

FOREST SPOTLIGHT

Modoc NF – Pacific Southwest Region

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<http://www.fs.usda.gov/modoc>

Behind the scenes with Devil’s Garden movers and shakers

Horse trainers are a talented bunch. They must be aware of the horse’s nature, possess a kind heart and infinite patience. When these qualities are matched with the clean slate of a wild horse, amazing things happen.

Trainers know how to establish deep connections and trust between horse and human and move across an inter-species bridge of understanding. As emotional mirrors, horses teach people about themselves as well.

In the past year of the Modoc National Forest’s journey into the process of gathering, caring for and finding good homes for Devil’s Garden wild horses, much has been learned. After the horses, the best teachers are trainers whose passion, knowledge and dedication for mustangs inspires everyone involved.

Outstanding trainers have taken a chance on older Devil’s Garden horses, and their success is spreading like wildfire.



Daniel and Katy Yriarte with
DG mare Val

Daniel and Kathy Yriarte, trainers in Reno, Nevada, have years of experience, clinics and competition on their resume. As a young boy, Daniel was raised around horses and cattle and wanted to be a cowboy. To him, a person who could train a mustang was a true horseman. And so, his obsession with mustangs had begun. He worked as a trail guide in Los Osos, California, where he first heard about legendary horsemen, the Dorrance brothers and Ray Hunt.

Young and full of fire, enjoying life working with horses and going to round ups came to a pause when he went to college. Soon after that he met Kathy, the love of his life. Sharing the same passion for horses and mustangs in particular, they began to build their dreams and business foundation. They rode with famous horse trainers like Trevor Carter, Buck Brannaman, Vaughn Knudsen and Bryan Neubert.

Both competed in mustang challenges and Extreme Mustang Makeovers in Reno. Today the Yriartes have 11 horses in training, all mustangs, and their six personal horses are mustangs as well. Six of their wild horses are Devil’s Garden mustangs.

“Kathy and I love the build and mind of these horses,” Daniel said. “We have been blessed to be able to help find new homes for them. They have an off the chart self-preservation instinct so it takes longer to earn their trust, but well worth it when you do.”

“When you can earn their trust they will be willing and right by your side,” he added.



Daniel Yriarte working on a first ride



Lisa Sink works with DG mares Jewell and Gemma

Kevin and Lisa Sink at Stormy Ranch in Oregon have been training mustangs for 23 years. After adopting their first mustang they were hooked, and have adopted over 40 horses since. "Working with mustangs, we have found that you are working with a clean slate. Horses that have had very little contact with humans," Lisa said. "So what you put into them is what you get out. If you are quiet and gentle you will get a gentle willing horse. Our goal is to find homes for as many wild horses as we can, one horse at a time."

The Sinks are amazed at how easy the Devil's Garden horses are to gentle. They are easy going and eager to learn compared to other wild horses they have trained. In fact their Devil's Garden gelding will be ready for work under saddle soon.

Coni Lehr, a well-known mustang specialist from Auburn, California has been training horses and competing since 2005. She said, "My horse training philosophy is structured around horsemanship taught by Ray Hunt, Tom Dorrance and many others along with 35-plus years living and working with horses." Lehr gave mustang training demonstrations at the Modoc Fair in 2016 and has been a valuable and consistent participant in two volunteer Devil's Garden adoption/placement groups since the 2016 gather. She currently networks with trainers all over California to encourage placement and training of Devil's Garden horses.



Coni Lehr with DG gelding Lucky and her dog Blue



These two horses loaded easily before they headed to their new homes

Bonnie Kohleriter works tirelessly helping the find horses homes. She coordinated the transport of 91 horses to new homes placing 88 of them purchased or adopted by 30 different individuals and sanctuaries. She connected an exuberant group of adopters and buyers with a network of safe horse transport companies who delivered horses all over California, Colorado, Missouri, Arizona and even states in the Northeast and Southeast.

There are approximately 60 mares and geldings left at the Double Devil Corrals ready for adoption or sale. For more information please visit the Modoc National Forest website: <https://go.usa.gov/xQ3r3>.

Check out the following Facebook pages to see the progress of horses already started or to view those still available.

<https://www.facebook.com/devilsgardenwildhorses/>

<https://www.facebook.com/stormyranch>

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/doubledevilwildhorsecorrals/photos/>

<https://www.facebook.com/conilehrhorsemanship>

<https://www.facebook.com/teamyriartehorsemanship/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/modocmustangtraining/>



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