



DRESSAGE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



September/October 2019

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Carl Hester at the WA State Equestrian Centre with our wonderful organising committee.

Dressage WA Newsletter

We've had a huge couple of months for Dressage Western Australia with the prestigious RubberGem WA State Dressage Championships, HB Horsecare Grassroots Championships, the Penny Hill Park Rising Star Award and the wonderful Car Hester making his way to our shores.

This edition is fairly Carl Hester centric given the popularity and excitement around his Masterclass in early October, so Carl Hester fans read on!

We're lucky to gain an insight into his yard thanks to our wonderful Judges from Downunder that attended the Judges Course at Hartbury earlier this year. And of course a write up on the Masterclass including commentary from our wonderful riders will be found in this edition of the newsletter.



DRESSAGE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Dates for the Diary

November

3rd Nov – Moora Districts
Horsemen's Assoc.
Healthways Unofficial
Dressage Spectacular

9th Nov - Brookleigh
Dressage Club – "Spring
into 2020"

9th Nov – Busselton
Sharyne Alberts Memorial
Dressage Competition

10th Nov – SEC Unofficial
Dressage Event

December

1st December – Transitions
Dressage Event

*Note: not all upcoming
events are listed and this list is
subject to change. Please
regularly check the EA Events
page and other local sources
for up to date info.



Advanced Freestyle 2019

The Equestrian Australia Dressage Committee (EADC) has recently become aware of a contradiction in the test sheet for the Advanced Freestyle (1/1/19) and the directives for Freestyles in the current Rule Book (Section 8).

Movement 12 on the Advanced Freestyle test sheet reads:
Flying changes of lead every 4th and/or 3rd stride – minimum 3 times consecutively. Whilst Table 8.12 in Section 8 showing 'Examples of movements of a higher level deliberately shown' was amended to reflect the test directives, Rule 8.6.1 (d) was not at the same time changed.

Clearly this was an oversight for which we take responsibility and apologise sincerely for any confusion this has caused amongst riders and/or officials. With our riders in preparation for the Australian Dressage Championships, we wish to make urgent clarification that the intent of the change was to give riders an opening to increase the 'degree of difficulty' in their freestyle choreography – and to be rewarded accordingly. As the Table 8.12 clearly outlines what movements are and are not acceptable in Freestyle across the levels, Rule 8.6.1 is in fact redundant and is removed accordingly.

Prue Spurrett
Chair
EADC



Upcoming Event



Back by popular demand DWA DJTF present

2019 SUPER G SEMINAR

INCLUDES F LEVEL

with **Pollyann Huntington**
EA A level Judge, JE

Friday night 8 November at SEC
and Saturday November 9 at Brookleigh.

Complete prerequisites for G in one weekend.

This seminar will cover the first two levels of judging and will feature horses showing Preliminary & Novice work.

Polly will cover how to become an EA Dressage Judge. What is the role of the Dressage Judge?

The Training Scale and how it relates to the progression within each test level.

The collective marks and comments, special section on judging the Junior and Youth riders.

What is the progression from Preliminary to Novice level. What does the judge look for in test riding?

ORBT: Open Rule Book Test for those who require it.

Shadow Judging: This seminar offers shadow judging with a mentor.

Cost: Reaccreditation seminar for G and F level. Introductory Seminar for potential judges, riders coaches \$30 and trainees \$20.

EA Judges, riders coaches all welcome. Suitable for Pony Club riders and judges, ARCA, Eventing Judges.

Please bring own lunch (no food heating facilities) local shops open. Morning afternoon tea provided.

Registration: 5.30pm Friday night and Start time: 6pm

Coaches, riders, supporters welcome.



Please pre-register with Elaine Greene: elaine_greene@westnet.com.au



Downunder IDOC Judges Visit Carl Hester's Yard

By Wendy Barker

Carl Hester is in the eyes of many devotees of our wonderful sport, the guru of dressage training. Christoph Hess described him as one of the greatest trainers and riders of all time when commentating at the World Equestrian Games in Caen, Normandy. We are immensely fortunate that Dressage WA has been able to persuade Carl to come to Perth to present a Masterclass.

I first saw Carl work his magic on Valegro way back in 2006 at the British Dressage Championships at Stoneleigh. Carl was head and shoulders above all other contenders, riding a jaw dropping test to win Four Year Old Young Horse Champion on the most exciting horse I had ever seen - Valegro!

