

## How our Trail Rides Work

### 1. Book your ride.

- When you book your ride, we will ask you questions that help us prepare to maximize the enjoyment and safety of your experience. We will ask you your age, height, weight and experience level. We may also ask you questions about your personality as well so that we can match make you with the best suited and safest horse possible for you. We pride ourselves on really knowing our horses. We know what level riders they can work with, how much work load they can tolerate, which horses they prefer to ride next to, and even what kind of personalities they prefer in their riders. We know that the best matchmaking experience results in the best ride.

### 2. Welcome!

- Waiver of Liability: When you get to the stables (or the remote destination for some of our longer rides) we will need every rider and spectator to sign a waiver of liability. We also ask that kids sign the waiver as well as their parents because, after all, they are the ones riding the horses! We will explain the waiver to you and give you as much time as you need to discuss any of your questions with us.
- Helmets: We have plenty of helmets available for our riders and they are sanitized regularly and checked for safety. In NYS any rider 14 years or younger must wear a helmet. At our stables we require anyone riding with us that is under the age of 18 to wear a helmet. We also enforce a helmet policy for any of our beginner adult riders and recommend helmets to even our most advanced riders.

If you are an experienced adult and choose not to wear a helmet, you will need to note this on your waiver and accept the additional risks involved in your decision.

- Horse 101: Before you meet your horse, we want to talk to you about how our horses work. Whether it is your first time riding or you have been riding for years, we want to explain how to ride our horses and want to make sure you fully understand horse behavior, the mechanics of riding, and how to act when around horses.
- Meet and Greet: We will assign you a horse for your ride. Before your ride we will spend a little bit of time introducing you to your horse and explaining the horse's personality and why we chose the horse for you. Horses are individuals too and we feel that it is important to understand why your horse is unique and special. We will also give you any particular tips on any quirks that the horse has, as well as what other horses that horse likes to ride near.

### 3. Mounting Up.

- May we help you?: We assist every rider in mounting their horse no matter what skill level. At this time we also give them a demonstration of how to start, stop and steer their horse in a respectful way. We put all of our first time and timid riders on their horses first and give them time to practice in the arena before the actual trail ride.
- Arena Test: Each person must demonstrate that they are comfortable steering and stopping their horse in the arena before we head out on trail. We may set up a short pattern around two cones for riders to demonstrate these skills. Anyone who cannot demonstrate these skills will not be allowed to join the ride.

### 4. Trail Ride

- All trail rides are led and operated by the owner of Painted Bar Stables, Erika Eckstrom. We always have at least one staff rider for every 5 trail riders. For groups that are larger or less experienced we will have at least one additional staff rider. Our staff riders will ride in the line according to where we see potential problems.
- When riding it is important that all of our riders maintain a safe distance between them and the next horse. Typically, if you cannot see all four feet of the horse in front of you then the horses are riding too closely. We will aid our riders by giving clear instructions throughout the ride to help people maintain safe space.
- All of our trail rides are designed to cater to our slowest, least experienced rider. It is important that all of our riders have a fun and interesting experience on our horses that offers them a new understanding and appreciation for horses; but safety is our priority.

If there are two distinct groups in our ride and we have two riders on staff, we may split the group up midway so that one group can go on rougher terrain or at a comfortable and controlled faster speed while the other group goes another direction at a walk. The two groups would reunite immediately after the jaunt.