

JULY 2023

EQUES RIAN

magazine

Shenae Lowings

Betting on a Bold Venture

Nicole Tough

Why warm ups matter

Arthritis

It's a pain in the joint

Follow the leader

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On the Cover

Shenae Lowings and Bold Venture
leading the way at Millstreet (Libby Law
Photography).



OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Amanda Mac

As editor of *Equestrian Hub Magazine*, Amanda's two long-standing passions, one for horses the other for writing, come together perfectly. Although much of her time is spent busily editing away behind the scenes, in this issue she speaks with star eventer Shenae Lowings. Shenae has her sights firmly fixed on the Paris Olympics, and talks about her much loved off the track horses.



Nicole Tough

An EA Level 2 Dressage Specialist Coach and National A Level Judge, Nicole has over 30 years' experience in training, competing, judging and coaching. She enjoys presenting seminars and masterclasses, has trained in Germany, Spain and The Netherlands, and has produced nine very successful FEI horses. In this issue she explains the importance of the warm up.

Anna Minogue

Anna is an equine dentist and independent bit fitter with a strong focus on horse welfare and ethical practices. Drawing on science, technology, and her own considerable experience, she helps riders find the right contact with their horses, leading to partnerships that flourish. In this issue, Anna comments on bits, tack checks, and why your noseband might be a cause for concern.



Lisa Martin

Lisa grew up with horses and later trained with dressage great Rozzie Ryan. But two riding accidents significantly changed the course of her career. She has overcome immense odds to become a successful para dressage rider and will be campaigning to qualify for the Paris Paralympics. Read our product review to find out why Lisa is a big fan of Iconoclast leg boots.

David Nash

Director of Nutrition Technology at KER, David is an equine nutrition professional with many years' experience. He advises on feeding and managing horses across all disciplines, and has been instrumental in quality control, laboratory management and pasture research. Don't miss KER's excellent article on managing horses on high-fructan pastures.



Michelle Terlato

Michelle grew up with horses and has always loved them. When she's not travelling the globe photographing the world's top equestrian athletes, she's home riding her own horses. It's the behind the scenes and the unexpected shots that she likes the most, and in our Behind the Shot feature, she shares her favourites and explains what makes them so special.

Christine Armishaw

Christine is a Level 1 EA Coach with a focus on jumping and eventing, and helping those returning to riding build their confidence. Based at Otford NSW, she runs regular clinics and social sessions with facilities that include an indoor arena, an outdoor arena, and over 100 acres of trail riding. Full-care agistment is also available with a vet nurse living on site.



Dr Clare Williams-Paterson

Clare is an equine veterinarian who works with Apiam Animal Health, a leading Australian rural organisation with 332 highly experienced vets, 73 clinics, and a team of dedicated professionals. Apiam aims to enrich the lives of animals and their humans - and with winter upon us, Clare's informative article on arthritis couldn't be more timely.



BEHIND THE SHOT

Ben Maher & Explosion W

One of Australia's top equestrian photographers, **MICHELLE TERLATO** travels the world capturing equestrian athletes in action. Each month she shares one of her favourite shots.

Rider: Ben Maher

Horse: Explosion W

Event: 2019 Longines Global Champions Tour Rome

Location: Stadio dei Marmi, Rome, Italy

Camera & Settings: Canon 7D Mark II 70-200mm Lens ISO 500 f 2.8 1/1200 sec

Challenges: The Grand Prix final was scheduled for late on a hot Italian summer's day with bright afternoon sun on one side of the arena, and long shadows on the other. The media were not allowed to stand on the side that offered the best position (with the sun

behind us) because it was the VIP area. So, it meant we had to shoot in less than ideal conditions. I really wanted to capture Explosion W over the huge Longines OXER as it was the final jump and had the wonderful background of the crowd in the amazing stadium – built in 1932 and flanked on every side with sixty four-meter-tall classical statues of athletes fashioned from Carrara marble – with even the horse trucks and parklands in the distance. This was a truly magical place for a show jumping event and I've been lucky enough to attend a few, but this is still top of the list: the venue, the

atmosphere, the weather, the crowds, and the win by Explosion W.

Why this shot is special: When I headed to Europe in 2019, the one horse on the top of my list to capture was Explosion W! I had been watching him throughout the year and was keen to see him in the flesh. His talent really is extraordinary - he lives up to his name! The OXER was the final fence and with a clear and fast round in the jump off, Ben was clearly delighted by their win (they had already won London and went on to win the New York event and the GCT Series title in Prague).

Explosion lived up to my expectations as 2019's best show jumper. Unfortunately, following a brilliant return after being rested, he recently suffered a soft tissue injury while competing in France. I have my fingers crossed that I'll capture him again if he competes in Paris at the 2024 Olympics. Ben and Explosion's lap of honour in the Roman twilight, with the opera aria *Con te Partiro* playing in the background, gave me goosebumps that will be forever in my memory. 🐾

Michelle is available for event, commercial and private shoots. Visit [Michelle Terlato Photography](https://www.michelletterlato.com) to see more of her stunning work.



FACING PAGE & ABOVE: A walk lap and a trot on each rein should start each training session (Images Christy Baker Photography).



HANGING TOUGH

Why warm ups matter

The warm up is where we prepare the horse physically and mentally for the more intense work to come, writes **NICOLE TOUGH**.

The physical reasons for the all-important warm up are to increase heart rate and blood flow, which enables oxygen to reach the muscles, and to activate the connection between the nerves and muscles, improving efficiency in movement and helping to prevent injury.

The mental reasons are to achieve

'losgelassenheit' as soon as possible. A relaxed horse can hear, listen and respond to cues and signals; whereas a tense horse is surrounded by white noise and has trouble focusing.

