



Seventeen year old dressage star, Georgia Worth, is on a roll. Last year was her first season on horses but she more than exceeded expectations, picking up numerous wins and titles. Show Circuit caught up with Georgia to find out what she has been up to since coming out of the pony dressage classes and what she has planned for the future.

Interview with **GEORGIA WORTH**

WORDS: JENNIFER BOYES PHOTO: JULIE WILSON © 2010

SHOW/CIRCUIT: When did you start riding? Can you remember your first pony?

Georgia Worth: I started riding at around three years old and got my first pony when I was six, after attending a few riding lessons and doing regular horse treks. That pony's name was Goldie. She was a 13.2hh chestnut Welshie mare and a fabulous first pony. She was safe, reliable, and gave me confidence in my riding. I had a lot of fun during the four years that I rode her.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: So, when did the passion for dressage begin? How did your first competition go?

Georgia Worth: I got into dressage when I was ten years old, after moving onto my second pony Mingo. I was more interested in show jumping at that point but Mingo was very well schooled on the flat and so we did a lot of dressage while I was getting used to riding him.

Once I started with the dressage I soon discovered that I enjoyed it and decided to stick with it. I can't remember my first competition exactly, but I do recall doing many winter series days when I first started getting into the discipline competitively. In the beginning, I did pretty badly. My pony could be spooky and I was still not established in the basics but with experience and practice our results soon improved.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: Why did you get into dressage and what do you love the most?

Georgia Worth: I never really made a decision to get into dressage... It was more that I did it in lessons and found that I got a lot of pleasure out of it. I love the fact that dressage is always evolving. Every time you hop on there is something to work on. When you start perfecting your work or aspects of it anyway, the feeling of power and grace that you receive from riding certain movements can be amazing.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: What horses are you riding and competing at the moment?

Georgia Worth: I am riding and competing with Veritas at the moment, a 12 year old, 16.2hh Warmblood gelding by Voltaire II out of Imagine Me (xx). We are training at Grand Prix level and competing in PSG/Inter 1/CDI-Y classes.

I bought Valdi, as he is known at home, from Penny Castle in January 2009 because I wanted a horse that could teach me to ride top quality dressage. I wanted to be able to feel when I was doing things badly but also when I was getting things right. Valdi is a fantastic dressage horse to have on the yard as he has such a great attitude towards his work; he loves to please and tries extremely hard to do what you ask.

I also have 'a would be, should be, could be' mare, that always gets put on the back burner behind Valdi. She is a crossbred and not really built for dressage but she has taught me an awful lot about riding. It was through schooling her that I matured enough in my

attitude towards riding even to start looking towards buying a horse like Valdi.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: Are there any recent results that you've the especially proud of?

Georgia Worth: Valdi and I have done some amazing things together this past season. I was thrilled to be named Young Rider Champion at the Stellar International NZ Pony and Young Rider Championships in Taupo in February. In April, we came fifth in the young rider class at the Sydney CDI which was a great result as we were up against some strong combinations. We also won the CDIY FEI Young Rider Freestyle at Horse of the Year and came second in the young rider class. I am very proud of my achievements over the last season with Valdi. I am also extremely happy with the way he is training at home. We are working hard but have a few more things to tweak before we reach the heights that we're aiming for.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: Are there any trainers or mentors that have particularly inspired you over the years?

Georgia Worth: Ben Conn, an Australian Grand Prix dressage rider and trainer, and Keiron Lynch, an instructor based in New Zealand, have been the most influential people in my riding so far. Both are amazingly generous with their knowledge and advice. The thing that I like most about both of them is that they view being my riding instructor from a holistic viewpoint. They are willing to talk to me about where I want to go and then they start helping me get there.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: We hear you're over in Australia at the moment. What have you been up to?

Georgia Worth: I am currently a working student at Ben Conn's on the Gold Coast. I am over here as it allows me to train more regularly with Ben. It also opens opportunities to expose myself to a wider competition circuit and to experience a much larger industry than we have available in New Zealand.

SHOW/CIRCUIT: What are your plans for next season?

Georgia Worth: My plan for the next year is to work really really hard! I want to consolidate all of my PSG work and start getting my Grand Prix test up to scratch, so that I can hopefully try my hand at some Grand Prix classes next season.

SC: DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER YOUNG RIDERS WANTING TO SUCCEED IN THE DRESSAGE ARENA?

Georgia Worth: The biggest thing for my riding was realising that if I actually wanted to get somewhere with my dressage, then I needed to start doing something to make that happen. Ever since then I have taken time to look at my riding, where was I a month ago? Where am I now? How do I move forward?' Then I take action to help me step closer to where I want to be....'

Your instructor also plays a major role. The hardest thing for me as a young rider was realising when I was good enough to start going to a more experienced instructor. I would advise young riders not to be afraid of trying higher level instruction.

'It is very important to start learning long term skills at the beginning of your riding so you set good habits for the future.'

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