

Pocket AKA Ronnie Entered training 6/8/17 with Zia in Santa Fe

3-year-old gelding standing 13hh. Pocket was captured in XXX on June 20th. He was brought in as a stud colt. When we processed him in the chutes he was definitely not happy with the forced confinement and he also clearly expressed his dislike towards the chutes by kicking out with his rear feet as soon as he would get touched. Which of course is understandable. The castrations went really well and his recovery also was easy and complication free.

Week one of our training was taken on with baby steps. I ran him in the chutes and started with just petting him and getting him used to human contact. He didn't like that much... haha. Once I got a halter on him with a long lead shank I ran him in the round pen and started working him there. As expected there was a lot of snorting, kicking and running going on. However he figured out pretty quickly what I would ask from him and how to obtain that pressure release. Day nr. 2 I was already able to approach him (halter and short lead shank was left on) in the round pen and I didn't need to run him through the chutes. On our third day he allowed me to saddle him. He only bucked for a couple strides and then accepted the saddle. Subsequently I started hosing him off, after every session, while tied up. For the rest of the week saddling and desensitization and basic groundwork was our focus.

Week nr. two was exciting. I've learned that his preferred way of being caught is to walk behind your back and lean his shoulder against your back. Then one can start petting him and put the lead shank around his neck followed by the halter. Next step was to start ponying him around the facility saddled. It went really well and he wasn't acting much like a stud when we would pass the mares. The next day I sat on him bareback and started moving around carefully. He sucked up only once but came straight to a stop. On the next day we kept at it and moved around a bit more. Even started trotting a bit. The subsequent day I rode him under saddle. He truly was a changed horse. The saddle almost acts as a security blanket. He's shy and reactive (tail swish, snorting, sucking up, head high) when on the ground. But under saddle he relaxes. Chewing and licking, head drops and he seems to almost fall asleep. For the rest of the week I rode him in the round pen. Walk, trot and stops as well as keeping him tied up for a good while.

During our third week I was focusing on making the catching, haltering, saddling and bridling routine boring. While it was successful with the saddling and bridling, the catching still remained at his personal preference, which means he has to come to you. Further we started riding in a different, larger area and we even started to pick up a lope. All of which went very smoothly.

By the forth week we were riding solid. He's still somewhat stiff in his neck but that's my current focus. Softening his neck and pole as well as moving off my leg. At this point we are riding all over the facility. I've also started working with his feet. He's great in the front but still dangerous with his rear. So that has been our focus.

Fifth week and the final training week we finally went "outside". We even started pushing cows around and kept working with transitions, softening exercises as well as dealing with scary things. Finally we tackled the trailer loading process. To my surprise, he walked straight in and instantly started chewing and licking his lips.

I truly believe he will be easy to rehome. He's definitely still uneducated and if I had more time I would start him out on trails for a couple of weeks before doing the "boring stuff" aka arena flat work. Milage and tonnage!!!