



## DAYS AT DUNROVIN

# No. That's Pronounced DIVAS, not Donkeys

Dunrovin has two little half-sister donkeys who live life at the intersection of late childhood and early eccentricity. They bray loudly, especially if their meals are not served on time. They disrupt almost any event with their demands for attention. The shyness they showed when they arrived at Dunrovin Ranch as small jennets didn't last long – everyone's attention naturally flowed in their direction. How could anyone resist their charms?

Well, all the fuss went to their heads. No longer ordinary donkeys, they have donned the mantle of DIVAS and aggressively seek to be the center of attention. Always. In every situation. Unfortunately for the Dunrovin Ranch staff, they are not only demanding, entitled, strong, and quick on their feet, they are more than clever. They are devious and very, very smart.

They are always on the lookout for a gate left unattended. But no matter, really, because they have figured out how to open them all. Dunrovin Ranch has had to resort to fist-tight bungee cords in addition to gate latches to keep them from opening their stall gate, escaping, then running around to open all the other equines' gates, and hosting a party in the hay barn. It's happened. And, more than once!



Miss Gertie (left) was named after ranch owner SuzAnne Miller's grandmother, Gertrude. Like her namesake, Miss Gertie is the older, rather bossy sister. She can be counted on to instigate the trouble and the fun. She knows no limits. She is darned sure of what she wants and is unafraid to tell you so. Purple is her color, as she believes it adds the right contrast to her lovely gray coat with a dark cross along her back. Clearly, she doesn't think that women need wait until they are older to wear purple.

Miss Maude, named for SuzAnne's great aunt and Gertrude's younger sister, adores the color red. Her rich chocolate coat with amber tones comes alive when adorned with red. Miss Maude also resembles her name-sake: sweet, agreeable, but with plenty of playfulness and a spark of naughtiness. Whenever the two are caught in one of their escapades, Miss Maude always points the finger at Miss Gertie. One must be careful, however, in believing that Miss Maude is always so in-nocent. D@D viewers know the truth and have snitched on her

And look out barnyard if they are bored. For no apparent reason, they take it in their minds to run about with total mischief on their faces, kicking up their heels, enticing others to misbehave, and creating general havoc. Each has her own distinct personality. Our viewers love them. Everyone loves them—and they know it.



Naturally, the DIVAS don't just stay home hoping for fans and adventure to come their way. They are women who get out and about. Happy to go grocery shopping where they cause a stir with other shoppers, to visit local farm-and-ranch supply stores to help them advertise, to drop valentines and letters off at the post office, or to parade around Lolo to help get out the vote. You can count on these ladies to do their parts like they are here with Brookdale seniors.

Holidays are their favorite, of course. Halloween and Christmas top their list. They love to carry candy in the pots attached to their sawbuck saddles to hand out to children and spend days before Dunrovin Ranch's annual Halloween Party getting their costumes in order. Local businesses vie for their celebrity appearances during the Christmas holiday, when they also strut their stuff at Missoula's Parade of Lights.

The Donkey DIVAS hold themselves in very high regard. They contend that they play a key role within the Dunrovin Ranch barnyard: that of animal psychologists, providing their fellow creatures with free, unsolicited, and often nonsensical advice on coping with their human handlers. Humans can be perplexing creatures. However, the DIVAS think of themselves as keen observers and have amassed a treasure trove of clichés, platitudes, and stereotypes about humanity to convince many a wary animal that they know of what they speak—or bray, as the case may be.

### The DIVAS Dish - Animal Advice from the Wise Asses

Having fooled many a Dunrovin animal into listening to them, they have become quite certain that what the animal world needs now is more advice from a couple of worldly and wise asses. Not wanting to be on the wrong side of the DIVAS, Dunrovin Ranch has relented and agreed to assist them in their endeavor. If you have an animal in need of advice from the DIVAS, just write to them at [DunrovinDivas@gmail.com](mailto:DunrovinDivas@gmail.com). Dunrovin Ranch cannot accept responsibility for the veracity, suitability, or validity of whatever they write or bray in response. Writers and readers, please beware.

