

Hi Guys

I have only been with WES for a couple of months so please bear with me. Along with my girls we have always been involved in English riding but had become so disillusioned with it that I decided to try Western. The first thing was getting a horse as my old pony, at the time, was 27 and retired and I had an offer of a 5-year-old, Spanish Mustang mare, who would be the first mare in the United Kingdom coming over from Wyoming. As they are on the endangered list, I decided to kill two birds with one stone and buy her. Unfortunately she did not weather quarantine well due to this breed being continually mistaken for the BLM mustangs that roam wild in America. Subsequently when she arrived she was very frightened and had a cut over one eye and once we took the headcollar off we could not get it back on. I have to thank Brian Sinnett, the WES trainer from Prestbury for his help in this as it took him over three hours on a dark Sunday night with him constantly looking at a pair of hooves aimed in his direction and hooking a rope over her neck to be able to get a headcollar on her. It took another year of patience and love before she started to come good, although still nervous with men, she was backed with Brian's help and we turned her away for 6 months just to enjoy life and get used to her surroundings. Even things like cars which we take for granted, to her was a strange horse-eating beast not to be trusted!! She is called Nizhoni Nitika which are Native Indian names meaning 'Beautiful Angel of Precious Stones' as she is a rare Blue Dun/Appaloosa.

My old chap died in April this year aged 29, which coincided with me importing a lovely year-old black Sorraia mustang gelding named Dunsmoke Tin Star. He has impeccable breeding, conformation and temperament. He was brought up with children from the day he was born and is such a contrast with his behaviour, is very trusting and craves constant attention! He went through a different quarantine place in fact it was the same quarters that Shania Twain uses and as they had inside knowledge of this breed of horse, he fared a lot better and was in fantastic condition when he arrived which was 11pm at night. He is overly affectionate and downright nosy, charges around like a lunatic in the field without thinking of the consequences especially in the frosty weather we've been enduring but can turn on a sixpence! There are only around a dozen of these lovely horses in the United Kingdom so I feel proud to own two of them and the nearest to me is around 150 miles away!

I found a lovely WES trainer closer to me, Chris Coles, who has formed a bond with Nitika. We had to have a saddle made for her because of her unusual shape but she is now continuing with her training, weather permitting, with Chris and hopefully I will be leaving it to him to get her ready for the big wide world and have great confidence in him!! I will also be seeking Chris's help with Tin Star with hope to introduce him to western this year and any additional advice from you guys who know all the ropes is especially welcome.

As a part of history, these horses hail from the original Indian ponies, and the old Iberian horses of the great conquistadors of Spain. They have very strong bones and hardy feet, very sturdy and agile. They are both part of the Windcross Conservancy project which hopes to preserve these wonderful animals from extinction or just fading into the backgrounds of history and Tin Star is also registered with the American Heritage Horse Association and information about their ancestry and the Spanish Mustang Organisation can be found on the internet.

Enough of my ramblings guys and hope to see you all out and about this year.

If you would like to find out more about Spanish Mustangs and in particular the Sorraia Mustangs check out [www.sorraiamustangs.us](http://www.sorraiamustangs.us) If you look at the "sold horses" page you will see photos of Dunsmoke Tin Star.