

Blue Skies

By Jennifer K. Hancock



This ambassador has carried rookies and presidents.

RACING FOR LISA ANDERSON, AZURE HOPE Three made five starts at Los Alamitos. Bob Baffert saddled the A Zure Hope Too gelding for his races.

"Azure" left the track in 1989 after Kip Didericksen, who broke and rode the gelding, told Lisa he was "a good horse but not for running."

Lisa took note and took the horse home. She began running barrels on the gelding. While he was successful at his new task, Lisa could tell he didn't love his new job.

"He didn't like being in the arena by himself," she said. "I was offered a lot of money for him as a barrel horse, but I knew he wouldn't like it as a permanent career, so I turned it down. Plus, I knew I would never sell him."

In 1993, Lisa moved back to her hometown of Walla Walla, Washington, and she started showing Azure.

Lisa would loan Azure to a friend so the friend's daughters could show in 4-H.

"He had a lot of talent for the show arena, and he packed those two girls around so gently," Lisa said. "He didn't have a mean bone in him, and anyone could ride him. Azure was priceless to me. I could show him and barrel race him on the same day. You could do anything with him. He was the go-to horse."

Lisa also used Azure for team penning, trail riding and as a pony horse at the racetrack.

When Lisa first met fiancé Denny Boer of Dutch Masters III, she wanted to take him riding, but he hadn't ridden a horse in awhile.

"I had the best horse for him to get back into the saddle," she said.

After a fun trail ride outing, Lisa wanted to introduce the dairyman to team penning.

"You have to go pretty fast sometimes, but Denny never felt any fear with Azure," Lisa said. "No matter what you are doing with Azure, he will only go the speed you ask of him. Denny got out every cow he chased. He was so excited – he offered me a million dollars for the best horse he had ever ridden. I was flattered but knew he was kidding. To see the excitement in Denny after he rode Azure,

you would have believed him."

AQHA Executive Committee member Dick Monahan and wife Brenda have borrowed Azure for AQHA trail rides where he has carried many riders, including AQHA Past President J.D. Blondin.

Lisa tried to retire the now 20-year-old Azure about four years ago, but the gelding wasn't ready.

"He hates to be left behind, and he figured out how to prevent that from happening," Lisa says. "When I started loading my other horses to go, Azure figured out how to open the gate and got in the trailer."

When Lisa returned to the trailer with a horse to load, she was surprised to see Azure loaded and waiting to go.

"I guess he was saying he was not ready to retire just yet," she says.

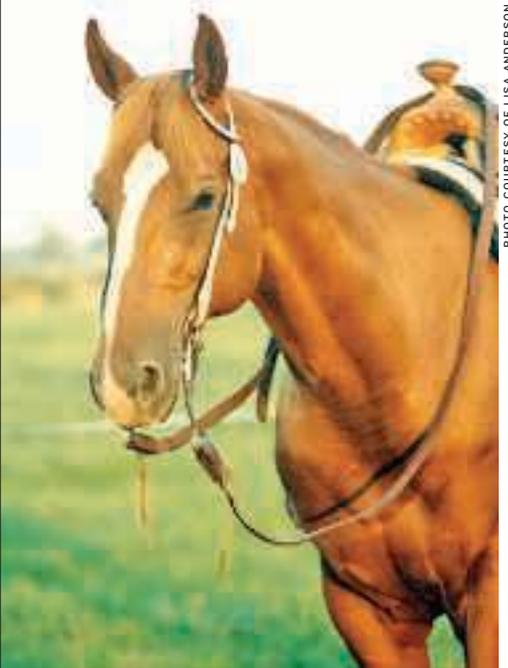


PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA ANDERSON

A Zure Hope Three is Lisa Anderson's go-to horse to show the versatility of the American Quarter Horse.

"I try to give Azure the choice to go or stay," she says. "I open the gate and give him the choice to get into the trailer. If he doesn't want to go, he stays where he is and nickers at you. I guess it's his way of saying, 'Goodbye. Have a great day.' I wish he was still young. It's tough not to have that go-to horse, but he delights me every day I get to see him." □

If you know of a former racing Quarter Horse in a new career, contact Ms. Hancock at (806) 376-4888 Ext. 4771 or jhancock@aqha.org.