

## Oh Happy Day! Wally Gets a Shoe and I Get a New Horse

By **Cindy Hale**

March 25, 2009

In a few minutes I'm heading over to my parents' place to meet up with Ed, our farrier. He's going to nail Wally's front shoe back on, now that the Hoof Abscess from Hell is beginning to heal. I'm eager to see how much of Wally's hoof has to be cut away in the process, which will help determine how long it'll be before I can ride him again.

In the meantime, as you can see by the photo above, I acquired another horse. I know, you're probably thinking, "Wow! That happened fast!" But in reality, this little 3-year-old Paint gelding was one of the first horses I looked at during the beginning of my horse hunt. It was love at first sight: Joey is the perfect size (15-hands), he has excellent conformation (he placed 4th at the big APHA halter futurity as a yearling), he's been in professional training for a year, and he comes from the same training barn as Wally. I knew that I could trust the trainer because she'd been so upfront about all of Wally's idiosyncrasies. My husband, Ron, just fell in love with Joey, too. I think that was mostly because Joey has the disposition of an overgrown Golden Retriever. Yet I'd promised EVERYONE, including my vet, my sister and all of my horsey friends, that I'd look at more than just a few horses before deciding. Indeed I did, and yet every time I inspected or rode a horse, I kept going back to Joey.

The only things that prevent Joey from pursuing a career in the show pen as a western pleasure mount are his size and his movement. To win in the major divisions at the large APHA shows, the western pleasure horses have to be at least 16 hands. Joey will never make that, thank God! They also need to move with long, low, sweeping strides. Joey is not a bad mover, he just has too much knee action. But none of those traits prevent him from being a lovely horse for recreational riding. So, to make a long, tortuous story short... After much whining and moaning about all the unsuitable horses I'd been looking at, my husband bought Joey for me. I believe he actually said, "I'm buying the horse this time around, so it's going to be one that I like. And I like Joey." Fine with me! What made it even better was that the owner was also Joey's breeder, and she wanted Joey to go to a good home. Because the trainer vouched for how well I cared for Wally, Ron and I were able to negotiate a little on Joey's price, which was nice, because originally he was a little above our budget.

Today, after I rode Joey in the arena, I rode down the trail. Those he's only 3, Joey just cruised along, not minding the barking dogs nor the traffic along the street. His ears were up and his head was down as he just strolled down the bridle path. As we turned the corner we came upon a gentleman who was riding a very fancy buckskin mare. I said good morning to the man and he smiled at me and Joey and then said, "Now that's a happy Paint horse." Indeed, Joey is a happy Paint horse. And I'm the happy owner of another horse. Now I can split my riding time between Joey and Wally, and (hopefully) keep all three of us sound and content. I just hope Wally will be happy to see that he has a little brother!

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