A helpful tip to promote relaxation is to find a warm up routine and then use it at every training session, keeping it the same for competition. This way, thinking

same ol', same ol', the horse lets us in quicker. Another tip involves discipline. The warm up is the trainer's chance to set the intentions for the session. Start fussy, remain fussy. Every transition counts. Don't ride aimlessly. Give them a job to do. Structure the warm up like you structure your session and be clear about its objectives, which are to achieve:

- ♦ attentiveness and immediate response to the aids; and
- ♦ suppleness through the poll joint and the whole body.

Regarding the response to our aids, the exercises we use in the warm up will depend on the horse's personality. Some horses are energy savers and will need exercises to wake up; whilst others are overthinkers, and will need exercises that encourage patience. With either type, we should use targeted questions to produce the best response to the leg, seat and rein aids; and regardless of type, the horse needs to be ready and willing to go forward, yet totally respectful of the brakes.

A walk lap on each rein and a 'normal' trot should start each training session. Not only for the benefit of ongoing soundness, but also to establish balance before adding impulsion (the gears). If ridden too forward in the beginning, the horse can rush, becoming strong in the contact because they are balanced more on the forehand than we would like.

From balanced 'normal' gaits, we can develop understanding between the gas and the brake with lots of transitions and by consistently opening and closing the steps. The focus for the spicy type is to promote the idea of waiting by using a lot of transitions and a slowly posting trot; whilst for the energy saver, it's to get them thinking forward (can I go now?) and in front of the leg, with as many tune ups to the gas as required.

By fine tuning responses to the leg, seat, and rein aids, we can shift their balance more to the hind leg, achieving self-carriage and having them ready for more intense work. In other words, first organise the muscles of the neck and back, and then engage more. Regarding

suppleness - and no matter the stage of training, from young horses to FEI - we start the horse deep and round, seeking contact, and supple through the poll to the left and right.


Having said this, every horse is different and may need a different point of balance depending on its confirmation. Find the most productive frame where the horse becomes looser and more supple. When a horse is using their back, they can stretch in all the paces. Think about the feelings underneath you: is the horse leaning or becoming heavier on the rein in general or in any of the transitions? These are evasions, and not a true indication of seeking contact and achieving the benefits of topline connection and muscular stretching.

Interestingly, and I digress, but once the warm up lower frame is understood, the rider can use this frame to trigger relaxation whenever the horse becomes tense or tight, or when introducing a new movement. If the stretch is truly understood by the rider and the horse, it

can be used as a way to diffuse tension and build confidence.

The stretch down, when performed correctly, is also a test of self-carriage. At any point in a session, or within a movement, the rider should be able to invite the horse to stretch and seek the contact without losing self-carriage. Ergo, achieving the lower frame in self-carriage is proof of relaxation and balance.

For competition warm ups, we need to know how long it takes to make our horse supple, both laterally and longitudinally. The competition warm up must be dedicated to not surprising the horse in the arena, but rather to give them a heads up about what is expected in the test, whilst preserving their legs and the petrol for the competition.

Ultimately, we use the warm up to engage the horse's mind, asking lots of questions to achieve teamwork and willing co-operation. As a result, we can tell our horse that they are here to do great things today. So, let's do it! 



FACING PAGE: Horses blow into each other's nostrils as a way of establishing who is the more dominant.

ABOVE: (L) The direction of the ears tells you what has their attention. **(R)** Their ears should be flicking back to you every few strides.



FEATURE

Follow the leader

Does your horse respect you as a leader they can confidently follow? It's a quality well worth working on, writes **CHRISTINE ARMISHAW**.

When you ride or handle a horse, you need to be a leader your horse deems worthy of paying attention too. Being a good leader means making decisions for your horse as you go along; teaching them what you will and will not accept, and making sure if you ask something of

them, you keep asking and follow through until they do it.

In a horse/human relationship, there is always a follower and always a leader. If you aren't the leader then by default, your horse will be. This applies when leading your horse in hand, during

ridden work and throughout general interactions. Even when horses meet each other, there is an assessment of hierarchy. They sniff and blow into each other's nostrils and usually the more dominant horse will nip, or gesture as if to nip, the other horse's nose. This is followed by a lick and chew by either one or both horses as a level of acceptance and understanding of the matter is reached. It's really interesting to try this yourself with a horse, breathe into their nostrils and use your hand like a nipping mouth - you just have to be quick enough to assert yourself as the more dominant party. Afterwards, observe the behaviour of the horse you've just interacted with; more often than not they seem pretty comfortable with the outcome as it's a level of body language they understand.

Firm is relaxing

Sometimes people feel that they don't want to be too firm with their horse, thinking that they might not like them

anymore. But what you may not know is that when you are an ineffective leader, it creates stress in your horse and makes their life harder. In a herd situation, the dominant horses are responsible for most of the decision making, like deciding where to search for the next patch of good food, when to move off, and how to react to various situations and experiences, all of which put these horses under higher levels of stress. The act of making decisions is stressful in itself, cortisol (the stress hormone) levels increase and the brain becomes fatigued. In contrast, the herd members following the lead of the dominant horses get to enjoy a more relaxed life!

Many riders have observed the benefits of having an older, more mature horse leading the way when first introducing a younger horse to new sights, sounds and experiences. The youngster takes their cues from their older and wiser counterpart and will often accept things they might not have if they had been on

their own. When it comes to the horse/human relationship, it's our job to adopt the leadership role so the horse can become reliant on us.

