

# Grayt Times

*A Show Jumping Collective*



**Classic Horses &  
Classic Training**  
The Keys to Nicole  
Walker's Success

**An Open Letter  
by Jack Goldberg**

In Support of Para Show Jumping

**Young Guns**  
Canada's Upcoming Talents

SPRING 2021



FREE

*On the Cover: Nicole Walker & Excellent B  
PC: Grayt Designs*



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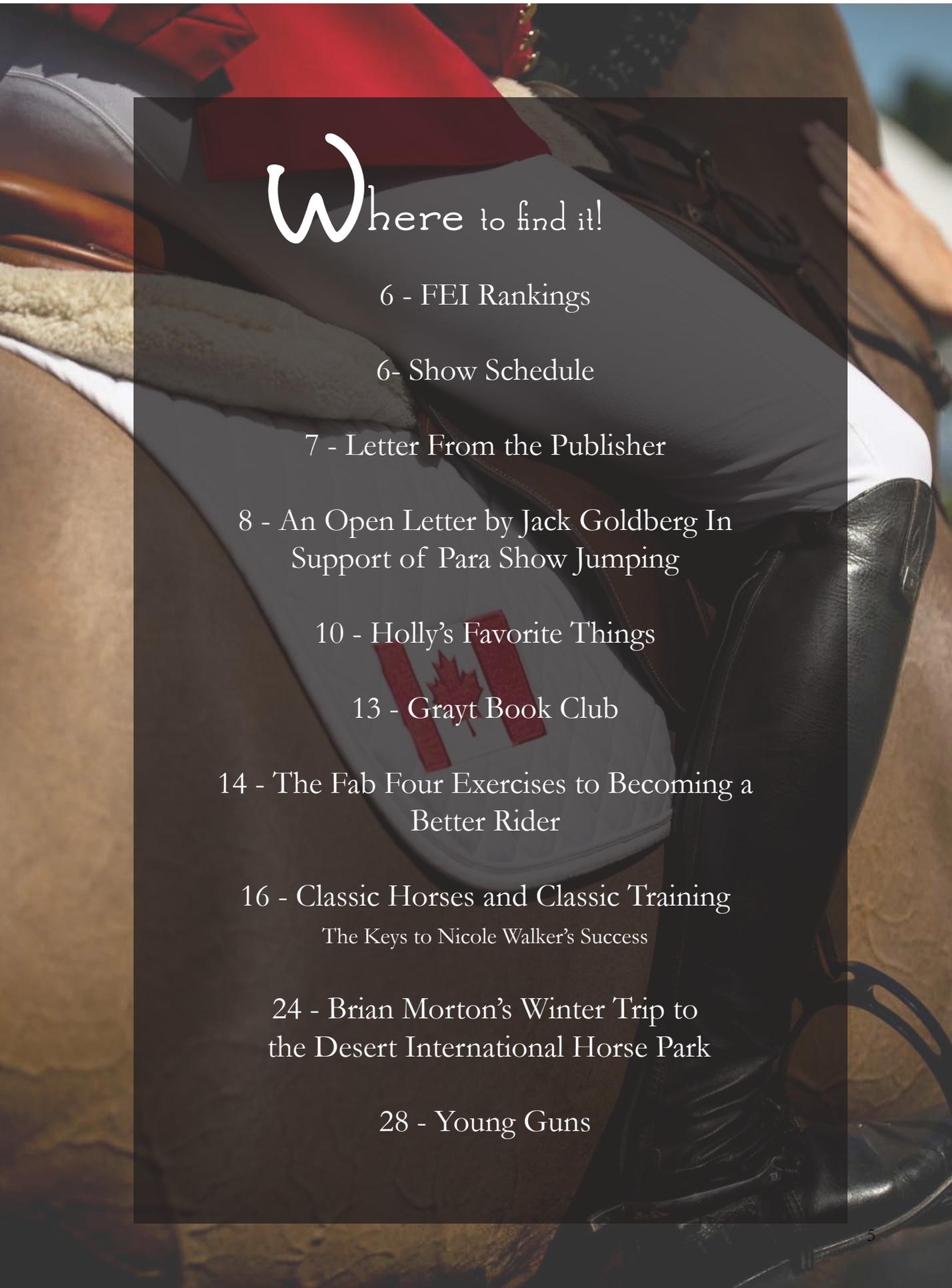


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# GD

## Grayt Designs Private Photography

[www.graytdesigns.com](http://www.graytdesigns.com)



# Where to find it!

6 - FEI Rankings

6- Show Schedule

7 - Letter From the Publisher

8 - An Open Letter by Jack Goldberg In Support of Para Show Jumping

10 - Holly's Favorite Things

13 - Grayt Book Club

14 - The Fab Four Exercises to Becoming a Better Rider

16 - Classic Horses and Classic Training  
The Keys to Nicole Walker's Success

24 - Brian Morton's Winter Trip to the Desert International Horse Park

28 - Young Guns

# Show Schedule 2021

**May**  
Cancelled

## June

**June 9-13 Anglestone CSI\*\***

**June 10-13 RMSJ**

**June 23-27 RMSJ**

**June 25-27 Ottawa**

**June 29-July 4 Ottawa**

**June 29-July 4 Tbird**

## July

**July 6-11 Ottawa CSI\*\***

**July 6-11 Tbird**

**July 14-18 Bromont CSI\*\***

**July 14-18 RMSJ**

**July 14-18 Ottawa**

**July 21-25 Bromont CSI\*\*\***

**July 21-25 Ottawa**

**July 21-25 RMSJ**

**July 22-25 Amberlea**

**July 29-August 1 Bromont**

# Canadians on the FEI Ranking List

The Longines Rider Rankings list is released monthly from the international governing body of equine sport, the FEI. The rankings as of April 1st, 2021 are as follows:

