



days at  
Dunrovin

April 2019



**Ranch  
Talk**



# Being a DIVA is HARD Work!

## Human Training from the DIVAS' Perspective



### Patience is the Key

Humans can be very trying. They all too often think they know everything and that their species is the smartest and best.

As predators with eyes straight forward in their heads, they can be overly focused and fail to see the forest for the trees.

However, most of them mean well. With a large dose of patience, they can be trained to properly interact with equines who see all and read humans' body language like a book.

The DIVAS have had the opportunity to train many different people at Dunrovin Ranch over the years. We have yet to fail to make ourselves understood and gain the confidence of all who enter our realm. Some have become fast friends with whom we have formed special bonds.

Our current human personal assistants, Kelli and Kate, are particularly wonderful. Kelli is a total sap for an animal of almost any kind and is very susceptible to being hoodwinked. She is now wrapped around our hooves. And Kate is not only charming, willing to listen, and most agreeable, but she BAKES treats and she is new to our game, not that we would ever take advantage of her novice status.

### Partnering with Humans has its Rewards!

We donkeys are very smart and sociable. Getting around town to see the sights, interact with others, and strut our stuff gives us enormous pleasure. Having humans who can drive trucks and trailers, arrange public appearances, and accompany us through the artificial world they have created with their cities, roads, traffic, and buildings can really broaden our horizons.



# Donkey Training from the HUMAN Perspective

It was good to get the DIVAS' perspective before writing our own. In fact, Dunrovin must agree with much of what they said. A solid relationship with an equine does take a lot of patience and a willingness to step outside of your world view.

Equines are prey animals. Human are predators. Our eyes are set in front of our heads to be able to “lock onto” and pursue a prey animal. Theirs are set on the sides of their heads,. They can see independently around them for nearly 360 degrees in order to scan their environment for the presence of predators. It takes trust and understanding on both of our parts to form a meaningful relationship that allows us to have fun together.

## Señor Kona Taught Us How!

Señor Kona was Dunrovin Ranch's first donkey and he set a very high standard. He truly did have the patience to teach us all the differences between donkey and horses. You drive a donkey, while you lead a horse. Horses tend to run when frightened. Donkeys tend to fight. They are used in many parts of the world as guard animals for sheep as they do not hesitate to run off predators.

Señor Kona is the only equine from Dunrovin Ranch to have won a full-sized trophy for the best commercial entry in the 2007 parade for the University of Montana's Homecoming. He pulled a small “Budweiser wagon” and dressed as a Clydesdale horse “wannabe.” Dunrovin's black dog, Jewel, wore white “stick-on” spots to serve as a “reverse Dalmatian” to complete the joke.

Señor Kona also appeared at churches for Palm Sunday festivities. He was an exceptional animal, much loved by all who knew him.



**Watch Kelli and Kate work with the DIVAS to navigate Dunrovin's obstacle course.**



## Obstacle Courses Build Confidence!

We humans often use obstacle courses to work with donkeys and horses. Facing new and frightening objects together develops confidence for both the human and the animal. Humans learn to watch the animal for signs of stress, provide support, and wait patiently until the animals get comfortable enough to proceed. They learn to trust the human enough to override their own instincts. They gain trust that allows them to know that they are safe at the side of their “human” in all circumstances.

**Broadcast Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_