

Weaver Ranch

By: Audry Dunn

As the interest in trail riding increases, so does the need for dependable and experienced trail horses. For many people, the search for a good horse can cover many miles and horse lovers can be very picky with both breed and personality. Some, however, simply know a good thing when they see it, or hear about it.

year." After a three-day trailer ride across the country to Virginia, Sly finally met his new owner. Reggie felt he needed to try his new horse out and let him stretch his legs after being cooped up for so long. So a day after Sly arrived in Virginia, Reggie took him on a trail ride through the Great Smoky Mountains where he had the time to find out the personality of his

ability to accept different situations, and are given many opportunities to learn the ins and outs of trail riding. Sly had been used the summer before for everything from herding mares and colts to navigating the rocky, uneven country in search of cattle. Sly went on trail rides with younger, inexperienced horses and as the lead horse he walked them across creeks, through brush and up and down steep hills. Although Sly was a favorite at the Weaver ranch, he learned the same skills as other trail horses. All of the saddle horses are experienced in the mountain country before they are sold and are very adept at maneuvering the trail.

Weaver Quarter Horses is located in the beautiful Bears Paw Mountains outside of Big Sandy, Montana and is owned by Stan and Nancy Weaver. The family runs the ranch and Stan and Nancy's children are the fifth generation of Weavers to live there. Their proven breeding program is based on foundation breed horses with the bloodlines of Kine, Leo, Poco Bueno and Doc Bar. The ranch was the recipient of the 1997 Montana Quarter Horse Ranch of the Year, and their horses have been sold to 28 states and four countries - including Australia and South Africa. The Weavers welcome visitors to the ranch to view the studs and broodmare band, as well as the colts and saddle horses that are sold in the annual production sale. Stan and Nancy can be reached at:

Weaver Quarter Horses
P.O. Box 589
Big Sandy, MT 59520
www.weaverhorses.com



Early morning trail ride on the Weaver Ranch

Reggie Knighten of Virginia wanted to buy a strong, experienced trail horse. He needed a horse he didn't have to train, but yet was not so old that he would only have it for a few years. Since Reggie had two artificial hips, he wanted a gentle horse that could comfortably maneuver the trail, but was easy to handle. Reggie found exactly what he was looking for at a ranch in Montana - almost 2,000 miles away.

On September 19, 1999, Reggie bought a three-year-old gray gelding named Sly from Weaver Quarter Horse's annual production sale by placing a bid over the phone. Reggie had heard about the sale from a friend, and was determined to buy the gray gelding after speaking with owner Stan Weaver and seeing pictures of the horse in both the sale catalog and on the Weaver's popular web site.

"I was looking for a younger horse, but one I didn't have to put a lot of time into," Reggie stated. "It isn't often a person finds a horse that matches them exactly, this was my good luck omen of the

new friend. He was not disappointed. Two hours after the start of the ride Reggie and his party came across a black bear. The bear stood on her hind legs to get a better glimpse of the group, and Sly merely walked up the trail, uninterested and unfazed by anything but the job at hand. After a few days of rocky terrain, crossing creeks and enjoying a multitude of wildlife, Reggie returned home and couldn't have been more pleased with his new purchase.

Two weeks after Reggie bought Sly he was offered twice the amount he paid for him. Reggie declined by saying, "Sly is my made to order horse, he's here to stay."

Sly's personality can be seen as one of a kind, but his capability as a trail horse comes from the treatment and experience that he gained while owned by Weaver Quarter Horses. The Weaver ranch raises well-rounded cow horses that have the



"Sly" purchased at the Weaver Quarter Horse Annual Production Sale