

STALL OF FAME & HONOUR ROLL HORSE

AARISTOCAT

(nominated 2016)

By Julie & Ron Phair (and re-typed by Kristen Howard)

Aaristocat (aka Ritz) was born April 23, 1993 of Bask and Muscat blood lines.

This tall, grey purebred Sweepstakes gelding caught the eye of Deb McBride who purchased him in the fall of 1997 in Eastern Ontario where he had been showing that year in hunter pleasure classes. Deb McBride has owned Ritz throughout his competitive years and Ritz is currently retired from competition at Deb's farm.



Deb McBride on Aaristocat

His long distance competitive career began in 1998. He logged 2583 career miles in OCTRA. Of those miles, Ritz accumulated 454 OCTRA CTR miles. In 2002, Ritz competed in the 2-day 80-mile Canadian Championship Competitive Ride placing 6th. He completed 2 Ride 'n Ties placing 1 and 2.

From 1998 to 2009, Ritz completed 44 Endurance rides in Ontario and the United States competing in OCTRA, AERC, IAHA and FEI events. Rides varied from 50 miles, to multi-day rides, to 75-mile rides and he completed 6 one-day 100-mile rides.

Of those 100-mile rides, 2 events were IAHA National Championship Rides at Spook Run in Indiana in 2000 and 2003. In Ontario, he placed 9th in 2001 at the Speckle Creek 100 and Placed 5th in 2002 at the

Speckle Creek 100 which was also an IAHA Ride and FEI qualifying ride. As a member of the Canada East Team in 2001, Ritz and Deb successfully completed at the Vermont Pan American 100-mile Championship with a top 20 finish.

Also, Ritz and Deb were selected again as a Canadian Team member at the 2003 Washington State Pan American Endurance Championships.

These rides all were instrumental in Ritz being ranked on the short list from 2001 to 2005 for FEI International Events, including the 2004 World Championships in the U.A.E. Unfortunately, prior to the competition, Ritz took a kick to his forelimb resulting in a hairline fracture and the prognosis was possibly the end of his competitive career.

However, after a time for healing, Ritz made a strong come back and in 2005 completed the Biltmore 100-mile FEI qualifying ride and was selected as a Canadian Team member at the 2005 NA Championships in Maryland.

In 2005, Ritz was declared the OCTRA Top Endurance Horse for the year. As well, in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003, Ritz placed in the OCTRA Top Ten Endurance rankings. With Top Ten placing in 17 OCTRA sanctioned events and 5 Top Ten completions in out of Province rides.

In the American Endurance Ride Conference, Ritz has accumulated 2525 career miles with an 81% completion rate Distances vary from 50-mile rides to 60 and 75-mile rides plus 2-day 100-mile rides. Ritz also ranked in the North-East Region of AERC on several occasions.

There is no question that Aaristocat was performing at a caliber well above the average in OCTRA for those years. The evidence is in the statistics above and the fact, Ritz repeatedly ranked high in order to represent Canada at FEI competitions. The standard set for completion criteria has been and is high in FEI events.

During Ritz' career and pursuit of representing Canada and OCTRA, horses were expected to prove themselves not only in 50 mile rides but on 100 mile trails that were considered tough and technically challenging like the Biltmore, Spook Run and Vermont. These rides did and still do draw the best of the best in eastern, southeastern and the Midwest of USA and Canada.

Aaristocat was retired in 2009 with his last OCTRA ride of 25 being ridden by a new competitor, Mike Robinson. Since his retirement, Ritz has been a trail companion and stable mate for horses being introduced to trail riding. Also, he has been an excellent mount for newbie riders of which the current rider is a 9-year-old.

