

## Bridgman Winchester ("Chester") Mule for Adoption

6/7/19 Robin Yandell Williston, VT

Description: Chester is a very handsome bay john mule, 14.3hh, 25 yo, retired from active riding at this time but in good health and could easily be ridden again if started slowly. Trained both English and Western, shown under saddle and over fences, trail rides, coon jumps, has fox hunted. Stands to be groomed, clipped, OK with vet and farrier, loads, loves people/attention and gets attached to his main person.

Reason for Surrender: It is with great regret that I am putting Chester up for adoption. I have enjoyed him for 18 yrs. I don't ride anymore due to multiple joint replacements. I have a large farm property to maintain with other animals and gardens so have to make some tough choices about realistic workload. Chester is too good to be put down and deserves more years with someone who will give him more adventures than I can here.

Ownership History: Born 1994 in Troy, NY. Purchased by Bridgman Stables 5/1/96 in Varysburg, NY who kept him for 3 years and trained him Western. He did everything from flat work to team penning. He is out of a 15.3hh Palomino QH mare (Pines Golden Star by Pines Bar). Don't know about the donkey sire. Bridgman Stables said he had an extensive show record in NY, PA and Shelbyville, TN Nationals. They sent a written piece about his care and handling as well as a video I still have. He had one other owner for a short time after Bridgman, but he ran her cows and jumped out I was told so she didn't keep him. Around 1999, he was bought by Marshlyn Reed, owner of Ass-Pirin Acres Mini Donks in Addison, VT. Marshlyn bought him for her daughter to trail ride, but after 2 years, they didn't have time. I bought him in August 2001 from Marshlyn for \$2600. I have maintained contact with Marshlyn and Bridgman Stables over the years. Chester has been with me for 18 years. I know of no history of abuse or neglect from any previous owners.

Activities and Training: Since I have owned Chester, he has been ridden English. With a trainer's help, he has learned basic dressage and more extensive jumping.

He is athletic and nimble and loves to jump. When I had a stadium course set up in the ring outside my kitchen window, I could see him loose, jumping the jumps all by himself on a course just for fun! Has shown successfully under saddle and in conformation classes. He is an excellent smooth mover and looks like a thoroughbred jumping on a hunt course. As an aside, he was featured in both Mules and More and The Brayer in 2004 as an example of a nice English riding mule. He has also been trail ridden and gone fox hunting, which he loved but got quite strong with all the hounds and activity. He knows how to lunge, but he thinks it's stupid so he can be resistant. Chester needs an experienced rider who can keep him focused on the task. He is fun to ride, smart, curious, reactive to his surroundings. He also shies more than the average horse and is very quick when he does. Most people who have ridden him have fallen off once because he's so quick (not that he's trying to dump you, he's just quick.) Now that he's older, maybe he'd be quieter? But he's not a bomb-proof, walk/trot trail animal. He also isn't great with traffic, bicycles, motorcycles, loud heavy equipment. Trail rides better with others than alone, so I rarely rode alone. I am happy to talk to a new owner about bits and other riding pointers. He had impressive performance in his prime, but he's only been ridden maybe 6 times in the last 10 years!

Chester has been pastured with other horses as I boarded horses for much of his time with me. Tends to be dominant in a herd, mares love him, he can get studly and mount mares, but never injured any. He likes companions that play and run, play with balls with him. He can be rough so I wouldn't put him in with old weak horses. He likes my mini donks but they were never pastured together as he runs them, badly. He respects electric fencing. Loves having a sand pile to roll in.

I never tried driving Chester.

Temperament/Quirks: Chester has a great personality and is very smart. Loves to play. As mentioned above, he tends to be dominant. Needs a job or he can get into mischief if he's bored. He does best with someone who handles him a lot, who is confident and firm and likes him. If he doesn't respect you he will take advantage and push limits. For example, sometimes he can be hard to catch in the pasture or, when a group of horses come into their stalls for the night in winter, he might intentionally sneak into someone else's stall because he knows they have better grain. Say his name sharply and he will go exactly where's supposed

to. I have not done clicker training with him, but he would take to it quickly. Gets attached. Brays whenever he sees my truck coming down the road. I admit he is spoiled with too many treats (my fault) so he can get pushy and nippy for those. I often lead him with a chain through his halter, as have other owners (not dangerous, just pushy at times). Doesn't kick, bite, pull back when tied, none of those vices. He loves his ears itched inside. Likes a radio on in the barn

Medical/Care: Chester has always had annual spring shots, teeth floating, sheath cleaned, fecal checks. Farrier trims every 6-8 weeks. Because his fecals have been negative for worms, my vet recommended just seasonal worming, 4 times a year. He is due for worming again this summer. All shots done in April 2019, fecal negative, Coggins negative (will give Ann the list). Chester has always had good teeth and hooves of iron. Never been shod with me. In recent years, my farrier suggested corrective shoes because he's starting to stand in a way that some hoof walls are turning in. Farrier thought this might be due to favoring arthritic joints at his age. I have not wanted to put shoes on him. Eyes are showing some faint signs of age-related cataracts, to be expected my vet said. Chester is an easy keeper and prone to laminitis on too much grass. He has never foundered but has been sore some summers when I've let him get too fat. Once in a while I've seen him sore in a joint (age). Cold water hosing and some Bute have resolved it.

He gets itchy skin every summer and rubs small patches of hair off his face, shoulders and forelegs. Has been tested for ringworm in past. Vet thinks it's bug allergies, so he goes on antihistamines in summer as a precaution. Fly boots on his lower front legs help, as do anti-itch lotions. I have tried many skin preparations and have never found anything that really resolves his "summer skin."

I use fly masks and fly spray all summer.

He will tolerate baths though he doesn't like them. He would rather hold the hose in his mouth or have you hose his muzzle with a light water spray—likes to play with water.

He is used to a large pasture space or field for running and playing. He has always had a run-in shelter year round. In winter, he is in a stall at night in an enclosed barn and out during the day. Always has access to heated water in winter.

I never used to blanket him in winter, ever, but in recent years I have found he is more comfortable with rain sheets or blankets in bad weather.

Feed and Supplements: Chester is an easy keeper and gets fat easily, especially if he isn't worked. He gets plain grass hay, one flake twice a day in summer and 3 flakes twice a day in winter.

Grain: ½ cup oats and ½ cup hay stretcher AM and PM with supplements and a little water (the only reason he gets any grain is to get supplements into him)

AM—antihistamine in summer

PM—Glucosamine, Multivitamin

Placement Suggestions: Chester would be very happy in a working barn with a lot of activity and busy-ness. He loves to go on walks or riding with others and gets upset if left behind. He does best with an attentive, loving owner who can be firm. Loves people. Gets depressed alone or without enough to do. Does well with a routine and a job. He also could be a pasture mate, as long as he got a lot of attention. If someone wants to ride him again they need to start him slow as he's been retired for so long. My land is all flat but he would do well in a pasture with hills or some rough terrain for the exercise.