

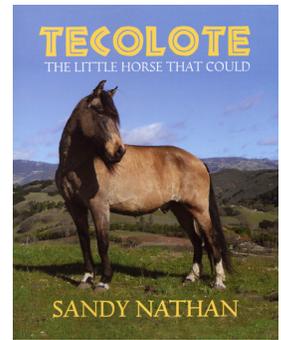


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# TECOLOTE

THE LITTLE HORSE THAT COULD

**SAMPLE INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR  
SANDY NATHAN**



The following sample interview is provided for the convenience of the media and book groups.

## **Where did you get the idea for the book?**

The events in the book--Tecolote's premature birth and all that happened when he was young--were part of life on our ranch. Those events were so vivid that they shouted, "Write me! Make me into a book!"

The book came into being because I wanted to share the story with my grandchildren. That's the bottom line.

## **Where is Tecolote now? What is he doing? Is he still with the herd? Does he have friends? Enemies? Any quirks? Tell us about him.**

Tecolote will be ten years old on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011. He's doing *great*. He's sound, healthy and very happy. He lives in a pasture with two mares and another gelding. They're great friends. When he's not hanging out with his buddies, he's my personal riding horse. We roam the trails together. He's very easy to catch and handle—I note in the book that the foals we've had who've had early veterinary problems have been very easy to handle because of all the human contact they had while babies.

Tecolote has one enemy: Leon Gitano BSN, our stallion. The enmity goes from Teco to the stallion. Whenever my husband and I ride together and he rides Leon, Teco pins his ears back at him and acts like he wants to bite and kick. No clue as to why Teco dislikes Leon so much. Leon doesn't do anything. Teco's other quirk is that he hates having a bath. He'll stand in the wash rack, but he wiggles and paws.

## **How did you get interested in horses?**

I was born interested in horses. My dad took me to San Francisco's Golden Gate Park to ride the ponies when I was two. I started riding lessons when I was ten and got my first horse when I was thirteen. I rode pretty much every day until I was eighteen. I was in a drill team/parade unit. Later I began showing horses and rode in western pleasure, trail, equitation and reined stock horse classes. I liked the later best. Reined stock horses are thrilling.

My equestrian life went on hold for a few years when I went to school, worked, and had kids. When I was forty, our family got into horses big time, founding Rancho Vilasa. We've bred, showed, trained, and loved Peruvian Paso horses for more than twenty years. We're in "retirement mode" now, down to six horses from a high of twenty-two.

**How did you get interested in Peruvian Pasos?**

Tecolote is a Peruvian Paso horse, a descendant of easy-gaited horses introduced to Peru by the Spanish Conquistadores. The easy-gaited part means that Peruvian Horses have a special gait that makes them smoother to ride than most breeds. They're supposed to be "the smoothest riding horse in the world." They don't trot under saddle—the bounce–bounce–bounce gait that causes most new riders such pain.

Peruvians are the only horse I can ride—I have a bad back. Ten minutes on any other breed and I'm in agony for days. In addition to being beautiful and easy to handle, Peruvians have given me twenty-five years of riding that I wouldn't have been able to enjoy without them.

**What's the most important thing about humans and horses?**

So many things about the relationship between horses and people are important. The bond that occurs between horse and rider or caretaker is probably the most important to me. It's a real connection, almost a union. I'm very sensitive to personal energy/horse energy. Did you know that horses have energy flows just like people? Equine energy charts and horse acupuncturists exist. When I'm working with a horse or riding one, I can feel that energy flowing through both of us. It's amazing. I almost feel like my horse is part of me.

That's the spiritual side of horses. Spirit, energy, bonding. Huge topics. I've had almost enlightenment experiences showing horses, and I know other people who have had similar experiences. The posture that a rider takes when seated properly is a yogic posture. It's balanced and aligned. When the horse is collected, as every horse is when being shown, the combination of human and equine posture can produce magic. There's a thread that you can see when you've ridden a lot. The way the horse and rider move. I've seen it in almost every type of riding and in horse handling, such as masterful round pen work. Horse whisperers are not rare. They're all over the place.

Showing horses is a discipline like martial arts. If you show horses and win, you can do anything. You transform yourself into a winner. What I learned showing horses is the fundamental bottom line of what I've achieved in life. Used to teach MBA candidates at a major graduate school of business. A number of us taught active listening and negotiation techniques. Apparently, I was the highest ranked facilitator year after year. My boss, the professor who taught the class, asked me how I was so successful. It was from working with horses. You're in the moment, responding to behavior and subtle cues. What you do matters. To get the result, you have to intervene properly. Working with horses gave me that ability.

Mastering fear. I've always been afraid of pretty near everything, including horses. I was very shy as a youngster. Learning to work with horses brought me out of that. It changed my life. Why? If you can't assert yourself with a horse, you won't leave the barn. It's fundamental.

**Have you always lived on a horse ranch?**

No. When I was a kid, my family boarded our horses. My husband and I bought a horse property about 1988. We started caring for our horses at home then. Going from taking riding lessons to having a horse is like going from grade school to college. Going from boarding a horse to caring for it full time is like going from college to a PhD program. Huge jumps in what you need to know and what's required of you.

**What does living on a horse ranch teach you?**

That's a whole book in itself. Multiply what happened in *Tecolote: The Little Horse That Could* by 365 days a year, by however many years you're a rancher. It's intense. Emergencies happen all the time. Things break. Horses get out. Horses get hurt. You have to feed twice a day, no matter what you'd rather be doing. It's a demanding lifestyle, very disciplined and very much in the moment. I treasure it.

**Do you have other books about horses planned?**

Yes, I have a whole file of experiences like those in *Tecolote*. I'm getting ready to write "the horse book." I have a couple of novels to get out there first. I have so much to do lined up that I'd be happy if there were 48 hours per day.