Let them stress less

If you reduce the levels of stress your horse is experiencing by being a good leader and allowing them to rely on you, chances are you will also be helping your horse to become more trainable and able to learn things more easily. In a study on stress and decision-making in humans, one group was asked to carry out the stressful task of public speaking, which raised the participant's cortisol levels. They were then asked to complete a decision-making task and were found to make much less advantageous choices when compared to the stress-free control group.

You can tell a lot about what your horse is thinking and feeling by their head and neck carriage and the position of their ears. Relative to the withers, a high head carriage often signifies a horse is

on edge or quite alert, while a low head carriage shows a more relaxed state. The direction your horse's ears are pointing will tell you what currently has their attention. They ought to be flicking back and forth onto you every few strides. Both ears pricked forward tells you that something in front of them is on their mind and not you! Giving the inside rein a squeeze or a jiggle to get that ear to flick back is a good way to remind them a rider is on board.

Take the lead

To establish a good connection with your horse and position yourself as the leader, start by doing groundwork - literally guiding your horse from out in front, and leading the way over, through and past objects that might cause a bit of a stir. Set out some challenging activities that will cause your horse to be a little cautious so you can work together to build their confidence and thus their ability to look to you for support and leadership. Take them



Participants at one of Christine's recent working equitation days learning how to be good leaders from the ground and in the saddle.

over poles and tarpaulins, move around and between cones and barrels, and introduce them to items they have never seen before. Use praise, pressure/ release and a confident posture to instil confidence in your horse.

If they get a little bit worried but you keep them safe and work them through the obstacles, they will start to look to you more and more for reassurance and guidance in other areas of life.

Next, take your training to the saddle and lead from above. This is harder, and the reason why it's so important to establish solid groundwork first. But ultimately, it's how most riders interact with their horse, so you need to be able to lead while mounted. Often you will notice that things your horse did not seem bothered by when you were on the ground with them have suddenly become scary. However, if you have practised techniques in groundwork that are easily repeatable from the saddle, your horse will recognise the safety of familiarity and once again look to you for guidance.

Being a good leader entails correcting unwanted behaviours that may crop up. If your horse is nippy, use your hand in a biting motion to pseudo-bite them back. Don't let your horse rub on you and treat you like a scratching post, nor

“To establish a good connection with your horse and position yourself as the leader, start by doing groundwork...”

should you let them push into you and make you step back. If ever they do move your feet, make them move their feet back - that's what a dominant horse would do.

Rather than riding cautiously along waiting for your horse to spook, ensure their attention is on you right from the get-go. Look directly where you are

going and ride there, don't look around trying to find the next thing your horse might jump at. Give them jobs; keep them engaged. Use transitions to go up and down within the paces, or from one pace to the next.

Always do everything with purpose. Leading requires having some form of plan, knowing what you'd like to do next. Make decisions for your horse so they learn they can rely on you and subsequently relax. A relaxed horse is one able to be in a learning state, which is exactly where they need to be mentally to advance in your training together. Take them places with an assuredness and level of certainty they can mirror. Remember one of you will always be the leader and one of you will always be the follower. If you're not the leader, your horse must be by default. So, make their life easier - it's time for you to step up and take the lead. 🏠

You'll find Christine at [Christine Armishaw Equestrian](#) or visit her [Facebook](#) page for more information.

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OPINION

On bits and other pieces

Professional bit fitter **ANNA MINOGUE** explains how to avoid a Charlotte Dujardin moment, before she shares her thoughts on nosebands.

Elite dressage rider Charlotte Dujardin recently joined the ranks of riders who have failed a dressage pre-competition tack check for having their horse's bit on incorrectly. Charlotte later explained that the arrow symbol on Times Kismet's bit was on the wrong side of her mouth, earning an immediate elimination.

So how can that disappointing scenario be avoided? Start by always checking the manufacturer's mark. Usually, and there are a couple of exceptions, but usually the manufacturer will put a mark on the

nearside of the bit facing forward. If your bit doesn't have any markings, make sure you know exactly how that particular bit should be placed in the horse's mouth.

From the point of view of your horse's wellbeing and comfort, putting many bits on back to front really isn't such an issue. For example, if your bit falls into that category and is marked with an arrow on the nearside pointing forward, but the bit has been turned so that the arrow is now on the offside pointing back, then it doesn't really matter (other than for a pre-competition tack check when it very

definitely does!), because for the horse, the difference is negligible.

However, other bits, a ported bit for example, should be fitted in the way that the manufacturer intended. Say you've got a single jointed bit, or a single jointed bit with a curve, you want the curve to go into the mouth in a way that's ergonomically appropriate and shapes nicely to the mouth. I have seen a bit with curved cannons put in back to front, so that the cannons are on completely the wrong angle in the mouth.

More on markings

Often, but not always, a manufacturer's mark will be an arrow. For example, Sprenger and Neue Schule are marked on the nearside with an arrow pointing forward. Bomber and Trust have the bit size stamped on the nearside, Fager places their brand on the offside and the bit size on the nearside. Each manufacturer will do things slightly differently, which can make it confusing - but the general rule is that the mark should be on the horse's nearside and it should be at the front of the bit facing towards the nostrils.

When you buy a bit, my advice is to find out what that particular manufacturer's markings indicate. Some of the cheaper brands won't have any markings at all, so you just have to use your common sense and figure it out. The most important thing to remember is that if your bit has markings and you put it in contrary to the manufacturer's recommendations, you could be eliminated in a pre-competition tack check.

Nosebands

Studies have shown that stress and pain markers in horses increase significantly when they're wearing a tight noseband. Multiple tests, including eyeball temperature, heart rate, and respiratory rate, all point to the same problem.

According to Equestrian Australia guidelines, you should be able to get two fingers between the noseband

and the side of the horse's head. But because the head can often be quite concave in that spot, you can have the tightest of tight nosebands and still be able to get two, three, or even four fingers into that space, depending on the shape of your horse's head.

