

Bianca Barnes

This month's rider of the month is Bianca Barnes whose horse, Belcam Cadel, was the Five-Year-Old Champion at Dressage with the Stars. They also competed in the Champion of Champions, but missed out to Shiraz Black who was the Six-Year-Old Champion. This down-to-earth young rider is excited about her pretty grey gelding that Ulf Möller described as, "Really a horse for the future."

Super horse!

Thankyou very much. I got him as a four year old - he's developed so much since then. Matthew's [Dowsley] helped me so much...there's still work to do, but he's just got so much trainability and a good temperament, that it just works for him. He's just got a beautiful nature.

And such wonderful rhythm...

That's just natural! He's got three very good paces, but you know there's always a bit of tweaking here and there that needs to be done, but his canter, there's so much potential there! Especially bringing him back in the collection, he's just so balanced. I can't get enough of him!

So what had he done when you got him?

Nothing. We bought him unbroken. He was just in the paddock, and the lady who owned him had too many horses and needed to sell them off. I was riding another young horse for her at the time and he just caught our eye. My mum said, "Oh he's nice." You know you always find a horse when you're not looking. We sent him to a breaker who actually breaks in Thoroughbreds, and from the third day after being broken in I hopped on and rode him. He's just so quiet.

What a nice temperament...

An absolute gem, he's not perfect all the time, no horse is, but he's just a pleasure to ride and be around. He thinks he's a stallion at times, prancing around and biting and nipping, but that's just playing. He's a very lovely horse - very good lady's horse...

So what do you do when you're not competing at Dressage with the Stars?

Well I work full time at an accounting firm. Doing the PA/secretarial work, I've been there two years. I eventually want to move onto PA/EA, a little higher up. But in the back of mind there's always uni... You know I'm only 20; I'm 21 next month. So there's plenty of time...but I'm one of those people who changes their mind all the time. All the time! So I don't see me going to uni right at the moment. I've got too much in my schedule. Between trying to keep a boyfriend in the area, and balance that sort of relationship and have a social life, and always serious about riding...

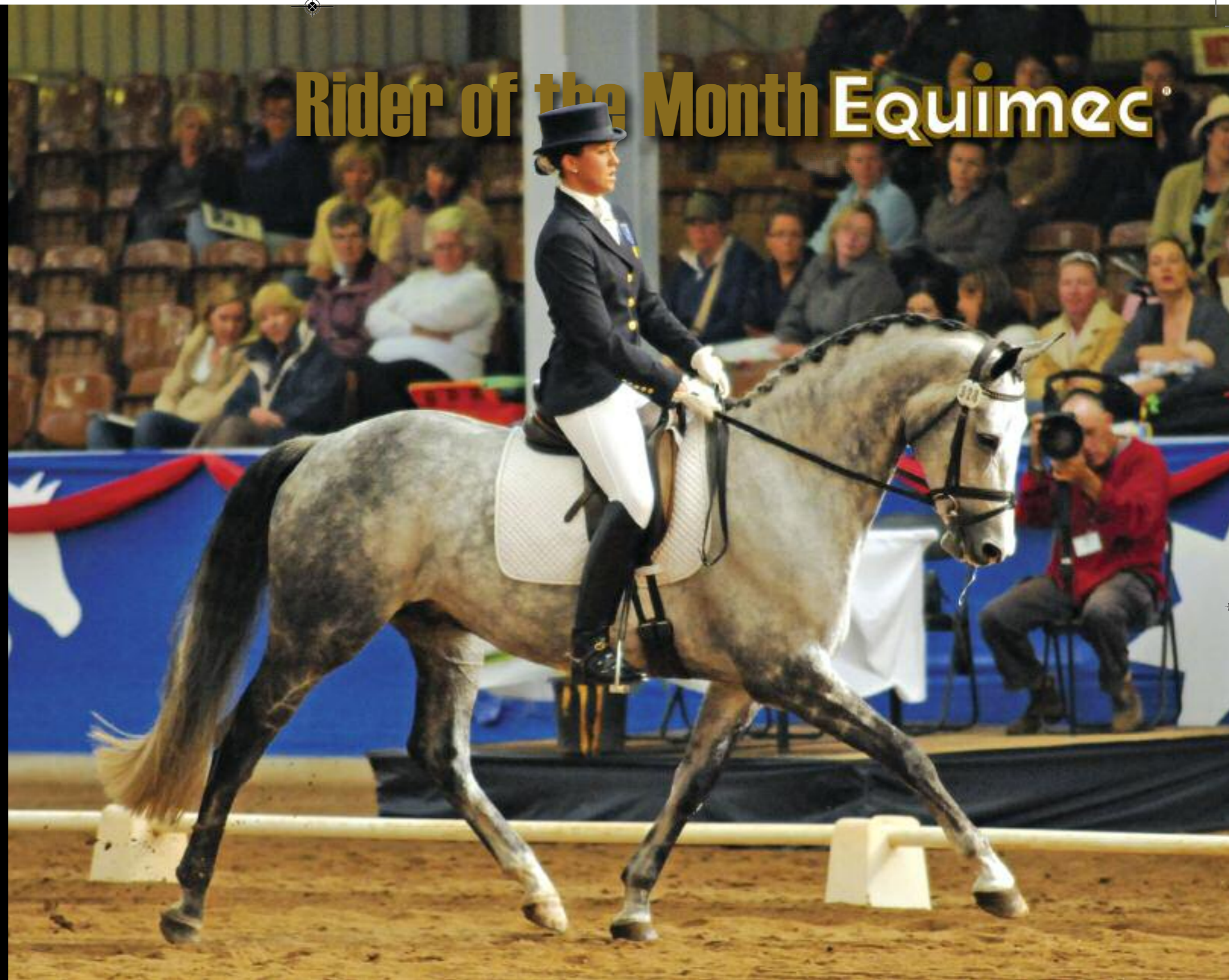
I mean how serious, how ambitious?

Well I've been riding since I was three. I went through Pony Club. Did a little bit of jumping - didn't like falling off - so I stuck to the dressage. And very serious... I've had a previous horse, called Highborn Baden and we still have him. I've been doing a little bit of showing with him. I won Barastoc Rider of the Year. Mum had him since he was five. He taught me so much, but he doesn't have the ability to go on... he's at Prix St Georges, but that's sort of it. But he's great in the show ring. And I was stoked to win at Barastoc. People said, "Oh that dressage rider!" and I was like, oh okay...

But will you take this horse to Verden, if you get the opportunity?

I've been to Germany. Not with the horse, but I've trained... I've been over there just to have a look and see what it's like, but taking a horse over, it is costly, so you have to be dead serious about it. And I have to make sure that that's where I want to go. I don't want to take the horse over there and go, "Oh I'm homesick," and come home. That's a waste of money, I need to be ready in myself to go and want to stay there for the years that I need to be there...

But if the competition came up and Matthew said I was ready... You know, you all get excited and you want to go,



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but at the end of the day you talk to the people who know what they're talking about and they can tell you if you're ready to go. If I go, I want to do it successfully. It would be great to go and make the top ten... That would be fantastic. But if I am going to go and come

last, that would be a disappointment. So it is always in the back of your mind, but you need to think seriously: is your horse that good? Or going to stand up against the competition in Germany... I don't know...

I'm just stoked with the win at the moment. A little bit star struck, but very happy and he's just a pleasure...



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