

The only way is  
**UP**  
 for Kallista Field



New Zealand's first Olympic dressage rider, Kallista Field, has had an absolute shocker of a year. Thankfully, things have finally started to turn a corner. We caught up with her to talk about the ups, the massive downs and what she hopes the next 12 months will hold.

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What Kallista Field has been through over the past 12 months would be enough to turn most of us into a quivering mess. Luckily, our past Olympian is made of much sterner stuff than most and has promptly picked herself up, dusted herself down and set her sights on the next exciting challenge.

Although the year started off well with success at the 2010 Horse of the Year Show, Kallista tragically lost four horses, two of which were serious prospects for London 2012. The first horse to go was the up and coming chestnut Oldenburg gelding, Awakino Don Bon Jovi, (by Dormello x Anhaltiner) who sadly had to be put down. It was a hugely disappointing turn of events for Kallista as, according to her, "he had talent to burn, moved like a superstar and would probably have been my London 2012 horse..."

The second horse she said goodbye to was her stunning stallion, Salutation FE, which Kallista had owned from just 18 months of age. Affectionately known as 'Slick' at home, he died of complications from colic in July.

"I bought Slick when he was very young. He was so tiny back then," says Kallista. "I remember we went to look at three youngsters in Germany when we were searching for a horse to import. I don't think the Germans like to let any of their good horses go as we were shown one that was horrendously ugly, one with the straightest hocks and then Slick who was really small. Thankfully, he did grow in the end and ended up at about 16.3hh!"

"It was heartbreaking to have to put him down. The hardest thing is that he lasted for five weeks after his colic operation but wasn't improving and was clearly in pain. In the end, I decided that he had suffered enough and he went to sleep. He's buried next to the arena now. I loved that horse so much, but we did what was best for him.

"Bad things don't come in threes, they come in eights", adds

Kallista wryly. "As well as losing the two boys that were under saddle, we lost two lovely foals, including a stunning colt which died shortly after birth. In the 16 years that my mum and I have been breeding, we have not lost a single horse. I kept thinking that things couldn't get any worse but they did. However, finally things calmed down again and after drinking a lot of wine, I sorted myself out and started to get back into things again."

*After dealing with one of the worst years of her life, Kallista is happy with how things are going at Field Equestrian, the schooling, breeding and horse sales business she runs with her mother and dressage legend, Sharon Field. With six talented young horses in training, she is optimistic about the future.*

"I still have Waikiwi FE, (Weltmeyer/Concerto), my 11-year-old advanced dressage mare, which I will be competing at Grand Prix as soon as she is ready. All of the movements are well established, the one-time changes and so on. We just need to work on her piaffe a bit more before I'm happy to bring her out at that higher level. She doesn't quite understand the piaffe training so we simply have to look at another way to show her what we are asking. There's no rush, she'll tell me when she's ready. There's no point coming out too early and

achieving mediocre scores when, with a bit of patience and slightly more time, we can get marks in the 70s and above.

"I'm also very keen to see how my 17hh five year old Sobranie FE (Salutation FE/Marima FE) progresses over the coming year," adds Kallista. "He was going to be sold but, with his sire passing away, I have been allowed to keep him. I'm thrilled I get to continue working with him as he is without a doubt the best horse I have ever bred. He has lovely, long legs and finds both extending and collecting very easy, which is quite rare. On top of that, he has a fantastic temperament and is a lovely horse to be around. He's just like his sire, a real chip off the old block, and for such a young horse is doing amazingly well. He has been getting 75-76% in Elementary tests."

Despite losing two horses that were possible Olympic standard, Kallista certainly hasn't ruled out competing in 2012.

"I have a few young horses that have Olympic potential which isn't a bad situation to be in," she smiles. "I have a big 17hh five year old called Super Hit FE, the third offspring of Waikare (Kallista's 2000 Olympics ride) by Salutation FE. He's a lovely, elegant gelding and will be right up there once we have worked through the training and he has had time to get physically strong.

"Waikiwi could also go all the way. She's a delightful mare and has been very consistent in advanced competitions. Earlier this year, she was reserve National Level 6/7 champion and claimed the Advanced Dressage HOY title for the third year running. We also won the Advanced Musical Freestyle at the same show. She has a lot of talent and could definitely be a horse for the Olympics once she's competing at Grand Prix. We won't push it though. If it happens, it happens."

Unlike many others, Kallista has had the benefit of competing at the Olympics once before, having been the only New Zealand representative at Sydney in 2000. She feels this prior experience will stand her in good stead should she qualify for the Olympics again.

"The Sydney Olympics taught me so much," remembers Kallista. "One of the things, that really sticks in my mind, is that there are some nasty people out there, individuals with tall poppy syndrome who will cut you down as soon as you are out competing at a certain level. But the people who are actually at the top of their game, like Isabell Werth and so on, are very friendly and completely down to earth. That was a really nice realisation. I would love to compete at the Olympics again. It's fantastic to be mixing with all these athletes who put just as much effort into their sport as you do."

As well as pursuing her own competition goals, Kallista is equally passionate about breeding. The aim at Field Equestrian is to produce New Zealand-bred horses that are competitive on the world stage. Many will be pleased to hear that Salutation FE will continue to live on through his offspring, with a number of his progeny already doing him proud throughout New Zealand. These horses are still at the very beginning of their careers, with the oldest only four or five years of age, but showing their ability in tough competition. Two up and coming stars flying the Salutation flag include four year old Aragon Sashi FE with young rider, Marjorie Bentley-Brett, who won the Tielcey Park 2010 Summer Dressage Series Level 1 Championship and Ashbury's Intuition (Salutation FE/ Bellwood Palaceaia x Zephyr Palace\*\*), bred by Josie Harley and owned by Rachel Thomas, winner of the 2010 South Island four-year-old Young Dressage Horse Championship and awarded the Pamela Reid Salver for the top four-year-old young sporthorse in the Nelson region.

The Field Equestrian breeding programme received another boost this year when Des and Jan Oram of Te Aroha kindly gave their imported State Premium Holsteiner mare, Aloha (Ragtime) to the stud. The nine year old Aloha is by the Grand Prix Dressage Holsteiner Stallion, Aljano, who has also produced outstanding jumpers. Her dam is Macarena,

whose sire is the famous Contender. Aloha (Ragtime) is undoubtedly one of the best bred warmblood mares in New Zealand, with every one of her forebears being licensed and State Preferent Holsteiners. At her mare test, she was awarded an overall mark of 9.03, including a 10 for her canter.

"I was blown away by their generosity," says Kallista. "She is currently in foal to Salutation FE, and we are very keen to see what that pairing produces. It should be a very special foal."

Kallista still has frozen semen from Salutation FE but has not decided how she wants it to be used just yet.

"Thank goodness we stored some", says Kallista. A few people have wanted to buy some but so far I have said no. I only have a few strands, and they are worth more than money to me at the moment. I will decide what to do at a later date. It has still been such a short time since I lost him."

Kallista has achieved more throughout her career than some riders dare to dream. She is New Zealand's most capped Grand Prix Dressage representative. With numerous tours to Australia, including three individual CDI Grand Prix wins, plus a CDI Prix St. George Derby team win, Kallista was also the youngest member of the dressage team at WEG 1998 at Rome and sole representative at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and at WEG 2002 in Jerez.

However, she is as down-to-earth as anyone you could meet, and her aims for the future are surprisingly simple. "I want to breed nice healthy foals and to continue riding, training and teaching to the best of my ability," smiles Kallista. "If I can achieve that, I will be very happy."

**'Roll on next year – I know it's going to be amazing.'**