Since then it has been my dream to visit Carl's yard (Oaklebrook Mill) and see his horses at home. I have been lucky enough to judge at Hartpury International Festival of Dressage (at Hartpury University in Gloucestershire) for the last 8 years. Carl's yard is very close to Hartpury, and every single year I have been very close to going to Carl's (Judy Harvey even took me to his gate one year, but no one was home so we did not go in). July and August are 'high season' for dressage in UK, and Carl is always very busy at that time, so somehow, in spite of several attempts from several friends who know Carl well, it has never quite come off.



"The horses all get to Grand Prix in about 5 years, so it just shows that you don't need to school them 6 days a week to get horses to Grand Prix quickly!"

This year the International Dressage Official's Club (IDOC) held a Judge's Course at Hartpury during the CDI3*. The following day, Susie Hoevenaars and Isobel Wessels took us to visit Carl Hester's beautiful place. What made this visit really special, was Carl gave a fantastic talk to the group of judges in his indoor arena, and while he talked, Charlotte rode a stunning 5 year old mare, then as a grande finale, she rode Valegro (Blueberry) who showed us exactly why he has been the superstar of the dressage world. Carl gave us a really informative talk, starting by saying there were 15 horses in the yard, and just 3 members of staff. Everything at Carl's is immaculate, so you know everyone works very hard! He said, "Horses are very expensive to keep, you don't make money out of riding horses," quipping, "I spent 6 years getting Del (Hawtin's Delicato) to Grand Prix, and when he wins at a CDI3* (he won the GP Special at Hartpury the previous day), he wins 500.00 quid!" As he explained, it is coaching and presentations that keep the whole operation going.

Carl's Program

He talked about the program that all of the horses are on. They are worked in the school on Monday and Tuesday, mainly doing many many transitions to develop their suppleness and engagement. They are hacked out



Wednesday (Trish Gardiner, Olympic dressage rider, now 83 years old, hacks Valegro out twice each week). Carl said "Blueberry is the safest horse in the yard!" They are schooled Thursday and Friday, hacked out Saturday, and they all have Sunday off. Carl said, "The horses all get to Grand Prix in about 5 years, so it just shows that you don't need to school them 6 days a week to get horses to Grand Prix quickly!"

Choosing a dressage horse

One area he concentrated on was what to look for when choosing and buying a dressage horse. A theme of many of his masterclasses, and this talk was no different, is he always looks for a horse with a very good canter, and particularly a canter with a good hind leg, Carl argues, this is because so much of the test (he means the GP of course) is canter, which cannot be easily improved a great deal, whereas, the trot can be developed a huge amount, so a good trot in a young horse is not such a priority. He also believes it is not ideal for a horse to have a huge walk, as a huge walk can make life more difficult (in the collected walk) in a test.

Carl doesn't believe you have to spend a fortune to end up with a good dressage horse. "I paid £1000 for Barney (Nip Tuck), and £4000 for Blueberry as youngsters." He likes to buy horses at about two and a half years – "This is a good age to buy horses, they



Carl and Utopia in the retirees village (shared with Valegro)

haven't been ridden, so are cheaper to purchase, and you can develop that bond with them that you can't develop with a horse that someone else has trained."

Carl was asked how to train the hind legs to carry more and push less. He said the best way is to use the half steps and the piaffe to develop more bend and strength in the hind joints.

Hind legs

He spent some time focusing on how important a good hind leg is in a potential FEI dressage horse. Charlotte rode her gorgeous 5 year old mare when we first arrived, and Carl pointed out what a fantastic hind leg this wonderfully elastic horse had. He talked about Valegro having the same excellent hind leg, how people often used to say horses with short legs could not do big extended trots. He laughed, saying Valegro had completely debunked this myth, because he had short legs, but it is in fact all about the hind leg, Valegro's hind leg was right underneath him! He also talked about how training could really change the hind leg, joking about how Barney's hind leg was out the back and 'pushing' in the early days, but how he was able to train him to step under and enjoy success at major international events. Carl was asked how to train the hind legs to carry more and push less. He said the best way is to use the half steps and the piaffe to develop more bend and strength in the hind joints.



