

## My Adventure to the National's Road Trial

For most people, the preparation for the Road Trial involves packing a bag and dog food and getting on your way. My adventure started in December when I purchased my first horse trailer. It is a 2 horse 2005 Brenderup Baron HB. The reason for selecting this trailer was simple. It can be pulled with a mini van, believe it or not (and most horse people were on the 'not' side of that statement). You have to see it to believe it.



I started preparing for our first trip months in advance and packed the trailer at least a week before leaving, except for my tack. This was my first time towing a full horse trailer, my first time taking a horse anywhere and Zorro's first long trip in his life (that I know of). To say that I was a bit nervous was an understatement. People kept asking me if I was going to do this alone and when I would say 'yes', they did not have encouraging words for me. Statements like 'You are very brave!' and 'Are you CRAZY?' kept resurfacing. That didn't make me feel any better. I figured between AAA, US Rider Insurance, OnStar and a cell phone full of helpful numbers, I wouldn't be alone for long should something go wrong. I used the old Boy Scout motto of 'BE PREPARED'. It was all I could do.

I bought buckets, manure forks, brooms, hay bags and extra tack. The most important thing I purchased was US Rider Insurance which gave me the peace of mind I needed. The day before leaving I loaded all my tack and hooked up the trailer. I practiced loading Zorro (he only learned to load in my trailer months before) so we wouldn't have any arguments over that. I loaded the hay, shavings and a 5 gallon jug of water. I bagged all his feed and marked each bag. Everything was ready to go until my husband snapped off the handle of my trailer that lowers the wheel in the front. Thankfully, I didn't kill him and a simple cotter pin was all that was needed to repair it. I didn't need any more stress!!

The next morning I hooked up the trailer, checked all my lights, loaded Zorro and off we went. The trailer towed beautifully. I barely knew it was back there, except for the fact that my gas mileage was HORRIBLE. I stopped every 2 hours to give Zorro a break, give him grain and water (and a carrot or 2) and to just check on him. He was WONDERFUL!! He didn't eat well on this trip, except hay and grazing but he was fine. When I arrived at the Road Trial barn, I was greeted with a sigh of relief that I made it OK. My friends called to be sure I made it also.

My advice for anyone towing a horse trailer for the first time by yourself is to prepare well in advance and take your time. Stop often and give your horse, truck and yourself a break (I take 'power naps' all the time when I drive places). Stay visible and only stop in places where there are a lot of people. Truck stops are great or rest areas where there are a lot of trucks. I napped behind an Arby's for 30 minutes while Zorro rested in the trailer!

All in all, we had a great trip and even came home with a THIRD PLACE!