So, the correct way to measure tightness is with a noseband taper gauge (approximately equal to the width and depth of two adult fingers), which should slide easily between the nasal planum and noseband - and that should remain the case after tightening a flash strap. Many riders make the mistake of measuring their cavesson before attaching the flash, which then pulls everything down and tightens the fit of the noseband.

The other point I'd like to make is that overtightening the noseband causes a significant increase in poll pressure. To experience just how much pressure, try putting your hand under the bridle's headpiece (crownpiece) and ask a friend to tighten the noseband! I've never fitted a bit that applies as much pressure to the poll as does a tight noseband.

Because dressage judges will deduct marks if a horse opens their mouth, some riders rely on overtightening the noseband rather than teaching the horse to accept contact with the bit as part of the Training Scale. Show jumping and cross country are a bit different. Because your horse evading the bit while you're travelling at speed could be dangerous, a firmer noseband may be necessary - but make sure that it doesn't restrict breathing or swallowing.

In dressage, the lengths of our whips and spurs are checked, but noseband tightness is not - and I believe that it should be. This is our sport, and we don't want to see it go the way of the dodo because we're perceived to be ignoring the wellbeing of our precious horses. 🐾

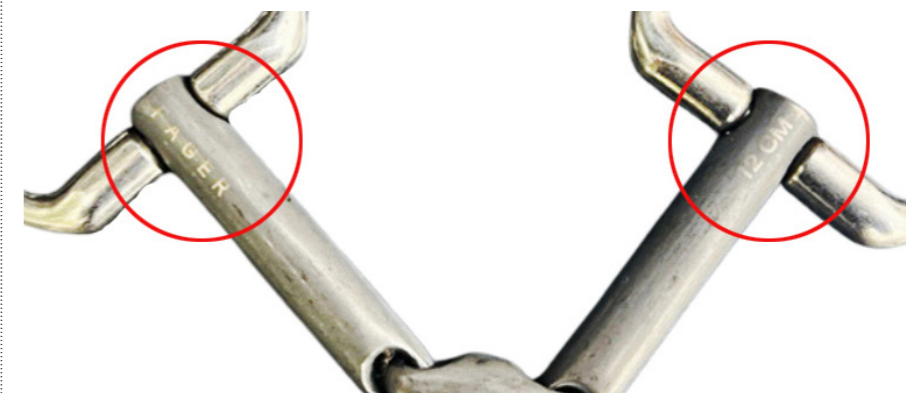
You can reach Anna at [The Bit Fitter](#), or through her [Facebook](#) page.



ABOVE LEFT: The Trust logo should face forward on the nearside. ABOVE RIGHT: The Fager logo as it appears on the offside of the bit.



ABOVE LEFT: The Sprenger bit arrow should be facing forward on the nearside. ABOVE RIGHT: The TBF logo appears on the bit's nearside.



ABOVE: A Fager bit with brand name on the offside and the size on the nearside.



ABOVE: The correct way to measure tightness is with a noseband taper gauge. FACING PAGE: A Bomber bit with the size printed at the front of the nearside. All images courtesy of Anna Minogue



VET VIBES

Arthritis: A pain in the joint

With winter well and truly upon us, there's no better time of year to discuss arthritis, writes

Dr CLARE WILLIAMS-PATERSON of
Apiam Equine Services.

My guess is that quite a few of you reading this article will have noticed that your joints tend to ache more during the colder months, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that arthritic horses feel the cold too.

What is arthritis?

Most simply put, arthritis means inflammation of a joint. Sudden joint inflammation with pain, heat, and stiffness is referred to as acute arthritis. Over time, if this condition becomes chronic, changes can extend further to damage the surrounding soft tissues, cartilage, and bone – and then we are talking osteoarthritis.

We see arthritis in horses of all ages and disciplines. It is a major reason why many athletic horses are no longer

able to perform at maximal level, with arthritic discomfort contributing to early retirement.

In the performance horse, arthritis predominantly affects high-motion joints such as the carpal and fetlock joints. In pleasure horses we see it more commonly in slow-motion joints such as the distal hock joints.

What causes arthritis?

Joint trauma is the leading cause of arthritis. This has a multitude of forms.

Acute arthritis can be caused by direct injury, chip fractures within the joint or tears (sprains) to ligaments near or within a joint, for example; or infection (septic arthritis). Septic arthritis can be a consequence of a puncture wound immediately involving a joint, or typically a blood-borne infection in young foals, where high numbers of circulating bacteria end up lodged in joints (known as joint-ill).

Chronic arthritis can be the long-term result of an injury, joint infection, or the wear and tear of years of training. Poor conformation (upright hocks for example), hoof deformities, and trimming/shoeing issues are other common contributing factors.

Clinical signs of arthritis

Common outward signs exhibited by horses suffering from arthritis include:

- ♦ Stiffness, uneven gait, or a shortened stride
- ♦ Swelling or heat around joints
- ♦ Lameness
- ♦ Reluctance to move on one lead, in one direction, or at a certain gait
- ♦ Reduced range of motion
- ♦ Development of a sour attitude to work.

Diagnosing arthritis

By the time a horse becomes lame from arthritis, the problem is often significantly advanced. At this point the damage to joints is both irreversible and progressive. Thus, a major challenge to diagnosis is to catch arthritis as early as possible.

Whilst arthritis is very common in older horses, it can occur well before what we consider to be a horse's old age. It is important to identify the cause of any stiffness or lameness, regardless of the age of the horse, because early treatment can often allow a horse to continue to enjoy a productive and comfortable career.