Horses that want to work

He said the best kind of dressage horse is a horse that really wants to work. He likes hot, sensitive horses, and felt lazy horses were the worst for dressage. He explained that Valegro was very very hot and sensitive to the leg early on, and that he still is very sensitive to the leg. Carl said Valegro could cope with legs as long as Charlotte's, (he also pointed out just how still Charlotte's leg is), but that he didn't appreciate legs as long as Carl's, particularly in the one time changes! "Valegro was a proper dressage horse, a horse with a very good work ethic". He talked about the kind of horse you need for the really big events. He said horses need to be very very fit so they can still produce their best on the last day of the event. He said, "Valegro had never had a day off in his life, but Uthopia just had to look at a stone and he would go lame, yet even at 18 years, that Uthopia still has 4 very clean legs, but unfortunately he always had very thin soles" – "he has feet like glass".

Stretching

He talked about how as riders we need to adjust the stretch according to each individual horses' needs. He explained that every horse should stretch at some point in each ride. He said, when you are riding a very sharp horse, (nodding his head towards Charlotte's mare) early in the ride you should always have a contact to be safe, but at the end of the ride, horses must stretch, once they are relaxed. Charlotte finished the session with the mare in a stretch. Carl explained that because horses like this mare and Valegro had quite short backs and necks, they needed to be made longer and more open in the stretch, but that this would not suit a long type of horse, where the stretch should be rounder and shorter so they stay off the forehand.

Contact

Carl commented, "Some horses are born with mouths like silk, and some are born with mouths like bricks." He said when they first started Valegro he was very very strong, and would run away. Carl said that it was much easier to train a horse that starts off strong to be light and in self-carriage, than to convince a horse that is reluctant to take a contact that he should fill up the reins.



Partnerships

Carl talked about how working with Charlotte has completely revived his passion for dressage. He said it is hard to keep doing it on your own, and so many successful riders have someone to work with over a long period, mentioning Anky Van Grunsven and Sjef Janssen's very successful partnership, Isabel Werth and Madeleine Winter-Schultze, Edward Gal and Hans Peter Minderhoud, and Ferdi, Geri, Michael and Maria's

A lovely photo opportunity for Wendy Barker in Carl's peaceful stable complex



teamwork in the Eilberg family. Carl said he felt it was much easier to stay at the top when you have a great partner to work with.

I am pretty sure almost all riders feel bone-weary after a big show, I know I do, and after the huge 5 day show at Hartpury, Carl and his team must have been exhausted. It is a mark of Carl's incredibly generous spirit that he was willing to have us all at Oaklebrook Mill the very next day, just before many 'downunder' IDOC members had to fly home. It was an enormous privilege as well as a great thrill for all of the IDOC crew. We are all immensely grateful to Isobel Wessels, Susie Hoevenaars and Maria Schwennesen for making it happen. I have been lucky enough to watch and hear Carl at many masterclasses and presentations, as well as watch all of his videos, he is such a fount of knowledge, (as well as an all-round beautiful person) but I can't wait to hear more from this incredibly gifted rider and trainer at his Masterclass at the State Equestrian Centre on 14 October.





Upcoming Event – “Spring into 2020!”

The 2019 DWA Young Dressage Horse & Pony State Championships will be run at Brookleigh Dressage Club's final competition of 2019, the Perth Equine Hospital “Spring into 2020”. Run over two days participants are encouraged to step up to the next level to help meet your 2020 dressage goals!

We are lucky to have esteemed FEI 5* judge Mary Seefried judging the DWA Young Horse & Pony State Championships which are qualifiers for the Australian Young Horse Championships!


PERTH EQUINE
HOSPITAL

Spring into '2020'

BROOKLEIGH DRESSAGE CLUB'S FINAL
COMPETITION OF 2019

Encouraging all riders to step up to the next level.


DRESSAGE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Prep to FEI, Competitive & Participant Classes
A & B EA Tests
NOVEMBER 9-10TH 2019

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2019 DWA YOUNG DRESSAGE HORSE & PONY STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

With FEI 5 Judge, Mary Seefried.*



SUNDAY
4, 5, 6 & 7 Y/O Horse
4, 5 & 6 Y/O Pony


BROOKLEIGH
RIDING CLUB

ENTRIES VIA NOMINATE



Notes from the Perth Carl Hester Masterclass

The WA Dressage community was thrilled to have Carl Hester visit our shores and impart his knowledge with easy to understand instructions and humour. He seemed to have a strategy for any issue or area of development for combinations at all levels and it was fascinating to see how quickly improvements could be seen.

