

Stars Wildfire SL

ICAA F4-2715

Submitted by Linda Hokanson

I purchased Pratt Double Secret in the spring of 2010. She travelled all the way from Red Hills Ranch in southern Oregon to west central Alberta, a very long journey! I had been forewarned by her previous owner that she was very difficult to catch, so it came as no surprise when this proved to be true. I felt so bad for her when she finally got here. When I opened the trailer door to bring her out to her new home, she was huddled as far to the front of the trailer as possible looking so lost and terrified. I had decided to keep her in the round pen for the first while which would allow me to work with her a bit. She made it very clear that people were NOT her favorite and would run to the opposite side of the pen when anyone approached. So, my first objective was to get her to trust us and be caught. We soon found that she was unfamiliar with grain, no clue about those yummy horse cookies and really did not like to be touched. There has to be some incentive to want to associate with humans, so we went to work getting her to like the goodies. It took some time but soon she had the taste for the cookies well established. Step by step we finally got her to take them from our hands. We still did not try to



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touch her yet. I then began to work with her in the round pen, teaching her to face me etc. After a few sessions she was ok with me approaching her and resigned herself to be caught, which I refused to do. She was puzzled at first and didn't understand why I hadn't grabbed her halter when she submitted but in only on more session, she offered herself completely and happily, then I took hold of her halter and lead her a few steps before releasing her again. Progress was very rapid after that, she got to love being touched & groomed and we could catch her anywhere. Once this was all done, it was into breeding season. I loved this mare's conformation and her mind. I decided to breed her to my ICAA registered black leopard stallion, Stars Fim Koppur for a four generation foundation bred foal.

On May 11, 2011 she delivered a gorgeous black leopard colt in the middle of a huge windstorm that had sparked a mega wildfire that destroyed half of a community (Slave Lake) north of us hence his name, Stars Wildfire SL. I was worried that

Oreo would be aggressive and uncomfortable foaling in our facility since she was used to foaling out in a large pasture. Worry was needless, she was more than happy to have me "assist" which involved standing and watching LOL. She delivered close to midnight, healthy foal and all normal. He was a beauty and I felt a special attachment, felt he was very special. I loved his look and his personality. Really wanted to keep him. But, as a yearling he was sold as a prospective herd sire and I swallowed my feelings. His new owner nicely kept me posted on his development and he did sire some very nice foals for her. But, in 2015 she decided that the breeding game was not for her and sold all her broodmares. She then contacted me in the spring of 2016 to offer me first choice on Wildfire. I had lost his sire in March to colic so was open for another stallion. He came back to us in June of 2016. In the meantime several things had changed and we had decided to no longer breed as well. We made the decision to keep him anyways and had him gelded. We can always use a good riding horse! Wildfire & I attended his first clinic in July with a superb clinician, Josh Nichol of A Horseman's Pursuit, to ensure we got off to a very solid start in training (the previous owners had done little to no training). He is an extremely intelligent horse, learns very fast & has that wonderful "what's next?" attitude. Plus, he is very beautiful to look at and possesses fantastic natural carriage. Everyone fell in love with him which is not often the case with our Appaloosas, he is a tremendous ambassador for the breed.



Josh Nichol & Wildfire July 2016

"This horse is the result of years of commitment, hard work and breeding knowledge"Josh



Wildfire with Greg Czech



He went to a trainer in the fall (I am getting to the age where I am no longer comfortable with first rides, very hard after starting my own horses for the past 56 years!) and won over another fan! Winter has been frustrating as I am anxious to carry on with his training but the weather is not cooperating at all! But spring is just around the corner and I am really looking forward to putting some miles on this beautiful boy! We are booked into two clinics with excellent teachers and have several group rides planned. I am looking forward to many years of enjoying this ICAA gelding!