Diagnosing arthritis in your horse will involve a detailed discussion with your veterinarian regarding your horse's work program and athletic history, as well as a thorough physical examination and a lameness evaluation.

Various modalities, including radiography, arthroscopy, synovial fluid analysis and ultrasound, are available and can reveal detailed information

“ It is important to identify the cause of any stiffness or lameness, regardless of the age of the horse ... ”

about the condition and the integrity of the bone, cartilage, and joint capsule. These procedures are helpful in making an exact diagnosis and directing the course of treatment. However, they may not all be necessary or financially feasible in every case.

What's involved in treatment?

There are a multitude of treatments and supplements for the management of horses suffering from both acute and chronic arthritis, and it is beyond the scope of this article to present all the options available. Rather, it is your veterinarian who is best placed to determine which treatment, or combination of treatments, will most likely benefit your horse.

Our goal in the treatment of arthritis is to reduce inflammation and pain and to

slow further damage to joint structure, bearing in mind that there is no cure.

It is very important that management programs are tailored to the individual patient, with attention also paid to the many practical considerations that extend beyond any pharmaceutical assistance. Examples of these include the provision of balanced nutrition suitable for the age and activity of your horse; keeping the horse from becoming overweight; and regular farrier attention to the feet, all of which help minimise stress and strain to the limbs and feet. It is also important to keep horses moving. Arthritic horses can become increasingly stiff and sore when kept standing for extended periods of time, so never underestimate the benefits of walking!

Having your veterinarian maintain regular contact with your horse so that they can monitor their arthritis is recommended. And remember, during the winter months re-evaluating your horse's medications and joint support may be necessary in order to offer them the very best level of comfort possible. 🏠

Visit [Apiam Animal Health](https://www.apiam.com.au) to learn more about their services.



ABOVE: Various modalities can reveal detailed information about the condition and the integrity of the bone, cartilage, and joint capsule.



LIFE AFTER RACING

A bold venture pays dividends

Shenae Lowings and OTT Bold Venture have made an indelible mark on the eventing world, with the best yet to come, writes **AMANDA MAC**.

Shenae Lowings has a long-standing thing for off the track Thoroughbreds, and at last month's Millstreet International Horse Trials, her belief in their abilities was more than justified. Aboard ex-racehorse Bold Venture (aka Bentley), she was not only a member of the team to secure Australia's eventing ticket to the Paris Olympics, she also won the CCIO3* class outright, leading the field from beginning to end. "Getting the qualifier and then the win was just a bonus really, so yes, really happy," she says.

Shenae, who grew up in Perth, has been riding since she was a child. Her first pony arrived when she was 10, and the pair enjoyed some success in ridden classes. However, Shenae wanted more and

moved on to a talented show jumping pony who took her through to 105cm.

But by that time, she had developed a fascination for eventing, and began attending competitions with a local agistment centre. "Once I saw what eventing was all about, I didn't want to do anything else, it was all I ever wanted to do," she says. Which is why, after leaving school, she eventually moved to NSW with her four horses to first base herself in Prue and Craig Barrett's yard, and later to work with Shane and Nicki Rose at Bimbadeen Park.

The experience was invaluable. At 3* level, and partnered with Warmblood cross gelding Venture Sky High, she began to notch up some eventing successes, earning a berth in the Young Rider teams that competed at the 2015 and 2017 Oceania Games.

And then along came OTT Thoroughbred Ballyhoo, Shenae's first real 4* horse. Now ridden by Oliver Barrett, Ballyhoo was a game changer. "He used to score really well on the flat and he was an exceptional cross country horse – there was never a question that was too difficult," she tells me. "Unfortunately, he could have a few poles in the jumping, so he let me down in that regard. But he was one of those horses that was so beneficial; he taught me how to ride cross country, he taught me to be confident. I think every horse has their job in your career, and he had a huge role. I'll never regret the years I had with him, he was super."

I'm curious to know why Shenae is so taken with OTT Thoroughbreds: "They're all so different in their own ways," she remarks. "I think if you have the ability to understand them, then that can be really valuable because they're bred for the sport: they're bred to run and jump and they have the stamina, they have the athleticism. The issue has always been whether you can get them on the flat. I think if you can do that, you've already ticked the other two boxes. I really love working with them. Most of them



ABOVE: One of Shenae's favourites, SS Graphite has great potential (Image by Derek O'Leary Photography).

FACING PAGE: Shenae and Bold Venture put in an impressive performance at the 2022 FEI World Championships (Image by Michelle Terlato Photography).

have got really great brains and they're really willing."

And Shenae should know – she's worked with more than a few: "I've had probably three that I've sold after about 1* level. But I've actually got another one

“I think every horse has their job in your career, and he had a huge role. I'll never regret the years I had with him ... ”

at the moment, SS Graphite, who's one of my favourites. He's by Sea The Stars, so he's really well bred. He was just about to go 3* and has had a little bit of time off. But when I get back home, he should be coming back into work. He has an amazing technique over a fence, with huge scope. And he gives you an amazing feeling cross country, like he

could run and jump for days – one of the reasons why I just love this breed of Thoroughbreds. He's got great paces too, so he should be really exciting."

But back to Bentley, who enjoyed a far from stellar track career: "He did terribly," Shenae laughs. "I think he had three starts and he may have beaten one horse home at one of those starts!"

Having failed to impress as a racehorse, Bentley came up for sale and was advertised on Facebook, which is where he caught Shenae's eye. "I came across the advert, which was just a standing shot, and I thought wow, that's a really, really nice type. So, I contacted the owners and literally bought him off that photo. He was in Perth and I was still in New South Wales at the time, so I asked Mum and Dad to go pick him up. It all happened really quickly."