Introduction to the Young Horse (4YO and 5YO)

- The most important thing with young horses is their temperament and work ethic. Movement can be improved, but is difficult to do so if the temperament and work ethic isn't there.
- A walk for a 9 or 10 in the young horse classes have a big, 3-4 hoof overtrack. But are we able to collect this walk? Will the walk bounce and quicken to enable piaffe in future?
- To improve the walk, we want the horse to use its whole body. Riders should move (row) their arms with the horse's neck movements to encourage the horse to move its body. The longer the neck, the longer the body is and the bigger the overtrack.
- The trot in the young horse is the least interesting, the walk and the canter is more important. Bear in mind that the Grand Prix test is mostly in canter and that is where the marks are.



4YO Young Horse

Bella Robson rode Hollands Bend Francesca to demonstrate correct training for the young horse and Carl worked on transitions with the combination.

- Rising trot can encourage swing and an even longer stride in the young horses trot.
- A test to see if the contact is even is to give away the inside rein, if the horse turns its head to the outside, then there is too much outside rein.



- When working on the trot/canter/trot transitions with young horses, maintain a light seat in the upward transitions, and keep the upper body light and forward in the downward transitions.
- In the trot, try to find the "swing speed," if the stride quickens, the horse is pulling and unable to swing.
- Throughout training sessions with young horses give a long rein to stretch, the horse will tell you whether they have been training correctly, they will put their nose forward to find the rein and will be able to balance there.



5YO Young Horse

Bellisima demonstrated relaxation beyond her 5 years and Carl worked with Rachael Andrews to encourage her to be forward thinking and off the leg.

- When working with a horse that is behind the leg, we need to think of riding with less leg. Remove the leg and don't let it get "stuck on".
- In canter, work from medium canter to working canter until the horse is forward thinking.
- "She is going to sweat, you are going to glow!"
- If the whip is used then there needs to be a reaction and the horse needs to respect the aid. Once you have a reaction, keep the hands closed, catch the energy created from the hind quarters.
- Leg yields are the first of the lateral movements taught to young horses. The rhythm should stay the same and the shoulder leads.
- When thinking of the appropriate level of bend in leg yield, the rider should be able to see the corner of the horse's eye.
- The horse should move off, and bend around the inside leg in the leg yield – not the inside rein. If the nose twists, then use/lift the opposite rein to balance and straighten the front end.



Elementary/Medium

With Penny Hill Park Sahara and Emma Hayward, Carl focused on the preparation for transitions and balance in the canter through the transitions.

- It's important to give and take in the collected canter, if you give with your hands and the horse trots then it's a sign you're holding the collection through the rein and it needs to be through the seat.
- A common sign a horse is out of balance in collected canter is the bobbing of the head. Lengthen the neck, open the gullet by keeping hands forward and collect the canter through the seat.
- In the canter walk transition, ask for the walk transition on the stride when the horse's head is up and come down into the walk transition riding forward.
- How you ask for walk canter is how you ask for flying changes. In the flying changes, ask for the change (right to left) when the right front leg is on the ground.
- A good square halt is not only when the horse is square, but the hind legs come under the horse's body. This means that you





can only step forward to correct a halt. To do this, trot with very little steps of walk into halt. Continue with little steps until the halt is square and the hind legs come under.

- In medium trot, keep the hands and body forward, keep the neck open and allow the horse to come through.
- In the shoulder in we should see 3 tracks when standing directly in front of the horse.
- There are 3 phases to shoulder in, the start where you develop the angle, the middle where you maintain the shoulder in and demonstrate expression and the finish where you straighten.
- Judges will see expression in the shoulder in from the horses outside shoulder.
- Practice shoulder in up the quarter lines and imagine there is a flashlight on your outside toes, the flashlight should shine directly on to A or C.



Advanced

Next up wait Katlin Hull and Sunday Morning KDH. Carl asked that Catlin only warm up in the walk before the masterclass to demonstrate a good warm up for a more experienced horse.

- In the stretch think of dropping the base of the horse's neck and have a plan for the warm up (i.e. 20m circle at A, E/B and C on each rein).
- Horses with longer backs have further to go to get their hind legs under them, but can find the lateral movements easier than short backed horses.
- Horses that are light in the mouth can be harder to train to take the contact, with horses that



are heavier the contact can be lightened through half halts and rein back.

