

## California Girl

The call came Wednesday afternoon after waiting 7 long days... They will be in Lincoln, California at 4 a.m., Thursday morning, and will call one hour before arrival. As we have no phone service at our ranch, this meant driving to the town of Lincoln at 3 a.m. to get the call. I got up at 2:30 a.m., with very little sleep, and made a Thermos of coffee and headed for the Safeway Parking lot on Highway 65 in Lincoln. My old truck's heater stopped working last year so at 48 degrees, it was a bit cold, but she was coming and I didn't care. After 3 long years of waiting, never seeing a Fell pony in person, after all the wait the past week as she traveled from Pennsylvania to Kentucky to Washington State, she was coming.

At 6 a.m., still no call. My husband had stopped by on his way to work and still no call. My daughter stopped by on her way to work and still no call. I knew I had to wait for dispatch to come in at 7:30 to find out what had happened. I'm freezing now (I know what you east coasters are thinking, but I'm a Californian born and raised and 48 is cold to me), so the only thing to do is to get out of the cold and Starbucks has just opened up. So, I wait at the Starbucks and warm up. Of course, I have to share the story with whomever was willing to listen, and then at 6:50 a.m. I get the call. WE ARE AT DUNNIGAN, northeast of Sacramento and will be there in an hour...

Still not believing she will be here at all, I am now really chatting with these poor Lincolniters, who just wanted their morning coffee... This kind lady I was talking to said, "Is that the truck?" And there it was, pulling in at 7:50 a.m., just as promised. I didn't care I had waited in the wee hours, after all, isn't that what all expectant mothers do?

Within moments they had the door opened and I was looking toward the front of the truck, but as I got closer, I see this beautiful black face peer out around the corner, and there she is, Miss Petal [**Laurelhighland Rose Petal**].



*Here she is!*

grabbed the camera and took her picture in the truck, still tied. Then they lead her so carefully down the ramp... My heart is racing at this point. I handed the handler my camera and said please take my picture for Mary Jean, and he said ok. I knew I must have looked a sight, but it didn't matter ...



*Almost there ...*

Then we loaded her into my trailer and headed for the ranch, about a 20-minute drive. I have a very rare trailer that is a 3 horse across. We decided the middle stall would be the safest. When I got to the ranch, she had limboed under the divider and was standing in another stall, still tied in the middle. (Clever Girl). As I pulled into the ranch named FELL LEGEND FARM, the name took on a whole new meaning... Our first Fell filly was really home.

Petal jumped out of the trailer, circled me twice and seemed to know this was her

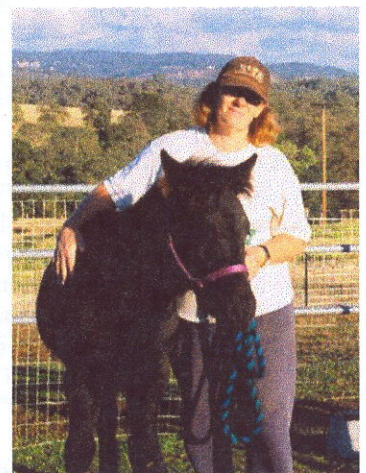
new home. She never spooked, shied, got excited, she just checked out her new digs and demanded Breakfast... I took the day off to bond with her and spent the morning in my lawn chair in her paddock and fed her, loved on her and just bonded. I tried to take pictures of her, but she wouldn't leave my side to even get a picture. At 3:30 her Dad (my husband Tom) came home and he sat in her paddock and got to know her, too.



*First kiss ...*

Here are a few pictures of our now California Girl, Princess Petal and her Fell-crazy parents on her first day in California.

**Rene' Bender**  
California



*Rene' Bender &  
Laurelhighland Rose Petal*