When Bentley came to Shenae, he was a straight off the track six-year-old, with more than his fair share of quirks. "He actually was and still is a bit tricky mentally. He's really sharp. He is exceptionally well bred by Devaraja and he's got a really good dam line. I think

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Bentley is a trier who wants to do the right thing and continues to surprise Shenae by giving more than she expects (Image by Australian Equestrian Team/Kirsty Pasto).

the trainers tried to make it work with him, but obviously he just wasn't put on this earth to be a racehorse."

Bentley's potential wasn't immediately obvious. Shenae comments: "He had it all there, he was a beautiful mover. He naturally had a really good jump and always wanted to leave the poles up. But he was so ridiculously quirky! The first day I tacked him up he bucked the saddle off, and it took me about two weeks to be able to get on him because he had always been led around a parade ring where jockeys are legged up, so he thought being made to stand next to a mounting block was terrifying!"

Initially, Shenae was unsure whether Bentley was going to be a keeper or an OTT project that she would sell on. But despite his quirks, she loved him –

and Bentley seemed to trust her. Then some months into their journey together came a turning point: "I thought wow, this could be a really serious horse, and still to this day he keeps surprising me. I think I've reached the limit on the flat and he just keeps giving more and more. He is such a trier," Shenae explains. "He really wants to do the right thing. He just gives his all and tries his hardest so he's amazing to work with and I think that's why he's such a good horse."

Now a 12-year-old, Bentley and Shenae's credentials are impressive. In June 2022 there was the CCI4* at the Melbourne International 3DE; the FEI World Championships in Pratoni, Italy, later the same year; the RM Williams CCI4*S at this year's Adelaide Equestrian Festival (where Shenae was named SA Event Rider of the Year

and presented with the prestigious Anna Savage Memorial Trophy); and of course, the win at Millstreet.

Shenae and Bentley are currently based at Kevin McNab's yard in the UK, where she plans to stay until August so she can compete, and hopefully qualify for Olympic selection in the 4* Long at Mallow in Ireland this month. "I'm desperate to get that box ticked. Once that's done, I'll be much more settled and I can focus and aim for the big goal."

If you're now inspired to take on an OTT yourself, Shenae has some advice: "Go slowly with them. You can never take it too slow with a horse but you can rush one. And teach them to relax, because it's difficult to teach a horse that isn't relaxed. Getting them to slow their mind and body is very helpful." 🐾



NUTRITION

Managing horses on high-fructan pastures

Horses on pasture require careful monitoring even during the colder months. The experts at **Kentucky Equine Research** explain why.

If you've been involved with horses for any length of time, you're no stranger to the anguish caused by laminitis. While you may be aware of the more common causes of founder - grain overload, endocrine disturbances, and overload of supporting limbs - there's one you might overlook: autumn and

early winter grazing.

While spring pastures may contain high levels of sugar that can induce a bout of laminitis, a feeding frenzy in autumn or early winter could have the same effect. "Some rain and a late summer heatwave, especially after a long, dry summer, can cause pastures to have a

growth spurt similar to what happens in the spring. These pastures can have high water-soluble carbohydrate levels, including both sugar and fructan, that may induce laminitis," explains David Nash, Director of Nutrition Technology at Kentucky Equine Research. "Autumn founder can also occur following the first frost," he adds.

Cool-season forages such as tall fescue continue to grow late in the year, posing a risk for any horse or pony predisposed to developing laminitis. Further, these grasses often experience a spike in sugar content after a frost. So how can this readily available, appealing, natural forage be dangerous for some horses and ponies? A closer look provides an answer: it's not the grass itself that's the problem, it's the amount of fructan, a specific type of sugar within the grass.

Fructans are specially adapted sugars that are found in cool-season forages. These sugars derive their unique properties from the bonds



FACING PAGE: Keep a close eye on all pastured horses, and check often for signs of colic or laminitis.

ABOVE: Horses with high energy requirements can handle fructans if the overall energy balance is taken into consideration.

that hold individual fructose sugars together to form short- and long-chain carbohydrates. These bonds cannot be broken by normal enzymatic mechanisms that digest soluble sugars in the stomach and small intestine. For this reason, these easily fermented sugars pass into the hindgut, a situation that leads to the rapid production of lactic acid and volatile fatty acids (VFAs). VFAs are the normal products of the digestion of cellulose and other cell wall constituents of forages, so horses handle them well. However, lactic acid is not efficiently used by other bacteria, nor is it easily absorbed from the hindgut – and the resulting accumulation is a cause of colic and laminitis in horses on pasture.

All horses are subject to digestive upsets associated with lush pasture. The amount of highly fermentable carbohydrates in these pastures can be overwhelming to an unadapted digestive system. Ponies, because of a

'thrifty' gene that allows them to survive on little more than limited amounts of medium quality forages, and overweight horses, because of insulin resistance and associated high levels of circulating pro-inflammatory agents, are particularly susceptible to pastures with a high fructan content. However, many horses are able to handle some amount of pasture turnout if their digestive tracts are given time to adapt to the dietary change, and if a hindgut buffer is used to help neutralise lactic acid.

Fructans are produced by photosynthesis. Photosynthesis occurs in plant leaves during daylight hours; the sunnier the day, the more photosynthesis and therefore the more fructans. Overnight, plants use the sugars to grow more leaves and stems. Extra sugars that are not used for growth are stored within the plant tissues. Many cool season grasses store fructans in the lower five centimeters of the stem just above the soil line.

Horses with high energy requirements can handle fructans as long as the overall energy balance is taken into consideration.

However, temperatures at night are critical. If nighttime temperatures do not go above 4°C, the plant will not grow and sugars remain in the leaves in high concentrations.