- An exercise to improve the canter is to canter travers up the long side and transition between collected and working canter whilst in travers and back to collected.
- When training canter pirouettes a good exercise is to half pass from the corner to the center line then shoulder in up the center line to A or C, repeat. This helps get the hind legs under in the canter. Once established, build in a 5m-6m pirouette after the shoulder in but before reaching A or C.
- Ensure the pirouette starts from shoulder in and not travers.
- The ingredients for a good pirouette are to be able to canter "on the spot", to be able to move sideways from the outside leg and bend.



- In the collected canter, think of rein back, then let go, rein back then let go.
- When in halfpass, look through your horse's ears to the letter you are heading towards.
- With changes an exercise is to change, collect the canter after the change, then go forward in the canter 3 strides, collect again and change. This way the horse will learn not to rush after the change and wait.
- Count in your changes, out loud!



Small Tour

Carl then worked with Rachel Brennen and Mists of Time on the small tour movements and demonstrated how a normal trot can be improved to an expressive trot.

- Hot horses need the leg on, lazy horses need the leg off.
- Collected trot should look like medium trot, in collection.
- Similarly, collected canter doesn't mean going slowly, collected canter has a medium canter feeling.
- How many strides of collected canter on the short side? For an average sized horse there should be 9 strides of canter across the short side.



- Take the collected canter forward, less of an up and down canter, bring the hands forward, open the gullet and allow the horse to take the canter forward into an elastic contact.
- When estimating where to start tempi changes cross the diagonal, the following rules can ensure the changes are even on both sides of X:
 - For 4 time changes, start 4 strides from the corner
 - For 3 time changes, start 5 strides from the corner
 - For 2 time changes start 3 strides from the corner
- In the one time changes the rider needs to consistently move their legs to ask for the next change, don't ask for the first change



and wait to see if the horse changes on the before preparing and asking for the next change, it will be too late. Give the aids with the assumption the horse will change on every stride.

- For the one time changes the canter needs to be different, we need a shorter, bouncier canter.
- Test to see if the left to right aid works as well as the right to left aid, then work on the weaker combination.
- If you have a hot or tense horse that jogs in the walk, walk in a zig-zag pattern (sharks teeth) rather than trying to stop the horse.
- Train your horse to walk on the spot (slowly) when transitioning from extended walk to collected walk. The horse learns not to jog in this transition to collected walk if they think "slow" when the reins are shortened.



Large Tour

To complete the masterclass Steph Spencer then rode Redskin R to demonstrate the Grand Prix masterclass. Carl has worked with this combination before and was pleased to see the progress made.

- The higher level movements can help improve the horse's movement, for example a horse with a flat canter can learn to bounce through teaching one time changes.
- Quick, light steps are needed for passage. For horses that get slow behind we need quick front legs to let the hind legs start getting quicker.
- Leg yield in a passage trot to stop the hind legs "getting stuck" or walking behind.
- Train the zig zag in canter, in leg yield as this teaches the horse to stay more forward and helps prepare for the new direction as you're already in that position.
- Training 6 x 6 x 6 x 6 strides from the corner of the arena helps determine whether your zig zag is even, you should end up back in the corner at the opposite end of the arena.





Well done to our combinations who acted as "guinea pigs" for the Carl Hester Masterclass, the audience got so much out of your lessons with Carl. Thank you to the organizing committee and to Carl Hester for a wonderful and memorable evening.

Photographs from the Carl Hester Masterclass courtesy of Eric Lloyd Photography

A word from our riders on their experience with Carl Hester

Rachel Andrews: Bellissima and I were extremely lucky to be selected for the 5yr old young horse demonstration for the Carl Hester Masterclass, along with Bella Robson on her lovely 4 yr old, Hollands Bend Francesca.

During our session, Carl explained how to get a bigger over track in our free walk. Bellissima needed to use her neck more and Carl asked me to think of "rowing a boat" with my arms to encourage her to stretch down and out with her head and neck. This had an immediate improvement with a bigger over track.

We also worked on keeping her in front of my leg. To do this I would do transitions within the pace, bringing her forward and back. Even to the extent of going into a light seat and attempting to "gallop" down the long side. My take home message was to make sure that I do a transition with her every 20 meters to help keep her listening.



I enjoyed every minute of the Masterclass! Carl explained everything in a way that was easy to understand and I'm pretty sure most people could relate in some way to what we were working on. He kept the session interesting and had everyone in stitches half of the time with his great sense of humor. Thank you to Dressage WA for



organising such a fantastic event! It was great to see the SEC packed to the rafters again.