Canada Ranking	World Ranking	Rider
1	22	Eric Lamaze
2	43	Mario Deslauriers
3	83	Tiffany Foster
4	109	Erynn Ballard
5	212	Amy Millar
6	248	Vanessa Mannix
7	258	Beth Underhill
8	316	Ali Ramsay
9	303	Sam Walker
10	320	Jim Ifko
11	358	Kara Chad
12	454	Nicole Walker
13	454	Lisa Carlsen
14	460	Rachel Cornacchia
15	474	Jill Henselwood
16	514	Jonathon Millar
17	560	Hyde Moffatt
18	643	Kyle Timm
19	653	Ben Asselin
20	667	Susan Horn

Contributors: Holly Grayton | Jack Goldberg | Gina Allan | Brian Morton | Lynne Burns | Alexander Grayton

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# Letter From the Publisher Holly Grayton

Just when you begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel the flash of light goes away. So far 2021 is turning out to be as topsy turvy as 2020 was, only this year it's mostly just a bit exhausting.

As I write this we are working on the layout for our May/Spring issue, and we have had to make some tough choices already this year. The recent lockdowns across the country determined that a pivot to digital only for this issue would be wise to ensure distribution. I have high hopes that Canada will get ahead of COVID and have things opening up again this summer so we can get back to print – and some semblance of real life!

In the meantime, we have a fantastic issue for you here: included are suggestions of great horse supplies, a home workout, an exclusive interview with one of Canada's top talents, getting to know the up-and-coming young riders of Canada, and many more unique perspectives and thoughts. Please share with your friends, in tough times the more we can support local and small businesses, the bigger we all grow!

I always welcome new ideas, new writers and viewpoints. Please send me your reviews at [holly@graytdesigns.com](mailto:holly@graytdesigns.com)

Enjoy,





# An Open Letter In Support of Para Show Jumping

by Jack Goldberg

Dear all,

I am Jack Goldberg, a para equestrian and have been riding horses since I was 6 years old.

Before I was born, I had a stroke in-utero, which caused cerebral palsy that I will continue to deal with throughout the course of my life. In addition to that, I have focal epilepsy, and started having seizures when I was 13 years old.

To begin my riding journey, I started training with a dedicated coach named Taylor Brooks who helped me in every way. She helped me believe, and proved to me that no matter what differences I had, I could do whatever I wanted to. I appreciate her working with me deeply, she was so influential, and is someone that I still look up to greatly in the riding world.

Recently I started training with the Millar family alongside Alex Grayton, who continued to

improve my riding, for which I am so grateful. I am so appreciative that I get the opportunity to train with them.

I have done the hunters for all of my riding journey, competing against fully able-bodied people, and I just started doing the jumpers in the 2020 show season. I did both disciplines throughout the WEF circuit in Wellington, Florida, again against fully able-bodied people.

After a many years of riding and showing on different circuits throughout Canada and the US, a new opportunity rose up for me. In 2020 I was connected with Wren Blae Zimmerman, a fellow para equestrian. Once that connection





was made, I was introduced to a movement that I appreciate deeply as it is making positive modifications and adding to the sport that I am so passionate about and love doing so much.

We as para equestrians want to bring our differences together, demonstrate that everyone, able-bodied or not, faces challenge of performance in this sport that we all enjoy so profoundly. Together with diverse voices we can make another step toward getting more people involved in the sport.

Our goal is to have a para show jumping league in Canada and the US - it is already a recognized sport in some European countries. In addition to that, we are working to have the sport of



show jumping instated into the Paralympic Games.

I am writing this to everyone in the community to not only explain our goal, but to also seek support from other athletes and people that are

involved in the equestrian show jumping world.

Over the last year or so Wren Blae Zimmerman and I have been working together to contact associations in the riding world such as Equestrian Canada, USEF and USHJA. Fellow para equestrians and coaches have also been working behind the scenes to further this goal.

We need to continue to build support beyond just the para equestrians, to create a team of people who will advocate to the associations mentioned above, the real desire to support this movement going forward.

Riding does not have to be just for able-bodied people, but can be for everyone without anyone worrying about what differences someone may have. And it can be done in a safe way.

I ask that you please contact me if you are interested to help support this goal or know of someone with experience or expertise in this area so that together we can bring our movement forward and achieve our ultimate goals at the highest levels of the sport.

Sincerely,  
 Jack Goldberg  
 jackgoldberg14@gmail.com  
 @jackgoldbergparaequestrian

# Holly's Favorite Things

Tried and tested, some suggestions for you and your horse.



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## Lucky Braids Shampoo/Whitener

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The results are obvious, and some of the world's best riders swear by her products- you won't be disappointed! Visit [LuckyBraids.com](http://LuckyBraids.com), too!

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Available in Canada at: Equi-Products, Spruce Meadows, Running Fox, Willow Equestrian, Riders' Tack, etc.



Spring 2021

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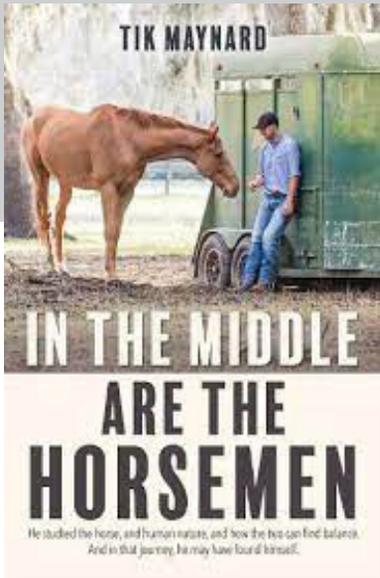
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# GraytBook club



## In The Middle Are The Horsemen by TIK Maynard

Follow Tik's journey through being a working student for top names, competing, and finding his own unique place in the horse community.

