



THE ROCKING HORSEMAN

As he sat rocking in his armchair David Cassidy pointed to the racing plate nailed to his mantelpiece and got on to the subject he most loves in all the world: horses.

He first learned to ride when he was growing up in Los Angeles. He soon became so keen he decided that he was no longer satisfied with just trotting and galloping, so he told his mother, Evelyn Ward, that he wanted a horse that would jump. Evelyn was rather surprised and a bit apprehensive, but she wasn't the sort of mother to stand in his way and she agreed. The result was that David soon became the highly accomplished horseman he is today.

However, when he took up acting and went to New York, he had to give up his outdoor life and concentrate on his singing and dancing lessons which were much more important to his career.

Now, when his career has rewarded him with wealth, he can turn once again to his former love — although now he's gone one stage further and has bought himself several racehorses. He talks non-stop about

them, horse magazines litter the table of the main lounge and are on the tiny reading table beside his bed. You feel that if he were to fall in love with any girl now she will have to have, above all, a good understanding and love for horses.

In fact, although he'd been in the recording studios all the previous day, David had got up at dawn on the day we met and gone down to Hollywood Park to see one of his horses gallop.

"I have a horse that is just three days old," David told me proudly. "I watched and helped her being born. It was really an incredible experience being there at the birth, really wild."

"I'm not a great horseman and compared with a lot of people I'm a novice, but I love it, it really occupies my thoughts a lot. For instance, there's a horse I'm thinking of buying that would be a really big investment for me. He is very expensive, but he's very very good. If it all works as planned I could do really well with him."

The great thing David likes about horse people is that they leave him alone. In fact, as he says thankfully,

they're more interested in the horses. And it's hard for David to go anywhere in the world where people will leave him alone.

Our talk turned to David's last major tour, which occasioned those incredible fan scenes, and continual pictures in the newspapers of David escaping here and there. "I was seriously thinking of giving all those live concerts up," he admitted. "It was so much of a hassle. At one time it seemed to me that the price you had to pay was more than the return was worth. It takes such a toll on you, it really does."

I asked him if he had seriously thought he would give up touring in favour of a recording career?

"Yes, it's true. You see I had so much else that I wanted to do, what with my horses, and my house and the land. I love performing, but there came a stage when I was out on the road that all I could think about was getting home. It really got so lonely out there touring. It was awful — you can also get abused, which is something I can live without!"

Having toured with David, I knew how he felt because everyone always wanted something from him.

"You're right — everybody! The trouble was that I just wasn't able to please everyone all the time. I just ended pinching myself and asking, 'What am I doing here?' I got really brought down by a lot of the trip. I suddenly realised that I was the loser all the time. You do right by somebody and you're going to cross somebody else. You end up getting kicked one way or the other!"

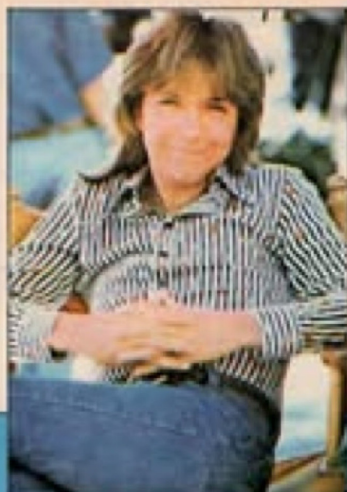
"However things have all been straightened out now, and I'm really looking forward to getting back out there and meeting all those people."

David told me that one of the ideas he'd had was to do a big charity show in New York for 100,000 people. He'd give his services for nothing and a charity would get all the admission prices. And in England he'd had the same idea to do a big charity show in Hyde Park.

"I wanted to do that before I did the last tour, a couple of months before we set off there was some talk of it and I said 'just let the kids come.' Anyway it ended up with the police saying 'no,' so that was that. But wouldn't it have been great! I know the Rolling Stones did a concert in Hyde Park years ago, but I'd like to have given one free too."

David told me that he was really looking forward to Britain "because the girls are so sensational," and this time wanted to see much more of the country itself.

"But as I've said, when I'm away I really do miss my home, sitting around here, painting the house, fixing the sheds and fences. I need to do the heavy stuff like that, for instance a tree I had to cut down, I couldn't really manage by myself but I had a go anyway! There are only a few things I can't handle, but I like doing stuff



around the home: I've done most of the painting inside and out, and even wallpapered the bathroom! That was quite tricky, but not nearly as difficult as I'd imagined.

"You see it's such a change from what I have to do normally. It helps me unwind and really relax. What's a more I'm helping make my home a better place into the bargain!"

This is no idle boast by David because as I've told you his house is fantastic — no wonder he's proud of it. He'd been really pleased to show me round his home, and outside we'd had a long talk with his close friend Sam Hyman about what they were going to do with this and that. David was trying to find out how you measure gravel because he had to order a whole lot for his backyard.

I wondered if David had taught himself how to do all these handy home things.

No, I was brought up, contrary to public opinion, in a really middle class American family. In the beginning I lived with my grandparents. My grandfather worked as a public servant and they really were small town unsophisticated down-to-earth people. I learned a lot about growing vegetables from my grandfather.

"I mean I'm just an ordinary sort of guy — apart from my racehorses my wants aren't that extravagant."

You can read more about David's family and friends in Part Five of our At Home series in Jackie dated April 20 the week after next — because next week we've got something extra-special for you!

As you probably know, David is 24 next Friday, April 12, and to mark the occasion we've had a special horoscope cast for him. Not only can you read the predictions for his future, but delve into all the secrets of his personality and his love life that the chart reveals.

Even if you think you know everything there is to know about David, there are one or two surprises in store!

Don't miss it!

