

California Girl Joie Gatlin

By Holly Hugo-Vidal

When talented and beautiful Joie Gatlin enters the jumper ring, she commands attention. She is not only one of California's elite hunter/jumper riders, but a striking picture on a horse as well. Adding to it, colorful announcer Davin Malmqvist introduces her as "Jooooo Eeee Gatlin" stretching out her name as far as possible!

Joie is a native Californian, born and raised in Burbank. She grew up in a horsey family and began riding at the age of two. Her father had roping horses and was an old-fashioned cowboy, moving cattle, riding saddle broncos and bareback. Then, he became a stuntman. Her mother, who was from Colorado, was Miss Rodeo America, as well as a trick rider and a barrel racer. "Horses were always in our back yard," smiled Joie.

When Joie was 10-years-old, a friend of the family suggested that she might like jumping. So she began taking lessons and, indeed, fell in love with jumping. It all started from there, snowballing into a successful and lucrative career. Her first teacher was Barbara Eldred, then Randy Redmer. "A great horseman," Joie said, with a smile.

"I rode with Richard Keller for several years after that. He gave me the most knowledge and encouragement of anyone. He was incredible! He had professional riders with him at that time, such as Kenny Nordstrom and Will Simpson. It was the summer of 1984 when I was 17-years-old that he gave me the ride on one of the grand prix horses! I won my first grand prix on Hometown Hero, owned by one of his customers. I was his rider from then on and he was a true mentor to me. What a fabulous horseman!" Joie went on to say, "That same day, I won an equitation class in the morning and the Grand Prix in the afternoon. It was quite a day!"

When Joie was a junior she showed in the hunter and equitation divisions. While that was typical for juniors at the time, riding the



Joie, sitting on Kistler, waves at the camera while waiting for the \$500,000 Hunter Derby at HITS Saugerties in 2012.

Photo by Josie Driscoll

same horse in both divisions was not! During her junior career, Joie won the United States Equestrian Team Medal Finals, was named the Rhulen Rookie of the Year and won several national championships.

In 1987, Joie rode with Rodney Jenkins, as a working student doing everything from rolling bandages to riding. At that time Rodney was at Montpelier Station in Orange, Virginia. "It was an incredible experience. He occasionally gave me lessons on my own horses. I also helped at the ring as well as hacked some of his horses. I learned so much from watching. He was a man of few words and when he did say something – I listened. But I watched as much as I could. Subconsciously I picked up a lot of knowledge. It was an honor to be in his presence!"

In 2004, Joie acquired two Olympic caliber horses and with the owner's urging, she asked Katie Monahan Prudent to come out to California and help her. With Katie's reputation of helping riders attain their goals, she seemed a natural. She agreed and, as Joie said, "She thought we were a little crazy for having just gotten these horses to be doing this, but never the less, she came out and helped us. It was an incredible experience! I had SunCal's King and Mogharebi's Luna for about two or three weeks prior to

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Joie and SunCal's King in the Nations Cup in Gijon, Spain in 2006.

Photo courtesy of Joie Gatlin