

Darla Kennepohl

Darla seems to have a natural talent for training barrel horses...Is it a natural talent or the result of good ole hard work and determination? Or is it a combination of both? Either way, in the end, the result would ultimately be the same. Her dedication has earned Darla a long list of accomplishments. Let's find out more....

"I have a burning desire to be on the back of a horse"

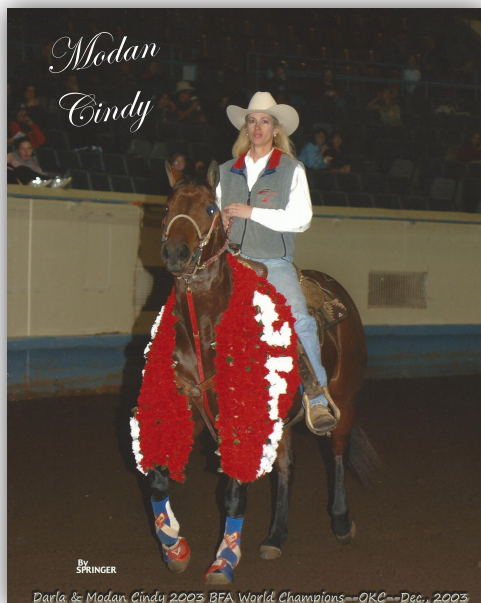
I grew up in Deer Trail, Colorado, a small town on the eastern plains with my parents and 4 siblings. I did not come from a rodeo family or family that "knows" horses. My sister and I both had a horse, but neither one of them were bred to do anything-we just rode them. We didn't even own a trailer. So quite frankly, I don't even know how we got the horses home. My mother is deathly afraid of horses and still to this day dislikes the fact that I ride young ones every day. I have always loved horses and continue to have a burning desire to be on the back of a horse. I was not able to have a barrel horse until I was out of the house and married. I purchased a 3 year old and we both learned together. Today my husband and I reside in Kiowa, CO. We have three children: Justin 23, Erica 21 and Logan 15. I enjoy camping, hiking and doing stuff with my family.



Photo courtesy www.SeanHalverson.com

What barrel racer got you started? I attended a Gary and Judy Townsend Barrel Racing Clinic. I believe this couple had worked for Martha Josey so they were teaching Martha's style. Loved it!!

The horse that launched her career... I won the AQHA World on Designer Red in 2002 then followed that up with a little mare that I had trained named Modan Cindy. I won AQHA Res World Champion and the BFA Year End World Championship, as well as AQHA Best of Americas Horse on her.



*Modan
Cindy*

By SPRINGER

Darla & Modan Cindy 2003 BFA World Champions--ORC--Dec., 2003

*Designer
Red*



Do you have a bucket list? I have always played the futurity game...so I would like to try a few rodeos.... Greeley, Cheyenne and Pendleton to name a few.

VF FAMES LIL RED

“Beetle”, the horse I currently compete on, is a 7 year old gelding that we bred and raised. He is by Designer Red out of a daughter of Dash Ta Fame. I started riding him after he had 30 days put on him. He doesn’t like it when you approach him too quickly-he wants to come to you. He doesn’t like his winter blankets.....he destroys 3 or 4 a year. I use normal rim shoes. I warm him up in the same bit I compete in; a large twisted wire snaffle. I also use a German martingale during a warm up but I take it off to run. My daily exercise program consists of a lot of circles. I will walk the barrel pattern once or twice on him. I do different things on different horses depending on their strong points and weak points. As far as hauling goes, I haven’t traveled more than about 800 miles at a time; so when I load...I roll on ...no stopping.



Beetle & Darla

Click the photo to view a run!

“I have never bought one already going on the barrels”

BLOODLINES & TRAINING

My favorite bloodlines include Dash Ta Fame, Designer Red, and Sticks An Stones; but I am definitely not opposed to riding anything that wants to try for you. I buy off the track or just broke to ride; it doesn’t really matter. It has to be broke though...I am definitely not a colt breaker and don’t claim to be. I have never bought one already going on the barrels. I have always made my own. When I start them, I know that they have had a substantial amount of rate and patterning put in them. When I train one, they WILL turn barrels.

I don’t have any help so I normally ride 8-10 horses. I feed and clean all my own stalls, so I cannot do justice to more than that. I like to start one of my own every year and the rest are client horses. I can finish a horse on barrels in approximately 7-9 months, start to finish.... depending on the horse. They will be SOLID!!

GOALS

One of my long-term goals would be to continue to train horses that anyone can ride and win on. And a short-term goal would be to win a slot race.

PREFERENCES

I prefer to stay in a snaffle. I feel like I can get more bend with one. I also use a Loomis gag for bend and flex and it helps get them on their rear. I like some sort of a short shank like a junior cow horse for those that I need just a little more control. I have definitely had horses though that force me to try other bits. I love my Court’s Allene Mourne saddle. It’s heavy but feels good to sit in every day. I use my Steinhoff or Shiloh saddle to compete in because they are lighter.

