

Bonded Friendship

Nina Hungerland's shared her story of saving her friends' horses.



PHOTO BY MIKE NELSON

Hungerland embraces her friends' horses she helped reach safety when the friends were out of town and she didn't want to leave the animals behind.

BY BRIDGET GRAHAM

The night before the fire raged through Malibu, Nina Hungerland had a feeling something was coming. She began to pack. Friends of the family (“I’ve known them my whole life,” Hungerland said) were out of town, and she knew instinctively to worry about them.

“In the morning, after I packed my car the best I could, I headed over to their house,” Hungerland said. “Their incredible son had been able to get some things out of the house, including the dogs.

But he couldn’t take care of the horses as well.

“It’s such a stressful time for the horses, they knew something was going on,” she said.

Initially, she wanted to walk them down, but she knew that was putting them in more danger. She waited on the roof of the house watching the fire come down the hill, knowing she had to do something.

So, she opened the corral.

“We opened it so they could escape,” Hungerland recalled. But they just walked around the property.

Hungerland made her way down the hill and met a woman with a trailer who helped her back to the property to assist in moving the horses to safety.

“I wish I knew her name,” she said. “She told me at the time, and now I can’t remember, but it was incredible.”

Once the two were back on the property, they were able to coax the horses into the trailer—more easily than Hungerland thought would be possible.

They all made their way to the beach.

“It was such a long day and long night,” she said. “I stayed with the horses all night. I watched them and the fire without knowledge of what might happen.”

When morning came, she drove up to her friends’ home to see if it was still standing. It was.

She found help again with a trailer to bring the horses back to home—and reunite with the owners a few days later. ■