

20 QUESTIONS

... about your life with Arabian horses ... with SYDNEY YOUNG



1 What is your current involvement with Arabian horses?

I currently own two beautiful Arabian horses, and show one of them in ATR Hunter Pleasure. Outside the show ring, I am the past Region 17 Youth Director, currently the AHYA Treasurer, Canadian Nationals Youth Committee Chair, Region 17 Youth Coordinator, and the Regional Youth Team Tournament Secretary.

2 How many years have you been around horses?

I have been around Arabian horses for 14 years.

3 They say, "the Arabian horse finds you". How did the Arabian horse find you?

I started riding for fun when I was 6 years old, down the road from my house with Diane Comeau who was 12 at the time. I am very fortunate to have had my first horse experience with an Arabian.

4 Who is or has been your favorite horse companion?

I couldn't pick a favourite out of my horses. They have all been blessings to my life in their own unique ways. The two horses I currently own would be the top two. I have had my mare City Dance for 9 years and Texas for one year. They are both equally special to me, and each for their own completely different reasons.

5 Who has been your (horse) mentor?

I grew up in the horse world with Michelle Hansen as my trainer and mentor. Inside and out of the show ring she has taught me nearly everything I know about horses and the Arabian horse world.

6 What is your favorite horse book?

My favorite horse book would be the ENTIRE pony pals series. I read every single one. All 44 of them.

7 What is your favorite horse movie?

My favourite horse movie is Secretariat. I cry tears of happiness every time I watch him cross the finish line.

8 What are some 'Arabian horse activities' in which you participate?

As Youth Director, I have been fortunate to attend three board meetings a year. One in Denver, one at the

AHA Convention and one at Youth Nationals. At the Region 17 Championship Show I arrange lots of activities every year which I and all the other youth have fun participating in. This year there was a Dunk Tank, Trainer Egg and Spoon Class, Silent Auction Fundraiser, Tie Dye Pizza Party, and lots of fun in the evenings at the stalls. I also participate in AHA's TAIL tours that happen at our national shows. These tours are for the public to learn more about who we are and what we do. As the Canadian National Youth Committee Chair I also plan and organize activities at Canadian Nationals similar to those at the regional show. Outside volunteering I have shown in every discipline except english and park.

9 What would be your most memorable experience or moment with an Arabian horse?

My most memorable experience with the arabian horse would have to be the last time I rode my horse City Dance in the show ring. City and I spent a good four years butting heads and not getting along in the show ring. It was a long journey to reach common ground with that horse. And that day, I rode the horse of my dreams down the chute into the national ring for the last time. I entered the ring with tears streaming down my face and a smile that made my jaw cramp. I saw all my friends in the stands cheering with tears running down their cheeks as well. It was a big class, but those 10 minutes felt like City and I were the only ones in the ring. I was a dysfunctional crying mess on her back so City took it upon herself to perform in that class all on her own. We came out with a top 10 and a 5th place finish. I'll never forget the feeling of that last victory lap and all the support from my cheering show family in the stands.

10 What has been your greatest achievement with your Arabian horse(s) so far?

My greatest achievement with my Arabian horse so far would have to be winning reserve national champion with Texas this year in my last JTR Hunter class.

11 Which horse do you consider to be your "dream" horse, either past or present?

My dream horse would be City Dance+/. We didn't win many championships, but the partnership I have with that horse is one a girl could only dream of. She is my rock.

12 Horses are amazing teachers. What has your horse taught you that has helped you become a better person?

Patience. Persistence. Perseverance. Working with horses has taught me that absolutely nothing is achieved for free. They taught me to work hard, set goals and chase them. They taught me to believe in myself, never get discouraged and pursue my wildest dreams. In 2010 I decided that I wanted to take my little crabby chestnut mare to Scottsdale. My mom and my trainer both had their concerns, and we set out to look for a new horse so I could go to Scottsdale. My absolute undying love for my horse kept my heart set on taking HER and nobody else. After a few months of hard training, we were on the way to Arizona, and a week later we were decorated in every class we entered. My horses have also taught me that everything I do has an affect on my life. They kept me out of trouble as I got older, because I knew I had a few four-legged family members that counted on me being a good person with a bright future. I truly own everything to my horses.

13 What is the best thing about working and playing with your Arabian horse?

The best thing about working with the arabian horse is they are everything but conventional. They are always thinking and plotting and analyzing everything around them. They have their own unique way of doing everything and most days all you can do is laugh at the horse that has shimmied his way out of a four strap winter blanket. They keep my world interesting.

14 What would you say to a person considering buying a horse to encourage them to purchase an Arabian?

An Arabian will be your teammate, teacher and friend, in and out of the show ring. They will challenge you to be the best, and support you when you may not have the energy. They will teach you to be the best rider you can be, and make you work every second of it. Outside the show ring, they make a great companion on the trails and they are willing to learn any new tricks you may teach them. Truly the most versatile breed.

15 What is your advice to someone, "brand new," considering becoming involved with horses?

My advice to anyone considering getting involved with horses is to reach out to the community for any information or help you might need. There's lots of resources to get a hold of people around you involved with the breed, and I know for sure nobody would be annoyed by questions!

16 Is there a favorite reference book you'd like to share?

I don't think I have a favourite reference book, although growing up I read my AHA Equitation Manual more than my math textbook.

17 What is the one thing you'd like to do that you haven't done yet?

I would like to compete at US Nationals. That is my next big goal!

18 What about "kids" and an Arabian horse?

I can only speak from experience, but growing up with an arabian horse was the most challenging yet rewarding experience. My horse tested my skills and limits in every way, and gave me the world when I finally "got it right". I could never cut corners or my horse would sure let me know. Owning an arabian horse as a kid definitely made me into the best rider I could be.

19 Why do you think you get such a "rush" being around or riding your Arabian horse(s)?

You absolutely never know what to expect. It's not consistent like riding a bike. You have 1000lb of attitude beneath you, and the thrill comes from figuring out each day how you are going to finesse the horse's energy. It's almost more mentally challenging than physically.

20 What are your words to live by?

"Just be" meaning just live in the moment, be who you are, don't regret the past and don't worry about the future. Be exactly who you want to be, and live how you want to live. ■

