

Riders' Choice Nomination – My Cameo Love

Reliability. Durability. Dependability. Longevity. Efficiency. These are the reasons you should vote for My Cameo Love for Riders' Choice this year. At 32, she is the oldest horse competing in UMECRA events and has been competing continuously since 1999. "To finish is to win" – and Cameo is still here at the finish line after all these years, fit to continue.

A horse that has shown its ability to overcome setbacks. Cameo found her calling as a distance horse as a teenager but she has had a lengthy career nonetheless. She started her job as a distance horse in 1999 as a 15 year old a couple of years after recovering from a colic surgery that involved removal of 8 feet of her large colon and advice from the vets at the U of MN that she'd probably never do anything particularly high-octane again. After a 3-week hospital stay, several blood transfusions, more liters of lactated Ringers than I care to remember, and an extended period of convalescence during which she got down to 675 pounds, she was good to go.

A horse that has been a consistent competitor. **Cameo has completed at least one UMECRA event every year for the last 18 years (most years full seasons).** Every time I think about retiring her, she comes up with a plan to avoid it.

- 2000: UMECRA rookie competitive top 5 in a very competitive rookie year!
- 2004: 1000 mile award
- 2002-2005: Mentors my new weanling Gold to camp, pony, and trail ride.
- 2006: Gold breaks ankle; Cameo continues to be my go-to horse.
- 2006 (age 22): Completes her first 50 endurance
- 2007: Switches to Limited Distance.
- 2008 (age 24): Shows novice Phil Jansen the ropes, scores 9 & 2 at the vet checks, and wins Reserve Champion UMECRA novice as well as her own 2000 mile award.
- 2011 (age 27): Pretty much teaches herself how to drive. Loves it.
- 2012: Starts competing in Midwest Distance Driving Association events and is MDDA Rookie of the Year
- 2012-2015: UMECRA Drive Top 5 for the last 4 years. No wrecks.
- **Versatility: Cameo was the first UMECRA equine ever to complete events in all divisions: endurance, limited distance, competitive, novice, and driving.**

Any horse, for any reasons the nominator admires and feels is a superior representative of the "Distance Horse." A good distance horse should love her job and do it with enthusiasm, and preferably without excessive drama. Cameo is always ready to try her best at whatever I ask her to do. Although she is occasionally too afraid to do something, she never just "doesn't wanna." She also has remarkable self-preservation skills and adjusts her own speed according to weather and trail conditions so she doesn't overheat or get hurt. She has NEVER been lame for more

than a rare day or two the entire time I'd had her. I remember only two occasions when Cameo did not complete a ride – once another horse kicked her and another time new hoof boots chewed up her pasterns. Neither was her fault and both times she was good to go the following weekend.

Cameo's not a Ferrari. She's not super flashy or super fast. But I can pull her out of the pasture and know that she'll get the job done, efficiently and reliably, without a lot of fuss. She loads and hauls nicely, is an excellent camper, and stands quietly for the vet check. . At this point she can probably vet herself in and out without me. She doesn't need loads of electrolytes and supplements and poultices (although, lacking many of her teeth, she does now require a special diet of wet senior feed and beet pulp). She lives outside 24/7 year-round and she doesn't even wear shoes. She just continues steadily down the trail, year after year, with her ears up.

Respectfully submitted by Cameo's longtime person,

Sharon Hahn