

## Magical Horses Come to Life

By Cindy Hale

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I have to figure that if you're visiting HorseChannel then you were once a horse crazy kid. If so, then you probably grew up drawing horses on every surface that would accept the scrawling of a crayon, pencil, paintbrush or indelible felt tip pen. I remember filling up sketchpads with panoramic scenes of race horses galloping to the finish line, their nostrils flared, their hooves outstretched in a full gallop. It was always a photo finish and only I, the omnipresent artist, could determine who won. How? I'd simply make one horse's nose longer by a tad and that would be the horse that visited the winner's circle on the next page.

Once I got in a whole lot of trouble in my seventh grade homeroom. My teacher caught me drawing a mustang on my desk. I'm not sure what clued her in: the fact that I was not paying attention to the daily reading of the school bulletin, or the fact that I had graphite smudges on both my elbows. But when she handed me a sponge and a canister of Bab-O (a gritty industrial strength cleanser), and instructed me to clean my desk of its equine mural, I was heartbroken.

Did you draw horses and ponies, mustangs and race horses, show jumpers and broncos when you were a kid? I'm wondering if it's some kind of compulsion when you're a horse lover, especially when you're a horse lover who doesn't have enough real horses in your life. Maybe the act of creating horsey artwork dates back over the eons to when our cave dwelling forefathers drew animals on the walls of their granite dining rooms in hopes that the flesh and blood beasts would appear out their back door in the morning.

"Yum, breakfast! Thank goodness I drew that bison on the wall last night!"

However, even though I have had plenty of horses in my life, and I currently have horses right out my back door, I'm still creating their images. Only now I'm crafting the horsey scenes through mosaics. It takes me forever to finish each project, from the time I sketch out the scene, freehand, to the moment I glue on the last chip of stained glass and slather on the grout. But during the entire process I'm in a blissful trance. It's not only because I'm mesmerized by the process of cutting each tiny piece of angular glass and then dabbing a bit of glue to its back to anchor it in place. It's more the idea that I'm creating yet one more horse in my life, whether it's a dappled gray mare grazing in a pasture or a palomino sipping from a stream.

The one aspect of horse art that I have never mastered—and probably never will—is the anatomically correct human. Occasionally I think, "Gee, maybe I could do a scene of a hunter and its rider jumping a stone wall," or, "I wonder if I should do a cowboy on his Paint galloping after a steer."

But alas, I cannot create people who look anything beyond enhanced stick figures. I have absolutely no talent for drawing or mosaicing people. But that's probably a good thing, because who wants to clutter up a perfectly good scene of beautiful horses with just another person in the way? Besides, they might come to life at night. And the last thing I need around my back door are more people.

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