

2022 Ft Valley Intro Ride

Welcome to our ride. Ft Valley Endurance Ride is run by the Old Dominion Endurance Inc and has for several years now offered an Introductory Ride for new riders, or new horses to the sport. The purpose is to provide an experience that is not overwhelming to either rider or horse, and to share our beautiful trails which are at peak color in the autumn mountains. These trails are rugged, hilly, and rocky, but offer the new rider and horse a slower pace than some rides that are flat and contain little to slow the young or new horse down. It is our belief that any reasonably fit horse can cover the trail when ridden at a walk/trot. Horses do need foot protection for these rocky trails; in fact, we mandate shoes or boots on all four feet.

The Intro ride will cover about 11 miles of trail in one loop, and will start at 10:00 am on Saturday, October 15, 2022. You can haul your horse to the ride that morning or camp the night before. The best way to introduce your horse to this sport is to camp the night before. There are many ways to secure your horse overnight; electric fencing, steel or aluminum panels, hi-ties, or simply tying to the trailer. Whatever you decide, make sure your horse is secure. If you do haul in Saturday morning, know that you will not be allowed to arrive after 7 am because trailers would be coming in where horses are warming up for the 50-mile ride.

At 9 am, before heading out, our Intro Ride Hostess, Sonja Knecht-Hoshi, will meet with Intro riders at her trailer. She will go over the trail, answer any questions, and help you get your horse vetted in, before you get tacked up.

You can go at your own pace, and the trail is well marked, but this year we will not be having a guide horse lead riders out. You need to be prepared to follow the ribbons and navigate the trail. If you are a junior, under 16 yrs of age, you need to have a sponsor over age 21 that stays with you for the entire trail. Be sure that you mark your horse's tail with a red ribbon if he's a kicker, to make sure everyone stays safe.

Weather can be variable in Ft Valley in late October. Make sure that you pack waterproof shoes, a change of socks, warm and waterproof jackets for you and for your horse. Try to secure a bottle of water or electrolytes to your saddle if you are not accustomed to riding longer distances. Make sure the bottle does not bounce and bother your horse.

If you are new to the sport of endurance, welcome. Among all equine sports, you will find that the community of endurance riders is the most down-to-earth, inclusive of all. We are here to help you have a great day, and if you have any questions, you can approach any rider at basecamp, identify yourself as new to the sport, and they will be delighted to meet you. I guarantee it.

Claire Godwin DVM
Ft Valley Ride Manager