

FEI JR/YR & U25 Clinic with Charlotte Bredahl-Baker welcomes California and Oregon up-&-comers to the dressage community.

by Cassidy Gallman

There is something about Epona Farms. It may be the green color of the hills that surround it in the Westlake Village area's Hidden Valley. It may be the peaceful quiet. It may be the charm of the barn or may be simply that Epona Farms inspires.



As an Official United States Equestrian Federation Training Center, Epona Farms serves as a place to train current U.S. Team members and the sport's future generations. On April 15-16, Epona Farms served as the host facility of the 2017 California Dressage Society and the

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Oregon Dressage Society's inaugural FEI Junior, Young Rider, and Under 25 Grand Prix Clinic Series with Charlotte Bredahl-Baker.

In 1992, Charlotte Bredahl-Baker was part of the U.S. Bronze medal winning Olympic team in Barcelona with Monsieur. She is also on the High Performance Committee for the USEF and is the U.S. Assistant Youth Coach for Dressage.

Eight riders, under the age of 25, were invited to participate in the clinic. The clinic consisted of two days of lessons for each rider and a group dinner. Charlotte remarked, "The riders were all talented and very eager to learn. I think they all really enjoyed getting to know each other and learned from each other's lessons. I try to keep them all engaged during every session and I was thrilled to have many of the riders personal trainers attend." The riders learned about preparation, visualization and exercises that will help them with their current horses and for horses in the future. Accurate test riding was emphasized most of all.



However, what riders ultimately found at the clinic was a sense of community. They met, spent time and learned from other riders who are in similar places in their lives and navigating the same challenges. It is more than just riding.

The eight rider participants learned many lessons and gained experience that they can take to their next test or project. Many are going to be or already are competing in the FEI Pony, Junior, Young Rider and Under 25 Grand Prix Dressage classes. They have or will compete at the

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North American Junior and Young Rider Championships and the USEF Festival of Champions/US National Championships. They may be future US Team Members or Olympians.



But for now these riders have just trained where U.S. Team Members and Olympians have, the beautiful Epona Farms. Lastly, Charlotte noted, “The parents really enjoyed the amazing lounge area above the arena. It was a real treat for riders, trainers and parents to be at Epona Farms. It is such an incredible facility with everything always perfectly organized by Button Baker. I would like to thank CDS for making this possible, Paula Langan for organizing ahead of time and Cassidy Gallman for helping during clinic.” It is truly a wonderful thing to see such a motivated, talented, and smart group of young individuals that are working hard to accomplish their goals and it is an honor to be a part of that journey.