



COWBOY DRESSAGE WORLD OF COLORADO

NEWSLETTER, JULY 2017

COWBOY DRESSAGE WORLD OF COLORADO

COWBOY DRESSAGE IN A NUTSHELL



Jenni Grimmert, DVM

Dr. Jenni Grimmert, DVM and Certified Level 1 Clinician, has allowed us to use a recent blog that does a wonderful job of answering this question: "What is Cowboy Dressage?"

Cowboy Dressage In a Nutshell

My husband Dan and I were recently asked to describe Cowboy Dressage "in a nutshell". I am sure the person inquiring was more interested in getting the short version from a pair of enthusiasts than he was in really hearing the answer but it made me realize that describing Cowboy Dressage in a few words accurately is highly difficult. It's a struggle to try and describe something that is so near and dear to your heart in a way that doesn't tend to border on mystical when you are as passionate as we are! But, it is a conversation that needs to happen more and more as folks look at this growing discipline and wonder if

maybe it is for them. So, maybe you have been asked as well and are looking for some way to provide answers to your inquiring friends. If so, I have provided the internet's favorite approach to frequent queries in the form of the beloved FAQ. I will endeavor to remain completely non-mystical in my descriptions!

1. What is Cowboy Dressage?

Cowboy Dressage is a new discipline in western riding that takes some of the best principles of classical dressage training and applies them to the traditional training of the western horse. It is a method of training and being with your horses that encompasses much more than riding. It is a lifestyle and a commitment to the kindness and partnership with your horse.

2. Isn't Cowboy Dressage and Western Dressage the same thing?

No, no, and double no. I get this question at least once a day and often more than that. They are definitely not the same thing. Cowboy Dressage has actually been around much longer than Western Dressage. Cowboy Dressage began with the unique style of a single horseman, Eitan Beth-Halachmy. Eitan and his winning

Morgan Western Pleasure champion Holiday Compadre introduced what became branded as Cowboy Dressage at the Morgan Grand National show in 1993 during a very entertaining victory lap. Eitan showed that his stallion could as easily go from a western pleasure jog to an extended trot to a reining spin and sliding stop and then a canter pirouette all with soft feel, lightness and partnership. They shattered the rules about what a Western horse was supposed to do and look like and a new style was born. Western Dressage was the first concerted effort to turn Eitan's Cowboy Dressage into a new discipline. Western Dressage was very early on adopted by the USEF and during that process the goals and "look" changed from what Eitan's Cowboy Dressage is meant to be. Western Dressage and Cowboy Dressage are now two separate entities; similar in taking principles of dressage and applying them to western horses but different in their approach, goals, and overall look.

3. Do I have to show to do Cowboy Dressage?

Definitely not. The whole purpose of Cowboy Dressage is to make - continue on page 4 -

Welcome to our first newsletter for Cowboy Dressage World of Colorado!

Our goal is to publish monthly to share information about Cowboy Dressage, introduce our members, and provide a calendar of events..

BRINGING COWBOY DRESSAGE TO YOUR AREA

As Cowboy Dressage becomes more popular in Colorado, we've had many questions about having events in various locations.

Because we are a volunteer organization, we encourage our members to host events in their area to help develop a base of members who are close enough geographically to meet, learn and ride together.

In Colorado, we have several Ambassador/Clinicians that can help with your play days, intro clinics, clinics and fun/schooling shows.

Abby Martin, indigoequestrian-training@gmail.com; Amy Ryals, 303-727-0668; Cody Harrison, 720-312-9139, info@chequine.com; Francine Althoff, falthoff@icloud.com; Leslie Sutherland, 303-366-8558; Marion

Dahlgren, savvyacres@frii.com; Melanie Smith-Brecht, 719-322-3445; Pam Pierce, 970-988-6404.

We have volunteers who can serve as a resource for you in planning your first event. Contact: cowboydressageofco@gmail.com *Deb Cheuvront, 970-818-1127; *Amy Ryals, 303-727-0668; *Marion Dahlgren, 970-372-8665 *Pam Pierce, 970-988-6404

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COWBOY DRESSAGE WORLD OF COLORADO



Melanie Smith-Breidt

Getting to Know You

As part of our monthly newsletter, we will feature an interview with a Cowboy Dressage participant (chosen at random), in an effort to better know our members and horses. Chosen this month was **Melanie Smith-Breidt**, owner and manager of Armada Bay Equestrian Center in Falcon, Colorado. Melanie is a CHA-certified trainer and Master Instructor. She is also a Level I

Member Profile

Cowboy Dressage Clinician.

Please tell us about yourself and your horse.

