

What Drove the Start of ABSJ Magazine?

An interview with the publisher...

Lynne Burns



An interview with the Publisher of ABSJ Holly Grayton. The 'Alberta bound' journey began for Holly after graduating high school and it is here she begun her strongest contributing years.

When asked why she began 'Alberta Show Jumpers' the website and magazine, she immediately states wanting to create a sense of community, to feel part of something here and to share information. Holly is often reminded of how much knowledge and winning experience not to mention many Olympians, are here in Alberta. With all that knowledge swirling around, she asked herself, "wouldn't it be cool if that knowledge could be collected and shared?"

Holly's idea grew roots quickly, as professionals shared their knowledge and rising stars shared their experiences. With Alberta riders competing all over the world Holly wanted to report back on how they were doing and in turn foster support for them. So, in a labour of love, each night results from every horse show around the world are uploaded onto her Facebook page, "it's a tedious task", she says, "but so worthwhile." From the outset she has had a lot of good feedback on that.

Speaking of good feedback, Holly fondly recounts her family's reaction to her idea of starting a print magazine. "That seems like a lot!" "Do you know what you're doing?" However, as this idea took hold, Holly says it's her family that is the most supportive putting in many hours of proof reading and editing, and being a sounding board for ideas.

Right from launch day, this magazine proved to be welcome information. From the first contributing

writers to the first congratulatory phone call, the experience has been positive and inspiring. With no shortage of ideas for articles, and steadily rising momentum Holly is excited about the great community initiatives she's planning for this year and the great community around her. Not surprisingly, this endeavor was intimidating at the start, to approach serious competitors and respected trainers to suggest they write an article or do an interview was dipping a toe in wild waters. Nevertheless, to everyone's delight, the responses have consistently been "yes, I would love to." Equally impressive are how gracious and well prepared people have been, she says, "It changes how you feel about the people around you." She's come to realize in an environment of competition and judgement, most people want to see others do well, raise the level of sport, and they are truly supportive and willing to share their knowledge.

So, when asked what's next? Holly says to watch for things like the magazine sponsoring a medal class this summer, themes in the magazine, and ideas to bring the history of Alberta Show Jumpers together with the future of Alberta Show Jumpers. She is really hoping an Albertan goes to Rio and of course she hopes her readership continues to be outspoken and share their ideas and opinions with her.

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