Katlin Hull: My time spent with Carl Hester was a truly wonderful experience. More so learning that he really is just so normal, kind, genuine and respectful to his riders and their knowledge of their horses.

From a coaching perspective, Carl definitely picked my character and technical ability instantly. He was able to entice me to take those little extra risks by pushing for more, which enabled me to step outside my normal boundaries. This is something that will pay off with Sunday Morning KDH and I, particularly now that our partnership has built up.

I really learned that no matter what, you have to have confidence, even when it's a nervous situation, to just trust yourself and your horse and go for it, you only ever learn from your mistakes anyway!

In terms of technical ability, most notably I was able to improve my canter quite easily in the session through the exercises we did, which involved keeping the forward in the half pass and working pirouette and finishing the pirouette in half pass to shoulder in. These movements in sequence really developed my feel to open up the canter in the collection.

The Masterclass was an experience I will never forget. Although it was overwhelming, I adored my time and I feel I made the most out of the opportunity with Carl.



Emma Hayward: Oh what a night, they often say to never meet your idols; Monday could not have been further from that. I would kidnap Carl and his eagle eye in a heartbeat, plus he is the nicest guy you could ever have the pleasure of meeting. Thank you to everyone involved in making this happen here in Perth!

The takeaway message: transitions, transitions, transitions. From young horse right through to Grand Prix, take care of the basics, pay attention to the timing, and ride forward.

A favourite moment from our session was improving the halt. Sahara will often halt square, however her hind legs love to stay "out the back". Carl very quickly corrected



it by guiding us through a sequence to help bring the hind leg under. Riding a series of controlled short walk steps directly from the trot into the halt. This gave her time to place the legs and find her balance, we then rewarded the effort, trotted on again and repeated. Always correcting forward when the balance went backwards and the all-important pat when she halted square with the hind legs placed correctly.

The opportunity to watch the other riders and their beautiful partners was the perfect refresher and motivator. It was a memorable night and a much needed outing for the mare. I'm now looking forward to a summer of training and putting some of Carl's words of wisdom into practice.

Rachel Brennan: Carl Hester's generous and approachable coaching style immediately made me feel comfortable and confident, which of course transmitted itself to my horse Mists of Time.

Let's face it, riding a very sensitive and occasionally hot mare in an electric atmosphere in front of around a thousand people had the potential to be tricky. Instead, under his guidance it quickly became an opportunity to use some new aids and learn a lot in a short space of time. For instance the use of light taps of the whip to encourage the engagement and collection in Piaffe was of huge benefit and did not cause the horse to become hot. Counting the incoming steps for correct placement of sequence changes was also a great help – although I didn't seem to be able to count quite so well that night as I usually can and certainly didn't get it right every time!



His tips on the transitions between collected trot and passage work were absolutely invaluable – as they were on the development of a better collected trot. I really loved that section as the horse gave me such a great feeling in response.

He left me feeling reassured that I am on the right track and ready to really go for it in my training in the future.

Steph Spencer: Being involved in the Carl Hester Masterclass was such an amazing experience, albeit a little nerve wracking putting yourself into such a big atmosphere where the crowd is watching and critiquing your every single step and on top of that, one of the world's best trainers and riders doing the same!! I found Carl to be such an amazing presenter and communicator. His instructions were so quick, simple, clear, precise and very effective. Not to mention his wicked sense of humour that gave the whole evening a relaxed feeling.

I am so proud of Redskin for being so willing to try anything that was asked of us. He was very focused on me and willing to make any little change that Carl suggested, and wow, what a difference that made!



I particularly found his advice and exercises with the Passage and Piaffe so valuable and it really gave me a clear feel of what I need to achieve to improve it. I also found the canter zig zag exercise in leg yield from the wall a great way to ensure the distance travelled on both the left and right lead were equal. Although it was apparent that there are many ways you can count these!!

A huge thanks to the amazing team of organisers, volunteers and Dressage WA for bringing us all this amazing opportunity to learn from the world's best. Along with the evenings' sponsors Spooks Riding Australia, Performance Vehicles Australia, LaNoir Equestrian Saddleworld and Equinesque. Thank you Eric Lloyd Photography for being there to capture the amazing memories we will all treasure forever!

