

Trail's End
Late Autumn 2006
Jill Owens, Editor

Autumn is perhaps my favorite season of the year. It's exhilarating to feast the senses on blazing sunrises and sunsets, the fall colors of the leaves, and the long shadows rendered by the oblique sun; the musky fragrances of the sages after the first autumn rains; the chilly feel of the cool mornings on my skin; the mournful call of the goldfinches that always arrive in my garden in October; the tastes of persimmon, pumpkin, and fresh ripe apples. Being able to get out and enjoy many of these things on horseback just multiplies the pleasure!

But there's another reason fall is an especially poignant and reflective time for me: many important landmarks of my life have happened in the autumn. It was in this season that Mike and I first got together, that both my daughter and son were born, that each of my parents died, that we bought our ranch, finished building the stone walls of our house, and that I got my horse.

Some might think me silly to put my horse in there with so many important life events, but it has been no small thing for me to find my way back to horses after thirty years, and to find my dream horse in Gypsy. Since so many of my "life passages" have occurred in the autumn of the year, maybe it's not so surprising that I should find this one in the autumn of my life.

Perhaps the placement in my life span is part of what makes it so compelling. When many people my age are easing off on personal quests and scaling down their goals, how lucky I am to find such an exquisite creature to enrich my days and to give me an entire new set of achievements to pursue with passion—to discover for the first time in my life that I can actually be athletic at something, and as a result

to be more fit physically, mentally, and psychologically than I ever was in all my more youthful years.

Happy trails to you!