So, when is the best time to graze horses in order to avoid fructans? The answer to this complex question is: it depends! One thing to consider is the daily cycle of high and low fructan levels. During seasons of warm days and cool nights (4°C or lower), sensitive horses should not be allowed to graze at all, and grazing time for all horses should be limited. If the weather is sunny during the day and it stays warm at night, horses should be grazed early in the morning when plants have had the night hours to use up sugars from the previous day. Then before the day gets hot and sugar production starts all over again, horses should be taken off the pastures.

To complicate this explanation, the fructan and sugar content of grasses



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A grazing muzzle is one way to help decrease the volume of forage your horse is consuming.

varies based on plant maturity. The first growth of grass in spring has very low levels of fructans but high levels of sugars. However, while fructans may be low in early pasture growth, levels of indigestible cellulose and lignin are also low. There is a relationship between these cellulose and lignin levels and the volume of forage a horse will eat: high levels of cellulose and lignin help to decrease intake, but when levels are low, horses tend to eat more. Therefore, even though the fructan levels are low in first growth grass, the horse's total intake may still be high due to the volume of forage consumed.

Managing pastures so that horses do not overgraze will help reduce fructan intake. One simple step is to mow higher than usual during seasons when fructan accumulation may occur. Because plant stems contain high levels of fructan, horses should not be grazed on stubble. The condition of the entire pasture must be monitored daily, as horses tend to

select high fructan plants to graze. In addition, environmental pasture stress can cause fructan levels to increase. In plants reacting to drought or frost, fructan levels can rise by as much as 30%.

As a general rule, horses that have high energy requirements can handle fructans as long as the overall energy balance is taken into consideration. Horses that can generally handle high fructan levels if they are allowed time to adapt to them gradually include growing horses (don't overfeed grain when fructans are high), lactating mares, hard-working horses, thin horses (that are not compromised by disease or parasites), and breeds that are known to be hard keepers, such as Thoroughbreds. Those that should generally avoid fructans are easy keepers, ponies, and any overweight horses. However, each horse is an individual, regardless of breed, so keep a close eye on all pastured horses, and check often for signs of colic or laminitis.

The fructan question can be complex

and confusing. When in doubt, use grazing muzzles if limiting intake is necessary. Start with brief turnout periods and increase gradually when introducing horses to grass. Immediately consult your veterinarian for guidance if you detect signs of colic or laminitis; and keep sensitive horses off pasture completely.

Hindgut acidosis is characterised by a drop in pH caused by microbial fermentation of starches and sugars, such as fructans, and the resulting accumulation of excessive lactic acid in the hindgut. Research supports the use of a hindgut buffer in cases of high grain and high fructan intake. Using a product such as a time-released buffer is helpful in preventing metabolic problems associated with overconsumption of sugar-rich grasses. 🏠

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Putting your best boot forward

Paralympian Lisa Martin is a huge fan of Iconoclast boots, and relies on them to keep her horses' legs in top shape.

When Lisa Martin flies to the Netherlands this month, she's taking with her a set of Iconoclast orthopedic support boots. The lucky recipient is Villagio, a six-year-old Warmblood gelding, and the three week trip is to see how the horse, stabled with Dutch Grand Prix dressage

rider Geert Raateland, is progressing with his training in the lead-up to Lisa's Paris Paralympics qualification campaign.

Lisa originally bought Villagio from Germany's Christoph Koschel, with whom she has previously trained. Knowing the type of horse that suited her, Christoph called to say he had a

very nice Warmblood which might be a good match for her. Lisa, who was in Holland at the time - "the day flights opened up after COVID I was on the plane!" - went to see the horse and bought him.

After Christoph left earlier this year for an extended overseas tour, Lisa moved Villagio to Geert's yard. "I knew I needed someone on the ground to help me," she explains. "I have plans for being in Holland leading up to Paris. If I qualify and I'm fortunate enough to get on a team, I'll stay there for the seven months."

While she is now sponsored by Iconoclast, Lisa has been using their boots ever since the brand was launched in Australia nearly a decade ago. "It was when my daughter was doing a bit of cutting and I noticed that many of the horses were wearing Iconoclast boots. When I looked at the amount of pressure a cutting horse's legs are under, I realised that it wasn't that much different to a dressage horse."

Deciding to investigate further Lisa contacted Iconoclast, explaining that she wanted boots for her 18hh mare First Famous that would not only protect her legs but also provide support, particularly around the pastern area. Although the company was at the time making boots to fit smaller Quarter Horses and some performance horses, there was nothing to fit First Famous. However, Iconoclast took the hint and added to their range an orthopedic support boot designed to fit much larger horses.

But every boot brings with it the danger of overheated tendons, which is why Lisa decided to check the temperature in the boots after she had ridden in them. "Although I wouldn't say they were cool - we do, after all, live in a very hot climate here in Australia - they were a lot cooler than 80 per cent of other boots I've used," she says.

Lisa is absolutely convinced of the value of Iconoclast boots: "I genuinely love them, which is why I'm taking a set to Holland for Villagio. They were a huge help for First Famous. We did Rio with them and they travelled all around the world with me."

For Lisa, another advantage is the way the boot fastens on the leg. "The straps run around behind the pastern and cross at the front of the leg. They actually cup the pastern and do up in a cross so that you've got equal tension around the pastern and up the leg."

Another bonus? They take immense amounts of wear and tear. "They're genuinely good boots," she says. "I use them for both the fore and hind legs because in more advanced work where you're getting your horse back onto their hindquarters, or even when they're younger and you're trying to get them back and be confident from the hindquarters, with a full set of boots they feel supported from behind as well as in front."