Bella Robson:

Hollands Bend Franceska is a rising 5-year-old Hanoverian warmblood mare. She is by German Grand Prix Stallion Franziskus out of an imported Fürst Heinrich mare and bred by Jane & Peter Bartram of Hollands Bend Warmblood Stud in

Victoria. She is owned in partnership with myself and close friend Beth King. We were so honoured to have been chosen as a combination in the Dressage Western Australia Carl Hester Masterclass for 2019.

Carl began our session off by discussing that trainability and work ethic are EVERYTHING. This doesn't mean you necessarily need a quiet horse but one that is willing to work with you and form a partnership 100% of the time. This was reinforced by allowing Franceska time to settle in and gain confidence in the big atmosphere. Next, he discussed a rider's discipline in training. We need to be strict on ourselves to only accept the best; every time we ride and train right from the start. This includes demanding every transition, corner, line or exercise that we ride is done with Grand Prix as the long-term goal.

As the 4-year-old demo horse we worked on the basics required at the start of a dressage horses training. Carl spoke about keeping each training session fresh and fun for the young horse. It is just as important to include hacking sessions and cross training during each week to keep them happy athletes.

Walk is very important and needs to be correct from day one with a clear, free, four beat movement. The horse's head and





neck carriage is important, it shows the judges whether the horse is using their whole body. "It should be like a rowing motion, the horse has to take your hand forward". In the trot I was asked to warm up in a 'grandma' trot with an easy rhythm that was loose and elastic to allow the horse settle in the arena and grow in confidence with every lap. Carl warned not to ride into the corners on the 4-year-old and instead ride a half 20m circle through the short side. This helps to maintain the rhythm and enable the horse to stay more upright.

When it came to the canter we spent the time working on the transitions. Trot /canter transitions are an early indicator of the horse's ability to push and the canter/ trot transitions are an early indicator of the horse's ability to sit. He asked me to ride with a light seat during the transitions and switch between rising and sitting trot to keep encouraging my mare to keep her back up and swinging during the transitions. One of the key points I learnt was when Carl talked about find each horse's ideal 'swing' speed. He believes this is different for each horse and it is our job as a rider to work out which speed suits each horse. Carl asked me to test a more 'active' rising trot into my canter transition but this caused the transition to become a little hectic and I lost the fluidity. He was happy with my initial trot speed and declared this to be Franceska's ideal 'swing' speed. "You can spot a swinging back by seeing that the tail swings, the back has lifted and appears loose. Once you have this the transition to canter happens easily."

Lastly, we finished with a trot stretch on both reins. Carl pointed out that this is one of the biggest tests of each training session. When you give your horse the rein to stretch they need to stay in balance, tail swinging and back remaining lifted. At this point you can happily finish your training session knowing you have achieved something.

Working with Carl was an incredible experience for me as a rider, and such a confident and positive experience for our young mare. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity and have taken so much away from The Master himself to draw on as I take Franceska through the levels.

Photographs from the Carl Hester Masterclass courtesy of Eric Lloyd Photography



Thank you to all of our contributors for this edition of the DWA Newsletter. If you have any ideas or anything you'd like to read in the DWA Newsletter, please get in touch with us by going to the link below:

<https://www.dressagewa.org/contact-us.html>

Dressage Western Australia Committee Members

Chair – Suzanne Simons
Vice Chair – Val Mayger
Treasurer – Natalie Sakich

Finance/Treasury – Natalie Sakich/Suzanne Simons

DWA budget management, DDF accounts, purchase orders and payments

Issue of Information – Steph Munro
Website and Facebook

Correspondence – Suzanne Simons/committee
Minutes, Agendas, incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Business/Strategic Planning - Committee

Events – Working Parties

Club Liaison – Leanne Pitcher

Pony Representative – Leanne Pitcher

Participant Representative – Melissa Sullivan

Official Liaison – Val Mayger

Judges, Stewards, liaising with other disciplines, national issues.

High Performance – Tracy Spackman

EA/EWA – Val Mayger

liaising with EWA Board and CEO, ADC etc.

Riders Representative – Jamie Bawden.

Includes downgrading applications, Rider's forum etc.

Performance Trophies/Awards – Val Mayger

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Young and Junior Rider Rep – Natalie

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General Committee Member – Linley Crackel

This Dressage Western Australia Newsletter was compiled by Tracey Strommer

