

Rocky Mountains – Dressage

Kathy Simard's Passion For Dressage

By Dani Moritz

A USDF certified instructor through Fourth Level based out of Mile High Horse Ranch in Parker, Colorado, Kathy Simard is an instructor who's passionate about learning and teaching. Ever since she was a child, she's been "horsey, horsey, horsey" and now she enjoys passing her passion on to others.

We caught up with this busy instructor and asked her a few questions. Here's what she had to say!

We understand that you started with hunters and jumpers as a child. What inspired your switch to dressage?

I actually was kind of recruited into dressage when I moved to Colorado in 1990. Janet Foy (at the time Janet Brown) gave me a horse to ride that she hoped to sell as an eventer. I was hooked on the relationship you could develop through the complexities and intricacies of dressage. I remember I had trouble getting my canter departs on him because he kept giving me haunches-in instead. The lesson she gave me on the canter aids was a mind blower. I remember thinking, "all that just to canter?"



Kathy's first dressage horse, Peregrine, aka Grin. Kathy says that Grin is the "one who started it all. The best teacher ever." She trained him from First Level through some of the Grand Prix movements.



Maestoso II Odetta II — a Lipizzan gelding owned by Deborah Bennett. He is Kathy's current FEI horse.

Photo by Kathleen Bryan

Do you ever miss the jumping?

I do miss jumping sometimes when I see others doing it. The mare I own now jumps well so occasionally I'll pop her over a fence or two in the field. But when I think about the big jumps, I really have no desire any more.

What was it like training in Germany at the Etoile Riding Academy? How has that journey impacted your career?

Germany was amazing and I'd love to go back. To be a serious dressage rider, you need to adventure out of your own backyard. Florida, California, Germany — I've been lucky enough to do some education and/or riding in all three places. It really shows you what you're working for and what it takes to be good. The attention to detail in Germany will always be with me in both my riding and my teaching. Your horse doesn't know practice from the show, so you need to do every movement and every transition in the saddle well every time. In Germany, we had lectures every day about rider and horse biomechanics. This continues to be a favorite part of my teaching and the science that's coming out with advancements in technology is a treasure trove of new information.

Who would you consider your greatest mentor(s) in dressage?

Without a doubt Janet Foy. I have had and still do have great support from others in the sport, like Sharon Schneidman and Lilo Fore and I could go on. But Janet basically recruited me into dressage and has encouraged me to apply for opportunities to

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