

*This exclusive interview has been provided to the Menlo Charity Horse Show by our Platinum Partner PhelpsSports.com*

## The Art of Horsemanship-An Interview with 2008 Menlo Charity Horse Show Artist Elin Pendleton

Alden Corrigan for PhelpsSports.com



**Elin Pendleton**

*Elin Pendleton of Riverside, California has been selected as the official artist for the 2008 Menlo Charity Horse Show, August 5th through August 10th at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton, California. Ms. Pendleton is a member of the prestigious American Academy of Equine Art, Co-President of the Women Artists of the West, and a signature member of the National Acrylic Painters Association.*

*Her painting, "To the Ring" will be featured on all horse show posters, invitations, tee shirts, mugs and the horse show program. A 24 inch by 36 inch giclee print of this work will be auctioned off at the Friday evening Sponsors Dinner and party, which benefits Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.*

*I recently had the pleasure of a one-on-one conversation with Ms. Pendleton, to say that she is incredibly talented and an enlightened free spirit is an understatement. I hope you enjoy reading this as much I enjoyed my time with her.*

### **Where did you grow up?**

I never grew up. I'm still a kid at heart, climbing trees and seeing my world with optimism and humor. And I'm almost 60. Who says you have to be young to have fun?

I grew up in Northern Virginia, and then Ojai, California, where I had horses for the first time at age 12.

### **Which came first, your love of horses or art?**

Horses first, when I was about seven, and my Mom took the Girl Scout troupe with my older sister for their merit badge in horseback riding. I was lost ever since.

### **Can you elaborate?**

Sure! When their lessons were over, they couldn't find me. I was in a box stall with a huge Thoroughbred gelding named Eighty Eight, and I heard them calling for me, but my eyeballs were heart shaped and I couldn't leave. They finally found me. I've never been the same since. Good thing that ol' horse was tolerant.

### **Are you a rider yourself?**

Yes, my folks got me my first horse at age 12 because I was sneaking off to ride the horses in the pasture about a mile from our place in Ojai. The horses from a boarding school were pastured there through the summer, and I rode all of them with a rope and bareback until my folks discovered my horse-sweat jeans in the garage (I changed before I went inside...). Funny, in looking back on that, I KNOW my Mom could smell the horse on me. How naive is that?? So they got me a horse to at least know what kind of riding, and how safe the horse would be.



*"Pleasantly Perfect, Del Mar"*

### **What is your discipline of choice?**

I've always been a seat-of-the-pants rider. I did the normal competitive thing during high school, English riding, hunters, western pleasure, and even worked for a while for a hunt barn, showing horses for sale on drag hunts down near what was Thousand Oaks.

### **Do you currently have horses?**

Yes, I have a Missouri Fox Trotter mare. I tend to own one or two horses at a time, but lately I only have time to devote to one.

### **Do you ride competitively now?**

No, my pleasure and centering of my mind and art life revolve around the peace and quiet of taking my mare out for trail riding in the preserve around our home. I trailer out to other remote and beautiful locations and occasionally ride with friends.

### **Are you a classically trained artist?**

If you mean was I trained, yes. Did I learn much during the schooling? No. Most of what I've learned about equine art and color comes from study and workshops I've taken since that formal schooling. I do have a degree in art, and worked for a while in medical illustration, but the tightness of that genre was

very stressful. Only in the last ten years can I truly call myself an artist.

**What were some of your first works?**

I painted graffiti before there was graffiti, back in 1968. I won't go into that except to say it was mermaids in Ventura. My first painting was done when I was nine, and it was abysmal. White swan on blue water, green grass and blue sky. Like anything, doing more of it usually results in improvement, thank goodness! I've probably done over four thousand paintings since then.



*Rowdy*

**How long have you been selling your art?**

I've sold or traded my art since college days. Officially selling since 1982, and more recently most of my sales are directly through my web sites, blog and iTunes/YouTube videos.

**Who are your collectors?**

My collectors range from VIPs for Toyota Motors, to ordinary people who just want to own a small original. Because of the internet, there is no real demographic for my art, except a common thread that connects people to my paintings. If they have something in common with what I paint, then their wish to own it, makes it part of their life, and I share in that moment. Right now I'm working on a painting of my friend who died of cancer last month--I'm giving it to someone very important in her life, and although I cannot call that person a "collector", I can know that I've done something worthwhile--both for myself and for him.