If you are looking for some inspiration here are some Grayt suggestions! From books to podcasts to documentaries - we've got something to help with your mental game.

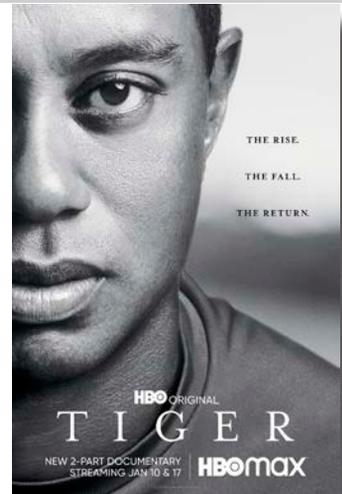


Tony Robbins  
Amplify Your Strengths | Todd Herman on alter egos, s

## Todd Herman - Amplify your strengths

On the Tony Robbins podcast

Todd Herman explores the idea of having an alter ego to help your performance. It's a great way to find who you want to be in the ring, without the overwhelming feeling of changing who you really are.



## Tiger

HBO Documentary

A fascinating look into what was given and sacrificed for the greatness that we have witnessed as spectators and fans - scandals and all.

## Hauling Horses with Grayton Farms

On the Equine Body Talks podcast

Tips and hard-learned lessons on safely and productively hauling our competition horses across the continent.



# The Fab Four Exercises to Becoming a Better Rider

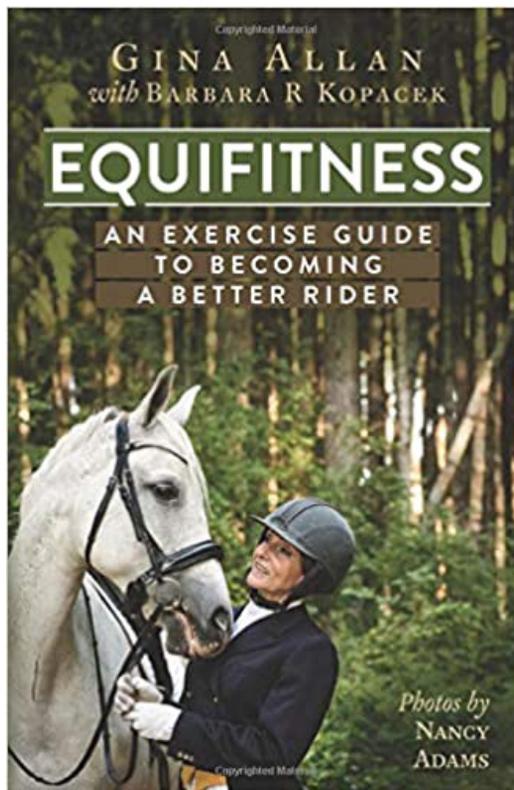
By Gina T Allan with Barbara R Kopacek

I believe as Equestrian athletes we are unaware of how demanding and complicated the art form of riding is. Riding is the source of many moving parts for both the rider and the equine. Having these many parts work together in a cohesive manner is no easy feat! Riding takes extraordinary core, pelvic, upper and lower body strength and stability, as well as tremendous balance, flexibility and aerobic endurance to create the magic of a beautiful ride.

The demands and forces the sport of riding places on our joints and limbs is extraordinary, and if we are not physically prepared for the challenge we will likely suffer from one of many injuries associated with continuously concussive activities.

Training over the course of the year for events, show season, or trail riding pack trips ought to begin early in the year. Though many riders focus primarily on riding their horse to improve their skills, strengthen their bodies and strengthen their horse, they really ought to consider getting off the horse and doing some

work through dry-land training. When we ride, our bodies are constantly trying to recalibrate and rebalance to the continuous changes in gait or jumping a fence. If you embark upon a fitness regime which targets the areas being most called upon by these stressors during your event or competition, you will notice a physical improvement in performance. If you can spend 20 minutes a few times a week to do the following exercises you will find your body will become more fit, strong, flexible and balanced and you will ride with greater precision and clarity. Your equine partner will appreciate it as well! Happy Riding!



**Three Point Touch Position**  
Begin by standing with your back against a wall

in Three Point Touch position, feet hip width apart. Ensure your balance is even between your fore-feet and heels. Lift your arches slightly to put a bit of pressure on the outer parts of the feet. Your legs should be straight but do not lock your knees.

From here there are three points of contact with

which we will be working: the back of your head, your upper back between your shoulder blades, and your pelvis.

Position your pelvis so your tailbone is pointing at the floor. Contract the front of your pelvis as if you were trying to stop the flow of urine, and pull your navel in toward your spine and up toward your sternum. Try to avoid tipping your pelvis by imagining it's like a bowl of water. Keep the water level in the bowl.

Lift your ribcage up out of your hips, as if you were being picked up by your underarms. Importantly, this will enable the back of your ribcage to lift also. This is an area that is too often overlooked yet plays an integral role in posture. While keeping the lift in your torso, broaden and lower your shoulders to meet your ribcage. Be sure your upper back can lay flat against the wall. It is important to avoid scrunching up your shoulders.

