

Biography for CA Destiny Gro+ "Des"

AHR*549091

*Grojor (By *Exelsjor) x Satanca (By *Figaro)

1997 15.1 hh Mostly Polish bred Arabian Mare

Arabian Horse Association Recipient of LEGION OF HONOR.

"Des" is a big bodied and fancy purebred Arabian mare and exhibits the soundness, longevity, hardiness, and the gentle soul that wants to build a one-on-one relationship with humans based on trust and understanding. She has wonderful bone and large, solid feet - the true from the Desert look. Kathy purchased seven year old CA Destiny Gro+ in 2004 to be Kathy's daughter, Jessica's, show horse for a few years before college. "Des" is the last progeny of her sire *Grojor. She has a unique blend of Arabian racing Polish and Spanish bloodlines you don't often see nowadays. Regional winner in Hunter Hack, Dressage (Training & First Level), and Sport Horse In Hand. Class "A" wins in Sport Horse Under Saddle, Sport Horse In Hand, Hunter Pleasure, and Hunter Over Fences (2' - 2'9"). Wins in Combined Training. Received scores in the mid-70s & mid-80s (out of 100) for conformation/in-hand classes countless times. Once Jessica went to college and off to her first career after college, Des lived the relaxing life living outside 24/7 and doing an occasional trail ride and occasionally leased and doing hunter lessons. Kathy and Des did their last Dressage show together in 2008 when Des was 11 years old. Later on dipping her toes back into shows, Des showed 3rd level dressage at 24-years-old looking better than ever with Kathy's daughter!

She is exceptional to learn on as she has had upper level dressage schooling (tempi changes, half pass, passage, piaffe). As a younger mare, she was professionally trained by USDF Gold, Silver and Bronze Medalist. With professional dressage training rides only a couple times a month, Des was schooling FEI movements such as piaffe and passage and tempi changes within only a couple years. She has easy lead changes, easy lateral work, and loves attention, treats and a good grooming or massage. Des is extremely talented, well trained and a great mover with excellent hind end push! Des schools in a rubber bit or can easily be ridden bitless or bridleless. She has correct form over fences with square, tight knees and good bascule with good use of her neck & back. Riders of all levels love Des for her willingness to please, responsiveness to the aids, and her "work ethic." Des' pedigree goes back to Fetysz who was foaled at the world-famous Janow Stud in Poland in 1927 and was acquired by Trakehnen in 1936 for the mixed herd. It was his son Famulus, who established the Trakehner breed's most valued dressage line. Fetysz left his legacy as even Olympic competitors today carry his valuable blood.

Some of Her Show Results:

* 2006 Region 12 Championships - Champion Arabian Hunter Hack AOTR 2'6" out of 8 horses

* 2006 Region 12 Championships - Reserve Champion A/HA/AA Dressage Training Level ATR (with junior rider) out of 11 horses

* 2006 Region 12 Championships - Top Four A/HA/AA Dressage Training Level Open out of 27 horses

* 2006 Region 12 Championships - Top Four Arabian Sport Horse Under Saddle ATR out of 19 horses (Only mare out of all stallions in top 5 placings)

Kathy Gilker and CA Destiny Gro (GA)



Team #1020 Kathy Gilker and CA Destiny Gro
From: Akron, Georgia
Ages: 72 & 28
Combined Ages: 100
Test: Introductory Level Test A



I nominate CA Destiny Gro+, a 28 year old Arabian mare, for the 2025 GAHA Ambassador Award. Through open competitions, lessons with local trainers, meet and greets, educational events, and photoshoots Des has shown what an athletic, kind, willing partner an Arabian horse is.

As a mature mare she learned upper level dressage work in less than six months. In 2006, Des helped me earn my first Regional Championship title in Arabian Hunter Hack 2'6". Des has competed in open/all breed Dressage and Combined Training shows, showing her wonderful athletic ability.

Even as a talented upper level dressage horse she has helped so many riders, young and old learn good horsemanship and riding. Whether it's the slow walk for a beginner rider or her easy lateral work for a rider learning. Especially with young children, she is the most gentle and quiet as they slowly brush her. Des is fantastic to ride bitless and bridleless, helping the rider properly learn to use their seat, leg aids and voice to communicate with their horse. Des has helped many re-riders get back into the equestrian world.

August 2025 Des also was involved with helping a vet student learn more about horse handling and horse care. The vet student learned to lunge and do ground work with Des along with learning to take care of her from beginning to end from grooming, bathing and hoof care.

From June through September 2025, Des participated in the Keystone Riding Initiative through the Arabian Horse Promotional Fund as a lesson mount for a re-rider with a dressage trainer. Through the lessons the rider did her first lateral work, rode through the pastures, worked on stirrupless work and rode her bridleless. Des was able to help her work on a large range of exercises in her lessons to add variety & fun to each lesson.

