



days at
Dunrovin

February 2019



**Ranch
Talk**



The Latest Gossip From Dunrovin Ranch



These photos pretty much sum up both Kelli and Crow.

Kelli and Crow are sensible, safety conscious, and ever ready on mountain trails.

And at home, Crow is ever patient with Kelli's fun-loving antics and dressing up for holidays.

What a pair!

Ranch Manager Kelli Loses Doc and Begins a New Relationship with Crow



Godspeed, Doc, and Welcome, Crow by Kelli Kozak



It's never easy to give one's heart to another, and it is particularly difficult when it has been so thoroughly broken by the passing of one's heart-horse.

Deputy Doc Renzi, 1/10/01–10/16/18, will always run free in my heart.



Kelli Kozak Remembers Doc and Welcomes Crow



I remain in good hands, though. There is no doubt that Doc handed me to Crow for safekeeping; it was a few minutes in human time that defy our human language.

So here I am and here we are, Crow and Kelli. Kelli and Crow. The phrase doesn't yet trip off the tongue. The three words have not yet run together into one: KelliandCrow. He is not an easy guy to get close to. He does not figuratively jump into my pocket. His eyes don't softly follow me, his very existence bettered by my presence. I am not everything to him. It is humbling, and not a little bit sad. Guarded and untrusting, Crow is suspicious of all people, including me, and he has a right to be. His past is unknown, save for his most recent location a bit south of Dunrovin and his life as a string horse who was leased out to different outfits over the years. Crow is a puzzle.

What I've pieced together so far: Crow is a 15-hands high (15hh) Red Roan Leopard Appaloosa. He has a very sparse mane and tail, not an uncommon Appy trait. His cracked hooves reflect unbalance in his nutrition and in his previous shoeing. His ears are small and his rump large, evidence of a Quarter Horse background. He is 13 years old.

Crow used to be "someone's" horse. He is easy off the leg and soft on the lead. He knows how to be "sent." His jog is lovely and quiet, with his neck long and his head low. He loads into a trailer and stands for the farrier.

He has not had a variety of recent experiences, however, except walking in a long line of other horses without having to do much else. The sound of anything dragging on the ground worries him, as does a raised hand or voice. He has not been desensitized to the smell of dead animals, so I know he hasn't packed out deer or elk—or he at least he was never comfortable with it. His ears go flat back when hay is taken into his stall, but not when he's fed in a larger space.

He is also sour to the point of refusal to pass by the arena gate or to walk ahead of me into his stall. He stands quietly to be saddled, although I can feel that he doesn't want to be ridden. He willingly moves forward off my leg, but not sideways, either in the saddle or on the ground. He doesn't lope when asked; to me, an indication of discomfort, as his other gaits are flawless.

To correct a few things over which I now have control, his teeth have been floated, his body adjusted by a learned chiropractor, his feet properly trimmed, and his nutrition corrected. I fitted his saddle. Being groomed has become a time of relaxation and safety, not a rush to being ridden in a way that, clearly, hasn't worked out well for him.

I will have to prove myself to earn a place as Crow's person, which is an important journey for both of us. He is learning that I will not use pain or fear to make my requests clear. He has learned that passing the arena gate is nonnegotiable, and that moving away from energetic "pressure" is easy. His ears slowly sliding forward before he gets his hay and his offer of an occasional nicker show me that we'll be just fine.