

## Monty in New Hampshire

Montana Plenty Red (aka Monty) joined my family in December 08. Like many of you out there... I always wanted a Mustang, but never imagined I would actually end up with one. I adopted Monty at Equine Affaire in Springfield Mass. privately (from the woman working in the booth next to me). Monty was 3 yrs old when we adopted him. We went down to Virginia to pick him up and he trailered home with me like an old pro. Monty was very much "gentled" when we got him - too much actually. Monty basically thought he was a dog. He had no boundaries and believed he belonged wherever we were (see the picture of him in my office). Monty had been ridden bareback at a walk and trot, but had not really been saddled, nor did he particularly care for the saddle. I had my daughter who was 14 at the time finish his "saddle training".

Prior to adopting Monty I had my ankle crushed by a Belgian draft horse. At the time I adopted him I was in between surgeries. I knew that I would be having a large surgery which would not allow me to ride for 9 months to a year, but I still wanted him. I had my daughter work with him while I was laid up. I went 2 months without even being allowed to go anywhere near the barn or horses due to the external fixator on my leg. Prior to the surgery I got rid of my QH as I knew he was not going to be the horse for me to ride when I was able to ride again (he took full advantage of my injury). After 2 months, my husband finally took me over to the barn to see my horse. He thought I needed some "horse therapy". I had my daughter approach Monty with my crutches first just in case he reacted to them in any way because I could not move quickly if needed (quite a few of the other horses were afraid of them), but Monty did not care about them at all. I was able to crutch right up to him and he stood perfectly still for me. It was one of the best days of my recovery.

On Christmas day of 2009 I was able to get back up on my horse. (My present to myself). My wonderful husband got me a new saddle for Christmas which I needed in order to ride again. My family took me to the barn and I crutched over to Monty and hubby lifted me up onto his back so my daughter could lead me around (a glorified pony ride, but it felt great!). I was very nervous and scared, but Monty was incredible. He walked like he was on egg shells and did not budge while I was lifted on and off of him. I never would have imagined that a 4yr old Mustang would be the horse that would give me the confidence to ride again! It took a while, but over time I started riding more and more. I road on my own after about a month, and this past spring I finally got the nerve up to leave the ring and venture out on a trail ride. Again Monty was just great!

This past June (2010) my daughter had to get rid of her QH one week before her first show of the season. I suggested that she take Monty to the show. Meagan and I thought it would be a great experience for Monty to get out and experience show life.... but we did not have high expectations for him. Monty proved us both wrong and actually won his pleasure class - out of 13 horses. After that one day show she decided to take him to her 4-H County show.

The County show was a 2 day show and held at a larger venue. Again we did not expect too much from him, but once again ..... he did wonderful. In July Meagan and Monty entered the New Hampshire State 4-H show. The goal and dream of all the kids at the state show is to qualify to show at Eastern States Exposition. Monty and Meagan showed against many seasoned show horses. Monty gained his own little fan club during the weekend long event. When people heard that he was a 5 yr old Mustang and at his third show ever, they just wanted to stay and watch and cheer for him. Meagan and Monty competed against 89 other kids and horses. They only take the top 17 exhibitors on the state team. Monty placed with a blue ribbon in every class he entered and once again shined in his pleasure class. During the awards ceremony, Meagan discovered that her and Monty ended up placing 10th overall for the state, and earned themselves a place on the New Hampshire State Team, and would be going to Eastern States this September.

It is quite an accomplishment to make it on the state team. It is more amazing when you realize that the horse was only 5, and shown only 3 times. I can honestly say that I have never been more impressed with a horse then I was with Monty during the show. He looked like a star, but more importantly he behaved himself! I watched horses bucking and broncing all around him. He just did his thing and paid no mind to the others. It was very comforting to sit in the stands and watch Meg and Monty and not worry that he would hurt her or "freak out".

I don't think there are many horses out there that can wear so many "hats". Monty can go out for the day on a trail ride, then come home, get bathed, and show the next day like he had been doing it for ages. The owner/trainer at my barn (a barn full of Saddlebreds) would like him as a beginner lesson horse. (Of course I would not do this to him - I don't like to share) and now he is my therapy horse.

I have no idea how Monty will do out at The Big E, but I do know that I will not underestimate him again. I think it is kind of fitting that he will be going back to the location where I first learned of him. I also hope to do some long distance rides with him in the future (would love to do the 100 mile in Vermont). Prior to being injured my husband and I did a lot of hiking, I no longer can even walk a mile, but..... I can ride. Monty is now my "feet" and "legs" as my husband says. I take Monty and hubby hikes or bikes alongside of me. If I did not have Monty I would have no chance of ever spending a night out in the woods again. Because of him we are planning our first overnight hike in a few weeks.

I imagine everyone who has the pleasure of sharing their lives with these amazing animals have wonderful stories to tell just like mine. I wish all of you well and thank you all for the opportunity to "brag" and share stories about Mr. Monty.

Take care all!  
Cheryl, Meagan, and Monty

See Photos Below.



Monty checking on his order at the feed store.



Looking handsome in the show ring.



Monty jumping in the outdoor.



Out for a stroll on the beach with friends.



Three year old green broke Monty.



Un tacking after a ride.