With your arms straight at your sides and palms facing forward, lengthen through the back of your neck as if the back of your head was being lifted like a marionette. This will also help you maintain the lift in your torso.

Keep your chin parallel to the ground while gently drawing it in and touch your head to the back of the wall. Now you've achieved the Three Point Touch!

Maintain this position while sliding one hand behind you at the small of your back. Your hand should just barely fit through the space. If you can easily slide your hand in and out, it is likely you need to work on your posture.

As mentioned, good postural alignment is one of the most important basics of good riding and is reinforced through maintaining core strength.

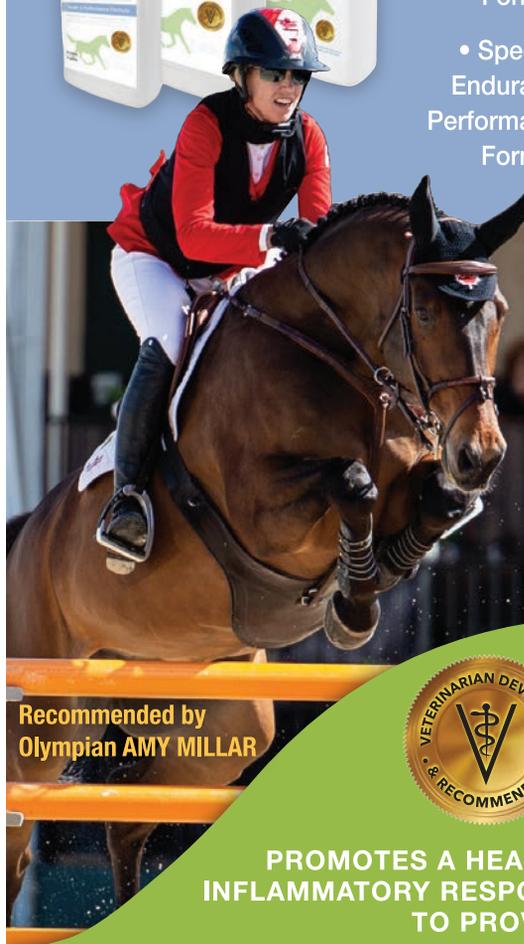
*Continued on page 22*  
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# Classic Horses and The Keys to Nicole

by Holly

“Once upon a time...” is how most good stories begin, and after talking to Nicole (Nikki) Walker for a short while that fairytale feeling takes hold. Walking into the beautiful Adena Springs farm in Wellington, Florida, it feels like the rest of the world melts away. While the farm is gorgeous, it definitely feels like everything is set up for the comfort of the horses and people that work there. Nothing is too far away, and nothing is hectic.

Nikki took time between rides during the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) to sit with me and share a few stories about how she grew up with horses. Her grandfather, Frank Stronach, was the one who sparked the interest in riding for Nikki with his long-standing interest in racehorses and racetracks. It was only natural he would put his favorite granddaughter up on a pony as soon as possible!

However, it soon became clear that maintaining the stature of a jockey was a lost cause and she wouldn't pursue racing herself, so they set out on the path of show jumping. Nikki rode with Ontario's best: Darcy Hayes, Chris Sorensen, and Beth Underhill, and then her granddad connected with Ireland's Cian O'Connor. He bought Cian's then recent Olympic bronze medal mount Blue Lloyd for Nikki to ride, with the condition that Cian be part of the deal. Now



nearly nine years and countless success stories later, that was clearly a fantastic deal.

Mr. Stronach has always headed up the purchases of Nikki's horses, and as she says, “He has a great eye for horses, he would buy them rapid fire sometimes with no trial! But he was usually pretty bang on with his picks.” Those picks included High Yummy, with whom Nikki first stepped into bigger classes. The big turning

# and Classic Training

## the Walker's Success

Grayton



into training with Cian, she notes three major points that stand out as reasons for the program's success for her:

- “1. Cian is very meticulous. He knows every inch of the horse, the management and care is 10/10.
2. We hack the horses out a lot. I think it's good for their brains, good for their muscles, good for them to be out always moving but very low impact.
3. The poles! I learned that very quickly. He set out three poles, set as a 4 [stride] to a 4 [stride], and he told me to go right down to it. I kind of struggled with that to start, and when he asked me to do a 4 to a 5 I just couldn't do it. I had no adjustability. And now after years and years I have the adjustability. The rideability and adjustability is something we work on every single day.”

point though was with Blue Lloyd. Having just graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies and Business Management from Wilfred Laurier University, Nikki found time to focus more fully on her riding.

Cian O'Connor's detail-oriented program has made many a successful rider and horse and is known for his use of intricate pole courses set up regularly for practice. Now many years

Even though Cian isn't always in the same place in the world as Nikki, “He is always available by phone – I don't think he ever sleeps,” she says with a laugh.

The focus on rideability has become the key to her success. “Being able to ride a big course and having the horse broke is so important to be able to be accurate. If you can lengthen and

*Continued on page 18*

shorten and do all those things, there really isn't a question in the ring you can't answer. It gives me confidence having that rideability."

Speaking to Nikki is a relaxing experience – something she brings to her riding as well. She is thoughtful and calm, and it is no surprise that her horses are that relaxed too! Having the training program in her back pocket helps to keep her nerves in check. "If I've done my homework at home and with a horse I know, then I'm typically not nervous.

The training is done – that's the hard part. You put in all those hours at home and you trust your horse, it's actually so much fun to be in the ring."

I know you are all thinking, "What about the elephant in the room – the positive test at the Pan American Games that stunned us all?"

