

UNCORKED Farmgirl

NO GOATS,
NO GLORY!



Nothing comes between Teresa Owen and her goats...except her camera. This southern Washington farmgirl and her husband, Jeff, were busy homesteading the farm where she grew up—hosting trail rides and operating their own winery—when the pandemic happened. With a keen eye for opportunity, Teresa shifted her focus to her darling herd of dairy goats and pictured a way to stay in business while brightening people's days with images of her hooved "kids" framed in flowers.

"The pandemic closed us down last year and I had a lot of time to really enjoy the farm, and that's how the goat pictures came to be," she says. "My friend has a flower farm, and we thought it would be fun to socially distance over some wine and baby goats wearing flower crowns! (We've

put flower crowns on every living thing on this farm except the chickens—and only because they won't hold still long enough.) I started taking photos of the baby goats and selling them as note cards along with some super-cute clothing, coffee cups, canvases, and goat-milk soaps. It's been a blast!"

True to her rugged bootstrap-pulling roots, Teresa loves looking for innovative ways to make a living off the land her folks humbly farmed in the '70s. Back then, the family lived in an old one-room government building her dad bought at auction, and their bathroom was an outhouse. But it was heaven to a horse-crazy girl who could ride for endless hours when she wasn't helping tend the goats and chickens, a peach orchard, and an enormous garden.



"My parents were the first out here on Red Mountain, which is an American Viticultural Area. Back then, it was just cheap land in the middle of nowhere, not terribly desirable," recalls Teresa. "Our original homestead is now the tack room for our trail-ride operation. My parents' peach orchard has been replaced with wine grapes. We are at the end of a private road named after my father—a neighbor surprised us by putting the sign up and dedicating the road to Dad."

When Theresa and Jeff returned to her family home about 10 years ago, they started Red Mountain Trails, offering guided horseback and wagon trips across the wide-open landscape of the lower Yakima River country.

"My skin took a beating—outside all day in the sun in a very arid climate. You couldn't drink enough water to stay ahead some days. I decided to get dairy goats not only to help tackle the weeds around here, but to make soaps and lotions to soothe my skin. My big dream was to make a little extra income from cheeses and goat-related products. Thanks to Covid for helping me follow through, I guess. That extra time on my hands made it possible."

Teresa will be the first to tell you, with a chuckle, that she's a no-frills kind of farmgirl. What may appear glamorous in a glossy goat portrait is not the whole picture.

"If you've ever fantasized about living on a small farm, collecting eggs in the morning, milking your adorable little dairy goats, and making goat-milk soap in a flower-decorated white cottage, riding horses through wine country, and then quaffing wine in the garden as the sun sets ..." she writes on her blog, "[my posts] may inspire but will most likely disappoint. People keep saying that I'm living their dream life, but I'd say I'm more like the 'Pinterest fail' version of your dream."

We had to laugh out loud when Teresa summed up her real-life farm fantasy like this: "I have a flock of insanely adorable



dairy goats, which I do milk and I do use that milk for soap-making (in a cramped corner of my clutter-congested basement). I collect eggs in the morning from our chickens (who usually peck me), and I ride horses through wine country, and I periodically quaff (cheap gas-station) wine in the (overrun) garden as the sun sets. Usually there is a lot of swearing, something inevitably breaks, and I'm sporting several smears of unidentified fecal matter before 9 a.m. And no, I don't even manage to look cute while doing any of it."

But despite the messy, mundane, and sometimes downright dirty details of forging a farm life, the Uncorked Cowgirl wouldn't have it any other way.

"I think my favorite thing about our little slice of heaven is how nicely every aspect of our farm flows together.

I call us 'faux-steaders' because we really aren't self-sufficient in the homesteading sense. But we get to do the things we love, and those things truly do sustain us financially, emotionally, physically, and mentally."

That's the crux of what she hopes to share with others through her pretty-as-you-please goat cards.

"Florals and adorable baby goats will brighten anyone's day! Give a set as a gift or buy them for yourself to send cheer to friends and family. They won't cure everything, but they are a great antidote for the blues," she says.

Stop for a spell at Teresa's site, UncorkedCowgirl.com, where you can shop for goat goodies galore, wander over to her winery, and reserve a trail ride to boot.