

Rider of the Month

Equimec

This month's Equimec Rider of the Month is Peter McMahon, the winner of the richest jumping event in the Southern Hemisphere, the Bell Tea

Olympic Cup at the Kelt Capital Horse of the Year Show in Hastings, New Zealand. The first few rounds were disasters so Peter was well warned...

"I knew it was going to be tough. My wife Michelle and I walked the course, then watched a few horses go and we worked out what we were going to do. It was just a matter of getting the horse ready and getting her focused up out in the practice area. We got that. Then when I went in the ring, it was all just a matter of staying cool, staying focused. I couldn't have done it without Michelle being there with me all the time and telling me to stay cool..."

It was tough getting them powered for the water then back for the vertical?

"Yes, I didn't get a great distance to the water. Luckily she didn't go too far out and I was just lucky enough to just get her back in time and jump the vertical in a distance I was happy with, and so was she. It was a very tough track the first round, it was a very careful track. There were lines where it was steady, and then some lines where you had to move up. You had to be either waiting or going. My horse was very, very careful - horses have to be careful to jump these sorts of tracks."

And how adjustable is Genoa, she always looks a bit of a handful to ride?

"To me she's very adjustable, I can always kick her down and she'll try her best to jump it, then I can actually wait. She may look tough to ride, but on her back she is not all that tough to ride. Once you get her to the fence and through lines and combinations she's just easy."

"She's got plenty of scope, some people probably criticise her and say she's a rat and has got no scope but I feel that she does a job for me. No matter where I am, she'll always try her hardest to jump the back rail. She just doesn't want to touch them and that's what you need in a good horse."

And it was good to bounce back after Hong Kong where you couldn't compete after breaking your collar bone in the warm up ring?

"Really, I'm out just to make a point that it was a mishap at the Games. She did jump awkwardly and stumble on landing so it wasn't any mishap of anybody's, and she wasn't rank, just an accident. She was jumping very well, and I can probably honestly say she would have given me an eight fault or less round out there. That's how well she was jumping. Today, it was go out there, get the job done, come back. Focus on the second round, block out everything else, jump the second round and wrap up the rewards."

But she felt good in the second round? She looked fabulous...

"She was great. I was a little bit hesitant coming over to five to six, I was a little bit deep at the vertical so that made me have to wait down to the seven AB but she was able to be adjustable and then I could kick her out. She had all the scope coming out, she was great."

When did you get Genoa, how old was she?

"She was a ten-year-old at Brisbane Royal, September 2004."

What had she done up till then?

"She was a C grade mare, she was stopping out at Brisbane Royal, and that's when I took the ride."

"I'd just seen the jump that she had. Michelle had probably seen different, when I rode her I knew that that was the horse for me, right up my alley. I knew I could ride her to the top. Michelle prob-

ably had different feelings, but now she accepts that I was right and she was wrong..."

Is she a nice mare to have around? Not a narky mare?

"She's a great horse to have around. She's kind, she's gentle, our little daughter can lead her and she just walks around on the grass. She's just the best horse on the ground, she's just lovely."

What do you call her at home? Has she got a paddock name?

"Jen-Jen, that's what Holly Williams, her groom calls her. Holly deals with the horse, she works her, she lets us know what's happening with her so it's all pretty much on her shoulders to have her right and fit for the day. Michelle and I just handle it when it comes to the jumping, she's a big credit to Holly, she's just a fantastic groom and has been with us for five years. I hope she's not planning on going anywhere..."

So what are the plans now?

"Plans? Go home, she can have a bit of a rest, she's done her job for now, now that we've got a qualification for the WEG. I think it's going to be a pretty easy run through this year, and see how we go for the World Championships. Hopefully the selectors can open their eyes on this class and maybe even put us in for a spot. Let's wait and see and we'll try and claim a spot for Lexington."

It must be nice coming to a show where you can win a bit of money...

"We've got to give half back to the bloody government! That's the worst part, \$150,000 would be nice to have in the hip pocket, cut it in half and it's still good though. It's a big relief off my shoulders, I can go home and focus on other things and get her ready for the WEG. It's been fantastic, the hospitality the New Zealand people have put on for us has been fantastic, I hope next time the New Zealanders come to Australia that we give them the hospitality that they give us. It's been great."

And do you plan to breed from her?

"We've taken eggs out of her and we have two fillies on the ground, both by Falkrich, Michelle's stallion. They're three-year-olds, they're looking like good young horses. We'll break them in when we get home, so that will be interesting."



Each Equimec Rider of the Month receives six syringes of Equimec in recognition of their achievement.



Team McMahon - Holly, Mileah, Michelle, Jen-Jen and Peter...

Peter McMahon