Without a note of hesitation Nikki answers, "It's my fault. I should have known, it was in a green tea bag, I grabbed the bag and made my tea. After the class I went to the hotel and wasn't even worried about a test."

There is no doubt that Nikki feels for her teammates, as this mistake was costly. "I know I'll get through it myself, but to know it affected all the Canadian riders, and that Canada is a country that loves horses has been really hard." Unfortunately, Canada lost a spot in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics to send a full team and can now send only one rider as an individual. At



print time, those Games are still planning to go ahead.





Every good story features redemption and a return to glory, and we are starting to see that. Nikki has returned to competition this season at WEF, and she is happy to be back, fit and showing again. This winter season has been used to get to know some of the newer and younger horses while getting back in the swing of the bigger classes as well. After a win earlier in the week with one of her newer horses, Atout des Trambles, in the \$6,000 1.40m competition, Nikki wrapped up with a 2nd place finish in the \$50,000 CaptiveOne 1.50m National Grand Prix aboard one of her more familiar horses, Excellent B during WEF 11's CSI 5\* presented by Rolex.

This fairytale is far from over, and we are so excited to follow along the journey cheering Nikki on!

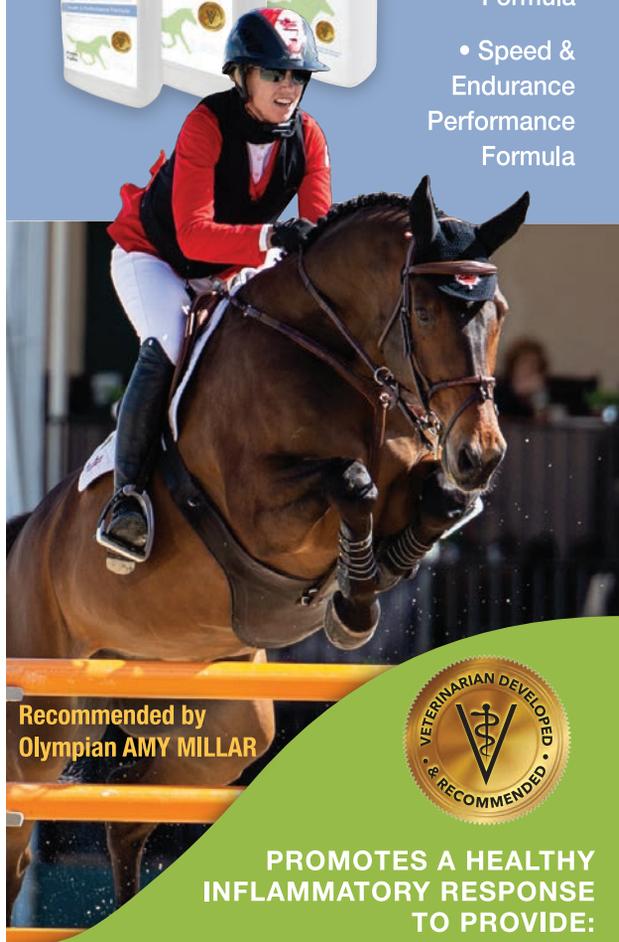


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***WHY SETTLE FOR LESS?***





Photo Credit: Gray Desings



### Exercise #1 Bird Dog

Begin in tabletop position, kneeling on hands and knees in Three Point Touch posture. Engage your core by contracting your abdominals inward and slightly upward as you exhale. Extend an opposing arm and leg (ie right arm and left leg) while keeping your hips and shoulders level and square to the floor. Lift your extended arm and leg toward the ceiling until just above the midline of the body, by about four to six cm and then return to the neutral tabletop position. Repeat eight to ten times on each side, working up to two sets of eight to ten reps. You may increase the intensity of this exercise by bringing your elbow to your knee and then returning to the extended arm and leg position. Later you can also add weights, to increase the intensity this exercise.



### Exercise #2

#### Transverse Abdominal Strengthening

Lie on the floor on your back in good Three Point Touch position and place your fingers on the inside of your hip bones. Cough lightly, feeling the lower abdominal muscles pop out. These are likely your oblique muscles. What we want to do now is contact and connect with the deeper layer of muscles called the transverse abdominals. In order to do so, you must not allow your obliques to become engaged or

dominate your transverse abdominal muscles. Now, begin by taking a deep breath and, as you exhale, keep your fingers on the inside of your hip bones. Press your lower abdominals, your waist and your lower back into the floor in order to maintain the Three Point Touch position. Imagine a triangle that forms from one hip bone to the other hip bone and down to the pubic bone. Try to create a concave position between your pelvic bones and hold this for 10 to 30 seconds. Repeat and remember to continue breathing as you do this exercise.

When you have accomplished this (without allowing your muscles to pop out), try lifting one leg at a time toward your chest, keeping your knee bent at 90 degrees so your heel stays away from your gluteals. Slowly, lower your leg. Do not let your abs pop outward or your pelvis shift as you lower your foot to the floor. Repeat with your other leg.

If you find you can perform this exercise with each leg individually without moving your pelvis or loosening your abdominals, then try extending one leg and lowering it. You can try it in reverse order as well. You will feel the desire to let your abdominals pop outward, but do not give in! Repeat up to 20 times – SLOWLY! And remember to breathe.



### Exercise #3 Plank Position

Lie face down (prone) on the floor with your legs extended and your toes and the balls of your feet on the floor. Lift up so you are resting on your forearms, keeping your elbows at 90 degrees to form the Plank Position. Ensure your abdominals are contracted to provide

protection and strength to your back. Keep your seat tucked in, your chest broad and open, and remember to breathe. Hold for four to thirty seconds. Repeat five to ten times. If you choose, you can add alternating leg lifts of two to six cm off the floor, but remember to keep your toes pointed downward and your hips level and square. The Plank will help stop your torso from collapsing when your horse draws upon the reins. It will also help you maintain broad, open shoulders and reduce slouching.