My journey with horses jumped to a new level when I started riding Armada, my Azteca mare that I had bought at 5 months old. She is so smart and sensitive that I needed to be able to offer her more in the way of clarity, feel, responsibility, etc. She needed me to learn to ride her thought, and then let her take care of maneuvering her body! It has been an amazing journey with her, and I still have a long way to go!

What initially attracted you to Cowboy Dressage?

Soft Feel! In my journey with Armada, I was learning how to better offer a feel to my horses, something you don't

always see in the show world. Cowboy Dressage seemed to be a place I could get out with other like-minded riders and not have to betray my horse in order to be competitive!

How has Cowboy Dressage improved your relationship with your horse?

Cowboy Dressage has helped provide a road map for continuing to develop our relationship. As you work up the tests you develop step-by-step the fundamentals that set you up for success for the upper-level work.

When did you compete in your first Cowboy Dressage show?

How did it go? My first event was to ride in the exhibition at the Rocky Mountain Horse in 2015 in Denver. Armada would get so lost and explo-

sive in new situations, but we had worked really hard and had three days to convince her the big arena was a great place to be. She was perfectly with me when we rode our test, and Eitan's comment was "this is what we are looking for! This is soft feel." I almost cried. We have a long way to go and that was incredible encouragement!

What do you like best about Cowboy Dressage?

The people! Everyone wants what is best for their horse and to be encouraging to others around them! What a great place to be!

Thanks to Laura Cassiday for volunteering to interview our members.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2017

8/6 - CD Clinic with Leslie Sutherland at GLG Performance Horses, Contact Leslie Sutherland, 303/366-8558

8/26 - 9:00 AM CD Schooling Show (fun show), Watkins, CO, Erin Long: caird-eashorsemanship@gmail.com

8/26 - 10:00-12:30 FUN & FUNDamentals, Esh Arena, Nunn, CO, Marion Dahlgren, 970/372-8665, savvyacres@frii.com

8/27 - 2:00-4:00 CD Social at GLG Performance Horses, Loveland, CO, Amy Ryals 303/727-0668

SEPTEMBER 2017

9/5 -9/10 Cowboy Dressage World, Murieta, CA

9/16 - 10:00 -Noon CD Gathering & Demo for Larimer County Horseman's Assoc., Savvy Acres, Pierce, CO, Marion Dahlgren, 970/372-8665, savvyacres@frii.com

9/22 & 9/23 - MARTINA BONE 2- DAY CLINIC, Esh Arena, Nunn, CO, Deb Chevront 970/818-1127, debradc@1791.com

9/23 - 10:00-12:30 FUN & FUNDamentals, Savvy Acres, Marion Dahlgren, 970/372-8665, savvyacres@frii.com

9/24 - 9:00 AM SCHOOLING SHOW (Fun show) Judged by Martina Bone,

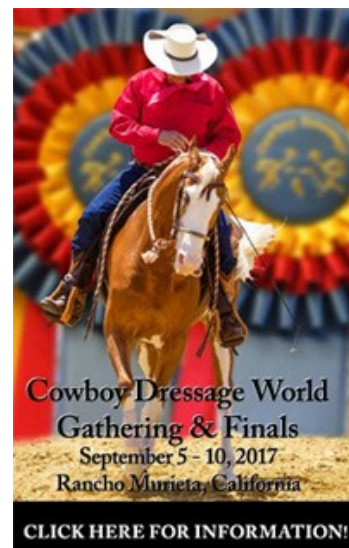
Deb Chevront, 970/818-1127, debradc@1791.com

9/29 - 10/1 LYN RINGROSE -MOE 3-DAY CLINIC, Esh Arena, Nunn, CO Pam Cunningham Pierce, 970/988-6404

OCTOBER 2017

10/22 - HALLOWEEN GATHERING (Costumes, playday, pot-luck & costume contest), Place and Time to be determined. cowboydressageofco@gmail.com

Oct. 28, Nov 25, and Dec 23 - FUN & FUNDamentals, Esh Arena, Nunn, CO, Marion Dahlgren, 970-372-8665, savvyacres@frii.com



COWBOY DRESSAGE WORLD OF COLORADO

CDW OF COLORADO FIRST GATHERING ON JULY 16TH!

Cowboy Dressage World of Colorado hosted our first Introductory Gathering on Sunday, July 16 at **CH Equine in Brighton, Colorado.**

First, we want to thank **Cody and Carrie Harrison** for donating the use of their wonderful facility for this event, not to mention all the work they did to prepare for all of us!

We were thrilled to have over 60 people in attendance! Many new faces as well as our wonderful group of volunteers and those involved with CDW of Colorado from its beginning.

The day started with introductions and discussion of what Cowboy Dressage is that included a reading of the "Handshake" and a brief explanation of the court and tests.

