

All of the Winter Intensive Training Program participants were required to interview someone in the horse industry. Here are some of the excerpts from those interviews.

Tessa Holloran's interview with Laura Graves.

Tessa: Did anyone influence you to get where you are today?

Laura: There have been a lot of people in my life, trainers along the way... of course my trainer now, Debbie McDonald, who is such a guiding light in my career... and learning about yourself is important, and what you are good at, as well as maybe not so good at, is really so important.

Jillian La'Rae's interview with Arthur Kottas, former Chief Rider of the Spanish Riding School.

Arthur: Horse, rider, trainer, they have to work together. We have to trust, we have to discuss if there is a question and for me this kind of horsemanship is so important

Jillian: Did you have a favorite horse ever in your lifetime or at least one that was the most influential?

Arthur: I loved all of my horses. Some were more talented for something, some less. But this is our job, as a good feeling rider, also with a not so talented horse to make the best [of them].

Jillian: What's the number one thing you've learned from horses and dressage that has carried on through other aspects of your life?

Arthur: You will learn [and] never forget, [that] you can never say, "I know everything," you can always learn until you die.

Jillian: What would be your advice for other young riders starting up and having aspirations?

Arthur: Trust your trainer, trust your horse, keep riding as something special. People should be happy if they have the chance to work with a horse together, and the important goal is love your horse, don't have too many excuses when it doesn't work, and it's not [that] the horse didn't want to understand, it's that the horse didn't understand because your aids were not clear enough or your horse was not ready.

Leah Tenney's interview with Alison Brock.

Leah: Why did you start riding dressage?

Alison: I was really fascinated by the dressage and hooked. I was so in awe of what the feeling was of what the horse gave you when there was a clear understanding between each other.

Leah: Can you tell me about your most influential horse?

Alison: There are so many. That's almost impossible to answer because it's like with people, everybody brings something to the table that helps push you and guide you on your path.

Leah: What do you wish you knew when you were my age?

Alison: I wish that I had paid more attention to my position... I wish that I had been less defensive as a student... to come into a lesson very open minded... the other part of it too is to be patient. You need to be goal oriented... [but] the goals don't sustain you, the journey does. You need to love the fact that you get to wake up everyday and play with horses.

Kayla Kadlubek's interview with JJ Tate.

Kadlubek: Can you tell me about your most influential horse?

Tate: Tate's most influential horse was a horse called Ehren Preis. He came to her in her teens when JJ thought she was the best rider in the world. She soon learned this was not true after riding Ehren Preis. "I cried everyday for 2 weeks because I could not get him on the bit or to go forward," she said. JJ stuck with him and earned her USDF Bronze and Silver medals with him and schooled all of the Grand Prix.

Kadlubek: What did you learn in Europe that you don't think you would learn here?

Tate: JJ learned a really good seat. She rode almost every lesson without stirrups for the first few months. She also learned the diligence of sticking to something that in the end will eventually work.

Kadlubek: How do you feel using classical training has helped you excel in your riding abilities and in the competition ring?

Tate: She believes doing what is right by the horse will enhance every horse. By using correct content in training, it will transfer into the show ring.

Kadlubek: What are your goals for the future?

Tate: JJ's goals for the future are to make the Olympics, improving each horse in the kindest way, and to be the best rider and trainer that she can be.

Kendall Cox's interview with Lisa Wilcox.

Cox: Do you have any goals for the future?

Wilcox: "Make a team and educate young riders." Lisa sincerely believes that no rider knows everything. She wants to continue to try to be the best that she can in every situation.

Cox: What is your strongest quality on a horse?

Wilcox: "Understanding patience and how different horses develop. Each horse is different and you must learn how the different personalities react."

Annie Klepper's interviews with Courtney King-Dye and Juan Matute, Jr.

Klepper: Do you have any advice for young riders who wish to pursue dressage?

King-Dye: Choose someone to train with you not only want to ride like, you want to be like. That's what attracted me to Lendon.

Klepper: What is your favorite thing about dressage?

King-Dye: The mental aspect, and I think more than any other sport, you're more connected with another being.

Excerpts from Klepper's interview with Juan Matute, Jr:

Having his father's title however, put immense pressure on him. Whenever he would ride into a show ring, people would recognize his last name and have great expectations for his ride. "I like the pressure, because it is something I learned to deal with." Juan's father was also his most influential trainer. "Even though he is strict, I ask him to be strict so we can improve."

"Don Diego is a very unique horse because of how many years I have been with him. His personality is funny because although he is big and clumsy, he has a noble heart."

Juan ended our interview with this.. "our sport is beautiful because of how humble it keeps you. We all have great shows, not so great shows, and bad shows, they are all great experiences and help us grow not only as riders, but as people."

Alexa Brown's interview with Steffen Peters.

Brown: How old were you when you started riding?

Peters: I was 8 years old, and the way it started was my sister was 1 year older and she was riding at a little pony club and she kept asking me to come with her to the pony club and for

6 weeks I was like "no, I'm not quite sure if that's really something for me" and then after 6 weeks she succeeded and I finally came with her so it's all her fault. She started it.

Brown: Do you have a favorite horse or one that stood out as the most influential that you've ridden?

Peters: There is no doubt, it was Ravel. Your very first International Championship, like a World Cup, is something you'll never forget and any win after that at a major Championship is great but it's not as great as the first one and Ravel was the horse that delivered this not just for me, but for the USA and for our entire Team Peters. So I'm always very grateful for Ravel.

Brown: What is the number 1 thing you see young riders struggle with today?

Peters: I think my answer would be the true understanding of self-carriage in a horse. That a horse learns to use his own muscles or her own muscles to carry themselves so that the rider is so effective with his/her aids that the horse goes into the arena in a beautiful frame in 3 very clear gaits. Because the movements themselves depend on that and I find that we practice sometimes so many movements without true suppleness and true self-carriage.

Brown: Do you do anything both mentally or physically to prepare for a show?

Peters: ... as far as mental preparation, I always make sure I go to the show arena and don't just go through the test, I picture where I'm going to be at what time of the test, how I have to ride the short side before certain movements. There is a lot of visualization that's going on before any show.