Exercise #4 Bridge Pose  
Hip Lift for Gluteal Strength



Lie supine (on your back) on the floor. Bend your knees so your feet are on the floor directly over your ankles. Keeping your shoulders back and down, engage your buttocks by squeezing your gluteal muscles together. Slowly and gently lift your hips skyward so they become level. Ensure your back stays in good Three Point Touch position. Now try to relax the back of the thigh as you hold this position. Can you keep your hips level and square? Hold for twenty seconds and repeat five times. When you have accomplished this exercise, try lifting one foot off the ground. Can you hold this and maintain the gluteal squeeze and soft hamstrings at the back of your thighs?



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# Brian Morton's Winter Trip to Desert International Horse Park

As told by Brian himself

Brian Morton headed south this winter to the Desert Horse Park with a string of horses owned by Spruce Meadows. He sent an email chain to some friends with his ups and downs and lessons learned. Here is a compilation of Brian's time in the desert.



## Here we go!

Today was the first official day of competition.

For me the big event today was the FEI jog for Cadillac (Cadi) and Crusador Z (Cruzie). For

24 Photo Credit: Brian Morton

those of you who don't know, that's the mandatory horse inspection from the vets and ground jury to make sure that the horses entered in the international section of the tournament are sound and fit to compete. Both horses were accepted, so we are good to go! It's funny, I've only ever had a horse have a problem at the jog once in my career, but I still get a little uptight about it and feel a sense of relief once it's over. It's kind of a feeling of "Okay we're in, now we can focus on the real deal!"

The International (FEI) classes start tomorrow. Cadi and Cruzie are both right in the prime of their careers, and now at the start of my second season with them, I feel a nice confidence going into this. Tomorrow's class is a two-phase (Power and Speed) 1.40m. With bigger events with more prize money later in the week, it'll serve as a set up class for most of the field. My plan is to get a feel for the horses in the warmup before I lock in my plan. If I had to call it now, I'd say that I'll ride efficiently but won't go for the win.

## Great first day FEI

The highlight of my day was Cadillac (Cadi) and Crusador Z (Cruzie) who jumped the FEI welcome class. Both were clear in both rounds. Cruzie was 12th and Cadi was 14th out of a field of about 44 horses. I stuck to my plan of riding efficiently, but not running them too hard on day 1. Cadi was fresh with a little wild streak in him! I really had to be smart in the warmup to not let him get set off. I often challenge him in the warmup, but today I needed to be very tactful in how I schooled him. Cruzie can be very strong, especially the first class out. Today though, she was lovely to ride and felt exactly the way she did in October when I showed her last. That makes me really excited for her! The rideability has been what I've been working on for a year, she's got all the other qualities already there.

## First GP of 2021

Tomorrow is Grand Prix day! It's interesting, I was raised by my mentors to pick my spots and try to peak for the big events. What result I might

Spring 2021





Brian Morton's Winter Trip to the Desert Horse Park  
**12th in the GP**

*deposits into the account before spending too much.* I hope my team and I have made enough deposits into the bank account of Cadillac that tomorrow I get to spend a little and go

I was super happy with the Grand Prix yesterday. Cadi really felt fantastic, and it almost gave me goosebumps feeling the way he jumped quite a big GP at 1.55m. I was also happy and proud of how our plan to peak for the GP worked so well. I was pleased with the plan I made for the course and the execution of the plan! We had a late rail down in the last line. I watched the replay of the rail down at least 10 times, and my "highly technical analysis" is that we were bloody unlucky! There were only 5 clear rounds in the entire class, so I managed to snag 12th place. What an

*Continued on page 26*

be aiming for is very relative to the class and the talent/experience level of the horse. Years ago, Claudia Cojocar introduced the idea of thinking of a horse like a bank account. *One needs to make sure that there have been enough good*

for it!

When I stopped in at the barn this evening, both horses were lying down resting. I think they know tomorrow is a big day!



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incredible feeling that class was! Leaves me feeling that there are great things to come!

### Two bullets in my gun

I'm super excited for the class tomorrow. Both horses feel in excellent form and I'm super confident! I got a great draw. I go 14th with Cruzie and 32nd with Cadi. That's about ideal! I usually get on to warm up 25-30 minutes before I compete. That's about 10-14 trips in the ring, so works out perfectly. I can watch 2-3 go before I get on Cruzie without compromising my warmup. I'll get to see how the course is riding and get a sense of how tight the time allowed is before I go.

### Climbing the ladder and a change of scenery

This week is a break "Off" week. It's been lovely, we've moved the horses away from the show and into Empire Polo