**What mediums do you use?**

I really want to say I used to go to the Ghost Whisperer....

Seriously, I paint primarily in oils and acrylics. Every once in a while I'll pick another medium to stretch the muscles, but most of my work is in either oils or acrylics.

## **Why?**

I love the buttery feel of oils, and their luscious viscous quality, but acrylics are incredible for their depth of color in the layers. That's technical talk, perhaps, but the end result in either medium is most satisfying to me. I'll use acrylics for speed, but enjoy working in oils when I go on location to paint a scene from life.

## **Can you be retained for commissioned pieces?**

I do commission work. I usually choose to do the ones that have meaning for the collectors. Many posthumous portraits of horses, dogs and people. I also do specific events with meaning for the collector--such as tacking up a favorite horse, something that happened on a pack trip with the pack mules... the interest I have is in the story behind the event, the people, and I re-create the moment and the emotion by that connection. I don't "do portraits from these photographs"--there would be too much of a disconnect. As I get older, I get pickier about which commissions I will do.

## **How many commissioned pieces do you paint a year?**

When I was doing the daily paintings, I did 365 paintings each year for over two years. Of those, perhaps 15% were commissions. Now I do perhaps 40% commissions and the rest are for major shows, or, as in this most recent portrait, for my inner self.

## **What are the price ranges?**

Depends on the complexity of the commission. If you need me to fly to do the photography, then the prices can range from \$1,000 to \$4,000. If you have copyright-free photographs and can take the time to talk to me via email or phone to establish the connection, then the prices are lower.



*To the Ring*

**Tell me about "To the Ring", the artwork that will be used for the 2008 Menlo Charity Horse Show:**

I was over in San Juan Capistrano at one of the major horse shows as a guest of another rider, and spent the days photographing any and everything about the event. I did have permission to photograph and go wherever I wished, but I stayed out of the rings, preferring to capture the story behind the complexities of show jumping. What intrigued me about the source material for "To the Ring" were the color of the coat against the white horse, and the sense of controlled anticipation of the rider.

**What was your inspiration?**

Color. Always the color--and horses, of course!

**It's uncanny how much the setting looks like Menlo, was this an actual horse show?**

This one could be Menlo, but in actuality it is in San Juan Capistrano. I took some artistic license with the background and hills, because it is usually a lot less green down this-a-way!

**When was it painted?**

I think in 2005.

**Is it for sale?**

Yes, from my web site at [elinart.com](http://elinart.com) under English and Hunt Horses.

**Will you be exhibiting your work at the Menlo Charity Horse Show?**

I would, but my calendar already had a workshop booked to teach in Maine.

**As an artist, are your paintings like children, impossible to have a favorite?**

Ha! Not a chance. I am more like Mother Hubbard, with too many in my shoe of a studio. Although I have a large studio (1,200 square feet, enough to bring a horse in for a model), I have enough paintings to fill the racks. I like seeing them go to new homes, because then I can continue to grow as an artist and paint more!



*"Cooling Off"*

**Tell me about your website elinart.com?**

I've been on the web since the early days--1996 was my first web site. I showcase all of my art there--the equine work, the animals, the still life, the landscapes. I also have equinepaintings.com and dailypaintings.com which are interconnected. Separate from these are my blog at elinpendleton.blogspot.com and the iTunes and YouTube videos. I do maintain my own sites, and also do the digital work to have the mini movies on those other venues.

**Do your customers tend to buy online, or in person?**

I have sales both through gallery shows and online. Most of my sales are from the web sites. I enjoy the exchange of emails, and although I do have an assistant who works for me, I tend to keep the communication direct between myself and my collectors.

**If you couldn't be an artist, what other career would you pursue?**

I'd have been a vet.

**Why?**

The only reason I didn't become a vet was because of a "girl's counselor" in high school who admonished me that "girls couldn't handle the science and math necessary to become a vet." Biggest regret of my life is that I believed her. I tend to be a tad more circumspect in my assumptions nowadays.

**More info on the artist:**

Elin Pendleton, AAEEA, WAOW, EAG

Daily Paintings at <http://elinpendleton.blogspot.com>

The Paintings: <http://www.elinart.com>

The Horse Paintings: <http://www.equinepaintings.com>