I feed Purina Ultium Competition and alfalfa hay. I supplement with...FORCO. It works!! It helps keep their digestive tract in order. I think that you can “kill them with kindness” if you’re not careful with all the supplements. Seems that a lot of people think you can win by putting them on supplements...they need to be rode!

Continue....

Watch Videos of Darla at work while sharing a training tip:

Once again I lope a LOT of circles. Watch the two videos showing me loping around the 1st and 2nd barrels. I start my every day routine with a walk through the barrel pattern and then lope around each barrel in the way that you would turn it. I use this exercise as a warm up as well as a training exercise... "killing 2 birds with 1 stone". I start with a big circle and then spiral down and turn each barrel like you would while making a pattern. I truly feel that if you lope them long enough until you feel them "come down to earth" and soften before you make your final circle that they learn to "hunt" the turn; hence rewarding them by moving on to the next barrel. Then I go to the next...and lope around that barrel in the direction that you would in a run. If the horse wants to shoulder in, you can correct them and keep loping a fluid circle. If you've got a horse that gets really nervous when you get down to a smaller circle; either hold them there until they relax or move them back out a little until they relax and then work on getting smaller. The key is to do your circles correctly, no bowing out or pushing/shouldering in. I like to keep it positive. If you know your horse has an issue just keep reinforcing it correctly every day versus getting into a fight with them and trying to fix it all at once. Habits are created after a period of time so if your horse has a bad habit, just remember that it takes 3 times as long doing it correctly to change that habit. Horses learn by repetition. I go through the barrel pattern every day 3-6 times (depending on the horse) at a walk or trot quietly and correctly. I don't like to run my horses at home. When they are first learning, you have to lope them through so they learn how to handle themselves. Once they know that it is a speed event and they know how to handle themselves at a run, I don't run them at home. Every horse only has so many runs in them and why use them up when you don't need to... A very good friend/trainer also is a firm believer that "speed kills". Most people feel they need to run their horse at home because they are not confident in themselves or their horse. Be positive!

Modan Third Rock & Darla
run the fastest time of 1400
entries & set an arena record at
OKC with a 14.834



GIVING THANKS

I want to thank my husband for his support. A big thank you goes to Tom & Vickie Stockton for providing a beautiful facility. Mile Hi Barrel Horse Association for their great events. And, last but not least, I would like to thank all my clients for having faith in me!

LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2013 Mile Hi Barrel Horse Assoc Winter Series Champion.
2013 Mile High Barrel Horse Assoc. Year End Res Champion
2013 Bonus Race Finals Qualifier
2013 BBR 1D Finalist
2013 BBR Year End 1D Top 10
2013 AQHA World Show Qualifier – Senior Barrels
2013 Trained the 2013 Josey Junior World Champion
2012 AQHA World Show Qualifier - Junior Barrels
2012 BFA World Championship Derby 3rd Avg
2010 BFA Super Stakes Top 10
2010 LG Pro Classic Slot Race money earner
2009 Trained the 2009 \$100,000 Super Stakes Res Champion & LG Pro Classic Sale Futurity Champion
2009 LG Sale Futurity Avg money winner
2008 AQHA World Show Qualifier – Junior Barrels
2007 Trained the 2007 Ft Smith Futurity Champion, West Virginia Futurity Champion and BFA Res World Champion
2006 Fort Smith Futurity Finalist on 2
2006 AQHA World Show Top 10 – Junior Barrels
2006 BFA World Show Finalist on 2
2006 Speedhorse Gold Cup fastest time of over 1400 runs posting a 14.834 OKC, OK (ARENA RECORD)
2005 Trained the 2005 \$100,000 Pro Tour Champion.
2005 Trained the 2005 AQHA World Show Qualifier – Junior Barrels, IBRA Res Champion, Fastest Time of Good Times Futurity
2003 World Show Qualifier – Senior Barrels
2003 AQHA Res World Champion – Junior Barrels
2003 BFA Year End World Champion
2003 AQHA Best of Americas Horse
2003 Speedhorse Gold Cup Finalist
2003 High Prairie Round Up Futurity Res Champion
2002 BFA Derby Year End Res World Champion
2002 Ardmore Derby Champion
2002 AQHA World Champion – Senior Barrels
2002 Cowboy Times Futurity Finalist
2001 AQHA World Show Qualifier – Senior Barrels
2001 Speedhorse Non Pro Finals
2001 Speedhorse Non Pro Derby High Money Earner



Photo courtesy www.SeanHalverson.com

Darla not only wins on her own horses but several clients are also winning on horses she has started.

To find out more visit:

SDKBarrelHorses@yahoo.com * 720-498-4194 * www.SDKBarrelHorses.com