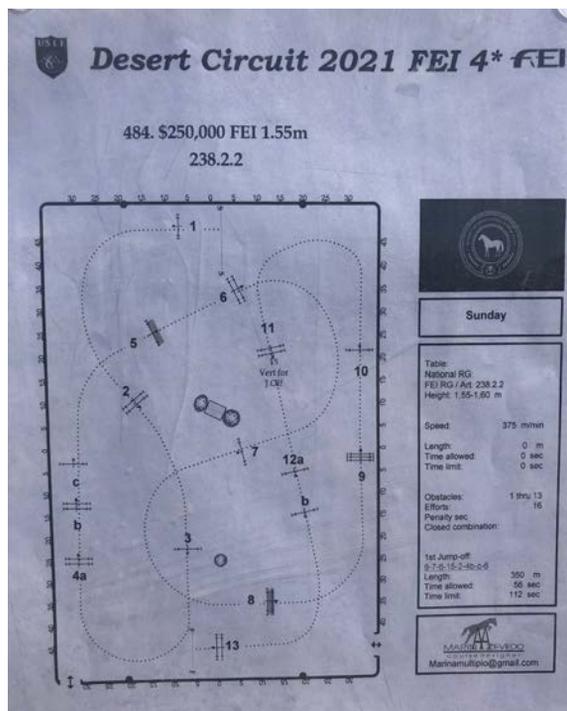


26 Photo Credit: Brian Morton

Club for the week. Gives the horses a chance to get some peace and quiet – no loudspeakers, no golf carts, no loud music and no stressed-out people! It's also so nice to see the horses get out of the stalls, have a good roll and get to just "be horses" a little. The polo club is beautiful and I'm loving riding on these big grass fields.

### A little polish

It's funny how memories will come back to a person sometimes. I was polishing my boots in prep for the week and as that often does, it made me think of Barb Soley. About 11 or 12 years ago, I was just jumping some of my first Grand Prix classes. Mark Laskin, who was my go-to grounds person at the time, had to leave the show last minute because of an injury in his family. I really didn't feel quite ready to jump the GP without somebody on the ground, so I put a call in to Barb to see if she could come in for the day to help me. She rearranged her life last minute to be able to come over on the ferry and make it for the class. The GP went great, and her help was irreplaceable that day. However, one thing that really sticks in my mind is her saying "Okay, I'll be there. I just better not get there and find that you haven't polished your



boots!"

### Early starts and great teamwork

Tomorrow will be a busy day as I've got a lot of horses going in the morning. Cruzie jumps the 1.50m at 11:00am, Skyfall and Pepper show the 1.30m that starts at 8:00am. I'm a huge believer that on show days the horses must go out for flat work in the morning, then they need a bit of time to themselves, a little snack and then come out again to show. Getting all that done with those three horses and getting the courses walked will make for an early start tomorrow. I'm very fortunate to have such a great team to help me! Nobody questions the work – if it's what the horses need, then we all are going to put our heads down and make it happen.

**You can look back and you can look forward just don't look down**

It's starting to feel like a long circuit, but I can also feel the horses and I are hitting "midseason" form. I was very happy with last week. Crusador finishing 6th on Friday and 10th on Sunday feels like a darn good step in the right direction. I haven't jumped a course like last Sunday's GP in a long time. To be honest my eyes were "popping" a little when I walked. Say what you want about Cruzie, one thing that's not hard about her is leaping over big jumps! People around the show have really started to take notice of her. I've had a lot of questions this week like, "Who's that big grey horse? She looks like she can jump a house."

**Time warp and the big week**

Time is a hard thing to keep in clear perspective! We are going into our 8th and final week of showing. It simultaneously feels like we've been here forever, and like we just got here.

This is a 4\* FEI week (Big deal) and will be the grand finale for the circuit. For me, the week centers around the \$250,000 1.60m Grand Prix on Sunday. I'm aiming Crusador Z for that. En route to that



we also have the 1.50m FEI ranking class on Friday.

**In it with a chance**

The final Grand Prix of the circuit is tomorrow. Crusador is in a good place, and I think we've got a shot at it for tomorrow. It's not every class that one enters that one really has a realistic chance of getting a good piece of the prize. This time though, I think we've got a good shot at it! Whatever happens tomorrow, I'm going to be proud of the growth that's happened on this circuit and excited for the coming months.

**You don't have to go home but you can't stay here**

As I'm writing this a bit of time has gone by since the end of the winter circuit at Desert International Horse Park. It's given me time to reflect on the winter circuit and really let the takeaways sink in.

I got to jump at a level that I have done only a few times before in my entire career. Looking back, I feel like I rode well at that level, and am well positioned to make a mark at that level as we look forward.

I also believe it's critical to first look at the big picture of the tour and make a general plan for what you are trying to accomplish with each horse. Once that's done, you can start to focus on what weeks you're going to do more, and what weeks you're going to do less or not show. I think it's vital to have that plan as a template. That being said, I believe it's also important to keep some flexibility, keep reassessing how it's going with each horse and be prepared to make a change of plan if need be.

If I only look at the tour through the lens of the results, I'd say that we had a good tour but probably didn't quite reach the results that I'd hoped for going in. The mental aspect of the sport is fascinating. It plays a huge role not only in the results, but also in people's longevity in the industry and sport.

I came into the 2021 season

*Continued on page 28*

off of a tremendous hot streak at the end of 2020. On the one hand, that hot streak gave me a lot of confidence and belief in the partnerships that I'd developed with relatively new horses. On the other hand, it set the bar precariously high for what my definition of success was going to be. When I reflect on that, I start to feel a greater sense of pride in the circuit as a whole and the results that we did have. Though there were a few moments that got away from me,



there were plenty of moments we were right on it and got a great result!

I'm reminded that though we strive for the top (whatever that might be to each one of us), we will spend most of our time in the middle ground between the two extremes. I think when we find ourselves in a high or a low, that we tend to start believing that this will go on forever and that this is "our new normal." It's reassuring to remember that in a low time that this is normal and won't go on forever. It's also grounding to remember to truly appreciate the high times and understand that the normal day to day adversity will happen again.

However, when it does that our skills, patience and perseverance can stabilize things and it won't be too long until we're back on top again!

The journey continues.