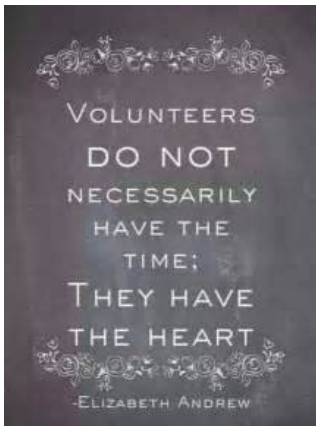
The following riders gave demonstration rides with tests called by Deb Chevront:

Laura Cassiday and Peaches, Challenge WJ3

Erin Long and Sid, Challenge WJ2

Abby Martin and Buddy, WJL 3; Cade Ryals and Brownie, Partnership on the Ground and Abby Martin and Buddy also did a beautiful Freestyle.

A BBQ / Meet & Greet followed. Watch the calendar for a similar event, October 22!



A special THANK YOU to the team of volunteers who worked hard to organize our first Gathering:

Cody and Carrie Harrison
 Amy Ryals
 Marion and Ken Dahlgren
 Laura Cassiday
 Lauren Light

Abby Martin
 Eliza Stowe
 Erin Long
 Deb Chevront
 Sue Nichols

Kathryn Titus
 Pam Pierce
 Tamy Knigge

And to all who pitched in at the last minute to help us!



DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER?

There are no dues or forms to sign, all it takes to join Cowboy Dressage World is your Handshake. We invite you to join us by visiting www.cowboydressageworldofcolorado.com, and follow the "join us" instructions...all it takes is your handshake!

To find follow Cowboy of Dressage of Colorado, you can find us at our website:

www.cowboydressageworldofcolorado.com; email: cowboydressageofco@gmail.com and on Facebook.

Cowboy Dressage in a Nutshell—continued

Western horses better at their jobs. Learning and embracing the principles of Cowboy Dressage and using the court to train your horse will make your horse better at his job whether he is a ranch horse, trail horse, cutting horse, gaming horse or western pleasure horse.

4. Isn't Cowboy Dressage just Dressage in western tack?

Nope. I do think that Western Dressage more closely resembles Dressage in western tack than Cowboy Dressage does. In Cowboy Dressage we strive for self carriage and for the horse to get off the bit, not reach for it. You will hear The term Soft Feel talked about almost continuously in Cowboy Dressage. While that concept is a mystical journey all unto itself, it basically means full body soft communication with your horse. A Cowboy Dressage horse, properly engaged will feel almost weightless in your hands and soft and willing between your legs and seat. The gaits we are striving to achieve in Cowboy Dressage also make it unique. The Cowboy Dressage jog and lope are shortened versions of the trot and canter and have no suspension. Western Dressage specifically defines their desired gaits with suspension.

5. Can I participate in both Cowboy Dressage and Western Dressage?

Absolutely! Depending on which area you

live in you may find more opportunities to participate in one discipline over the other. A Cowboy Dressage horse will show well at a Western Dressage show and often vice versa. The tests are different between the two disciplines as are the goals and scoring sheets. Remember that in Cowboy Dressage it is all about Soft Feel and partnership so much so that your Soft Feel and partnership scores are multiplied by 3. Riding with too much contact, a horse behind the vertical or a horse with suspension may not score as well at a Cowboy Dressage show.

6. Do I have to join an association to participate?

Not with Cowboy Dressage! Cowboy Dressage features membership with a handshake at www.cowboydressageworld.com. All you have to do is agree to embrace the principles of kindness and softness and confirm your membership with an electronic "handshake" to join the movement. The growth of Cowboy Dressage has been completely organic and is spread by horse folk just like you giving it a try and bringing their friends. There are no dues and few rules and we welcome all breeds, ages, and western disciplines.

7. Do I need special tack?

Nope. Cowboy Dressage has a few rules about tack but by and large all forms of traditional Western tack are

accepted. Mechanical hackamores, side pulls and bitless bridles are not currently allowed, but bosals or loping hackamores are. Any western saddle, with a horn, is welcomed and at a show you are only required to be in western attire. There are no points awarded for silver or fancy outfits. It's all about you and your horse.

8. What if my horse isn't good at arena stuff?

Well, that's kind of the whole point of participating is to get your horse good at this arena stuff. You don't need an arena to practice the principles of bend, transitions, straight lines and softness. Much of that can be accomplished on the trail. You can also set up the Cowboy Dressage court in a field, meadow or pasture. Helping your horse to understand these simple principles will make it better at whatever job it is you do with your horse.

9. How do I get started?

The best way to get started is to visit www.cowboydressageworld.com and join with your handshake. The tests, principles, rules and goals are all outlined there. There are DVD's, video clips and books that will help you learn what this is all about. All it takes is a piece of flat ground and a measuring tape and you can set up your own court and get to riding!