

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR YOUNG WARMBLOOD STALLION **GRYFFINDOR**



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Temperament, talent and joie de vivre were three of the things that founder of Gurteen Stud, Sam Pascoe, was looking for when she set out to purchase her first warmblood stallion. It was love at first sight when she met the *Gymnastik Star* bred *Gryffindor* as a weanling in 2000. This people loving, Hanoverian-bred colt encompassed all of the qualities that she was looking for in a breeding and competition prospect and has continued to prove his worth as he has grown and matured.

'I bought *Gryffindor* with the intention of breeding versatile, lovely natured but talented horses that would be able to take their riders wherever they wanted to go,' explains Sam. 'I wanted them to have the ability to carry a top rider to the highest levels or an everyday rider as far as they wanted to go. What I didn't want was to produce the kind of dressage horse that requires ten hours lunging before it is safe to be ridden. He had to produce warmbloods with a dual purpose for dressage AND jumping which his fabulous pedigree allows.'

'I'm thrilled with how *Gryffindor* has turned out. He's an absolute gentleman, he always tries his hardest whether he is competing or

training and he is so easy to manage. You can jump on him after three months of stud duties and he will be just the same as he was before the break. However, one of the nicest things about him is that, despite his calm, uncomplicated temperament, he still has that sparkle that always draws a crowd. He's a born show-off.'

Gryffindor has quickly become a firm favourite among mare owners across New Zealand and foals bred by Sam at her Canterbury stud are snapped up quickly.

'He is becoming very well known for producing rideable, highly trainable horses,' says Sam. 'It helps that interested breeders can come right up to him and pat him and they are able to see him being ridden under saddle at the Stallion Parades and out at competitions. I think that more people are becoming interested in horses that that are fun, safe and rideable, as well as being competitive.'

Gryffindor's rider, Tina Field, was more than a little sceptical when Sam asked her if she would train and compete the 16.1hh stallion on her behalf.

'Sam phoned me up out of the blue and was telling me all about *Gryffindor's* bloodlines, how much potential he had, his progeny' smiles



Tina. 'Then it suddenly clicked and I said: "Oh....errr....he's a stallion?'

'My initial reaction was definitely not. I had never ridden a stallion before, I was living on my own at the end of a long, quiet road with a three year old child and I had two mares on the property that I had brought back with me from my time in Australia. It all seemed too hard. But, I foolishly agreed to go and see him. I gave him a pat, had a ride and decided it was too good an opportunity to turn down. He was a very green three year old at the time but he ticked all of the boxes when it came to what I liked in a horse.'

According to Tina, *Gryffindor's* biddable temperament shone through, even at such a young age.

'When I got him back home, I started slowly, just walking him around the farm. Everything I asked of him he did, from mustering sheep and cattle, to climbing hills and jumping over spars around the property. His attitude and appetite for work just blew me away.'

'As he has grown up, he has just come along in leaps and bounds. He has a sensational canter and very expressive flying changes - he loves doing them. He also has a huge, ground covering walk. His trot work is improving all the time as well - you get whiplash from his

extensions! He is consistently getting 9s for his paces in tests. He just keeps getting better.'

Tina has been riding the eight-year-old *Gryffindor* for five years now and is excited about what the future holds for the young stallion. Tina and Sam have become firm friends. They plan *Gryffindor's* career and manage his life like two doting parents.

'He really hasn't had the opportunity to show the world what he is capable of as a competition animal yet. He has only had ten outings in his entire career,' says Tina. 'A lot of his time has been taken up with natural breeding but we are moving towards A.I now to give him a chance to compete.'

'He took part in his first Medium competition at the Canterbury Dressage All Grades Day in September and came away with a red ribbon. The plan is to get him going at Open Medium by the end of this season, do the South Island Championships and then make the leap to FEI competitions. I would also love to compete at the Horse of the Year Show. Sam and I just can't wait to get him out there. We have only scratched the surface of *Gryffindor's* potential - he has so much more to give.'