

Agracie Girl V and Stars And Stripes SF

by Cindy Reich

Nan Walden of Rancho Sonado LLC had a very satisfying Scottsdale show in the trail horse division, taking the Half-Arabian Trail ATR Championship on Stars And Stripes SF (Allionces Knight x Starry Spumoni), both the ATR and AOTR purebred trail championships with Agracie Girl V (Sundance Kid V x Amazing Grace V), and capped off the show by winning the open trail championship on Agracie Girl!

"Gracie is my dream horse — to me, the epitome of an Arabian mare," Nan says. "She is brave, smart, and playful, yet so kind and affectionate. She has a special love for children and is so gentle, especially with those who are frail or in wheelchairs. She will stretch her head down to the ground for 20 minutes or more so children can hug and pet her.

"For some insight into how special this mare is, we were invited to a couples ride sponsored by the Rancheros in California. With no warm-up, Gracie and I negotiated a ranch trail course that included walking down a 12-foot chute of plastic water bottles with a raised pole at the end, going over a huge teeter-totter, under and through a plastic flap carwash obstacle, and dragging a dallied sack of tin cans behind her. We had never practiced any of those things before, and she was the only horse out of 60 that did them all cleanly, and the only purebred Arab competing! After watching me on Gracie and my husband, Dick, on Stars And Stripes SF, John Branquinbo, patriarch of the famous rodeo champion family said, 'Nan, you and Dick have the two prettiest and the two best-trained horses here.' I was so excited to have that compliment from a lifelong working western, Quarter Horse legend!"

While Gracie has many National and Regional trail championships, Nan is most proud of Agracie being a Scottsdale Reserve Champion Sport Horse in-Hand. "Because she is not just athletic, but correct and beautiful. It might also



From left to right: Champion Trail Open, AOTR, and ATR **Agracie Girl V** (Sundance Kid V x Amazing Grace V), with Nan Walden; Champion Half-Arabian Trail ATR and Reserve Champion Half-Arabian Trail **Stars And Stripes SF** (Allionces Knight x Starry Spumoni) with trainer Courtney Spicer; and Top Ten Half-Arabian Trail Horse ATR **Duns Smokey Lady** (Were Dun x Zerrett) with Dick Walden. All horses owned by Rancho Sonado LLC, Sahuarita, Arizona.

interest people to know that Dick has roped and branded cattle on Gracie. The cowboys on Quarter Horses at our ranch dared Dick to rope off Gracie hoping to see their boss in a rodeo. When Dick roped cattle with her the first time, he was concerned she might shy, especially when the calf was taken to the branding fire and branded. But he said she just pointed those lovely ears and took in the smoke and smells and the whole scene. Finally after several calves, Dick's arm got tired (it had been a while since he had roped) and he missed a few. She looked at him, as if to say, 'Get another one, this is fun!'

"We are breeding her to *Jullyen El Jamaal this season to pass on her great athletic ability and beauty!

"Stars And Stripes SF (Allionces Knight x Starry Spumoni) is very dexterous with his lips," continues Nan, "and can spring himself and his barn mates if we don't clip the latch. He went on the annual Rancheros Visitadores ride in Santa Barbara County with Dick and did great in the Parade with 900-1,000 horses, wagons, and flags and banners galore. He did well in all their competitions including ranch trail which has such obstacles as ponying a burro

across a stream, walking up to a longhorn steer and petting it, picking up a chicken in a crate, and carrying a life-sized plastic blow-up doll in front of you on the saddle!

"Stars And Stripes has a bit of white around one eye and seems to be winking at the girls. He loves to nuzzle ladies' hair, but never nips. He does western pleasure, sidesaddle, and also will push or sort cows, but his favorite thing is trail. He loves being ridden out and is also very gentle with kids and inexperienced riders. He is extremely patient with them.

"Like every show, not all the top trainers and riders are all there. However, with Scottsdale, it is always inspiring and educational when top trainers like Lou Roper, Michael Damianos, Jill Mitchell, Jessica Bein, Scott Scheyli, Kathy Bast, and Amanda Borduin all compete at the same show. One thing we love about trail is that people are really collegial and supportive of each other. As someone who did not have the opportunity to ride and show as a kid, and who got her first horse quite late in life, I especially appreciate how encouraging both the pros and amateurs have been to me. Dick and Courtney feel the same way."