Des assisted in two Masterson Method demonstrations during a weekend helping teach 11 course attendees equine body work. Des patiently stood as the instructors went through each technique with the participants.

Through 6 Arabian Horse educational and meet & greet events in 2024 and 2025, Des helped introduce over 180 people to the Arabian horse. She thoroughly enjoys meeting new people and always happy for an extra neck rub!

Des' kind nature has made her a great assistant and partner in photoshoots. In March 2025 Sweet Fresno Photography had Des as a part of a senior's graduation photoshoot. Des even got to wear her graduation cap! Des also participated in a model call shoot with Michelle Carmona Photography this year.

Des displayed the Arabian longevity, soundness and athleticism again by participating in the Dressage Foundation's Century Ride. This is where both the rider and horse equal the age of 100 while performing a dressage test. At 28 years old, Des did a fantastic job during these rides! Beautiful moving, responsive, and kind through the tests.

I like to consider Des the epitome of the Arabian Horse War Mare and "Daughter of the Wind" - loyal, willing, athletic. While she was bred to be a racehorse, she became an amazing dressage and hunter horse who has the Arabian "in your tent" personality where she loves to develop a partnership with the humans she meets in her life. Des has been such a phenomenal ambassador of the Arabian horse breed over her 20 years with our family.

Jessica Gilker Ho

AHA/GAHA # 684809

Megan Gilker Thomas' Submission for CA Destiny Gro+ AHA/GAHA Lifetime Member: 611251

I am honored to nominate 28-year-old purebred Arabian mare CA Destiny Gro+ for the 2025 Georgia Arabian Horse Association Ambassador Award. In her younger years, CA Destiny Gro+ "Des" was initially started as a hunter pleasure horse and then upon being purchased by Kathy Gilker for my sister/her daughter, Jessica, to ride and show as a youth. Des was trained to FEI level dressage and hunter (up to 2'9" over fences) and also enjoyed many miles of trail riding with Jessica. Over the years, Des has helped several re-riders safely get back in the saddle and beginners learn the ropes of good riding/horsemanship and has safely toted my beginner rider husband, Bradley, on rides including a fun, but chilly snowy trail ride. Des has absolutely thrived promoting the Arabian horse the last few years while also showing how long living this incredible breed is!

For the past several years Des has been an integral part of the free riding opportunity at J.A.G. Arabians bringing in re-riders or positively introducing equestrians to the Arabian horse as well as farm open houses, also introducing the Arabian Horse to newcomers and other equestrians less familiar with the breed. At 24 years old, Des also competed 3rd level dressage in an open USDF dressage show competing against all breeds. More recently in August 2024 Des was one of the Arabians to teach vet student Anna at the The Royal Veterinary College when she did her hands on learning part of her Animal Husbandry Extramural Study (AHEMS) at our farm. She got hands on in all aspects of horse care and learned so much including how to lunge a horse for the very first time with Des. Des makes learning of ground work easy and straightforward since she is so responsive and willing to please! She is a fantastic teacher. Anna had only interacted with horses once as an adult and met them a few times as a youth. Later on in September 2024, Des was the perfect demo horse for the entire weekend's Masterson Method Weekend Course hosted at our Arabian horse farm. Despite the unfamiliar body work techniques, she was a willing participant so that clinic attendees could learn.

To kick off her ambassadorial activities this year, Des had the special opportunity to be a model in a very chilly March photoshoot with Erin Wheeler Sweet Fresno Photography for high school senior Sienna's graduation photos. Des was a perfect, patient model despite it being so cold in Georgia! The photos with Des turned out gorgeous. Throughout 2025 Des has generously introduced over 100 people to the Arabian horse through two Ladies Sunset at the Farm events this year and the June 14th "Meet An Arabian Horse Educational Fundraiser Event" for GAHA and two other non-profits, which had over 70 attendees. Many of the guests were from the general public and meeting the Arabian horse for the very first time. On June 21st Des was also featured in a western themed photoshoot by Michelle Carmona and was ridden bareback and bitless for photos.

Later this summer, Des had the privilege to give 12-year-old beginner rider Marilyn her third and fourth rides ever and Marilyn trotted for the first time on Des as well as rode Des bitless. Next in August, Des was a star teammate in helping her owner Kathy Gilker join the Dressage Foundation's Century Club where the horse and rider's ages must equal 100 or above. We are so proud of this accomplishment of Des! Des and Kathy are both now featured on the Dressage Foundation website as team #920 and are now representing the Arabian Horse in Georgia nationally among all sorts of different breeds.

