had the heart and pride of a warrior, the beauty and grace of a classical dancer, and the intelligence and soul of a bard.'

Steve & Lynn Howlett