Iconoclast bell boots are a big hit with the whole family. Lisa's daughter uses




Geert Raateland working with Villagio

them on her horses, particularly when she competes in Steer Undecorating competitions at rodeos, and stock horses on the family property are fitted out with them. "They are just as tough as the leg boots and they don't turn" Lisa explains. "A couple of my dressage horses in particular have really benefited from them. These horses brushed from behind and bell boots were a necessity so they didn't stand on themselves while doing a bit of piaffe and passage. They'd also be really useful if you've got an unusual front shoe that sticks out at bit from behind the foot."

Although Lisa is understandably protective of her dressage horses, they're certainly not wrapped in cotton wool! "All the horses on our farm are treated like everyday horses. I used to put Iconoclast boots on First Famous and we'd be off to work the cattle down on the flat and bring them up to the yards to get them ready for sale. Or I'd have Juicy Wiggle down there, galloping around, up and down hills. It's really good for them."

Over the years, Lisa has discovered the benefits of riding her horses in the freedom of a 60-acre paddock: "If I'm having a problem in the arena, say with flying changes for example, while I'm out with them in the paddock I'll just gather them up for a stride or two and

let them tell me when they're ready. So, you're relaxed, the horse is relaxed, and it's like they think 'Oh yes, I can do this'. Then once I'm in the dressage arena I consolidate it. Yeah, it's a different world out here," she laughs. 

Browse the full range at [Iconoclast](https://www.iconoclast.com).



ABOVE: The Iconoclast boot criss-cross fastening helps to provide equal tension up the leg and around the pastern.

FACING PAGE: Lisa and Juicy Wiggle competing in the Para Grade 5 at the World Equestrian Games.

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ABOVE: Blue light from Equilume masks advance reproductive activity as effectively as stable lighting, with the bonus that mares can be fitted with these masks while out at pasture in their natural environment.



ADVERTORIAL

Blue light a positive for breeding success

Equilume Light Masks advance reproductive activity as effectively as stable lighting, allowing mares to be out at pasture in their natural environment.

For successful breeding outcomes, timing is everything. The horse's natural reproductive period coincides with the light-filled days of summer. As seasonal breeders, the naturally lengthening days of spring suppress melatonin and in turn stimulate reproductive hormones that maximise fertility for both mares and stallions.

This can conflict with the desire to breed Thoroughbreds during the earlier,

darker months in order to have foals on the ground sooner. Often, early foaling mares experience longer gestation periods, have smaller foals and can have trouble cycling post-foaling. This has consequences for breeding efficiency.

Published scientific studies confirm that extending day length for mares using blue light from Equilume Light Masks advance reproductive activity as effectively as stable lighting, with

the bonus that mares can be fitted with these masks while out at pasture in their natural environment. Early reproductive activity means production of early season foals and increases the economic value of youngstock. Light masks should be fitted 70 days before desired ovulations.

For pregnant mares, the benefits of extending daily light using blue light from Equilume Light Masks are comprehensive. As well as hormones that control reproduction, lengthening days also stimulate important growth hormones in the mare that allow foals to mature optimally in utero, and mares to produce more milk and good colostrum. Specifically, it is the blue light wavelengths from the sun that drive these seasonal hormonal changes.

Published research studies, presented at the Equine Symposium of the British Society for Animal Science's Conference, showed that pregnant mares wearing blue light masks in the final 100 days of gestation had shorter pregnancies, earlier post-foaling ovulations, developed larger follicles, and produced foals that were more mature at birth. The exciting studies, conducted by researchers at

the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, Austria, also found that foals from mares wearing light masks in the final months of pregnancy were 15 minutes faster at getting to their feet after birth than foals born to mares that did not receive additional light.

The two-year study was conducted at the historic Brandenburg State Stud in Germany. The blue light stimulated mares developed larger follicles in the late stages of gestation and could be bred sooner after foaling. Foals born from mares wearing blue light masks also had shorter hair coats, demonstrating that the light perceived by the pregnant mare is transmitted to the foal and influences their physical development in utero.

These new study findings show how correct light management of our pregnant mares can improve breeding efficiencies similar to nature, but still allow foaling earlier in the year to fit with industry timelines.

For more information on how to maximise breeding performance, visit [Equilume](#), or email [Amandine](#) or [Max](#).

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any equine or agricultural pursuit. The possibilities truly are limitless.

Hazelview is more than a stud farm and pre-training facility, it offers an equine lifestyle like no other. Facilities include a 900 meter granitic sand track, a six horse auto trainer, state of the art barns, a dressage arena, and pasture improved eastern facing paddocks, all with electrified post and rail fencing.

Additionally, there is a quarantine facility, breeding and stallion barns, a round yard and walker, 20 sheltered walk-in/walk-out stalls, flood lit foaling paddocks, a veterinary lab, staff residences and offices, machinery sheds and six garages. Blessed with being located in a high rainfall area and with seven dams across the property, water supply is never an issue.

The stunning 2,395sqm Bruce Henderson architecturally designed main residence includes a caretaker's wing; a tennis court and putting green; an eight recliner cinema; games room; an indoor pool and gym; and an underground, temperature controlled, 1,000 bottle capacity wine cellar. There is also an extensive terrace and a private lake complete with its own beach and a jetty.

With five bedrooms and six bathrooms, entertaining guests poses no problems. Spacious and light-filled, the home offers extensive views across the property.

The elegant but functional kitchen is well-equipped, and multiple living areas, including two dining rooms, invite rest and relaxation. Quality and luxury are hallmarks of this home.

Located just over 30 minutes from Melbourne Airport and the Yarra Valley, and just 45 minutes to Melbourne's cosmopolitan CBD, Hazelview is undeniably a one-off property.

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