The top off Des' ambassadorial duties this year, Des was privileged to be the riding lesson mount for a local Keystone Riding Initiative grant recipient and beginner rider, Bailey. The is a program through the Arabian Horse Promotional Fund structured to introduce newcomers to Arabians & Half-Arabians through its support of riding and horsemanship programs, as well as providing aid to beginner riders interested in pursuing lessons and horsemanship courses at riding facilities that use Arabians and Half-Arabians in their education programs. By riding CA Destiny Gro+ in lessons, under the professional guidance of Samantha R., Bailey improved her riding position, rode without stirrups, practiced leg yields, shoulder-ins, and free walks for the first time, got some trail riding/hacking in and finished her final lesson with a bang by trotting and then riding Des completely bridleless! Des truly showed the reliability, versatility, soundness, and rideability of the Arabian Horse.

Des has the quintessential Arabian "in your tent" and the war mare disposition that were greatly favored - gentle, aware, hard working, responsive, and eager to please with such athleticism. She will go to the ends of the earth for her rider! What I truly love about Des is not only is she a powerhouse athlete and well trained enough to be an upper level competitor, but she is also a bareback and/or bitless or bridle-less professional! You are able to watch her visibly melt as she just senses when she's around a baby or young child and is extra careful and treats her beginner riders like glass. Des is one that treasures forming a close one-on-one bond with humans. She is always polite and is never pushy about wanting attention. She is serious about her "war mare" status - a gentle scratch or some light massage or a bit of alfalfa hay and you've earned yourself a new best friend! She truly is the sweetest soul that, especially within the last few years, has fully exhibited the adaptability, soundness, longevity, athleticism, responsiveness, trainability, soundness and true nature of the purebred Arabian Horse to newcomers to the horses in general as well as newcomers to the Arabian Horse and also has proudly represented the Arabian Horse among other breeds of horses.

I, Kathy Gilker, nominate CA Destiny Gro+ for the 2025 GAHA Ambassador Award. On August 23rd, 28-year-old Arabian mare CA Destiny Gro+ "Des" and I became a part of The Dressage Foundation's Century Club. The purpose of The Century Club is to recognize and honor dressage riders and horses in the United States. In order to become a member of The Century Club, the ages of the rider and horse must add up to 100 or more years! Horse and rider perform a test of any level and are scored by a dressage judge or dressage professional. I am so proud to have had Des for 21 years and be able to team up with her to be inducted to the Dressage Foundation's honorable Century Club! Through this Des exhibited the incredible soundness, longevity, and kindness of the Arabian Horse.

"Des" is a purebred Arabian and is the last progeny of her sire *Grojor. She has a unique blend of Arabian racing Polish and Spanish bloodlines you don't often see nowadays. With professional dressage training rides only a couple times a month, Des was schooling FEI movements such as piaffe and passage and tempi changes within only a couple years. Des was purchased to be my daughter's, Jessica's, show horse as a youth rider. Des & I did our last Dressage show together in 2008 when Des was 11 years old. Later on dipping her toes back into shows, Des showed 3rd level dressage at 24-years-old looking better than ever with Jessica!

In addition to being a wonderful ambassador as a lifetime show horse and trail horse, Des has been such a wonderful partner to equestrians getting back into the horse world and youth new to horses. Whether it be through lessons with local dressage trainers, Meet & Greets, educational seminars, or photoshoots Des has done it all. Des shows the kindness, versatility, athleticism and soundness of the Arabian horse through everything she does.

Kathy Gilker

GAHA - AHA #: 611251 - kgilker2705@gmail.com - 404.358.2928

Additional Letters/Notes about Des from non-GAHA members from over the years:

I especially enjoyed grooming and working with Des. She's willing and eager to please!

Fondly,

Jan Legg

Mar 21, 2022

Des is super sweet and knows the ropes! She definitely taught me more than I could teach her. If you want a horse that will make you better, this is her. She's beautiful!

K.c. Shields-Lipp

August 4, 2022

Des is such a good girl!

Lyndsey Deigan

May 10, 2022

Lovely mare! Such a good girl, too!

Sue Shepherd

Jan 21, 2022

Des is a sweetheart and it was a pleasure to get to know her. You can tell she is beyond wise, knows the lay of the land, and wants to own said land :). She is so confident and comfortable which made working with her a joy. **Laura Orth**

May 18, 2022

I really enjoyed getting to know Des this summer. She's got that "forever young" personality and an inquisitiveness unique to Arabians. She was always eager to see what's around the next bend or where we were headed next. Des was lovely to spend time with!

Jenna Anjola

Sep 11, 2022

Des has such a sweet soul and big heart! I love that she's always eager to work. She makes trying new things fun because of how well she responds! One of my favorite horses to work with by far. 😊

Bailey Grigsby

August 31, 2022

