

The CAROLINAS EQUESTRIAN

The SC-based television show, "Horse Tales," began as so many other horse tales have begun — with the magical allure of the horse. It's that smell when you put arms around a horse and bury your face in his mane; it's that feeling of empowerment when you're seated on the hurricane deck of a spirited horse; it's that peace that you feel watching the lazy swishing of tails in a herd of grazing horses. It's a draw that not all people experience, but those who do, are often said to be crazy. Crazy about a horse.



HORSE TV Tales I

the Pee Dee Cowboy

By David Grant • Photo Credits: Equestrian Images

It usually starts in the heart of a child, as it did for David Grant, host of "Horse Tales." Over 50 years ago, a young Davy (as he was called back then) was horseless, but always dreaming of them. He would go with his mom on her weekly trips to the Laundromat in town, and no sooner than the old Ford Galaxy would stop rolling, Davy was highlighting it over to the local hardware store where he would spend the clothes washing time walking around in the tack section. The smell of oiled leather fueled both his dreaming and his hopelessness of owning a pony.

But a loving older brother used his own money to buy Davy a pony named Charlie. He built the pasture and run-in shed in a day while little Davy was in school. Hence, a journey had begun with the young Davy that would eventually lead him to becoming the Pee Dee Cowboy. Childhood passions are often suppressed in order to get on with the business of life. As the years passed, Grant turned his focus to raising a family and making a living in the chicken business. Some folks go through the middle-age crazies and succumb to self-de-

structing habits. Not for Grant. He turned back to that old stirring in his heart.

Grant was always an avid hunter and he got back into horses via deer hunting. He went through a number of horses trying to find a steady, gun-broke mount he could shoot deer off. He soon learned about a special breed of horse called a Marsh Tacky while hog hunting in the Low Country of South Carolina. He was impressed by these little horses, from their temperament to their stamina. He invested in a handful of young, half-broke Tackies, including a stud he named DP in honor of a long-time breeder of Marsh Tackies. When he killed a nice buck off the back of DP and slung it over the saddle horn, he was branded the Pee Dee Cowboy by a fellow hunting buddy. And that stirring in his heart for horses became an insatiable burning.

Grant wanted to share with folks what he considered the best kept equine secret of this century, so he created a website for his outfit, Carolina Marsh Tacky Outdoors, and started sharing stories and photos about his pursuits in deer and hog hunting on horseback. He



David and some Marsh Tackies

owning a boutique. Family friend, Wylie Bell, was then plucked out of her comfortable behind-the-scenes spot to fill in as co-host to keep the show's balance of ol' roughneck cowboy and charming, young Southern lady. Being a crack rider, as well as stricken with the lever for horses, Bell helped bring a much-needed dimension to the show. Artist and graphic designer Daniela Snyder of Equestrian Images was chosen to redesign the websites for "Horse Tales" and Carolina Marsh Tacky Outdoors and create a cross-promotional marketing plan for the two entities. With these positive additions to the crew, "Horse Tales" is now entering its fifth year of production having produced 110 shows and counting.

The industry standard for a television show to develop and take root is five years. Grant and his crew have earned a solid following in the equine world in four years, despite the show being a part-time ("when there's time") endeavor for all involved. "Horse Tales" is a show like no other filling the network air waves. First and foremost, it is faith-based. It is entertaining, informative and light-hearted in its presentation. Its content is as broad as the breeds of horses in the world and varied as the folks who own and love them. From the swamps of the Low Country to the most elite stables around, you just never know where "Horse Tales" may ride up.

Grant has been described as having "an interesting personality". He will try anything at least once and will step out of his comfort zone to bring his audience a genuine product, something folks can relate to, the real deal. As for Grant, he describes himself as a "wannabe Cowboy", which at times has intimidated him around some very elite horse folks he has interviewed. But he will tell you that once he looks a person dead in the eye, "it" comes out — it being the shared love for the horse. A love that breaks down barriers of class, money, all the things that would hinder a person from sharing their story, their journey of how "it" took hold in their life.

"Horse Tales" is Grant's vehicle for living the cowboy way and sharing with the world the stories of horses and the folks who love them. One of Grant's many sayings is, "Because of the horse, my life has stayed on course." "Horse Tales" will continue to ride hard to stay the course and fuel the passion for horses. Visit www.horsetalestv.com for more information.



Wylie Bell and David Grant

also became a founding member of the Carolina Marsh Tacky Association, the official organization of the breed, and joined its efforts to restore the dwindling numbers of the horse breed. The breed is slowly, but surely, regaining its footing, and the Marsh Tacky is now the State Heritage Horse of South Carolina.

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The idea for a television show that revolved around horses started forming when Grant and his friend, broadcast journalist Richard Perdue, teamed up to do a hunting show about deer hunting on horseback. Perdue's connections in the TV world plus Grant's unfettered passion for horses led to the foaling of "Horse Tales." Grant recruited daughter Blaire, a student of fashion design and marketing, to be his co-host, and the first edition of "Horse Tales" hit the track running.

Grant soon learned how to eat humble pie, finding out 'lights, camera, action' is easier said than done. Filming of the first episode was a story within itself. When Grant and Perdue got word they had a time slot on a local network, they only had three months to produce the show from scratch.

Grant's daughter endured the roughshod beginnings of the show, but after two years, Blaire made her exit to follow her dreams of