



# David Lawson Performance Horses

Horsemanship tailored to meet the needs of the individual horse and rider

Born and raised in the Midwest, David Lawson has always had a love for horses. As soon as it was possible, David saved up money from detassling corn and two paper routes, and the first horse was purchased. From riding his half Arabian mare to and from local saddle club shows, David's talent for riding and training became apparent to others in the area, and horses were soon offered for David's use. If it involved a horse, David would do it, and soon he was riding western pleasure horses, hunt seat, and barrel racing. If someone was having a difficult time with a particular horse, they would pass the horse off to David to see what he could do with it. "Not knowing what a horse is SUPPOSED to do can lead you to find out what that horse CAN do," is part of David's philosophy.

David quickly rose through the ranks of the southeast Iowa saddle clubs into 4-H at the local, state, and regional levels, and began training outside horses while attending junior college. His love for competition kept him in the show ring whether loping by on pleasure horses or speeding down the alley on barrel horses. He seemed to have a knack for teaming the right horses for the right events, and that soon carried over into finding good teams to pair up where horse and rider were concerned. To this day, David recognizes the importance of team work and good communication between horse and rider, and prides himself in helping to build some great partnerships through the years. "I will never be the trainer who forces a horse



or rider to do something they are just not cut out for," says David about horse and rider relationships. "A huge part of any partnership is shared desire by both parties."

David attended Black Hawk College (BHE) in Kewanee, Illinois on an Intercollegiate Judging scholarship. During his two years at BHE, David soaked up as much information and riding time as possible, and enjoyed every aspect of his training there. From basic animal science classes, to training methods classes, to horse evaluation, David dedicated his time to learning. An internship with Sue Scobee, an Appaloosa trainer in Liberty, Mo, helped David focus his attention on training timed event horses. Barrel racing and pole bending proved to be David's real niche. However, competing at the All American Quarter Horse Congress and the AQHA World Show kept David in touch with "the pleasure horse world," and he could still appreciate

the thrill of a looper who can stay so backed off, balanced, and slow legged. While competing with the judging team at the Congress, David happened across the booth of rodeo legends RE and Martha Josey. In a flash, David knew what his next internship would be, and he secured his spot with the Joseys.

What was to be a nine week internship at the Josey Ranch in East Texas turned into a nearly two-year position as “Josey Ranch Coordinator and Instructor.” While working directly under RE and Martha’s guidance, David participated in major demonstrations across the country including Equitana USA, Equine Affaire, Kansas Equifest, and The Ride With The Stars. David instructed at clinics and schools across the country, was instrumental in writing and publishing Running to Win, and helped Martha qualify for the 1998 NFR. David’s communication skills and contacts in the horse industry grew tremendously, however, his hunger to compete on his own horses lead to his return home to Iowa.

While attending Western Illinois University to earn a teaching degree, David built a training and instruction business back in southeast Iowa. Training, showing, and sales of barrel horses at various competition levels was the focus while David also taught high school special education. A POA gelding, Santee Gold Mount, happened into the barn, and from that minute, a relationship with POAs and young riders was formed. This was also the moment that “the light bulb came on “and David realized that his training methods were pretty similar regardless of which discipline he was training which horse for; “A solid foundation is good thing no matter if you want a horse to show as a pleasure horse, hunter, trail horse, or barrel racer. Body control and focus on the part of both horse and rider are keys to success.”

David started training for the R5 Ranch owned by the Reiners family of Minnesota, and for nine years managed their POA operation. From futurity ponies to gymkhana the versatility of David’s POAs and riders was showcased at the state, regional, and international levels. David feels that this versatility along with his love of learning from others in the industry has helped make him the horseman he is today, and he looks forward to a new endeavor in Sonoma County, California where he has moved to raise a family with his partner. He looks forward to helping riders improve their horsemanship skills in relation to the needs of the individual rider and horse.



*“I never ask anyone to do anything I wouldn’t do myself. I work with people and horses- they don’t work for me and I don’t work for them. We work together. AWARDS are great, and we all want to win them, but it’s the REWARDS of good horsemanship and good friends that interest me the most.”*

-- David Lawson