



AMANDA WILSON

– PONY OF THE YEAR WINNER

Words: **FRANCESCA NAVIN** Photos: **KELLY WILSON**

Seventeen year old Amanda Wilson has had a dream season, culminating with winning the Pony of the Year title at the 2010 Kelt Capital Horse of the Year Show. We caught up with her to discuss the secrets to her success.

Show Circuit: You've had a fantastic season with your Grand Prix show jumping pony, 'Showtym Viking'. Can you tell us a little bit about him?

Amanda Wilson: 'Showtym Viking,' known as 'Strider' at home is a rising seven year old 14.2hh pinto gelding, by the 16.2hh Warmblood stallion 'Salute the Stars,' and out of a 15.1hh TB/Arab/Pinto hunting mare. He came to us for schooling and to sell on behalf in July 2009. However, after a few weeks of training, my sister, Vicki, fell in love with him and convinced me to buy him. I'm so glad she did as I have enjoyed riding him so much.

He is very honest, easy and a super fast learner. He really showed how good his temperament is when kids have ridden him during the Showtym Holiday Camps that we regularly hold at our Whangarei base. One of the ponies and riders in particular didn't click so we put her on 'Strider'... she was a beginner but he looked after her like a gentleman. She even learned to canter on him!

As far as his jumping goes, he has always been very consistent and reliable. He never changes from competition to competition. As long as the rider is doing their job properly, he will jump his heart out for you. He's a star.

SC: Had he done much jumping before he came to you?

AW: He had done a few hunts and been farm trekked as a youngster with his previous owners. Just enough to make him a confident pony ready for us to train as a competition horse.

SC: How did you prepare him for his first competition season?

AW: We did a lot of flatwork, concentrating on lateral work and keeping him soft and rhythmical. We only jumped him occasionally as we didn't want to overdo it with him. After a few weeks of training, we took him to a couple of winter series events, one for the 1m class and one for the 1m 10 class. He cruised around both tracks. We entered him into his first Grand Prix class in September and he popped around it with no problems whatsoever.

Our horses get about 15-25 minutes of intensive flat schooling a few times each week, and are ridden on the neighbour's farm the rest of the time. They are seldom jumped during the week either as they are usually out jumping at competitions over the weekend. That's enough for them.

SC: How did it feel to win the Pony of the Year title at the 2010 Kelt Capital Horse of the Year Show?

AW: It was absolutely amazing to win the title. I still can't believe that it happened! Competition was extremely tough this year. I was watching Jake Lambert on 'Soul Sister' just before I did my jump off and said to Vicki that I didn't think I stood much of a chance. She told me to go for it and risk everything and our tight turns really paid off. 'Strider' felt super all the way round and I got my ride right. Everything just came together. It was a great end to the year.

We have had some brilliant results during the 2009/10 season, including taking the New Zealand National Pony Grand Prix and four Grand Prix classes. Walking away with Pony of the Year was just the icing on the cake.

SC: You also performed in the Saturday night parade. How did that go?

AW: Yep, we did a bareback jumping demonstration that evening. Vicki was part of it as well, riding her chestnut mare 'Showtym Girl' over 1.50m. Both horses performed exceptionally well, especially considering they were jumping in the dark and in front of a large crowd.

The performance generated quite a bit of interest. We do heaps of bareback riding at home and Vicki rides all her young horses bareback before under saddle training begins. It's great for a rider's posture and balance. The Saturday night performance provided a good opportunity to share that element of our training with others. I really enjoyed it.

SC: 'Showtym Viking' is for sale now isn't he? Have you had much interest?

AW: We have had an overwhelming number of enquiries about him from both New Zealand and overseas. He has worked hard this season so has been given a well earned holiday at the moment and in a few weeks I will bring him back into work and the riders can come to our property to view him.

SC: Now that you're out of the pony classes, will you be moving onto hacks?

AW: I will definitely be sticking to show jumping and already have a hack lined up for next season. He is a ten year old 16hh gelding called 'Pippin.' We haven't thought of a show name yet but, like all our competition horses, he will have the 'Showtym' prefix. He has been used as a pony club mount but his rider has given up so we have him on trial at the moment. He has a super jump and I can't wait to get him out to some competitions to see what he is capable of. I'm hoping that I will have just as much success in the hack ring as I did in the pony ring. I'm determined to keep getting better.



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citori would like to congratulate **Amanda Wilson & Showtym Viking** for winning Pony of the Year 2010 and **Vicki Wilson & Showtym Girl** for placing 2nd in the Grand Prix and Leading Mare series...

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