

# THE ORIGINAL AMERICAN SADDLEBRED PARADE UNIT



For the 34th time Michele Macfarlane (far left) rode American Saddlebreds in the Rose Parade. This year, among others, she brought along Carson Kressley, Dena Lopez and Eric Antman.

## SCRIPPS MIRAMAR CELEBRATES 34th Rose Parade Appearance

by Bob Funkhouser | Photos by Debbie Keough and Carson Kressley

Many in the confined American Saddlebred world know of the thrilling show ring stars and noted breeding stock of the late Brownie Davis and her daughter Michele Macfarlane from their San Diego based Scripps Miramar Ranch, however, millions around the world know of the spotted American Saddlebred parade unit Macfarlane has organized for 34 years.

It's a massive undertaking that's hard to comprehend unless you've been a part of the posse and for several years she has invited an array of people from within the Saddlebred show world to experience the sensation of looking between the ears of an American Saddlebred while parading down Colorado Boulevard with hundreds of thousands of spectators along the way.

This year's riders were Carson Kressley aboard Flurry, Dena Lopez on Dr. Zhivago, Eric Antman on Sea Of Cortez, Melissa Moore on Connie, Michele Macfarlane with How The West Was Won, Don Truck with Prince, Austin Eversman on Smoke's Zoom Zoom, Melinda Moore on Ed, Savannah Miller with Blue, Kayce Reiner on Tobasco, and Susie Robinson aboard Buttercup. This group was accompanied along the parade route by Wilber Amaya, Kent Moeller and Craig Clapp. It's a long day and takes a great group of knowledgeable horsemen behind the scenes. Members of that team included Kevin Michael, Gerry Rushton, Paul Briscoe, Frank Miller and Kim Reiner.

If the effort for the parade wasn't enough, Macfarlane and company also put the American Saddlebreds on display at Equestfest where thousands met the majestic horses up close and personal.

"It's one of the best Equine experiences I have ever had," said Melissa Moore. "This was my second year riding in it and it's just indescribable, the feeling of presenting these horses to so many people. I'm amazed at how the horses handle being ridden with so much stimulation from everywhere. The number of people who line the street are simply awe-inspiring."

"Each year I'm struck by the absolutely massive undertaking that is participating in the Rose Parade," added Carson Kressley. "It is one that Michele [Macfarlane] takes on fueled by the sheer love and exuberance for our magnificent breed."

"Preparing 11 stunning examples of our breed with museum quality tack and custom made Manuel attire is quite the endeavor, but Michele rises to the occasion each year to showcase the breed that she loves so much – doing what it is naturally very good at – proudly parading

down Colorado Boulevard to the cheers and adulation of nearly 1 million spectators lining the streets."

The exposure is as mind-boggling as the experience of riding in the parade as it is seen in 80 million homes worldwide.

"Coverage on NBC, ABC- KTLA, Hallmark and HGTV was exceptional this year," said Kressley. "Those watching not only heard the words 'American Saddlebred,' but saw our breed in action, presented in the very best possible light. What could be more valuable than that? This sort of discovery has been fueling our industry since the inception of the breed. Haven't almost all of us fallen in love with American Saddlebreds because we discovered them somewhere (a horse show, a local riding stable, or a parade) and said, 'Wow, what's that? I want one of those!'"

"Sadly, in today's world not many people are exposed to horses, which is why the Rose Parade showcase is so valuable. Although Michele does not put forth such an effort for the accolades, each one of us owes her a debt of gratitude for she has literally introduced millions to our breed."

"In addition, this year KTLA – a station in the number one market in the US, Los Angeles, expressed interest in doing a special pre-parade piece, which was also seen by millions. Once again Michele charged into action, providing several horses for both me and the anchor to ride. The riding ring at Scripps Miramar Ranch was coated in fresh shavings and an array of immaculate parade saddles stood on racks, shined up and ready to go. The thing is, Michele conveys a breezy attitude like it was nothing at all, worried more about great TV exposure and her guest having a great experience at the ranch."

"And if that wasn't enough, Michele and her gang performed at Equestfest, a show somewhat like, and produced by the same team as Equitana. All the equestrian units in the parade perform for a sold out audience at the LA Equestrian Center's Equidome."

"I happened to be the host this year and I made sure everyone was invited back to the stalls to meet the American Saddlebreds. Michele had the area set up like a horse show stabling area with seating, colorful drapes and tack displayed. What I thought was remarkable was that Michele had each horse manned with an attendant so that visitors had an actual person there introducing them to the breed."

"Young and old and everyone in between could not wait to get up close and touch the horses."



In addition to the parade, the Scripps group also did a presentation to a sold out crowd at the LA Equestrian Center.



*Dena Lopez on Dr. Zhivago and Eric Antman on Sea Of Cortez have both had many thrilling show ring rides, but they were more than enthralled with this once in a lifetime opportunity.*

*For the second time, Melissa Moore was one of the parade participants and was again amazed at the experience.*



*Michele Macfarlane had an attendant with each American Saddlebred personally introducing the spectators to the horses.*



*This amazing group of American Saddlebreds represented the breed and Scripps Miramar Ranch in the highest order by hundreds of thousands of Rose Parade spectators. Millions more enjoyed the majestic animals on television, with some stations giving added history and other information on the breed.*