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# Young Gun Makayla Barta



## **Makayla Brabant**

*Ottawa, Ontario*

**Cirdano** 11 year old gelding  
**Cohinoor 4** 10 year old gelding  
**Intermezzo** 8 year old gelding

I have been training with Tiffany Foster at Little Creek Equestrian for just over a year now. It has been a great experience and an amazing opportunity.

### **What does your typical day look like?**

My typical day is fairly consistent, regardless of where we are in the world. I head to the barn in the morning around 8 or 9am if I'm flattening my three boys - earlier if I am showing. Monday is our one day off a week and Tuesday everyone flats their horses. Lessons start on Wednesday and continue throughout the week. During a show day, I will lunge my horses in the morning. Any day could be a combination of lessons and showing because I alternate the weeks my horses compete. On show

days I also get the opportunity to watch and cheer on Tiff and the other students at Little Creek. A big part of our team is supporting each other.

My horses go on the walker, graze and are given lots of treats daily. Typically, I will get home around 4 or 5pm, fit in a home workout (or head to Orange Theory if it's safe and available), make dinner, walk my beautiful French Bulldog, Fibi, watch some Netflix and then off to bed. This winter I decided to take the semester off from University to focus on my riding and fully immerse myself.

### **What pivotal moment(s) made you believe it was a possibility?**

With the great foundation that was embedded in my riding by Jill Henselwood, I felt confident walking into a program like Tiffany Foster's. Little Creek Equestrian brought a lot of my goals to life, I began seeing the progress day by day and round by round. My results demonstrated

that I was capable, my horses were very qualified, and that I was set up for success.

### **Is there something you've heard a coach say or have said to you that really made an impact?**

When I was 14, I had a pretty discouraging day at the show, falling off in front of a large crowd which included Jill Henselwood. This was when I was thinking about asking Jill if she would take me on as a student. Despite my poor showing that day, Jill agreed to take me on. She told me she was waiting to see how I handled "failure" and if I was able to regroup.

I learned you must acknowledge the mistake(s), figure what you need to do differently and get right back on track. Dwelling on the situation and feeling sorry for yourself won't help you be a better athlete. Therefore, determination and perseverance are key words that have stuck with me and impacted me.

# Young Gun Taylor Wood



## **Taylor Wood**

*Ottawa, Ontario*

**Clementine RS** 14 year old mare

**JoyRide** 10 year old gelding

### **When did you know you wanted to compete at the top of the sport?**

I fell in love with riding not long after starting my first lessons and that has been a dream and goal ever since.

### **What pivotal moment(s) made you believe it was a possibility?**

I never really stopped to consider it wasn't a possibility - it's something I'm working hard to achieve. I am thankful to have had some great experiences and opportunities already and am looking forward to many more.

### **What would be your ultimate goal within the sport?**

Riding for Canada at the Olympic Games and winning a medal.

### **Will you make this a career?**

Probably - it's what I love to do!

### **Who has been a major influence in your career thus far?**

My coaches have each helped influence my career so far. From Sandra Patterson, Becky Nuth and Christine Wiggins I was given a solid foundation, and now learning from Amy Millar, Alex Grayton and of course Ian Millar on Team Millar I am thankful to be building upon that. I also learn from my great teammates who also influence me with their great attitudes and riding.

### **Who do you look to for inspiration as a rider?**

I am thankful for the opportunity to watch and learn from so many top riders at WEF and getting to see the work my coaches put in everyday to continue to improve their own riding really inspires me to keep working hard and learning everyday.

### **Do you have any quotes that motivate you?**

I have two.

One is a bible verse, "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:31.

The other is, "Some days it's easier, other days it's harder. Be it easy or hard, the only way to get there is to start."

### **Is there something you've heard a coach say or have said to you that really made an impact?**

We are reminded that we are either winning or learning - there is no losing doing what we love to do!

# Young Gun

## Sabrina von Buttlar



### **Sabrina von Buttlar**

*Toronto, Ontario*

**Cinco** 21 year old gelding

**Peregrine** 10 year old gelding

### **Who has been a major influence in your career thus far?**

Both my parents Martina and Juergen von Buttlar have had a major influence on my career. My mom, Martina, helps a lot in the flat work aspect of my riding as well as always lending a helping hand in the barn. My dad, Juergen, not only rides and trains my horses but has also taught me everything I know about knowing your horse and taking care of them. My grandma, Eva-Maria Pracht was also a huge supporter of my riding and never missed coming to a horseshow.

### **Who do you look too for inspiration as a rider?**

Some people that I look to for inspiration as a rider are Erynn Ballard and Bezie Madden whom

are both great horsewomen, that while competing at the highest level of the sport maintain perfect equitation while being just as effective.

### **Do you have any quotes that motivate you?**

“Hard work beats talent when talent doesn’t work hard!”

### **Is there something you’ve heard a coach say or have said to you that really made an impact?**

My dad has always put an emphasis on learning by watching, something which I think really benefits me as a rider. I make an effort to watch whatever I can, whether that be on livestream, in the warmup ring or even at home. The unique thing about the horse sport is that you never stop learning, no matter if you’re just starting out in the sport or you’ve been doing it for years.

### **What would you say are keys to your success?**

I would say the keys to my success are having a great support system in my family and friends. Also, by taking care of my own horses I know them like the back of my hand and I am always aware of what’s going on with them and how they’re feeling.

### **What is your favourite exercise you do when riding?**

One of my favourite exercises to do when riding is working on stride control in either a line of poles or cavalettis. Differentiating between 4,5, and 6 strides so that I am able to practice leaving out strides, normal striding, as well as adding a stride - all of which carries over into the show rings.

**GD**

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